

Was Jesus a devout, Torah-observant Jew?

A response to Greg Deuble

This YouTube video (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qy9Zam-1nzc>) by Greg Deuble is a very sad reflection on how a person can come to great understanding only to lose it again.

Greg Deuble argues here that Yeshua was NOT a Torah observant Jew (he includes the word 'devout' to suggest in some misguided way perhaps that Yeshua was only sometimes Torah observant, like a Sunday-only Christian!). But the intent of this video is to argue that Yeshua was not a Torah-observant Jew and that he actually broke (according to Greg), a number of the Ten Commandments, as well as some of the Jewish ceremonial and legislative ordinances detailed in the Tanakh.

While I have not written an article or book to expose such a false understanding, in part because I really thought it was self-evident, I have written a book that argues that Yeshua's most famous disciple, the Apostle Paul was, like his leader, also a Torah observant Jew, not only before his encounter with the risen Yeshua, but after it as well. That book is *'Defending the Apostle Paul: Weighing the Evidence'*¹.

This video teaching is totally riddled with errors; with the twisting of the words and intent in an email he received from me; with a serious failure to take into account scholarship and teaching that he had once known and even espoused, but which he seems to have forgotten and returned to a much more superficial and blinkered understanding (see for example his references to Mark 7:19, but especially his total failure to grasp what the Apostle Paul meant by *"for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life"* (2 Cor 3:6).

Greg denigrates the work of a number of biblical scholars and translators without any serious research and evidence to support his accusations and conclusions. In my opinion the greatest scholar of recent times on 'Jesus' (more correctly transliterated from his Hebrew name as Yeshua) was the late Professor David Flusser. Greg knows of his work yet totally dismisses it without any significant justification at all. I would also argue that Professor Mark Nanos is the most impressive scholar on the epistles of the Apostle Paul in modern times as well. Greg also knows his work (as I have shared much of both Flusser's and Nanos' work with him) and he also dismisses Nanos without any significant evidence or justification (see for example the closing quote and mis-application of 1 Corinthians 9:20 – I will return to this later).

Even worse, over a decade ago, Frank Selch, Greg and I founded a theological organisation² to promote our shared biblical understanding and Frank wrote a number of great books which Greg, at the time endorsed (and even wrote a glowing foreword in one of them). Frank Selch pointed how the significant interpolations and mis-translations in the KJV of Hebrews that have been perpetuated in most translations and that lead to the very false conclusion that Greg argues for here (see Frank's article *'The Covenant in Hebrews 8 & 9'*³).

It seems Greg has really lost his way, but perhaps worse, he appears to have lost the significant ability he once had to be discerning, analytical and insightful as he was many years ago when he wrote the excellent book *'They Never Told Me This In Church'*, and instead is now just parroting common Hellenistic Christian dogmas that have been very well refuted many times by serious biblical scholars who appreciate the need to approach the whole Bible from an Hebraic perspective.

To address some of his errors, I am going to refer to the comment and error he made and then offer some further reading on this topic so anyone interested can investigate the issue further and see how seriously superficial and flawed his arguments really are.

Firstly, Greg argues that I suggested in this email he found *'disturbing'* that *"Jesus was born to be a Torah-observant Jew"*.

I don't tend to use Jesus but Yeshua and I never said or suggested this. No person is *'born to be'* faithful, as being faithful, being Torah observant is a decision made by a mature adult, and is not a purpose in life, but a result of seeking to know Yehovah and as a result, desiring to live in right relationship with Him.

Greg refers to my use of Uriel Ben Mordechai's translation of Galatians from Papyri 46 (P46) and misquotes me on it. In his attached article (and on the video he states something similar), he wrote in reference that I had argued *'that there is one reliable manuscript which alone faithfully records Paul's pen on Galatians'*.

