

The Sabbath is A Sign (Go To Meeting)

Michael Heiss—July 14, 2023

The incident that prompted my message tonight goes back a long time ago. I believe I mentioned the incident to you two or three times, but it bears repeating. It shows that we need validation! So many people never really got the foundation of the Sabbath.

Way back in 1972, to be precise, I was terminated from Ambassador College by employment—*gone with the wind!* I was in the office of the individual who was ushering me out, taking care of the processing. Of course, the most important thing he had for me was a severance check. I liked that!

It's interesting because no sooner had he given me all my paperwork, he got up, closed the door, sat down beside me and he said:

You're more learned than I am, can you please tell me from the Bible why I should keep the Sabbath? How do I know I should?

Here is an individual who spent six or seven years at Imperial High School in the Pasadena area, he went through four years of Ambassador College, and he doesn't understand why he should keep the Sabbath. He can't demonstrate from the Scriptures. That really puzzled me. But not only that, some years later an individual that I knew from Ambassador College—he was a sophomore and I was a freshman—who became an evangelist.

During the topsy-turvy days of, if you remember them from the late 1980s and early 90s when the Church was really struggling, like a tornado going through it, he said from the pulpit—I was there in the congregation:

Why didn't somebody tell me that the Sabbath was part of the Old Covenant?

I'm looking at him and I'm thinking, you're asking that type of question? The reason he was asking that question was because he fell prey to the old Protestant position, which was: the Sabbath, the Holy Days, and most of the Laws of God came under the jurisdiction of the Old Covenant. They derive their authority from the Old Covenant. Therefore, when the Old Covenant went by the boards, superseding the death of Christ—remember the curtain was torn asunder—and now the New Covenant was begun. Now we can go directly to the Holy of Holies. We didn't have to have a human priest.

Yet, all those days, all those laws, yes, at one point they were under the Old Covenant, but they existed before the Old Covenant. *He didn't seem to know that!* I began to realize that they were never really taught.

Oh, they heard messages, they heard sermons, they were in class and had lectures. ***But the foundation was never delivered to them!***

Looking back at my time, I realized the same thing! Because what I'm going to try to deliver to you I really didn't get from Ambassador College. I got the Sabbath, all right, yes, we have to keep the Sabbath Friday sundown to Saturday sundown. I knew that from the time I was a kid growing up in the Jewish world.

But to understand the foundation, to see it as a creation ordinance—which many scholars deny—they didn't get.

We're going to take our time and go through the Sabbath foundation. We may only get through three or four solid Biblical Scriptures, I may have to speak two more times before the end of the year, so what we don't finish tonight we'll finish later.

The Sabbath is perhaps the most important doctrine in the entire Church! It is so, because it symbolizes and really consists of:

- the Kingdom
- the Reign of God
- the Family of God

The Holy Days hang on the hook of the Sabbath!

The Sabbath can exist apart from the Holy Days (Gen. 1 & 2) we have the Sabbath. But you don't have the Holy Days until Exodus. That's a couple of thousand years later.

So, the Sabbath can exist apart from the Holy Days. The Holy Days show us how to get to the Kingdom. They hang on the hook of the Sabbath. There's the Passover.

Well, yes, to get to the Kingdom, we need to get rid of sin. Someone's got to pay the price for our sins. The Lamb of God comes as a sacrifice and His blood pays our penalty, pays for our sins.

But then we have to get rid of sin. We have to get out of it or get rid of it out of us, however you want to look at it: Days of Unleavened Bread. Then we go to Pentecost, the beginning of the Law, the Holy Spirit, and the resurrection to the Sea of Glass,

or as I like to think of it: the Sea of Crystal, because to me, crystals were beautiful. Who knows? ***Glass and crystal, I'll accept whatever God gives us!***

Then we have the day of blowing (Feast of Trumpets)! This is the decent down from the Sea of Glass to the earth and Jesus Christ begins His reign. But sin has to be completely gotten rid of—Day of Atonement. You can't have the Kingdom without getting rid of all the sin!

