

Observance of the Sabbath: The Seventh-Day Adventist View

The most well-known Sabbatarians are the Seventh-Day Adventists, who maintain the view that the fourth commandment in the Decalogue, "Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy," is binding on Christians. Showing that this command (with the rest of the old law) has been abolished proves this view to be false.

The Sabbath:

The Sabbath was **GIVEN**:

| | |
|----------------|---|
| When | ~1446 B.C. The children of Israel came into the Wilderness of Sin (Ex. 16:23) The children of Israel were at Mount Sinai (Ex. 20:8) |
| Where | Mount Sinai (Neh. 9:13-14) |
| By Whom | God (Ex. 20:8; Neh. 9:14) |
| To Whom | Children of Israel (Ex. 31:13; Deut. 5:15) |
| Why | Sign between God and the children of Israel, that they may know He is the Lord who sanctified them. (Ex. 31:13) |

The Sabbath was **ABOLISHED**:

| | |
|----------------|---|
| When | ~30 A.D. Death of Christ (Col. 2:14; Heb. 9:16-17) |
| Where | Jerusalem (Golgotha/Calvary) (Matt. 27:33; Lk. 23:33) |
| By Whom | Christ (2 Cor. 3:7-11,14; Eph. 2:15; Col. 2:14; Heb. 8:13) |
| Why | Old Law fulfilled (Matt. 5:17) Better covenant (Heb. 8:6-13) |

SDA Assumptions Refuted

I. The law (ten commandments) existed before sin came into the world, since creation.

SDA: Sabbath at creation

1. God made all things (Jn. 1:1-3)
2. The Sabbath was made for man (Mk. 2:27)
3. Adam was a man (Gen. 2:7)
4. Sabbath must have been made at creation for Adam to keep.

SDA: Ten Commandments at creation

1. Adam could not have known sin without the law (Rom. 3:20; 5:13)

2. Adam sinned (Gen. 3:6)
3. Ten commandments must have existed since creation.
4. Example: Adam transgressed 8th commandment by stealing the fruit.
5. Example: Adam transgressed 6th commandment because he brought death upon himself (“slow suicide”)

Bible: Sabbath NOT at creation

- Sabbath not mentioned before Ex. 16
- Sabbath given to Israel, not Adam (Ex. 31:16)
- Sabbath not made known until law given (Neh. 9:13-14)

Bible: Ten Commandments NOT at creation

- Covenant not made with anyone before (Deut. 5:3; Deut. 5:15)
- Old law given after promise to Abraham (Gal. 3:17)
- Old law given because of sin (Gal. 3:19)
- Adam’s law was: “Don’t eat the fruit!” (Gen. 2:16-17)

II. The “handwriting of requirements” (Col. 2:14 NKJV) is different from God’s great moral law, the ten commandments.

SDA: What was abolished? Take a look at our chart:

| Moral Law | Ceremonial Law |
|---|--|
| Written by God in tablets of stone. (Ex. 32:16) | Written by Moses in a book. (Deut. 31:24) |
| Placed in the ark. (1 Kings 8:9) | Placed in a pocket in the side of the ark. (Deut. 31:26) |
| To point out sin. (Rom. 7:7) | Added because of sin. (Gal. 3:19) |
| The law is holy, and the commandment holy and just and good. (Rom. 7:12) | How is it that you turn again to the weak and beggarly elements, to which you desire again to be in bondage? (Gal. 4:9) |
| Do we then make void the law through faith? Certainly not! On the contrary, we establish the law. (Rom. 3:31) | Having abolished in His flesh the enmity, that is, the law of commandments contained in ordinances... (Eph. 2:15) |
| For we know that the law is spiritual, but I am carnal, sold under sin. (Rom. 7:14) | Who has come, not according to the law of a fleshly commandment, but according to the power of endless life. (Heb. 7:16) |
| And it is easier for heaven and earth to pass away than for one tittle of the law to fail. (Lk. 16:17) | For on the one hand there is an annulling of the former commandment because of its weakness and unprofitableness. (Heb. 7:18) |
| For He has spoken in a certain place of the seventh day in this way: And God rested on the seventh day from all His works ... There remains therefore a rest for the people of God. For he who has entered His rest has himself also ceased from his works as God did from His. (Heb. 4:4, 9, 10) | So let no one judge you in food or in drink, or regarding a festival or a new moon or Sabbaths, which are a shadow of things to come... (Col. 2:16-17) |
| If you want to enter into life, keep the commandments. (Matt. 19:17) | For the law made nothing perfect. (Heb. 7:19) |

Bible: Moral vs. Ceremonial?

- Law of God and Law of Moses are the same thing (Ez. 7:6; Neh. 8:1, 18; 10:29)
- Ten commandments are the first covenant (Deut. 4:13); Ordinances and services were part of the first covenant (Heb. 9:1)
- "What is the greatest commandment in **the law**?" (Matt. 22:36)
- Ten commandments and "ceremonial law" grouped together (Lev. 19:1-37)
- Another example: "ceremonial law" called law of the Lord (Lk. 2:23-24)

Bible: What was abolished? Read the Scriptures

- Law was shadow of things to come (Heb. 10:1)
- Jesus lists some commandments that remain (Matt. 19:18)
- Christ came to fulfill the law (Mt. 5:17-18; Jn. 19:30)
- Jewish observances were abolished (Col. 2:16; Gal. 4:9-11)
- Weekly Sabbath included (compare 1 Chr. 23:31; 2 Chr. 2:4; 2 Chr. 8:13; 2 Chr. 31:3; Neh. 10:33; Ek. 45:17 with Gal. 4:10; Col. 2:16; days, months, years pattern)
- The entire old law was abolished (Jer. 31:31-32; 2 Cor. 3:7-11, 14; Rom. 6:14; Rom. 7:4, 6; 8:2; Eph. 2:15; Heb. 7:12; 8:7, 13)

Bible: What remains?