I did not say this. I did not argue that P46 was the only (*'one ... alone'*) manuscript that was 'pristine' (faithful to the

¹ <https://www.amazon.com/Defending-Apostle-Paul-Weighing-Evidence-ebook/dp/B009TLLK0U>

² <http://restorationfellowship.info/>

³ <http://www.circumcisedheart.info/frank/The%20Covenant%20in%20Hebrews%208%20&%209.pdf>

original), but I did argue that Uriel's translation into English of this, the earliest extant Greek translation of the original (possibly Hebrew) letter, was most likely the best translation, even though Greg clearly does not understand what it states.

Greg goes on to speak about the Torah (he calls it the Law, which he once upon a time agreed was a bad and misleading translation) and misapplies the reference to it being a tutor (Gal 3:24-25). For an in-depth discussion of this please see my old article **Siblings of the King** (p13 in <http://www.circumcisedheart.info/SiblingsOfTheKing.pdf>) which was presented at a National Conference with Greg in attendance in 2009, so he is, or at least was, aware of the great work of Frank Selch on this often mis-understood and misinterpreted passage.

And he continually refers to Torah and the 10 Words as '*the letter of the Law*' which is a false indictment as I show in my short article on 2 Corinthians 3. Here's a short excerpt:

"The Apostle Paul says the letter kills and the Spirit gives life. The letter, is NOT the Torah. How can we be sure?"

Because Paul kept the Torah and it had not killed him, and because in Rom 7:12-14 Paul says: "So the Torah is holy, and the commandment is holy and righteous and good. ... For we know that the Torah is spiritual,..."

When the Apostle Paul refers to the 10 Words ('tablets of stone') as a 'letter' it is as an analogy to the followers of Yeshua who are also a 'letter' (of recommendation) for the Almighty, and they 'recommend' Him by their holy lives and righteousness. He is arguing that their lives should exhibit the truth of the 10 Words and in doing so, they will bring (eternal) life to those they encounter. The only way that the 'letter' that is the 10 Words brings death is through breaking or rejecting it. Only in its rejection does it 'kill'. And thus in juxtaposition, seeing the faithful fully living it and therefore demonstrating that '*the Torah is spiritual*' should bring life and not death.

He then goes on to refer to Mark 7:19 in arguing that Yeshua broke several of the 10 Words, as well as the Levitical Kosher Laws in arguing that 'all foods are clean'. This total failure to acknowledge what we now know about this passage is shocking. I am sure Greg had once known about the translation and contextual issues here, but he clearly seems unaware of them now?!

Here's a short article that explains the context and contextual error that Greg has fallen back into:

<http://jesusisajew.org/Short/MK7V19.php>

But even clearer is that the v19: "*Thus he declared all foods ritually clean.*" is in brackets in most versions because of the challenge in interpreting it. Here the KJV (which most modern translations, in the main, slavishly follow) seems to do better than most with: "*Because it entereth not into his heart, but into the belly, and goeth out into the draught, purging all meats?*". I would postulate that the reason for the change by many translations to something like '*Thus he declared all foods clean.*' is really reflective of the translators theological bias.

For a more in-depth consideration of this verse and argument see:

www.torahresource.com%2FEnglishArticles%2FMark7.19ShortNote.pdf

Greg goes on to speak of Yeshua completely 'trumping Moses' and by being 'greater than the Temple' somehow Greg sees this as Yeshua having a superior authority to all, including the Almighty's Torah! As part of this seriously flawed argument Greg sees the Epistle to the Hebrews as declaring Yeshua as better than the Priesthood! This is no detailed supporting argument and evidence for this declaration by Greg and it also flies in the face of the great scholarship of Frank Selch on the redactions in Hebrews that Greg is, or was, well aware of – see

<http://www.circumcisedheart.info/frank/The%20Covenant%20in%20Hebrews%208%20&%209.pdf>

Greg sees the issue of the plucking of the heads of grain on the Sabbath as another example of Yeshua breaking the Ten Commandments. This was not what Yeshua thought at all, despite Greg's insistence that Yeshua was basically arguing here that '*my disciples are breaking the Law*'!

