



63 - Legalism vs. Liberty



One of the most dangerous misunderstandings in Christian churches today is the belief that Christians must rest on Sunday (i.e. a Christian Sabbath). The Sabbath day of rest (7th day = Saturday) was given specifically to the Israelites as part of the Mosaic Law and was simply a “shadow” of the true rest that Christians would eventually have through Jesus Christ. Jesus came to fulfill the law and brought it to a close. Christians aren't under the 10 commandments; we're under the “Great Commandments” which is to love God with all your heart, strength, and mind, and to love your neighbor as yourself. These two commands cover all of the 10 commandments except for the fourth commandment which was for the Israelites to rest on the Sabbath day. Christians rest every day in Christ! Paul made it very clear that the law has ended and Christians are at Liberty and are free to do as they please with respect to feasts and Sabbath days.

The Mosaic Law

The Mosaic Law was given to the Israelites through Moses and was contained in the first five books of the bible referred to as the “Torah” or “Pentateuch”. God also made a covenant with the Israelites binding them to this set of laws.

613 Commands: [moral laws (includes the 10 commandments), social laws (judgements), ceremonial laws (ordinances)]

- 365 Negative Commands (Don't Do This...)
- 248 Positive Commands (Do This...)

The 10 Commandments (Exodus 20:3-17)

1. You shall have no other gods before Me.
2. You shall not make for yourself an idol.
3. You shall not take the name of the LORD your God in vain.
4. Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy.
5. Honor your father and your mother.
6. You shall not murder.
7. You shall not commit adultery.
8. You shall not steal.
9. You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor.
10. You shall not covet your neighbor's possessions.



Notice that the first three commandments have to do with loving God; the last six commandments have to do with loving our neighbors. The 4th commandment is special and was given as a “Free Gift” from God to the Israelites. Jesus fulfilled the Law and ended the covenant with the Israelites. This puts Christians under “Liberty” and “Grace” and not under the “Law”.

[Romans 10:4] For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes.

LIBERTY



Liberty: The quality or state of being free.

- God gave the Israelites the law, not so they could follow it to be righteous, but to prove to them that they were incapable of following it and that they could never be righteous on their own. Jesus came to fulfill the law which in turn enables believers to be free from the yolk of sin and the law.

Jesus read from the scroll of Isaiah in the Temple:

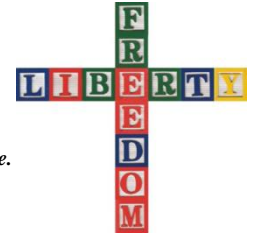
[Luke 4:18] "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because He has anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; He has sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed.

[Galatians 5:1] Stand fast therefore in the liberty by which Christ has made us free, and do not be entangled again with a yoke of bondage.

Jesus Said:

[Matthew 5:17] "Do not think that I came to destroy the Law or the Prophets. I did not come to destroy but to fulfill.

- Jesus was the only man who ever lived that was able to completely fulfill the law.
- When something is “fulfilled” it is brought to completion and ended.



[Romans 6:14] For sin shall not have dominion over you, for you are not under law but under grace.



The Great Commandments

- Jesus fulfilled the Mosaic Law and gave us a “New Law” called “The Great Commandment”. Also called “The Law of Christ” or “The Law of Liberty”.



[Matthew 22:36-40] "Teacher, which is the great commandment in the law?" Jesus said to him, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind." This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like it: "You shall love your neighbor as yourself." On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets.

**These two commandments cover all of the 10 commandments except for #4.

The Lord's Day

There are many Christians and churches that refer to Sunday as “The Lord’s Day”. This is totally unscriptural and dangerous. As soon as people start calling Sunday “The Lord’s Day” and making it a special day, they usually follow it up by demanding that Christians rest on Sunday. This is legalism and it undermines the work Jesus did for us because it is requiring a “work” be done by resting on Sunday.

This heresy was started by the Roman Catholic Church and unfortunately it has infiltrated many Christian Churches as well. The Roman Catholics not only continue to use the 10 commandments but they have also changed the term “Sabbath” to “Lord’s Day” while changing the day of rest from Saturday to Sunday. Catholics also make it a sin to miss Church on Sunday.

The term “The Lord’s Day” only occurs once in the entire bible...

(Revelation 1:10) I was in the Spirit on the Lord's Day, and I heard behind me a loud voice, as of a trumpet.

- “in the Spirit” means the Holy Spirit took John away (physically or in a vision). This term is also used this way in **Revelation (4:2, 17:3, 21:10)**.
- “the Lord’s Day” means on “the day of the Lord” or the tribulation period.
- Greek uses “Lord” as an adjective sometimes; however, Hebrew always uses the word “Lord” as a noun. This means that “The Lord’s Day” in Greek would always be “The Day of The Lord” in Hebrew”.
- Everywhere in scripture Sunday is referred to as “the first day of the week”.
- In **John (20:1, 20:19)** he refers to Sunday as “the first day of the week”. John didn't just suddenly decide to start calling Sunday “the Lord’s Day”.
- Christians go to church on Sunday based on tradition because this is the day Jesus rose from the dead...It's not commanded by God.

What About The Sabbath?

Jesus Said:

[Matthew 11:28] Come unto Me, all ye that toil and are burdened, and I will give you rest.

[Luke 6:5] And He said to them, "The Son of Man is also Lord of the Sabbath."

The Sabbath rest is a “Free Gift” to Christians. Jesus Christ is our Sabbath...We “rest” in Christ every day...It's our salvation!



The Sabbath Day of Rest was a “Shadow” of the Rest to Come in Christ

- The Sabbath rest was a “sign” for the Israelites shadowing true rest in Christ... See **Exodus (31:12-18)** and **Ezekiel (20:12-20)**
- Christians “rest” in the work that Christ did for us...See **Hebrews (3,4)**.

[Colossians 2:16-17] 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, but the substance is of Christ.

[Romans 14:5-6] One person esteems one day above another; another esteems every day alike. Let each be fully convinced in his own mind. He who observes the day, observes it to the Lord; and he who does not observe the day, to the Lord he does not observe it.

All Days are The Same For Christians

Because we are at liberty, there are no special days commanded for Christians. This also means that there are no commanded holidays (feasts) and no dietary restrictions. Because we are at liberty, it's important that we don't judge others based on our own personal convictions and put a stumbling block in their way. God wants us to have proper balance in our lives (God, family, work, play, rest).

[Romans 14:13] Therefore let us not judge one another anymore, but rather resolve this, not to put a stumbling block or a cause to fall in our brother's way.