

Dialog on keeping the Sabbath and Holy Days

Hello Likeminds,

I believe that some are confused with the ritualistic observance of the Sabbath, and the divine revelation that compels us to keep the Sabbath. In other words it is not simply the fact that we keep the Sabbath that makes us different from all of Christendom; but it is the knowledge itself that YHWH has revealed through His Holy Spirit which compels us to keep the Sabbath that separates us. Our calling goes far beyond just being Sabbath keepers, although that is outwardly what separates us from the rest. That is why the Sabbath is a "sign" of being God's children, but is not of and by itself the only distinguishing characteristic of our unique calling.

Thousands, maybe even millions of Jews worldwide keep the Sabbath, but this does not automatically make them God's children.

We have to ask ourselves, why do we keep the Sabbath? It is because of the revelation of God that allows us to understand relationship between obedience (to the commandments), faith (in Christ), and God's grace (not through works) which leads to salvation. We realize that obedience to the commandments is imperative, but works cannot save us; it is our faith combined with God's grace that saves us. Although this is a relatively simple concept for us to understand in the Church, those outside God's Church do not have a correct understanding of this. They do not understand that obedience to God is obedience to His commandments. The love of God is to keep His commandments (I John 5:3), this is a basic foundational truth of Christianity and they do not have a proper understanding of this. And since they do not have a proper understanding of obedience, faith, and grace, which are the very foundation of true Christianity, I believe that they are not a part of God's Church.

What is the real reason that most Christians do not keep the Sabbath or the holy days? It is primarily because they do not understand the prophetic significance of them. If they did understand that the Sabbath pictures the millennial rest of Christ ruling on earth, and that the holy days outline God's plan of redemption for mankind, they would most assuredly rest in obedience to the commandments. But God chose not to reveal this knowledge to them through His Spirit. Nor did He choose to reveal the concept of obedience vs. faith to them. There are many "good people" out there who understand the importance of family life, but this does not mean that these people are true Christians. If someone cannot comprehend the concept of obedience and faith, which are foundational truths in Christianity, then they are not true Christians.

The testimony of Jesus is the Spirit of Prophecy (Rev 19:10). Since those who do not keep the Sabbath and the holy days obviously do not understand the prophetic significance of them, they do not have the testimony of Jesus either. IMO you cannot have the testimony of Jesus, and not have a proper understanding of His plan of redemption for mankind. If you have one, you must have the other. While the Sabbath may be a sign of God's children, it is really the knowledge of obedience, faith and grace that compels us to keep the Sabbath that separates us from the rest of Christendom.

YBIC,
Brian L. Fulton

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Dear LM

IMO the sign of a true follower of God, is TEACHABILITY (which is closely related to humility). If one is teachable, one will continue to grow ad infinitum. One will come to be taught that the Sabbath must be kept, and in fact it is holy time set aside by God for our TEACHING.

The Bible uses a different analogy for teachability viz. a circumcised heart. God writes on our hearts with, not ink, but the Holy Spirit as 2 Cor 3:3 states "Forasmuch as ye are manifestly declared to be the epistle of Christ ministered by us, written NOT WITH INK, BUT WITH THE SPIRIT OF THE LIVING GOD; NOT IN TABLES OF STONE, BUT THE FLESHLY TABLES OF THE HEART".

For God to be able to get to our hearts, there is an awful lot of fat that surrounds the heart that has to be cleared away first, by cutting away the membrane called the pericardium, then the heart slips easily out of this skin and lies sensitive and exposed. Israel would have known this, seeing as they butchered their own animals.

Many Sabbath keepers do it out of habit, while retaining an evil heart. They never grow further than "just" keeping the Sabbath. Legalists love to have something purely physical to identify "true" believers. In reality, it is the Holy Spirit, writing on our hearts that is the true sign of a believer. I have no knowledge whether the thief on the cross kept the Sabbath, but he was teachable at the end, but the other thief was not.

If we do not remain teachable and grow in grace and knowledge (using the Sabbath time profitably to build a relationship with God) then Sabbath keeping, like all other rituals, can be just that, a ritual.

We have stomped around this issue in the past, so in conclusion I apologize for repeating my assertion that there are some teachable people out there who God IS working with, writing on their hearts, getting them to change and improve, who have yet to be taught that Sabbath keeping is necessary. Once shown, the Holy Spirit will convict them, as it did us. I regard some Christians in non-Sabbath keeping congregations as true Christians, (followers of Christ, being worked with by the Holy Spirit) yet are at this stage still totally ignorant of Sabbath and Holy Days. They might be better Christians than me, because they love more, have more faith, are more teachable - yet because they are blind to the Sabbath - God does not hold them guilty. It is our Christian duty to teach these teachable ones, about the need to keep the Sabbath.

