

Fact Sheet for **"The Sabbath"**
Jeremiah 17:19-27

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Jeremiah 17:19-27 is the 8th of 13 prophetic messages found in Jeremiah 2-25.

¹⁹ ¶ **Thus said the LORD to me: "Go and stand in the People's Gate, by which the kings of Judah enter and by which they go out, and in all the gates of Jerusalem, ²⁰ and say: 'Hear the word of the LORD, you kings of Judah, and all Judah, and all the inhabitants of Jerusalem, who enter by these gates.**

The "People's Gate" is mentioned nowhere else in the Bible. But God told Jeremiah to go to the gates where the most people would hear God's message.

²¹ **Thus says the LORD: Take care for the sake of your lives, and do not bear a burden on the Sabbath day or bring it in by the gates of Jerusalem. ²² And do not carry a burden out of your houses on the Sabbath or do any work, but keep the Sabbath day holy, as I commanded your fathers.**

This was the 4th of the 10 Commandments (Exodus 20:8; Deuteronomy 5:12).

²³ **Yet they did not listen or incline their ear, but stiffened their neck, that they might not hear and receive instruction.**

²⁴ ¶ **"But if you listen to me, declares the LORD, and bring in no burden by the gates of this city on the Sabbath day, but keep the Sabbath day holy and do no work on it, ²⁵ then there shall enter by the gates of this city kings and princes who sit on the throne of David, riding in chariots and on horses, they and their officials, the men of Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem. And this city shall be inhabited forever. ²⁶ And people shall come from the cities of Judah and the places around Jerusalem, from the land of Benjamin, from the Shephelah, from the hill country, and from the Negeb, bringing burnt offerings and sacrifices, grain offerings and frankincense, and bringing thank offerings to the house of the LORD.**

from the land of Benjamin **(the north)**
the Shephelah **(the low rolling hills on the west)**
the hill country **(the rugged mountainous area on the east)**
the Negev **(the semi-arid wilderness in the south)**

²⁷ **But if you do not listen to me, to keep the Sabbath day holy, and not to bear a burden and enter by the gates of Jerusalem on the Sabbath day, then I will kindle a fire in its gates, and it shall devour the palaces of Jerusalem and shall not be quenched."**

Should we obey the 10 Commandments... all of them? What about the Sabbath? Do we keep it? Should we? Do these verses in Jeremiah have any application to us? Remember that the Apostle Paul wrote 2 Timothy 3:16-17. And "all Scripture" without question includes these verses from Jeremiah! How then should we apply them? If we don't handle these verses well then it creates one of those little annoying glitches in our understanding of the Bible. Over time these glitches can eat away at our confidence in the gospel, and in our dedication to God. Let's look at things that are true from the pages of the Bible.

1. "Sabbath" literally means 7th. The Sabbath was the 7th 24-hour day of creation in Genesis 1:3-2:3. God commanded Israel how to observe this day (Exodus 20:8-11). And as you read Exodus you will find that when God gave Israel the 10 Commandments these were just the beginning of the whole law... all 613 commands of it. The command to obey the Sabbath was the 4th of the 10 Commandments. God

was serious about the Sabbath (Numbers 15:32-36)! It was to be a day of rest! The Sabbath is on Saturday. Traditionally it begins at sunset on Friday and ends at sunset on Saturday. This is from the repeated words in Genesis 1... "And there was evening and there was morning, the first (*and so on*) day." This is why the Jewish leaders wanted Jesus taken down from the cross before sunset on the Friday He was crucified (John 19:31). They did not want Him on the cross during the Sabbath.

