

# New Covenant Theology



# Questions Raised by New Covenant Theology

## What about keeping the Sabbath?

- What does/did it mean to keep the Sabbath?
- Who did God command to observe the Sabbath?
- Are Christians today obligated to keep the Sabbath?

# What about “keeping the Sabbath”?

- The word “Sabbath” comes from the Hebrew word, *shabat* – which means “to cease, desist, rest”:
  - *While the earth remains, seedtime and harvest, cold and heat, summer and winter, day and night, shall not **cease**.* (Gen 8:22)
  - *So these three men **ceased** to answer Job, because he was righteous in his own eyes.* (Job 32:1)
- So to “keep” a Sabbath **day** meant to **cease** from regular activities and **rest** from one’s work on that day.

# What about “keeping the Sabbath”?

- We saw last time, that even among those who tell us that we should “keep the Sabbath”, there is a lot of disagreement.
- For example, there is disagreement on ***what day of the week*** we are to observe the Sabbath: Saturday or Sunday?
  - Of the people that ***you*** know of who say that we should be “keeping the Sabbath”, do the majority hold to a ***Saturday*** Sabbath or a ***Sunday*** Sabbath?
  - Are there passages in the Bible where God commands men to observe a Sabbath day on ***Saturday***, the seventh day of the week? If so:
    - What ***are*** some of those passage(s)?
    - For each passage given, tell us ***who*** God is commanding to observe a Sabbath (rest) on Saturday.
  - What passage(s) in the Bible tell us that God commands men to observe a Sabbath day on ***Sunday***?

# What *did* it mean to “keep the Sabbath?”

- We saw last time that the Sabbath was a “sign” of the Mosaic Covenant given ***exclusively*** to the nation of Israel at Mount Sinai. (Exodus 31:16-17)
- We also saw that the Sabbath, as given to Israel, was a commemoration of what God did on the seventh day of the creation week as recorded in the book of Genesis (2:1-4).
- When was the book of Genesis (which includes the written record of God resting on the seventh day) given by God?
- Do we have ***any*** evidence that ***anyone*** prior to Moses was told that God rested on the seventh day?
- Do we have ***any*** evidence in scripture of anyone ***observing*** a Sabbath day prior to Moses?
- According to Nehemiah, who did God use to make “known” his “holy Sabbath” (Neh. 9:14)?
- If God’s resting on the seventh day and the institution of a Sabbath day was not known prior to Moses – would we have ***any*** reason to believe that observing a Sabbath day is a “creation ordinance” binding on all men in all ages?



# What about “keeping the Sabbath”?

- What about Christians **today**? Are **we** under obligation to observe a Sabbath day of rest?
- As you know, Christians today are under the New Covenant.
- Since the coming of the New Covenant, there is **no** command given in the New Testament that requires us to observe a Sabbath **day** – or day of “rest”.
- The **only** “Sabbath” that we are taught to observe in the NT is that we are to cease from doing work to gain favor with God and instead we are to rest in Christ’s work by faith:
  - *For we who have believed enter that rest... <sup>9</sup> So then, there remains a Sabbath rest for the people of God, <sup>10</sup> for whoever has entered God's rest has also rested from his works as God did from his. <sup>11</sup> Let us therefore strive to enter that rest ... <sup>14</sup> Since then we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus, the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession... <sup>16</sup> Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy... (Heb. 4:3,9-11, 14,16a)*

# What about “keeping the Sabbath”?

- Furthermore there are at least two places in the New Testament that **explicitly** teach that we are **not** required to keep a Sabbath **day** (or any other OT holy day or feast day) :
  - *Therefore let no one pass judgment on you in questions of food and drink, or with regard to a festival or a new moon or a Sabbath.* <sup>17</sup> *These are a shadow of the things to come, but the substance belongs to Christ.* (Col. 2:16-17 cf. Ezek. 45:17)
  - *One person esteems one day as better than another, while another esteems all days alike. Each one should be fully convinced in his own mind.* (Rom. 14:5)

A Look at What  
**The Westminster Confession of Faith (1646)**  
and  
**The London Baptist Confession of Faith (1689)**  
Say About the Sabbath

