

Divided By “Friday”

SABBATH IN THE “OLD” TESTAMENT

Sabbath, from the Hebrew “Shabbat” meaning, “cease, stop, rest,” was created the seventh day of that first week as the culmination of creation. When there were yet none upon the Earth, called Jews, Hebrews, or Israelites, YHWH Made this day, sacred for Himself. (Genesis 2:1–3). According to the account of Scripture, YHWH blessed this day *itself*, and He made this seventh day, holy, *because* He rested on it. For no other reason is this day special but for the active rest, our Creator made that day and exemplified by engaging there in *personally*. Thus He led the way for us to follow His steps for properly upholding this commandment.

Although we often think of the Sabbath as an aspect of the “law” issued at Mount Sinai, it was, in fact, instituted in creation as part of the nature of Creation, and was established as a commandment of YHWH for His people before ever, the “law” was put forth.

Exodus 16:23 records, Moses, telling Israel, “This is what YHWH has said, ‘Tomorrow is a sabbath rest, holy to YHWH.’” He did *not* say that the next day would be a *Jewish* sabbath, or that it would be a *Christian* Sabbath. While we like to brand things with our own labels, they remain the personal property of YHWH Sabaoth and no other. This alone is the reason they retain any value either. The seventh day slumber is the Sabbath of YHWH, and that alone makes it worth remembering and keeping holy.

Not until four chapters after this does the “law” come down containing the command that we must keep this Sabbath holy. In Exodus 20:8–11 the fourth of 10 Commandments states, “Remember the Sabbath Day by keeping it holy. Six days you shall labor and do all your work, but the Seventh Day is a Sabbath to YHWH, Eloheicha. On it, you shall not do any work... For in six days YHWH made the Heavens and the Earth, the sea, and all that is in them, but He rested on the Seventh Day. *Therefore*, YHWH blessed Sabbath Day, and made it holy.” YHWH Himself made this Day sacred in Creation, but it is His will, that we *remember* that sanctification and *keep* it so. The fourth commandment, then informs us that we must remember the sabbath, that it is the sabbath of YHWH, that we must set it apart, as holy, that we must do no work upon it, that we must rest on it, and that we must rest on it, *because* YHWH rested on it first.

This is usually when the excuses and exemptions start to come out of the woodwork. People say, “that just means the Lord wants me to take a day off,” or “my Sabbath is Sunday.” Or “Any day can be the seventh day, depending on when you start counting,” or “Jesus is Lord of the Sabbath, so we don’t need any day now,” or “because we rest in Jesus, every day is the sabbath,” or “Jesus is my Sabbath.”... And so on and so forth. The excuses are endless and each as mindless as the last. We need reasons why we don’t need to keep the sabbath, because we have no idea what the Sabbath really is or what it really means for us. If only we could manage to escape the awful example of rabbinic-Jewish sabbath-keeping and judge strictly from the Scriptures what would we find? What it means to remember the Sabbath Day, and to keep it holy, Would we discovered in it, the entire meaning of life, both personally and globally, the might of our Messiah, and the most mind-blowing foreshadowing of eternity?

The problem is our perspective. In modern times, most people do not honor the Seventh Day, but rather the first instead. In our day, the only thing we see, that is called “Sabbath-keeping” is the obstreperous onerous observances of rabbinic-Judaism. Jews have claimed the Seventh Day for themselves, and turned it into a burden that is impossible to bear and one we are more than happy to let them carry alone. For that one day, there are more rules, than for any other, so as to make them spend the entire Timeless time worrying and working at not worrying or working so that the

Day of Rest never offers them any respite. The rabbis have made rules against writing, music, even whistling, or carrying a pen, or touching a pen, electronics, and so much more so all the hours meant for relaxation are spent in frustration instead, and wasted on nonsense.

The Sabbath is often called Soul Day, because YHWH gave it to us to revive our souls by resting in Him. It is meant to be a time of freedom and liberation from labor and fiefdom, for truly only free people can afford to rest (Deuteronomy 5:15). And is this not what Sha'ul (Paul) wrote about in his letter to Galatia? - "It is for freedom that Messiah has set us free..." (5:1). The Sabbath then, is rightly a symbol of liberty, of being let go, and of letting go. It is the 24 hours in which we get to tell the world to keep their problems, because we're too busy not being busy.

