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Is the Sabbath for Today/Part 7

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By: **Dr. Robert A. Morey**; ©2003

Was the Sabbath observed even before the time of Moses? Did Jesus prophesy that Christians would be observing the Sabbath even at the end of the world when He returns? Dr. Morey examines these sabbatarian arguments in this article.

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Part II—An Examination of The Sabbatarian Arguments (con't)

The Exodus 16 Argument

The Sabbatarian Position

The Sabbath was observed before Moses, starting with the Creation. This can be shown in Exodus 16 where the people started resting on the seventh day as a Sabbath before the Ten Commandments were given. Thus, it was already being observed by the people of God.”

Examination of This Argument

1. Exodus 16 is still during the lifetime of Moses. There is nothing to indicate a pre-Mosaic origin of the Sabbath in Exodus 16. This is further borne out when we remember the “sign” nature of the Sabbath in Israel’s covenant relationship with God.

2. On the contrary, the following points are clear:

1. It is doubtful that the Egyptians allowed the Jews a Sabbath day during their 400 years of bondage. Thus it was not the practice of the people of God to rest the seventh day when they were Egyptian slaves.

2. Special revelation is not needed for a moral law or for something already observed. If

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- something is going to be introduced for the first time, there must be a special revelation and a training period so that the people can adapt to the new practice or ceremonial law.
3. In Exodus 16:4-5, God sets forth a new test for the people of God. He would give manna six days, with a double portion on the sixth day.
 4. When the sixth day arrived, the people gathered a double portion. But they did not know why a double portion was given. It is obvious in verse 22 that the people asked Moses what a double portion meant.
 5. Moses responds in verses 22-26 with his interpretation of the revelation/test given in verses 4-5: "Since God gives us a double portion on the sixth day, He does not plan to give us any manna on the seventh. It is a day of rest. So, cook up your extra manna to eat tomorrow and stay home."
 6. Some of the people still did not understand this new test of a day of rest. Thus, they went out on the seventh day for manna but found none (v. 27).
 7. Since the previous revelation of this new regulation had been ignored by many people, God once again revealed to Moses that this new test of obedience was to be strictly observed (vs. 28-29).
 8. So, the people finally gave in to the new law and rested on the seventh day (v. 30).

Conclusion

An accurate exegesis of Exodus 16 reveals that the Lord was foreshadowing the Fourth Commandment by giving a new test or commandment in Exodus 16. The purpose of this incident was to introduce the people of God to a new concept and a new law which had not been previously known or observed. Consequently, this passage cannot be used as proof that Sabbath-keeping began at Creation.

The Matthew 24:20 Argument

The Sabbatarian Position

Christ prophesied that Christians would be observing the Sabbath even at the end of the world when He returns—"pray that your flight be not on the Sabbath day."

Examination of This Argument

1. In verse 20 Christ is discussing what believers should do in A.D. 70 when Titus would come to destroy the Temple and Jerusalem. Jesus is not dealing here with the end of the world, but with the end of the Temple (vs. 1-2).
2. Jesus was simply saying, "Since the Jews forbid travel on their Sabbath, pray that you as Christians do not have to escape to the hills on that day, for the Jews will hinder you."
3. The "Sabbath" referred to in this verse is the Jewish Saturday-Sabbath and obviously has no reference to the "Lord's Day." And it is certainly stretching the point to suggest that Christ had in view a time when the "Sabbath" would be transferred to Sunday.
4. Christ was simply referring to things which would hinder escape from Jerusalem's destruction:
 1. Greed for material possessions (vs. 17-18).
 2. Pregnancy or nursing babies (v. 19).
 3. Winter time (v. 20).
 4. Jewish Sabbath (v. 20).

[To be continued.](#)

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