

Jesus Broke the Sabbath

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No Work to Be Done on the Sabbath Under
Penalty of Death
(*Exodus 31:15; Numbers 15:32, 36*)

Jesus Christ Broke the Sabbath and Justified
His Disciples in the Same
(*John 5:16; Matthew 12:1-3, 5*)

Those who accuse Jesus Christ of breaking the Sabbath day command create a serious problem because, if Christ broke any law or commandment, his sacrifice would not have been acceptable to Almighty God and, as a consequence, Christ would not have been resurrected by his heavenly Father. If this actually happened, no one's sins would be forgiven and, as a result, there would be no hope of everlasting life after death. The Apostle Paul pointed out that if Christ was not resurrected by his Father, everyone would remain in their sins and perish as a result.

And if Christ is not risen, your faith is futile; you are still in your sins! ¹⁸Then also those who have fallen asleep (i.e. died) in Christ have perished (1Cor. 15:17-18; NKJV used throughout unless otherwise noted; Ed. note in parenthesis).

As Christ fulfilled the will of his heavenly Father perfectly, he could not have transgressed any law or commandment, including the Sabbath command. Therefore, the claim that Christ disobeyed this commandment is false. Instead, because Christ was totally obedient, his shed blood covers the sins of all who repent (Heb. 9:22).

How much more shall the blood of **Christ**, who through the eternal Spirit **offered himself without spot** (blemish) to God, purge (cleanse)

your conscience from dead works (i.e. sins) to serve the living God? (Heb. 9:14; Ed. notes in parentheses; emphasis added).

But with **the precious blood of Christ, as a lamb without blemish and without spot** (1Pet. 1:19; cf. Jn. 1:29; emphasis added).

With this background the scriptures that have been misused, to accuse God of contradicting His word, will be examined. The first apparent contradiction is dealing with Christ healing a sick man on a Sabbath day.

Now a certain man was there (in Bethesda) who had an infirmity thirty-eight years. ⁶When Jesus saw him lying there, and knew that he already had been in that condition a long time, he (Christ) said to him, 'Do you want to be made well?' ⁷The sick man answered him, 'Sir, I have no man to put me into the pool when the water is stirred up; but while I am coming, another steps down before me.' ⁸Jesus said to him, 'Rise, take up your bed and walk.' ⁹And immediately the man was made well, took up his bed, and walked. And that day was the Sabbath. ¹⁰The Jews therefore said to him who was cured, 'It is the Sabbath; it is not lawful for you to carry your bed' (Jn. 5:5-10; cf. 5:16; Mt. 12:9-14; Ed. notes in parentheses).

What is important to note is that the Jewish leadership made no effort to assist the sick man so that he could enter the waters. Instead, they caused him more grief by applying additional Sabbath regulations that were never included in any Sabbath instructions from Almighty God. Instead, God's Sabbaths were meant to be a delight for mankind and any act that contributed to the spirit of this command would be considered as fulfilling the intent of this day.

If you turn away your foot from the Sabbath, from doing your pleasure on My holy day, and

call the Sabbath a delight... (Isa. 58:13a; emphasis added).

The Jewish religious leaders had added many burdensome rules and regulations to God's Sabbath command that were never intended nor stated in scripture. Christ addressed this issue on a number of occasions.

For laying aside the (intent of the) commandment of God, you (Jewish religious leaders) hold the tradition of men – the washing of pitchers and cups, and many other such things you do. ⁹And he (Christ) said to them, 'All too well you reject (set aside) the commandment of God, that you may keep your tradition. ¹⁰For Moses said, 'Honor your father and your mother'; and 'He who curses father or mother; let him be put to death.' ¹¹But you say, 'If a man says to his father or mother, 'Whatever profit you might have received from me is Corban – (that is, dedicated to the temple); ¹²and you no longer let him do anything for his father or his mother, ¹³**making the word of God of no effect through your tradition which you have handed down. And many such things you do** (Mk. 7:8-13; Ed. notes in parentheses; emphasis added).

Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you devour widows' houses and for a pretense make long prayers. Therefore you will receive greater condemnation (Mt. 23:14; cf. 23:15-35).

Christ pointed out that if he broke the Sabbath, based on how the Jewish religious leaders thought it should be observed, then they broke it as well because they worked harder on the Sabbaths than other days of the week due to the large number of animal sacrifices that had to be prepared on these holy days.

Or have you (the Pharisees) not read in the law (Num. 28:9) that on the Sabbath the priests in the temple profane (desecrate) the Sabbath, and are blameless (Mt. 12:5; Ed. notes in parentheses).

The Jewish religious leaders did not even understand God's regulations correctly, regarding Sabbath conduct, because they falsely accused Christ's disciples of breaking the Sabbath when they picked some heads of grain as they walked through a grain field (Mt. 12:1-2). God's law allowed them to do this without contravening the Sabbath.

When you come into your neighbor's standing grain, you may pluck the heads with your hand, but you shall not use a sickle on your neighbor's standing grain (Dt. 23:25).

The religious leaders had completely missed the mark regarding God's intent for the Sabbath. It was originally created as a blessing for all of mankind allowing them to rest from their usual work once a week and be refreshed both physically as well as spiritually (Ex. 35:2). By adding their own regulations, the Jewish leadership made Sabbath observance a dread rather than a delight for the people. This is why Christ corrected them because their actions were preventing people from learning and experiencing God's love and mercy through the correct observation of the Sabbath.

But if you (Jewish religious leaders) had known what this means, 'I (God) desire mercy and not sacrifice,' you would not have condemned the guiltless (Mt. 12:7; Ed. notes in parentheses).

Christ then concluded by stating that he had the authority to determine how the Sabbath was meant to be kept because he introduced it when he was the Angel of the Lord (see study: Who

did the early church think Jesus Christ was prior to his birth as a man?).

For the Son of Man is Lord of the Sabbath (Mt. 12:8).

Unfortunately, even today there are people who make the Sabbath a burden. In the modern country of Israel there are many examples of regulations that Almighty God never intended and some of them are even foolish. For instance, the Kibbutz Hafetz Hayim Hotel cuts toilet paper on Friday so their guests do not have to tear off a piece of toilet tissue during the Sabbath day. Tearing paper has nothing to do with one's normal work activities and therefore it is not a breach of the Sabbath command.



FOR THE SON OF MAN IS LORD OF THE
SABBATH.
Matthew 12:8

In conclusion, neither Jesus Christ nor his disciples broke the Sabbath command. Instead, the religious leadership of the day broke the spiritual intent of the Sabbath by adding many rules and regulations that made this day a burden for the people, rather than the delight that God created it to be. Upon Christ's return, all of God's Holy Days will be observed according to their original intent.

For as the new heavens and the new earth which I will make shall remain before Me, says the Lord, so shall your descendants and your name remain. ²³And it shall come to pass that from one New Moon to another, and from one Sabbath to another, all flesh shall come to worship before Me, says the Lord (Isa. 66:22-23).

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