THE Sign is whether you or I am/are prepared to change, when shown we are wrong. That is why one has to be like a little child to enter the Kingdom - teachable. Some Sabbath-keeping, Church of God "Christians" are totally unteachable (I say this looking in the mirror - not at anybody else. We all have to judge ourselves).

Warmest regards,

Steven Thomas

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Hi Likeminds

Dan wrote: <in part>

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> Do we condemn others for not observing the physical seven day Sabbath?

>Who is so great to know and understand the whole MEANING of the

>Sabbath? Are we better than the Pharisees?

> Unless we come to the spiritual maturity of a newborn baby in the

>spirit, we have no part in the Kingdom of God which is a spiritual

>dimension in which God Himself dwells.

Dan, I do not condemn others who do not keep Sabbath. My wife does not keep the Sabbath, I do not condemn her. Many people I know and love do not keep the Sabbath, I do not condemn them.

Who is so great, to know the COMPLETE true meaning of ANY of God's truths? WE are not BETTER than anyone! God in us is what is GOOD. God calls LOW people, so He can exalt Himself by making them HIGH.

<Righteous> People that knew us before conversion, marvel at the New Man. The glory is God's, we are humanly speaking, nothing.

We must become like a little child. Please understand this!...Most of us recognize our calling when we are young adults or older. The God of this World and our own human nature has taken it's toll. We are ate-up with the ways of this world. We empty this garbage in total repentance. We know where "our ways" have gotten us, and we are ready to listen to our creator. We become little wide-eyed CHILDREN...open to God. Though we become like little children, we begin a process of <growing up> in the ways of Jesus Christ. We never forget that first lesson!...we build upon it! If we do forget, HE will remind us if we do! We keep that little child attitude, but we grow up spiritually. God is still growing...Does that shock us?...That's what we are all about...God is reproducing himself. Let's not get hung up on each little point of truth. Lets try to get a grip on the plan of God, even from 2,000 feet if necessary...:)

Dan, when the Holy Spirit dwells inside of us, (in our very core being) we become part of that spiritual dimension. We are the Sons Of God. What we are is hidden from the world. The TRUE GOD is also hidden from the world. The world only knows a false god and a false jesus. This idea that God's called and Chosen, are no different than the children of the world, has no place in God's True Church. Much stronger language could be used here. I don't want to incite emotions that would not benefit. Truly, if I sound too preachy, please tell me! If anyone feels that I'm off base in my concepts, let me hear yours.

YBIC,
sonny ayers

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Regarding Annual Sabbaths and Feasts of the Lord:

While I heartily concur that we should pour our hearts into the meaning of the Feast Days, we would never even consider the meaning of the *appointed days* if we didn't observe them beginning first in physically setting them apart as God directs.

History show that the early church, both Jews and Gentiles, observed the Feast Days long after Christ died. Scripture also shows the disciples marking time by the Holy Days as we mark time by them today. Prophecy is full of support for Holy Day observance. There are also several other scriptures besides the one you quoted in Acts 18:21. (I'm not prepared to argue the whether or not Acts 18:21 was inspired, but I believe it was.)

I list a quick cursory word search below from only the New Testament epistles since many discount the dozens of examples in the four Gospels of Christ keeping the Feasts because they say He was *just* following Jewish custom which He changed after his death. I keep the Feasts today not just because of the early church example, but also because I don't see Holy Day observance, tithing, or abstaining from unclean food as part or the ritual law that was fulfilled by Christ at His death.

Acts 2:1 And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place.

Acts 12:3 And because he saw it pleased the Jews, he proceeded further to take Peter also. Then were the days of unleavened bread.

(As you mentioned) Acts 18:21 But bade them farewell, saying, I must by all means keep this feast that cometh in Jerusalem: but I will return again unto you, if God will. And he sailed from Ephesus.

Acts 20:6 And we sailed away from Philippi after the days of unleavened bread, and came unto them to Troas in five days; where we abode seven days.

Acts 20:16 For Paul had determined to sail by Ephesus, because he would not spend the time in Asia: for he hasted, if it were possible for him, to be at Jerusalem the day of Pentecost.

Acts 27:9 Now when much time was spent, and when sailing was now dangerous, because the fast was now already past, Paul admonished them,
(Atonement)

1Cor.5:8 Therefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness; but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.

1Cor.11:26 For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till he come.
(Referring to "the Lord's Supper" R.F.)

1Cor.16:8 But I will tarry at Ephesus until Pentecost.

There are many other indirect references that support Holy Day and Feast observance, notably Col.2:16 and the rest of that chapter.

Hope this quick compilation helps.

Rick Stanczak
Salem, OR