I have written on this as well in my book '**The New Testament: The Hebrew Behind The Greek**'. Here is part of my response: "... In fact, there are a number of instances where the Greek translators poor understanding of Hebraic customs and commandments, meant that even accidental errors were made. One example is the incorrect recounting of a story which makes Yeshua guilty of breaking a commandment.

It was accepted that on the Sabbath it was permissible to **pick up fallen heads** of grain and rub them between the fingers. According to Rabbi Yehuda, also a Galilean like Yeshua, it was even permissible to rub them in one's hand. Some of the Pharisees though found fault with Yeshua's disciples for most likely behaving in accordance with their Galilean tradition.

That is, it is most probable that these Galileans, picked the fallen heads of grain, rubbed them together and ate them. But what we read in Greek (see Matt 12:1-2⁴ in the footnote) is that **they 'plucked' the heads** of grain.

It seems fairly clear then, that when the original Hebrew account (written by someone who knew the customs and even the local differences in interpretation) was translated into Greek, the translator, not knowing these customs, and perhaps trying to make the scene more colourful, added the statement about plucking the wheat, and thus introduced the *'one and only act of transgression of the Torah recorded in the synoptic Gospels'*⁵ <end quote>.

Greg also makes a serious error in arguing that Yeshua is the Lord of the Sabbath (but also in Greg's opinion Yeshua also IS the Sabbath for Christians, so somehow he is Lord of himself!). While Yeshua does use the term 'Son of Man' to refer to himself (in preference to some of the other Messianic terms), Flusser argues very convincingly as to why in stating that the 'son of man is Lord of the Sabbath' Yeshua was referring to all the faithful and not just himself.

I discuss this in a number of articles including naturally my Sabbath article - <http://www.circumcisedheart.info/The4StepApproachToTheSabbath.pdf>

Here is a little:

"The great Jewish scholar Prof. David Flusser also argued that Yeshua was not stating that 'he' was Lord of the Sabbath, but that man, or mankind, that is all of us, are Lord or Master of the Sabbath.

"On that occasion, Jesus said, among other things, "The Sabbath was created for man, not man for the Sabbath. So, man is lord even of the Sabbath" (Mark 2:27-28). Literally, "the son of man." Here it means simply "man." This was already recognized in the seventeenth century by the famous Dutch scholar, Hugo Grotius in his commentary on Matt. 12:8." – 'Jesus', by D. Flusser, 2001.

So Flusser is saying that all men (or in this context, at the very least, all who follow the teachings (Torah) of the God of Israel), not just the Messiah have dominion over the Sabbath – why then would they remove (or move it to Sunday)?

The Sabbath was made for man; the Almighty created a rest day and even observed it Himself, for our benefit, for our growth and joy⁶! To discard it is simply foolishness⁷! [And to argue as Greg does in this video that it is a **burden** is astonishing and perhaps even spitting in the face of the great Giver of this amazing gift!]

Some try to argue that Yeshua somehow lessened or removed the requirement to observe the Sabbath because he 'broke' the Sabbath 'law' himself. Even if this were true, it would not change the reality of the Almighty's unchanging call to observe the Sabbath, as Yeshua was not/is not God and therefore has no authority to overturn the commandments of God.

Next Greg uses the classic furphy of the *'new wine'*. He is, or was, very well aware of this error in interpretation. Please see my 'Wineskins Parable' article - <http://circumcisedheart.info/Wineskins.pdf>

Greg argues that the 10 Words were temporary (yet the Hebrew Bible makes it clear that they will still be in effect in the Kingdom of God and the New Heavens and Earth – see for example Isaiah 66:22-23). Greg even endorsed Frank Selch's great book on the 10 Words that argued that they were the Moral Code of the Universe! He now seems to want to totally reject them and further even argue that those who teach them are bordering on being called accursed!