Then, of course, comes the Feast of Tabernacles, the actual Millennial reign of God, where millions of people are going to learn. And finally, the Last Great Day, where the billions of people who've never had a chance get their opportunity. *It shows us the plan!*

But the Sabbath is the Kingdom. Sabbath is the Family of God, if you can see it that way. So, let's really begin. What is the Sabbath anyway? I said it was the Kingdom. But down to earth now.

The Sabbath is part of the cycle of sevens; it is the 7th-day of a 7-day week. Now, the interesting thing is we can't find it anywhere else.

So, I have with me here three volumes plus my own notes, and I'm going to be pulling them in to give us, hopefully, a good synopsis of what I'm talking about.

Now, the first volume I want to point out is *From Sabbath to the Lord's Day*. This is not the book by Samuele Bacchiocchi, the Seventh-Day Adventist scholar. His was *From Sabbath to Sunday*. This is a book by scholars, Donald Carson is the editor. It's not written in what you would say, 'gobbledygook.' It's 400 pages and you do have to wade through it, because Scripture after Scripture after Scripture is used to either prove or disprove something.

So, let me read a couple of selections for you and see what we find. Here, their conclusion, in brief:

from: *From Sabbath to the Lord's Day*. by Donald Carson editor:

Israel kept the Sabbath according to the letter of the Law, but no convincing evidence has been produced that locates the concept of the Sabbath and extra Biblical sources.

In other words, apart from the Bible, apart from God's Word, you'll find a 7-day week. Some civilizations have 5-day weeks. Egypt had a 10-day week. Where O where is a 7-day week?

I remember when I was sitting in the University of Judaism and we were discussing this and were talking about:

- Where did Israel get its doctrines?
- Where did it get its theology?

We thought, and in terms of the Sabbath, well, none of the other civilizations or cultures had it. Since Israel didn't have it, **where did Israel get it?** So, it didn't have an answer. But obviously, it had to originate with Israel. But, of course, there was another Source that gave it to Israel. So, let's continue here.

The Biblical evidence is that the Sabbath was inaugurated **for the people of Israel** to be celebrated **as a weekly sign of the covenant.**

When we find the weakness, you see where they're right and they're wrong.

Yes, but it existed long before that. But that's as far as they see and understand. The Sabbath is not viewed as a universal ordinance for all mankind, but as a specific institution for Israel.

Well, to use colloquially, 'wrongdo bondo,' ***not so!*** But this is their starting point. This is their assumption.

Now, let me give you another quote or two from here:

As a sign of the covenant, the Sabbath can only be meant for Israel. With whom the covenant was made. It has a perpetual function for the duration of the covenant.

See, a perpetual duration, but only for the lifetime of the covenant, which was the Old Covenant.

And derived its importance and significance from the covenant itself.

Not so!

This is what happened to the Church in the 80s and 90s. *They had the concept that all the Laws of God were part of the Old Covenant*, deriving the authority from the Old Covenant. Therefore, when the covenant was superseded, all those laws were superseded.

Why didn't they know that the Sabbath had its basic foundation going back to Gen. 2:3? *We're going to cover that!* We are really going to delve into Gen. 2:3 and Gen. 1:31, but I need a few minutes to get into that.

Here is an amazing statement I want to read to you; talking about the #7. The #7 runs contrary to every *known* astronomical measurement of time. There are no sevens in astronomy; there are no sevens in the mathematical calculation of the stars and planets. *Doesn't exist!*

- we have seconds
- we have minutes
- we have hours
- we have numbers to calculate down
- we have years
- we have months

But no sevens! No!

Seven came from God! God is the Author of the seventh-day Sabbath! He's the One Who did it.

Let's go to Exo. 20. Here is the giving of the Sabbath to all of Israel. Now, that much we know.

Exodus 20:8: "**Remember the Sabbath Day to keep it Holy.** Six days you shall labor and do all your work. But the seventh day *is* the Sabbath of the LORD your God. In it you shall not do any work, you, nor your son, nor your daughter; your manservant, nor your maidservant, nor your livestock, nor the stranger within your gates; for *in* six days the LORD made the heaven and the earth, the sea, and all that *is* in them, and rested the seventh day. Therefore, the LORD blessed the Sabbath Day and sanctified it" (vs 8-11).