According to Exodus 31:12–18, the Sabbath is an *eternal covenant* and a sign between us and YHWH that He created all things in six days. This is itself important for two reasons: firstly, if our Creator made this an *everlasting covenant*, and made another *everlasting covenant* later in Messiah, how can we believe in the blood of Yahshua (whom folk call 'Jesus'), if the first *everlasting covenant* is overthrown, in favor of the *everlasting covenant* to follow, as many claim. And secondly, why would we who are Creationists denounce the Day that the Creator says weekly commemorates our argument that our Elohim did all His work in six days time and not over millions of years? Why not give the Most High what He wants? Why not concede to our Creator the day He demanded for us to commemorate Him.

Throughout all the 56th chapter of Isaiah's writings, we are furthermore shown that the Sabbath is not only an *order* which must be kept, but moreover, it is an *honor* that has been offered. It is a blessing, which is bestowed on all willing to submit to its remembrance in holiness. Verse two of this chapter, verifies, that, "Blessed is the man who does this, the man who holds it fast, who keeps the Sabbath, without desecrating it, and keeps his hand from doing evil." He goes on to promise, even to them that think themselves to be foreigners, personally, exempt and excluded from citizenship in Israel, due solely to their birth, as Gentiles, that, indeed, no, if they keep the Sabbath, worship YHWH, and hold fast to Him, loving His NAME, they truly will have an place within His people, a name in His Temple, and joy in His House of Prayer.

The prophet goes on to tell us at the close of chapter 58 of his book all about how these blessings may become our own, how we may keep the Sabbath holy, and what things may befall us for our obedience. We are taught in this passage, verses, 13–14, that we must "restrain our feet" which is to say that we should not plan travels for this day. Isaiah admonishes us not to indulge our daily pleasures, by no means for us to be melancholy, but rather that our business for these hours should be consumed by the presence of the Most High. We are instructed hear that we are to call the Sabbath, a delight, and say that it is honorable, and more so, to honor the Day itself by acting differently than all other times, both in speech and an action. And if we do all this, we are told that we will then find our joy in YHWH, that He will cause us to ride up on the Heights, and to feast on the heritage of our father, Jacob. We are offered the promises of the patriarchs, if we but submit to the Savior regarding this one day. And these promises are deep, involved, and thorough. (Deuteronomy 28:1–14)

Such as the heritage of those that fulfill this obligation and incumbency. Divine blessing unexplainable, shall descend upon all them, which do this faithfully, and upon all which they encounter, possess, and endeavor to accomplish. Wherever they find themselves in whatever situation they are forced into, they will be blessed because of their obedience. Such is the hope we have in the Most High because of the Sabbath, and the same hope holds true in our Saviour, the KingMessiah, Yahshua, the Master of the Sabbath and Sovereign of this Great Day

SABBATH IN THE "NEW" TESTAMENT

Sabbath detractors like to argue that the fourth of the 10 Commandments is the only one not repeated in the New Testament and thus, they find it, not applicable in our time. But to them I

must ask, "Do we worship a deity that goes back on his word?" Of course not! We would all agree that the Most High is faithful to keep His promises. Why then do we doubt the lasting nature of the Sabbath covenant, when we won't doubt any of the other covenants. When YHWH swore never to destroy the world by water ever again, we believed Him. And we believe Him still. When YHWH swore to always be the Elohim of Abraham, and to give him and his descendants, the holy land, we believed Him. And we believe Him still. When YHWH swore to give everlasting life to all who believe in His Son, Yahshua the Messiah, we believed Him. And though we have since changed the Name of the Son, we basically believe Him still. But for some reason, when YHWH swore that the Sabbath was made as a sacred day, forever, we do not believe Him... Even though He called every one of these promises, "everlasting covenant" (Genesis 9:16; Genesis 17:7-19; Exodus 31:16; Hebrews 13:20). If any one of these promises has been brought to a premature end, then none of them at all can be trusted for anything, including and especially the promise of eternal life in the blood of the Messiah. The Sabbath was called by our Heavenly Father an *eternal covenant*, and the work of the Savior was called the same. How can we reasonably, with any degree of credibility, claim that the former "perpetual" promise is abolished, changed, moved, nullified, "fulfilled", or made moot, while claiming the latter "perpetual" promise to stand solid and forever resolute? If our Elohim changed, some thing, He Himself said was unchangeable, why should we believe Him now when He tells us the grace of the Cross is also unchangeable? Only one of two things as possible here: either our Heavenly Father goes back on His promises, or He does not. And we know from Scripture and history, that YHWH does not go back on His promises. Therefore, the "new" covenant is added to the "old", but does not take it away, or take anything away from it. The Saviour is added to The Sabbath, but does not destroy it.