Greg also is very confused between the 'traditions of men' and the Oral Torah. Bruce Barham's articles on the NT being full of Oral Torah are again something that I believe Greg may have read in the past but seems to have forgotten – see for example <http://torahofmessiah.org/oral-torah.html>

⁴ Matthew 12:1-2 "At that time, Jesus went on the Sabbath day through the grain fields. His disciples were hungry and began to pluck heads of grain and to eat. But the Pharisees, when they saw it, said to him, "Behold, your disciples do what is not lawful to do on the Sabbath."

⁵ See M. Kister, "Plucking on the Sabbath and Christian-Jewish Polemic," Immanuel 24-25 (Jerusalem, 1990), pp. 35-51

⁶ The Weekly Sabbath teaches 3 very important, fundamental principles:

1. Belief in the Creation of the Universe by the Almighty who rested on the Seventh Day,
2. Belief in revelation, that is, in the Almighty revealing His ways and plans to those who seek Him – because the Torah is studied on the Sabbath,
3. Belief in the World to Come, in the coming Kingdom of God, the New Heavens and Earth, a time of true shalom (peace), a time when every day will be as joyous as the Sabbath. The Sabbath represents a small foretaste of this great new World. We read in Isaiah 66:22-23 "For as the new heavens and the new earth that I make shall remain before me, says the LORD, so shall your offspring and your name remain. From new moon to new moon, and from Sabbath to Sabbath, all flesh shall come to worship before me, declares the LORD."

⁷ <http://luke443.blogspot.com.au/2012/07/the-sabbath-one-of-greatest-gifts-god.html>

Greg argues that 'standards' (it seems he doesn't wish to use words like law or commandments or Torah here) need to be applied 'spiritually' as if this is only something that came with Yeshua and the New Testament, yet the Tanakh is full of the call to have 'circumcised hearts' and recognize the call to obeying Torah both in the flesh and in the spirit (with the two hearts⁸ and with the Yetzer HaRa and Yetzer HaTov⁹) – to see the deeper meaning and intent and not just comply with outward signs of obedience while having a heart turned to evil and sin.

Among the false accusations that Greg presents is the argument that I called for Sabbath obedience as a **necessary** part of salvation. He then states that those who teach this are to be 'cursed'¹⁰. This also shows how limited his understanding is. I never stated anything close to this at any time. Those who have circumcised hearts and seek the Almighty with all their heart seek also then to obey His Words, not out of some necessity for salvation but as a loving response and a strong desire to be in right relationship (righteousness) with Yehovah.

As a Jewish friend put it: ***"Frankly the preoccupation with "salvation" is self-seeking. We should be striving to understand the mind of God & such observance [of Torah] gives us deep connection which then reflects into our human relationships."***

The video finished with a quote from Anthony Buzzard¹¹ which misapplies 1 Cor 9:20.

1 Corinthians 9 :20-23 is admittedly a challenging portion of the New Testament, though again Greg is well aware of Prof Mark Nanos' brilliant scholarship on this passage. I also refer to it in some depth in my book *'Defending the Apostle Paul'*.

Here is an excerpt from my book:

"Perhaps one of the most challenging verses with respect to the Apostle Paul's character is 1 Cor 9:20. It is a most normal and natural tendency to assume on reading this verse that Paul is speaking about his behaviour here, his lifestyle; his obedience to, (or disregard for) Torah.

Let us assume for a moment that this reading is correct and that there is no redaction here, that is, that the Apostle Paul actually said this, and meant it in this way. In fact, let's even expand it to include the verses 19 through to 23 as below:

"19 For though I am free from all, I have made myself a servant to all, that I might win more of them.

20 To the Jews I became as a Jew, in order to win Jews. To those under the law I became as one under the law (though not being myself under the law) that I might win those under the law.

21 To those outside the law I became as one outside the law (not being outside the law of God but under the law of Christ) that I might win those outside the law.

22 To the weak I became weak, that I might win the weak. I have become all things to all people, that by all means I might save some.

I do it all for the sake of the gospel, that I may share with them in its blessings." -1 Cor 9:19-23

Under this understanding, Paul is a chameleon.