First, God says, ***remember.*** You can't remember if it's first inaugurated here. Oh, they acknowledge that in Exo. 16. We may not really go into Exo. 16 tonight. If not, we'll do it next time. It's true with manna on the Sabbath, the 7th day.

But ***they're emphasizing*** here is, yeah, it goes back to Gen. 2, but you see it's really inaugurating here, and God is using that 'as an illustration of some kind.' ***No, that's not so!*** It really isn't! So, one thing we want to do now is go to Gen. 1:31. Here we find:

Genesis 1:31: "And God saw everything that He had made, and indeed, *it was exceedingly good....*"

Go back to Gen. 1, and you'll find 6 times, and this and this and this, and it was good. And God did this and this and that, and it was good. But not here.

This is not just 'tob' *good*; this is ***exceedingly good!*** In other words, it was par excellence. It was magnificent. ***Because God did it!*** It was perfect! This was going to be *perfection* to get the earth ready for humans, starting the inauguration for God's Kingdom. His Plan to develop humans into God beings.

Now, here is another volume, which I have, and it is called *The Pentateuch and Haftorahs*. Now, you have to forgive me for its condition. I bought it back in 1963, so it's a little worse for wear, you

know, but it still serves me well. It's edited by Dr. Hertz, who was the chief rabbi of the British Empire in the 30s and 40s. Look how he translates v 31:

from: *The Pentateuch and Haftorahs* by J.H. Hertz:

...and it was exceedingly good. And then the heavens, the host, the earth **were finished!**

The Hebrew word implies not only completion, *but perfection!* This was done *to perfection!*

That's why it says *exceedingly good*. Now, it was so good, we can say God took a vow. He really did. Now, we may think that God would say, 'It's what I do. I create, I was just doing My job.' Well, it's true, He was doing his job all right. But Oh, how He did it.

Psalm 104:30: "You send forth Your Spirit, **they are created...**"

This harkens back to creation week. Remember the Spirit of God hovered over the waters? *That's what it's talking about here!*

"...they are created..."

Yes, the earth and all the forms on the earth, all the rocks and nooks and crannies and light.

"...and You renew the face of the earth" (v 30). *Clearly is referring back to Gen. 1!*

Verse 31: "May the glory of the LORD endure forever; the LORD **shall rejoice in His works.**"

Take great satisfaction, is what the Hebrew is really is telling us. In fact, if I may go out on a limb, God is almost saying, 'Now that's a peace of work. Glorious peace of work, if I do say so Myself.'

Sounds too, gratuitous? No, ***this is God***, and He takes satisfaction in His work. Whatever He does is perfect. This is just taking satisfaction in perfect work.

As I said, the major mistake that scholars make, and that the Church made, was putting all the Laws of God under the authority of the Old Covenant. Well, if that were so, let's read the Scripture we've been to many, many times. God is talking to Isaac and He's describing Abraham:

Genesis 26:5: "Because Abraham obeyed My voice and kept My charge, My commandments, My statutes, and My Laws."

How could God say that Abraham kept all these laws, these statutes, and these commandments **unless** they were in force in Abraham's day.

It didn't start out as part of the covenant. It started out way back when, on creation week.

Every time I read Gen, 2 really, I marvel at it, and what God has to say about the Sabbath:

Genesis 2:1: "Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host of them. And by *the beginning of* the seventh day God finished His work, which He had made. And He rested on the seventh day from all His work, which He had made. And God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it, because on it He rested from all His work, which God had created and made" (vs 1-3).

First of all, this word for *rest* is ceasing. God ceased. It wasn't that He needed a rest. 'That was a tough, tough job, those six days, you know. I need to get a little rest, need to get a nap, so I'll show them. No, no, no, no, no! All it means is He *ceased, He stopped, a cease and desist order!* He completed the work in six days.

