

Jasmine Young | NT622 Mark | Exegetical Research Paper Proposal | February 28, 2023

Overview of Exegetical Research Paper:

The Exegetical Research Paper will discuss Mark 2:23-28 “Jesus is Lord of the Sabbath”. It will explore the use of Sabbath from the times of Moses to the present tradition (in Jesus’ time) to properly interpret his message of Sabbath observance. The paper seeks to understand the historical context that informs a rightful contemporary observance.

The Paper also seeks to answer a subsidiary question about how observance of this Commandment takes form today, in Christ. For the Sabbath, specifically, is there reason to believe Jesus expects Sabbath observance on a given day of the week? What is or is not expected by God in Christian Sabbath observance? Can these expectations for today be directly inferred from Scripture and historic tradition?

The most relevant points to be discussed include: to what extent are Christians today bound by the Ten Commandments? And is there reason to also be bound by the Law? What precedent is there for binding and loosening which makes room for changes in original observance of the Law and would the same apply to the Ten Commandments, to the Sabbath? Effectively, what does the modern Christian make of the Ten Commandments, beginning with Sabbath observance?

Among the complications and alternative views is the fact that the Ten Commandments are still arguably in effect. Jesus says that he came to fulfill the Law (Matt 5:17). Theologically, how is Jesus’ claim and activity regarding Sabbath observance held in tension with the Law without nullifying it?

General Overview of Arguments and Reasoning: I expect the arguments and reasoning to resemble the following (contingent on the research confirming or critiquing these arguments and reasoning):

Jesus fulfills Old Testament Law through His claim of authority as Lord of the Sabbath. His doing so also loosens the Law such that Christ-followers can modify their traditional observance of Sabbath (e.g., observance like that held in the Old Testament). (1) Jesus's ministry, death, and resurrection fulfilled purposes that the Law was intended to relay regarding relationships with God and others, without nullifying them. (2) Jesus's demonstration to heal on the Sabbath, and the subsequent repeating of this activity by his disciples demonstrates a loosening of this Law in particular. (3) A biblical review of Sabbath observance reveals different practices than what are most commonly debated today, questioning the relevance of some contemporary debate. And since Jesus fulfills Old Testament Law through his claim of authority as Lord of the Sabbath, are Christians holding his claims in proper significance for the fulfillment of the Law as a whole? While certain unanswered questions remain, some agreement can be reached about the level or degrees to which debate over Sabbath observation should be prioritized in comparison to the broader message and commission of the New Testament.

Sources:

Proposed Bibliography

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Throckmorton, Burton H. *Gospel Parallels: A Comparison of the Synoptic Gospels, New Revised Standard Version*. 5th ed. Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1992.

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Witherington, Ben. *The Gospel of Mark: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2001.