- The new covenant (2 Cor. 3:11)
- There remains a rest (in Christ; heavenly; not command to keep the Sabbath) for the people of God (Matt. 11:28; Heb. 4:10)

III. The Old Testament law was considered binding by New Testament writers.**SDA: "Profitable for doctrine" means "profitable for authority"**

- All scripture is profitable for doctrine (2 Tim. 3:16-17) so we should teach that Christians must keep the Sabbath.

SDA: First-century Christians kept the Sabbath

- Paul kept the Sabbath (Acts 18:4)
- New Testament example of keeping the Sabbath (Lk. 23:56)
- Sabbath is the Lord's Day (Lk. 6:5)

Bible: "Profitable for doctrine" means "profitable for doctrine"

- Old Testament is profitable for doctrine (teaching), it was written for our learning (Rom. 15:4)
- Old Testament was a tutor leading to Christ, no longer needed (Gal:19-25)

Bible: First-century Christians did NOT keep the Sabbath

- New covenant not in effect until death of Christ (Heb. 9:16-17)
- Old law is a yoke that no one could bear (Acts 15:10)
- "You must be circumcised and keep the law", apostles gave no such commandment (Acts 15:23-24)
- See above on abolishment.
- Disciples came together on the first day of the week (Acts 2:1; Acts 20:7; 1 Cor. 16:2)
- The Lord's Day is the first day of the week (Ps. 118:24; Matt. 28:1; Rev. 1:10)

IV. The "ministry of death" (2 Cor. 3:7 NKJV) is abolished when the sinner comes to Christ, in the sense that we no longer have to pay the penalty for transgressing the law.

SDA: Up is down and left is right (This appears to be their view)

- Since the ten commandments have existed since creation, the purpose of them being given to Israel in Ex. 20 is to apply a penalty for disobeying them. Therefore, it is the penalty that is done away in Christ, not the commandments themselves.

Bible: 2 Cor. 3, Take a look at this chart:

| Abolished (v. 11, 14) | Remains (v. 11) |
|---------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Written with ink (v. 3) | Written with Spirit (v. 3) |
| Written on stone (v. 3, 7) | Written on heart (v. 3) |
| The Old Covenant | The New Covenant (v. 6) |
| The letter that kills (v. 6) | The Spirit that gives life (v. 6) |
| Ministry of death (v. 7) | Ministry of the Spirit (v. 8) |
| Glorious (v. 7) | More glorious (v. 8) |
| Ministry of condemnation (v. 9) | Ministry of righteousness (v. 9) |
| The veil (v. 13-16) | The mirror (v. 18) |
| Bondage | Liberty (v. 17) |
| Moses (v. 7) | The Lord (v. 18) |

The Ten Commandments:

| Commandment | OT | NT |
|---------------------------|-----------|---------------------------|
| No other gods | Ex. 20:3 | Matt. 4:10 |
| No carved images | Ex. 20:4 | 1 Cor. 10:7, 14 |
| Do not take name in vain | Ex. 20:7 | Matt. 15:19; Jas. 5:12 |
| Keep the Sabbath | Ex. 20:8 | ? |
| Honor father and mother | Ex. 20:12 | Eph. 6:1-2; Col. 3:20 |
| Do not murder | Ex. 20:13 | Matt. 5:21-22; Rom. 13:9 |
| Do not commit adultery | Ex. 20:14 | Matt. 5:27-28; 1 Cor. 6:9 |
| Do not steal | Ex. 20:15 | Matt. 15:19; Eph. 4:28 |
| Do not bear false witness | Ex. 20:16 | Matt. 15:19; Col. 3:9 |
| Do not covet | Ex. 20:17 | Eph. 5:3; Col. 3:5 |

References

1. "A Brief History of the Seventh-Day Adventist Church," <http://communication.euroafrica.org/resources/openlinks/manual/beliefs/history.html>
2. "Ellen G. White – Prophet or Plagiarist?," <http://www.bible.ca/7-plagiarism.htm>
3. Frost, Gene, The \$200 Text, Firm Foundation Publishing House, Austin, TX, 1952
4. Jackson, Wayne, "Should Christians Keep the Sabbath?," Christian Courier, <http://www.christiancourier.com/archives/sabbath.htm>
5. "Questions Sabbatarians Don't Like To Be Asked," <http://www.bible.ca/7-sabbath-questions.htm>
6. Seventh-Day Adventist Church, "Fundamental Beliefs," <http://www.adventist.org/beliefs/fundamental/index.html>
7. "The Weekly Sabbath is Abolished," The Interactive Bible, <http://www.bible.ca/7-sabbath.htm>