He is one minute a Jew and the next not; one minute 'outside the law' and the next not; in fact, he is anything and everything he needs to be for expediencies sake. He therefore displays duplicity and dishonesty. He is not authentic and certainly not Torah-observant based on this reading and interpretation.

If we had no other way of interpreting this passage, it would be a serious impediment to the introductory argument I have presented here about the righteousness and integrity of Paul. By itself, it may not tip the scales; but if there are many such statements, then there is a very serious question to be addressed.

Before I address this passage though, I must say I find it quite incredible that a number of biblical scholars will appear to recognize the problem of Paul's supposed expediency here, and in other places, and excuse it as acceptable to win people to Christ! It is not acceptable; it is never acceptable to dupe people into anything; even

⁸ <https://globaltruthinternational.com/2013/04/18/maintaining-holiness-through-confronting-error/>

⁹ <https://globaltruthinternational.com/2017/06/10/the-yetzer-hara-and-yetzer-hatov/>

¹⁰ Greg may be getting this idea from a poor understanding of Galatians 3:10 – please see my article here that explains this - <https://luke443.blogspot.com/2015/10/the-curse-of-law-another-look-at.html>

¹¹ Anthony Buzzard's organisation presents this video. Greg sounds increasingly like Anthony, in his flawed theology on the Torah.

if it is good for them. Gaining good through dishonest means is never righteous.

So what's wrong with this reading? How should this passage be seen properly in context? There are two crucial elements to be understood.

Firstly, this declaration is rhetorical; Paul is explaining his rhetorical approach in debating the revelation of Yeshua as the Messiah and revelation of Gentile inclusion.

Secondly, we need to have some appreciation of the dialectic approach that the Pharisees and Jewish scribes used when debating Scripture.

Consider his audience here. While his letters were being read to both Jew and Gentile, Paul is trying to convince his God-fearing Gentile audience to remain Gentiles, and NOT to get 'circumcised'; not to go through the whole '*works of the law*' process (Jewish proselytization rituals) and become Jewish.

Because, as he states in Gal 5:3, if they do instead become Jewish they will be obligated to keep the whole Torah; all 613 mitzvot (or at least those relevant to them and their role).

"I testify again to every man who accepts circumcision that he is obligated to keep the whole Torah" - Gal 5:3

Paul has made it very clear here that being Jewish means obeying the whole Torah. If his listeners, his Gentile audience saw that he, clearly a Pharisee and a Jew did not keep the whole Torah, his argument would have no support whatsoever. His behaviour alone would falsify his argument! He wouldn't convince anyone, because they would clearly see his duplicity, his inconsistency in practice as his words would not match his deeds!

Chapters 8 to 10 of 1 Corinthians is essentially a section of rhetorical argument. From 1 Cor 8: 1-3, we see that he is addressing some 'knowledgeable' (but not knowledgeable about God) readers.

*"1. Now concerning food offered to idols: we know that all of us possess knowledge. This knowledge puffs up, but love builds up.
2 If anyone imagines that he knows something, he does not yet know as he ought to know.
3 But if anyone loves God, he is known by God." --- 1 Cor 8: 1-3*

The Apostle Paul was clearly a great teacher. He was able to appreciate who his audience were; where they were at and work from that place of understanding or lack there-of, to the place he wanted them to end up. That is, he adapted his teaching; his writing and preaching to suit his audience.

This is sometimes called 'rhetorical adaptability' but it simply means being a good teacher (today we may often do 'pre-tests', before we start teaching a topic to ascertain where students are at, and then after teaching a topic we give post-tests to see what they have learned. The results of the pre-test may alter what and how we will teach the topic; the approach; the depth and breadth, etc.).

