

Come Let Us Reason Together

Addendum on the Sabbath

The main body of this paper has dealt with the safeguards God's Law specifically affords to families, particularly young families just getting started. Strong emphasis is made of America's need to repent of our worship of the modern *Molech, a god of sexual convenience*, which drives the demand for "safe, legal abortion," our state-of-the-art version of Israel's hideous ritual of passing their sons and daughters "through the fire to Molech" (II Kings 23:10). Now, let us consider the vital role that Sabbath observance has in choosing life today. Herein, Sunday is treated as the Christian Sabbath, the day of the week Christians are still commanded to remember so as "to keep it holy" (Exodus 20:8).

Pollutions in Israel

Scripture declares that "whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all" (James 2:10). Therefore, failure to keep even one of God's ten commandments, is a failure to Choose Life. We are in effect choosing death. Nowhere is this more evident in Israel and our "New Israel" than in our persistent failure to keep God's Sabbath day holy. So-called "blue laws," bequeathed by our Puritan ancestors, requiring business closure on Sunday are now relegated to the ash heap of history. They join, in this memory hole, the Puritan-inspired laws against gambling, that brings fiscal grief to families across America.

- Blood Pollution

God's people are repeatedly indicted for polluting the land with innocent blood. "Yea, they sacrificed their sons and their daughters unto devils, And shed innocent blood, even the blood of their sons and of their daughters, whom they sacrificed unto the idols of Canaan: and the land was polluted with blood" (Psalm 106:37-38). Innocent blood shed under King Manasseh is cited as a reason God removes the Jews into Babylonian captivity (II Kings 24:3-4).

- Sabbath Pollution

Ezekiel links Israel's blood pollution of the land through infant sacrifice with their prior pollution of the sabbath. He declares Israel "had despised my statutes, and had polluted my sabbaths, and their eyes were after their fathers' idols. Wherefore I gave them also statutes that were not good, and judgments whereby they should not live; And I polluted them in their own gifts, in that they caused to pass through the fire all that openeth the womb, that I might make them desolate, to the end that they might know that I am the LORD" (Ezekiel 20:24-26).

The alternative to worship of Jehovah each week on the Sabbath day and on holy days of Israel's national festivals in Jerusalem is worship of Baal and Molech with its attendant fiery sacrifices of infants. God further commands Israel to observe whole Sabbath *years!* "But in the seventh year shall be a sabbath of rest unto the land, a sabbath for the LORD: thou shalt neither sow thy field, nor prune thy vineyard" (Leviticus 25:4). In Israel, Sabbath years are not kept. So, Jeremiah predicts a seventy-year Babylonian captivity for Israel (Jeremiah 25:11) till "the land had enjoyed her sabbaths: for as long as she lay desolate she kept sabbath, to fulfil threescore and ten

years” (II Chronicles 36:21).

In America, a residual of this practice survives in the “sabbatical,” which some professors take for extended off-campus research. It is hard, but essential, for God’s people in pre-industrial and in industrial societies to envision just what it takes to keep the weekly or year-long Sabbath holy. Clearly, Israel fails to keep the Sabbath day holy and refuses to let land lie fallow during its Sabbath. Isaiah gives a positive pointer as he calls upon Israel to refrain “from doing thy pleasure on my holy day; and call the sabbath a delight, the holy of the LORD, [a day that truly honors the Lord]” (Isaiah 58:13).

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Negatively, Isaiah criticizes hypocritical, exhibitionist fasting of the Jews, who fail in giving tithes to help the poor and to seek justice for the oppressed. Rather, “in the day of your fast ye find pleasure, and exact all your labours [their servants work]. Behold, ye fast for strife and debate, and to smite with the fist of wickedness” (Isaiah 58:3-4). Similarly, Jesus refuses to endorse the Pharisees’ stringent ban of all “work” on the Sabbath day. He asks, “Is it lawful on the sabbath days to do good, or to do evil? to save life, or to destroy it?” (Luke 6:9). After Pharisees fail to answer, He declares, “it is lawful to do well on the sabbath days” (Matthew 12:12). And, He heals a man’s hand on the sabbath day. Then furious Pharisees “held a council against him, how they might destroy him” (Matthew 12:14).

Isaiah denounces Jerusalem for its harboring of sodomites and murderers by which their worship is invalidated. “Bring no more vain oblations; incense is an abomination unto me; the new moons and sabbaths, the calling of assemblies, . . . my soul hateth . . . yea, when ye make many prayers, I will not hear: your hands are full of blood” (Isaiah 1:13-15). The Lord further declares “I hate, I despise. . . your solemn assemblies. Though ye offer me burnt offerings and your meat offerings, I will not accept them . . . Take thou away from me the noise of thy songs . . . But let judgment run down as waters, and righteousness as a mighty stream” (Amos 5:21-24). Likewise, much of the worship of America today is an exercise in futility that is oblivious to the “silent screams” God still hears from the womb.

Faithful giving and stewardship of the Lord’s tithe is crucial to reclaiming the Sabbath that is truly a “delight.” Israelites are directed to use tithes to enable Levitical teachers and the poor to join them in festival observance at Jerusalem as they “rejoice before the LORD thy God” (Deuteronomy 12:11-19). Sadly, church-going is a tedious chore for many of God’s people. Many churches ration communion, the most joyful element of Christian worship, down to four times a year or less. Such diminution of communion effectually makes *excommunication* meaningless. More seriously, Christians are starved of joyful weekly reminders of Christ’s death, burial and resurrection, that Paul equates with the gospel, the great engine of our faith (I Corinthians 15:1-58). Accordingly, many church goers cannot truly say with David, “I was glad when they said unto me, Let us go into the house of the LORD” (Psalm 122:1).

The “slough of despond” fostered by rationed worship is intensified by relatively low, unstable support of teachers and ministers. This has a crushing impact upon the children of preachers

and teachers whose fathers, however excellent they may be, are seldom “counted worthy of double honour [salary]” (I Timothy 5:17). Such ministries are often funded at niggardly levels necessitated by the larceny of God’s people (Malachi 3:8-10) who foolishly exempt themselves from paying the tithe. When this is combined with bureaucratic wrangling that typifies local church politics, it is a wonder and a true mercy that any of our children remain in the church once they reach their majority. We must stop polluting the Sabbath by refusal to pay the Lord’s tithe. It is high time we stopped structuring our teaching and preaching ministries as if they were business enterprises dependent upon the vagaries of a supposed *market place of the soul!* “What shall a man give in exchange for his soul?” (Mark 8:37).

Finally, we must keep the Sabbath free from deadly Pharisaical rules, since “The sabbath was made for man, and not man for the sabbath” (Mark 2:27). The Sabbath rightly observed is a reminder that Christ has triumphed over death and death dealers on the cross. Our weekday jobs, yes even our “crosses,” are but a part of God’s mopping-up operations on earth, like those on Gen. MacArthur’s “secured” Pacific islands in WWII. The Sabbath reminds us how blessed we are that our work is not to gain victory (thank God) over “spiritual wickedness in high places” (Ephesians 6:12). We just bear faithful work-witness to Christ’s victory over doomed death dealers as it progresses on our watch. We are witnesses to the inexorable fact that “Death is swallowed up in victory” (I Corinthians 15:54).