And besides, to the charge that Sabbath, keeping is never commanded in the so-called "New" Testament, I must raise another question, "Do we follow the kind of teacher, who says, 'Do as I say, not as I do.?' " Of course not. We would all agree that the word and example of the Messiah should and must be emulated... We say, "What would 'Jesus' do?" But we do not do what He would do, because by practiced habit and action, He kept the Sabbath. This was actually the bulk of the backlash He received from the religious leaders of His day. Some people say, "Jesus broke the sabbath all the time." Wrong! The Messiah broke the man-made rules the rabbis used to burden the people that Day. And He did this deliberately so. The Most High made the Sabbath to send His people free, but the Pharisees made strict rules that they claimed came from the Creator and forced them on the people. When anyone broke the man-made rules, the rabbis said they were breaking the Sabbath, though it was not so. In fact, the Messiah often broke the human rules on purpose to prove how pointless they were, and how poisonous.

Over and over, the gospels give us the perfect picture in the example of our Savior, of how to keep the Sabbath. We see Him resting with His disciples, congregating with the believers, and healing the sick and the possessed, thereby showing us through deeds that truly the Sabbath is important, that it is required, and that it is a day of liberation and life-giving. Yet still, even knowing this, many seeking to rid themselves of this "burdensome" day of rest and blessing here declare, "That's true, but it was only for the Jews." Another idea "Jesus" clearly denounces, saying, "The Sabbath was made for Man, not Man for the Sabbath." The Lord's point was twofold in this: Not only was the Sabbath a gift and not something to serve, but also it was a gift to mankind. It was not just for Jews. The Day itself is holy and whoever desires holiness will keep it so. This also means that the idea of, "any day off will do" just does not cut it. The Day *itself* is holy by nature of being the Seventh from Creation. Not seventh, from whenever we start counting randomly, but Seventh from when YHWH Almighty first said, "Let there be Light!"

This fact, also flies in the face of all other excuses, such as, "my Sabbath is Sunday, because "Jesus" rose from the dead on Sunday." The idea of Sunday resurrection is another issue and beside the point. The Bible does not say that some *new reason* may arise to move the Sabbath. The Bible

never says that there can be a *new* Sabbath. The Bible never says anything either about *us* making *our own* Sabbath. *My* sabbath can be Sunday... Or Tuesday for that matter. Nobody cares when *your* Sabbath is. The commandment does not say "remember your Sabbath day." It says remember *the* Sabbath Day... The Seventh is a Sabbath for YHWH..."

The other reasons, the people raise against the Sabbath or attempt to use "Jesus" Himself as their evidence. "We don't need the Sabbath, because "Jesus" is lord of the sabbath," they say. Or even better, "every day is sabbath in Jesus." Or my favorite, "Jesus is the Sabbath." First of all, who are we to decide we do not need something the Most High declared that we do?! Secondly, how is that even an argument at all to claim, we need the Lord, but not the thing of which He happens to be Lord thereof?! Someone may say, "Well, he is lord of everything." Then why specify being Lord of the Sabbath, if such a title can be discounted on account of His universal lordship?! If being Lord of the Sabbath is a meaningless title, why even mention it?!

The idea of "Christ Jesus'" universal Lordship is also what gives rise to the "every day is sabbath" argument. "If he is truly sabbath master, and every day he is, Lord, then, every day is sabbath." This is the kind of faulty logic that prevails in our churches today. It's no wonder there is no more wonder in our worship. Yes, "Jesus" is Lord of every day, and yes, He is the same every day, but that does not follow that therefore, each day is the same as the next. Our Creator set aside six days for getting work done, and then, one He set aside for resting from that work. All days are His days, sure, but each has its own purpose and function. More to the point, if six days are for work, however, could every day be Sabbath? And yes, we know that we rest in "Jesus", but how is He a day of the week? The Sabbath is not an ideology to be transplanted from one thing to another, nor is it an idea to be applied every day. Only because we lack empirical Sabbatarian knowledge do we habitually argue this nonsense. We don't know what Sabbath keeping is in Christendom, and so we stand against it by assumption. Had we been imitating the actions of our Savior, however, when we encountered these facts in the Scriptures, we would, by no means find a post-Sabbath position.