Where do we see Paul indicating where his audience is at? Consider 1 Corinthians 3:1-3:

*"1 But I, brothers, could not address you as spiritual people, but as people of the flesh, as infants in Messiah.
2 I fed you with milk, not solid food, for you were not ready for it. And even now you are not yet ready,
3 for you are still of the flesh."*

He is here explaining that these Gentiles are still quite ignorant when it comes to the ways of God and His end-times plan. He is conceding that he will need to use a different approach to that he would use with say, fellow Pharisee's for example; that is Jews who have been brought up in the ways of God; who have the oracles of God and are very much 'spiritual people'.

Using this teaching style, this 'rhetorical adaptability', the Apostle Paul may start with ideas and concepts that they will easily understand, but ultimately he will lead them to very Jewish conclusions and to endorsing behaviours which represent appropriate communal, religious and moral behaviours for Gentiles living within Jewish communities.

So we can expect him to lead them to understanding that God is truly One; that to love the One True God is to then love our neighbour; that they are not to knowingly eat 'idol food', and so on (see the Jerusalem edict of Acts 15).

So the point being made in 1 Cor 9:19-23 is in summary; if Paul is arguing with Jews; he will use Jewish arguments, he will approach the debate with the standard Jewish dialectic¹² for example.

After all, he was a Jew, he couldn't therefore '*become (as) a Jew*'. Behaviourally he was either Torah observant or he wasn't. He couldn't just be so some of the time!

As I have tried to show in the first part of this article, the Apostle Paul was most emphatically Torah observant; therefore, he simply couldn't behaviourally, 'become a Jew'!

But when using various styles of teaching and debate; he could, and did, alter his arguments and teaching to suit his audience. When they were Jewish; he assumed a much greater 'spiritual maturity' and Torah knowledge and taught from this base. As a teacher of Torah and Messiah, he was indeed 'all things to all people' in his teaching approach (1 Cor 9:22).

It is also interesting to note that Luke writes in Acts 17 about Paul's very use of this 'rhetorical adaptability' approach when speaking to the men of Athens.

Luke informs us that Paul starts with the Greek's recognition of their Gods and their idols of these gods; but then having started with a degree of acknowledgement and agreement to 'hook' his argument onto something his audience are familiar with, he ultimately rejects their gods and idols. He explains that their position was out of ignorance, but that now they no longer need be ignorant, and then he introduces them to the One True God and His Messiah Yeshua.

So here as well we see another NT author and disciple of Yeshua, giving an example of Paul's teaching approach, which is consistent and supportive of the approach I have argued for here with 1 Cor 9:19-23.

Further though, I think it important, both for this apparently conflicting passage and for some of the others I am about to address that we look at what the typical Pharisaic approach to Torah discussion, debate and learning was.

We see this approach exemplified in Yeshua's discussion in Matt 5:17 where we can imagine that some Pharisees have listened to Yeshua's argument and disagreed with some aspect of it. So they have very typically replied '**You are destroying Torah!**'¹³. The Pharisaic approach was not only dialectic, but very forceful and passionate and zealous. If they felt someone else had even just some minor point of Torah wrong; then this could lead to having the entire Torah wrong, because everything was about how to act in response to God's instructions (Torah = instructions). If some minor error led to unrighteous behaviour then it in a sense 'destroys' Torah.

To the Pharisees and to the Rabbis of today, EVERY commandment is as important as every other one for this very reason. To most of us non-Jewish believers, we look at the 10 Words for example and say that 'You shall not murder' is far more important than 'You shall not covert' for example. This is not their more 'spiritually mature' approach.

So how does Yeshua (in many ways a Pharisee himself, as Prof David Flusser demonstrates so powerfully) respond. In the same way! He states (paraphrasing), 'I did not come to destroy Torah but to properly teach, enact and live Torah!'.

It is the zealousness, the fervour, the forcefulness of this Pharisaic approach that I wish to draw to your attention,

¹² *Dialectic: The practice of arriving at a conclusion by the exchange of logical arguments, usually in the form of questions and answers.*

¹³ Flusser explains in his seminal book 'Jesus' that to 'fulfil the Torah' was to correctly interpret and enact it and to 'destroy the Torah' was to interpret incorrectly. It was apparently quite common for Pharisees in arguments with each other to shout 'You are destroying the Torah!' or 'I am fulfilling Torah!' Two examples that I think illustrate this well are Gal 6:2 and Romans 13:10.