But what we have here, essentially, are three sentences. Each one of those sentences is 7 words in the Hebrew, 7. There's that #7. And there are three sentences: $3 \times 7 = 21$.

We see God mentioned—Elohim—He's mentioned 3 times. God had finished His work, had finished, completed 3 times.

Now, how many 3s & 7s do we need to understand God was signing off on creation week? Like composers, they put their names somewhere in the lines there. Paintings, you can find the name. Van Gogh, for example. Now, for me, in modern times, I really enjoyed Thomas Kincaid's paintings. He was a marvelous painter of light; oh, could he do wonders with light. Unfortunately, he fell to the demon of alcoholism. But nevertheless, he was a brilliant painter. He put his name there.

Well, when God does this, He's putting His name here: Three is the number of completion, finality. We see this in our common terminology.

Three chances; give you three choices; the first two don't count, third time's a charm. You know, three strikes, you're out. Where do we get this from? From the Hebrew. It's filtered down into our society. Three is completion, finality.

Now, 7 is a number of *perfection* and also completion. What is God telling us here? That the Sabbath, that He *ended* His week of creation. It was a perfect creation, *finality*. End of story.

So, really Gen. 2 ought to begin with v 4. This is the account of the heavens. So, it's final, it's perfect. But you will find scholars talking about the Sabbath. They'll say, man had really nothing to do with the Sabbath. Man was there, but Sabbath is a

memorial of God's creation. But not just the physical creation that He began, *but the spiritual creation*. What is God in the business of doing? *Creating!* Yes, He created the physical earth. That is, He re-formed it, remodeled it in six days. It was not a complete creation, that was a remodeling of it.

But there's another creation going on. You and I are growing with grace and knowledge. You and I are growing to become God as He is. That is going to be the ultimate creation! That 7th day Sabbath is a memorial of His start of the new creation. as well.

Remember, it is a complete Kingdom of God. It is the reign of God. It covers us in there. This is the foundation for the Sabbath. It's a memorial of what God has done and what He is doing. Now it's true. This is the Old Covenant that went by the boards.

We can read about it in Exodus 21-23. Then in Exo. 24, we have it sanctified. It's ratified. true. But ask yourself a question: Does the life, teaching, crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus of Nazareth in any manner, shape, or form alter the fact that in six days God renewed the surface of the earth and ceased on the seventh? *No!*

So it doesn't matter whether one covenant comes and another covenant goes. *The Sabbath remains as it is!* It's bedrock and it's fundamental! There's no getting around it. If we want to, we can.

Let me read a couple more sections from this book *From Sabbath to the Lord's Day*. Something I find very, very interesting. Gen. 2 does not mention the word *Sabbath!* True! 'ha shabbat' is not there. It doesn't exist.

It speaks about the seventh day. Unless the reader equates the seventh day with the Sabbath, what a novel concept.

Unless the reader equates seventh day and Sabbath, there is no ---- Feast Day or institution at all. There is no direct command that the seventh day should be kept in any way. Not according to these scholars:

We're told that God finished His creation activities on the sixth day, and that is it!

Not true! One thing they do have that's true, is God did not bless and sanctify the Sabbath.

- Sound off?
- Sound ridiculous?

No!

- What did he bless and sanctify?

They do have a point!

Genesis 2:2: “And by *the beginning of the seventh day* God finished His work, which He had made. And He rested on the seventh day from all His work, which He had made. And **God blessed the seventh day** and sanctified it...” (vs 2-3).

It is the seventh day God blessed, not a Sabbath, because the Sabbath doesn't have to be the seventh day.

Do we remember a Roman Emperor named Constantine, the ‘venerable day of the sun? That was a Sabbath. the first day of the week. The Sabbath doesn't mean seventh; it just means *a ceasing!* So you can cease one day in seven.

You can read the literature of the Puritans, and the deeply religious people in England and those who came across to this country. They talk about the Sabbath. *They do!* But they're not referring to the seventh-day Sabbath! No, no, no! They're referring to the first-day Sabbath.