All through the New Testament, we find the remembrance of Sabbath as common practice of the times. This is the main reason the commandment was never re-issued in verbal form or printing at the covenant's renewal, because it was one that had become so common that everyone was keeping it...even pagans. Why? Because it is wonderful... And more poignantly, why not?! Why would you not want to keep the sabbath? It is comparative to claiming you don't want cake and ice cream or presents on your birthday. Why refuse something beautiful, something glorious something awesome?! Mary and Joseph kept the Sabbath. "Jesus" kept the Sabbath. All His disciples kept the Sabbath, including Paul. And all the first generation of believers kept the Sabbath. Why should we, so many centuries later, be living differently than they who showed us The Way?

THE FALL OF JERUSALEM

There's no reason why we should be doing differently than our Founders is there? But there is a great reason why we are doing differently! The reason is the Jewish Roman war of the early centuries A.D. Between the "year of our Lord" 70 and 135, everything changed!... And I mean everything !!! With the loss of the first war AD 66 to 70, Jerusalem was destroyed, along with the Temple, and what is estimated to have been 2/3 of the population of Israel, the Jewish faith lost its center, as did what became the Christian faith as well, which was in that time still a sect of Judaism called "Nazarenes." The beginning of this first war also began the final rift between the Nazarenes and the rest of Judaism, for Judaism, had cause for a rebellion against Rome, but the Nazarenes did not. Therefore, we required a different identity apart from the Jewish religion to distinguish ourselves from the rebels. The problem, was that if we were not a part of Judaism, we were in danger of being viewed as a new religion, a thing that Rome forbade. We were damned either way.

The Jews too were more than happy to be rid of us as one of its subsidiaries, because rumors had risen up that we were cannibals, atheist, and incestuous a

One other issues, not to mention our faith in Messiah was hateful to them. The hatred between us culminated in AD 70 when Titus, surrounded Jerusalem, but the Nazarenes were not there. Having heeded the prophetic warning of the Messiah written in Luke 21: 20–24, they fled Jerusalem, and all Judea, crossing the Jordan river into Perea and settled in the city of Pella. And for this flight, the Jews cursed us thereafter for generations.

Jerusalem destroyed, and no more Temple to centralize us, we were forced to re-organize our faith and to restructure our religion. More and more, we began to identify with outsider terminology regarding us, and so in time, we came to call ourselves “Christians” instead of “Nazarenes.” No longer able to be guided from Zion, our faith was forced to look elsewhere for leadership, which grew evermore, heathen, and hopeless as it went, from Jerusalem, to Pella, from Pella to Damascus, Damascus to Antioch, Antioch to Alexandria, and Alexandria to Rome – where it remains to this day.

So Judaism and the Nazarenes were striving to exist separately and began to develop separately. The Jews clung to their rabbis, since the Pharisees were the only group of Jews, to outlast Jerusalem’s destruction, and grew more strictly in oral tradition, and the Nazarene struggle to keep the practices of Scripture without any structure. Thus, when war broke out with Rome again, in A.D. 132, the divide was made permanent. What was a line of demarcation had become an impassable chasm when Rabbi Akiba, under his own authority, declared Bar Kochba to be the Messiah of Israel, beginning, rebellion a new. Even if any Nazarenes desired to fight, none could do so, under the banner of a false Messiah. When the rebellion was crushed in A.D.135 and the false Messiah was crucified for his rebellion, Rome showed no mercy to the remaining Jews. They slaughtered many, enslaved many more, and displaced the rest. Rome, then raised up a new pagan city upon Mount Zion calling it Aelia Capitalina. They built a temple to Jupiter on the Temple Mount and sacrificed pigs there. They polluted this city with pagans and outlawed anything Jewish, and anything they thought might be Jewish. If a Jew set foot in the city, he would be crucified. From then, on circumcision, tassels, reading the Torah, celebrating the feast days, keeping the Sabbath were all outlawed on pain of crucifixion

And so it was that in Pella, the Nazarenes selected at this time, the 16th bishop of “Jerusalem”, the first uncircumcised gentile, whose name was Marcus. Under his encouragement, the church, abandoned all these commandments, clinging only to the writings of the apostles, and the gospels. They were welcomed in that region. Overtime, Sunday became the “new Sabbath” or the “Christian Sabbath,” and all other Commandments found new outlets of expression, which, in fact, and actuality broke the commands themselves. Christmas, Easter, Saint Johns day, Halloween, etc. replaced all the holy days ordered for our observation in Leviticus. And the “New” Testament was thought to have replaced the “old” testament. And so on down the line to modern times, where we keep doing what was demanded from yesterday, but never what was commanded from the beginning.