Try reading these passages and replacing 'fulfil' with 'correctly interpret and enact' and hopefully you will see what I mean:

Gal 6:2 *"Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfil the Torah of Messiah."*

Romans 13:10 *"Love does no wrong to a neighbor; therefore love is the fulfilling of Torah."*

This context is of course perfectly in harmony with God's pronouncement to Moses that he would send a Prophet who would perfectly declare the Torah (that is, who would 'fulfil' it).

because I believe this very much epitomizes the way the Apostle Paul speaks and writes and it can often be taken as arrogant or belittling of others, when it is not." <end quote>

To quote a Jewish friend again:

In Exodus the 4th commandment is introduced as "Remember "et yom hashabbat lkadosh" – (the day the Shabbat and Holy) by using the E and H means it is reminding the people about the specific event which occurred in Genesis when God made it holy. The commandment then goes on to describe it "the seventh day is Shabbat" creation etc.

Shabbat simply stands on its own as it is not called by a number as the 1st 6 days, but it's simply called "REST" in the Hebrew language and spelt exactly the same way as described in Genesis when God rested. We can chose to honour God and the world He created for us or not.

So what is good enough for God, is not good enough for Christians?

The problem of honouring Sunday is a separate issue BUT by substituting the day and honouring Yeshua is this in fact a "substitution" (or bringing another god before My face) as expressed in Exodus 20:3.

In arguing that Yeshua is our Sabbath, it seems to me that not only is Greg rejecting the Moral Code of the Universe, he is, as suggested above, creating a new God. This seems much more 'disturbing' to me.

In referring to the Apostle Paul with respect to the Sabbath I would recommend my other Sabbath article as well (Colossians 2:16 & the Sabbath – <http://circumcisedheart.info/Col%20%20and%20the%20Sabbath.pdf>)

Here is a part of one of Nanos' articles that starts to give some insight into this misreading:

*"... Paul and his communities--including the community he did not found but wrote to in Rome--were subgroups of the Jewish communities that believed Jesus represented the dawning of the awaited age. **The Jews in these subgroups, Paul included, observed the covenantal obligations of Torah, for they were Jews involved in a fully Jewish movement.** They upheld that by the gift of the Holy Spirit now made available with the arrival of the awaited age to come they were enabled to practice their commitment to the God of Israel according to the highest of ideals of Torah. The non-Jews who joined them did not become Jews and were thus not under the Mosaic legislation (Torah) on the same terms as Jews; **however, they were committed to lives of righteousness defined in Jewish communal terms and thus by Torah, for they met in Jewish groups, and thus according to the Jewish norms for these groups, and enabled by the same Spirit of God.** - <http://www.marknanos.com/Romans-Synagogues-8-31-10.pdf>*

That is, they met on the Sabbath, they studied the Torah on the Sabbath, they read the Apostle Paul's letters to the group on the Sabbath and so clearly the Sabbath was part of their lives and their communal living, so it was something that none of them would, or really even could, question.

For some real depth on this chapter and its true context I recommend Nanos' book 'The Mystery of Roman's'. Also with respect to Genesis and the Sabbath Greg appears to somehow try to disconnect these two because there is no an obvious direct and explicit pronouncement and thus it may appear on first inspection that any connection is an inference. But Exodus makes this connection explicit as I will explain below.

Firstly though, it is important to recognize that the Sabbath is the only ceremonial instruction in the 10 Words. Observing every seventh day has no relationship at all to any natural cycle. So to observe the Sabbath is not in any way to worship or glorify some aspect of nature as was common amongst the ancient peoples of the Bible times and before.