2. Sunday is not the 7th day of the week. It is the 1st day of the week. Jesus rose again on Sunday (Matthew 28:1). Jesus had celebrated the Passover with His disciples on Thursday (the Last Supper). This was the 1st of 7 Jewish Feasts in Leviticus 23. That evening began the 7-day Feast of Unleavened Bread, the 2nd of these 7 Feasts. Resurrection Sunday was the Jewish Feast of First Fruits, the 3rd of these 7 Feasts (Leviticus 23:9-11; Joshua 5:10-11). This feast always occurred on Sunday. The 4th of these 7 feasts was Pentecost. That too took place every year on Sunday (Leviticus 23:15-16). The first Feast of Pentecost after Christ's resurrection was when the Holy Spirit first indwelt Christians (Acts 2). This was one of 3 feasts where there was a special command to be present in Jerusalem (Deuteronomy 16:16). Jerusalem would have been packed with Jewish worshippers from all over. The 3,000 that were saved that day and the 5,000 in Acts 4:4 were likely in a very large part Jewish. Sabbath worship was their norm. But the church would soon open to Gentiles with the salvation of Cornelius and his household in Acts 10. Paul celebrated Communion on Sunday with the believers in Troas (Acts 20:7). By the end of the 1st century, with the large influx of Gentile believers, the day of worship for the church was already shifting to Sunday. When the Roman Emperor Constantine converted to Christianity in the 4th century and made a decree that Sunday would be the day of worship, this didn't suddenly change the practice of Christians from Sabbath worship to Sunday worship. This did provide a secular legal basis for the change that was already happening. Some have said that Sunday is the "Christian Sabbath" but this makes no biblical sense. Sunday is the 1st day of the week, not the Christian's 7th.

3. Christians are under the New Covenant, not the Old Covenant. The New Testament makes this abundantly clear. The word "covenant" or "testament" is an agreement between God and man. God made a covenant with Abram (Genesis 15). God made a covenant with Israel (the Mosaic Law). God made a covenant with David (2 Samuel 7). And God made a new covenant with Christians (1 Corinthians 11:25). We... are... *NOT*... under... the Mosaic Law, the old covenant! We are under the new covenant in Christ! This can be seen throughout the New Testament (Acts 15; Romans 3:19-25a; Galatians 2:11-14; 3:1-2; Ephesians 2:13-16; Philippians 3:7-9). We Christians are not under the Mosaic Law! We can apply much from it, but we are not bound to observe it!

4. In Jeremiah 17:19-27 the Old Covenant, the Mosaic Covenant, was still in effect... all 613 commandments! When God focused on the 4th of the 10 Commandments was He saying that if they kept this one commandment they would remain in the land, even though they might break the other 612? Was God removing them from the land because they were not keeping the Sabbath? In Jeremiah 1-17 there is a direct reference to their idolatry in 16 of those chapters (chapter 6 is the exception). However Jeremiah 17 is the first place the Sabbath is mentioned in this book. Then what is going on in 17:19-27? First, God has already made clear in this book that Jerusalem would be overthrown. Second, if they had been willing to follow God's directives concerning the Sabbath then they surely would have been willing to stay away from idolatry and worship the Lord alone. These verses were more of an indictment on the people than they were an offer of escaping destruction. Their heart devotion was not to the Lord. Their lack of Sabbath observance was merely an indicator of this. So, how are we to apply Jeremiah 17:19-27? These verses urged those in Jeremiah's day, who were still under the Mosaic covenant, to be wholly dedicated to God. Their lack of Sabbath observance was a key indicator that they were far from this kind of dedication. Here is a little tip for good application of OT passages. Look for things that are the same then as now, and draw your applications through those things. What is the same? a. The sinful nature of people, even God's people, to not be dedicated to Him. b. God's call for us to be wholly dedicated to Him. Are there any indicators in your life that you are not what you should be in your heartfelt dedication to God? These verses from Jeremiah should call you to a renewed dedication to God. We are not bound to observe the Sabbath (Saturday) by doing no work. We may choose to do this, but we are not bound to this. It soon became the pattern of the church to worship on Sunday. There is nothing in the Bible that would speak against this. But come back to your dedication to God. This is what Jeremiah 17:19-27 is all about.