DREAMING OF EDEN

Any idea or invention is always in its purest, and most perfect form in its inception, and the concept of the Sabbath is no exception. In the Creation, it was made as the Crown of Day, set apart and sanctified, because the Creator Himself said so. It was blessed in the beginning of the world when all things were good and true, perfect and flawless. And it was in that untarnished time that the Seventh Day received its purpose, not as a “Jewish holiday” or a “burden of the ‘law’” but as a just and pure blessing for all Creation as a whole. For we who walk the Earth after the Fall from

grace, the Sabbath should be seen as the Last Remnant of Edenic paradise, or the first glimpse of the promised return there too.

For this alone, the Sabbath should be remembered by the righteous and regarded as holy, but also this sacred day has only awesome privileges, promises, and profits to offer all its celebrants. Nothing negative has ever arisen out of the fulfillment of the sacrosanct obligation of old, and sacred Scripture, gives us every incentive to incorporate this habit back into our practice. Truly, we are told that honoring the Sabbath, as ordered by our Heavenly Father gives us special status as His own people, and the mark of His children. The Bible tells us that Sabbath keeping shows all the world that YHWH is our Elohim, and that He made all existence in six days time; and it proves to all that Creation that He alone can make us holy. To all who honor the Seventh Day as the holy day of YHWH, will be given a name in His Temple, an inheritance among His people, and much glory, joy, and blessing in this life.

This is all, not to mention that Sabbath will be the governing measurement of time in the coming millennial reign of Messiah. As the prophet have promised, all mankind will worship YHWH from Sabbath to Sabbath in His kingdom to come (Isaiah 66:23), and will be required to keep the Sabbath holy still (Ezekiel 44:24), and to bring the sacrifices appropriate for every Sabbath day (Ezekiel 45:17). According to Ezekiel 46:3, all people, not just Christians, will worship YHWH every Sabbath. If this is the very kingdom, we are praying for (Matthew 6:9) and for which we are preparing our souls to receive, should we not, then be aligning our lives with this understanding and commitment to keep the Seventh Day sacred?! Indeed we should, and this is what we are shown in scripture.

The Lord's practiced Sabbath keeping, as did His parents before Him, and His disciples after Him. The first generation of believers remembered to sanctify this Day, from all others, and all 15 bishops of the Jerusalem assembly before the fall of the city to Rome, both literally and spiritually, likewise were Sabbatarian. Besides practical examples of this beautiful celebration, the writer of the book of Hebrews tells us of the importance of the Sabbath, by relating it to the ancient Israelites, and to all who come to faith in the Messiah. The author tells us to take caution that we not miss out on the rest the Most High offers merely from a lack of faith.

In chapter 4, he writes of rest promised to Israel in the holy land they were headed for, which they did not receive due to lack of faith. He also tells us of the rest promised to us in the Messiah, into which we have entered by faith. And they both are set by the writer against, or rather in conjunction with and reflection of the Seventh Day Sabbath. The author uses three words to refer to rest in this chapter. The first is, "katapousis" meaning, "to abode, rest, repose." The second is "karapouo" meaning, "to settle down, rest, cease." And both of these words are used to liken the promise of rest to each other, linking them one to another, in the concept of colonization over constant migration.

YHWH Elohim offers endless rest to His ancient people, but they had no faith and refused His rest. Contrariwise, this same Savior offers us endless rest in His only begotten, a rest received only by faith, and a rest which is embodied in the Seventh Day Sabbath. So the writer of Hebrews hopes for us to understand that that rest of eternal life is a Sabbath rest, but we are now in a temporal life and thus are lacking that kind of perpetual Sabbath. And yet because our Elohim rested on that first Sabbath, setting the example for us to follow, our resting that same day as He, allows that we can rest not only on a Day of the week, but in the Most High Himself. Celebrating Sabbath is bringing Heaven to Earth and calling the hope and happiness of the hereafter into the here-and-now... If only for a Day.

This is the meaning of the third word for rest the writer uses in this passage. He says, "Sabbatismos" which means, "Sabbatism, Sabbath keeping, or a keeping of the Sabbath." The author tells us, "There remains a sabbatismos for the people of Elohim." This means that the "New" Testament author is announcing to all of us, that, indeed, in spite of all possible, excuses to stop

celebrating the best Day ever (for whatever reason one might want to do so) and not to mention all the blessings and benefits of this beautiful day, "There remains Sabbath-keeping for the people of Elohim." And evermore awesome still, now more than ever, because we have been given the Messiah, Who is Master of the Day, now we can comprehend the depth and divine purpose of the Sabbath, better than any generation before. Now we know the Lord of the Sabbath by faith, and are able to keep remembering Him through faith, every time we remember the Sabbath through that same faith.