But recognizing and honouring the seventh day is very much about recognizing and honouring the Creator of nature! The Sabbath was absolutely unique when it was first observed. It was revolutionary in many ways but most importantly it declared that there was a God who was the Creator.

The Jewish Virtual Library explains how the Jewish people saw this as well:

"The etiology of Shabbat is given in the first two chapters of the Book of Bereishit (Genesis), although the name of the day does not actually appear there: God worked six days at creating the world on the seventh he ceased working (shavat mi-kol mela'khta), blessed the day, and declared it holy.

The special status of this seventh day - and its name - were disclosed to the Israelite people in the episode of the manna. God supplied each day's need of manna for five days; on the sixth, a double portion was provided to last through the seventh day, on which no manna appeared. Correspondingly, the Israelites were commanded not to go out at all but to remain at home on the seventh day. Thus they learned that the seventh day was "a Shabbat of the Lord," which they must honor by desisting from their daily food-gathering labor.

According to the Book of Exodus, work is to cease on the seventh day in order to give slaves and draft animals rest, a statute that must be observed even during the critical plowing and harvest seasons. The Book of Deuteronomy's version

embodies this humanitarian motive in its divergent rationale of the Shabbat rest - Israel is to keep the Shabbat so that its slaves might rest, and because God so commanded. God's instructions for building the Tabernacle begins with an admonition to keep the Shabbat, indicating its precedence even over the duty of building the Sanctuary. The Shabbat is then called a sign of both God's consecration of Israel and of His six-day creation.

The Shabbat is one of the best known and least understood of all Jewish observances. People who do not generally observe the stringencies of the day think of it as a day filled with stifling restrictions, or as a day of prayer like the Christian Shabbat. But to those who observe Shabbat, it is a day of great joy eagerly awaited throughout the week, a time when we can set aside all of our weekday concerns and devote ourselves to higher pursuits.

In Jewish literature, poetry and music, Shabbat is described as a bride or queen, as in the popular Shabbat hymn Lecha Dodi. It is said "more than Israel has kept Shabbat, Shabbat has kept Israel." Shabbat is primarily a day of rest and spiritual enrichment. The word "Shabbat" comes from the root Shin-Bet-Tav, meaning to cease, to end, or to rest.

Shabbat is the most important ritual observance in Judaism and is the only ritual observance instituted in the Ten Commandments. It is also the most important special day, even more so than Yom Kippur."

- From <https://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/what-is-shabbat-jewish-sabbath>

And Exodus makes the inference from Genesis explicit. in Exodus 20:11, after the 4th Word is first instituted, Yehovah explains, "**because for six days, Yehovah made the heavens and the earth, the sea and all that is in them, and on the seventh day, he rested; therefore, Yehovah blessed the Sabbath day and sanctified it.**"

So why is the Sabbath part of the 10 Words? Because Yehovah rested from His work of Creation and therefore we are to rest from our work of creating our living (i.e. our jobs).

And what's more, **there is no Jewish exclusiveness in recognizing the Creator in this way** – He did not just create for the Jewish people, he created for all people and therefore all who come to acknowledge Yehovah are wise to publicly declare that acknowledgment through Sabbath observance.

To repeat, observing the Sabbath is actually declaring that there is a God who created the Universe and this God is Yehovah, the God of Israel. All who are followers of Yeshua as an Anointed One and Son of God surely should want to declare to the world their acknowledgement of His Father and their Father. This is what the Sabbath is at its core – a declaration of our living faith in Yehovah who sent us all the prophets including our Messiah ben Yosef, Yeshua.

The Sabbath though is much more than this – after giving us life, the Sabbath is one of the greatest gifts we have been given – to reject the gift is it seems to me to reject the Gift Giver. That is your choice, but it is a self-limiting and actually sad choice.

I have addressed many of the other issues that are commonly made in favour of rejecting this gift. For the details please see the Sabbath chapter from my book, *'The Doctrinal Pitfalls of Hellenism'* and my article on Colossians 2:16 at circumcisedheart.info.

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