After all, don't we know that Jesus was crucified late on a Friday? Was resurrected on a Sunday? *Hey, we have Easter Sunday!*

Therefore, the first day the week was sanctified. Now, doesn't really mean that that's the way it happened. ***But that's how they look at it!*** Therefore, they rest on a Sunday, and that truly is a Sabbath. It is, because it's a day of rest to them.

Now let's take a closer look at Gen. 2. We're talking about the Sabbath, the seventh day. It's an amazing thing. I don't know how many of you have seen or read or have a copy of *The Critical Experimental and Practical Commentary*. It is the Jamison, Fawcett, and Brown commentary.

If you're looking for the latest updates in archaeology, astronomy, and other things that happen; this will not do it for you, because it was written in the 19th century. So, it's a couple of hundred years or so old. But the Hebrew and the Greek is still very, very good without question.

So opening it up, we're going to take a look. Now, pardon me if I have to look closely because it's in fine print. The verb *to bless* carries with it a double idea, that of blessing, and also of worshiping in the particular manner of *bowing the knee*.

These two senses may be united once spoken of man, though the first only can be understood when God comes into the picture. This verb may here be better taken in the ---. What they're talking about are different verb patterns in Hebrew. We have the ---- forget all of them. The point is, the one in particular is causative. What does that mean if we understand it that way?

The verb has a double idea, and from the well-known power of that conjugation in order to do a thing, it will signify God ordered him.

This is going back to creation when God said he'd bless the seventh day and so forth.

God ordered him to bless and worship adoration, and we can read it this way. And God rested on the seventh day from all His work which he had made.

God commanded man to bless and worship Him on the seventh day and ordered him to sanctify it! The Hebrew can support that. According to these commentators;

It does appear from the original text that the word was given in the form of a command from God to Adam, and the design of it was to secure not only one day of rest and Holiness, but all the others.

They understand that. I came across this commentary years and years and years ago when I first came to Ambassador College, when they said, ‘Oh, that's a good commentary.’ So, I figured, well, I should go and get it, and I did and there it is.

So you see, going back to creation week, we have a Sabbath and that Sabbath Day was commanded by man. But scholars do not accept. They only accept this idea that was part of the Old Covenant, and that's what was used by all the infiltrators and those who tore down the Church.

Unfortunately, too many of us just went right along with it. I remember Mr. Brian Olds, who I worked for in the booklet department, who was managing editor of the Good News at one point. He was talking to us one day in particular. He said, ‘Prove all things?’ ***We didn't really prove all things!*** We had one or two items that stuck in our craw, that we weren't sure of. Once we got those out of the way, we accepted all the other, everything else, as packaged deal.’

We didn't really prove it. We didn't say, okay, this is how I know I should do this. here is the basic foundation for it. Never did! That's why one of my friends I knew very well, when changes were being made in the Church, he came up to me and he said, ‘Oh, isn't it so wonderful? We don't have to keep those laws of clean and unclean meat. I can now get a bacon, lettuce, and tomato sandwich and not have to worry about anything.’

Looking at him and saying, ‘Wait a minute! What have you believed all these years?’

‘Well, you know, the Church says...’ ***and there was too much of that!*** There really was. I

remember in one of the local congregations, when one of the congregants came up to me, I was ministerial assistant. So I was put on the totem pole! I was helping! I was learning! He said, 'If the minister told me to eat pork, I'd do it.'

I'm saying, wait a minute, what does God say? *God is over any mister!*

There was one time I heard the story repeated two or three times by people who were there, so I know it's true. In the old days, the Hewlett-Seaman Merit Mansion, which became Ambassador Hall, somewhere in the late 1950s, Mr. Herbert Armstrong was addressing a group of the evangelists. He was a little upset. He said, 'You men, you're just following me. If I went astray, and I told you to do this or do that, and it was contrary, you'd follow me.'

Well, of course, there was one individual named Rod Meredith; he was just going right through this saying, 'No, I wouldn't.' According to the story, Mr. Armstrong looked at him and said, 'Well, I know you wouldn't, Rod.' ***But too many would!***

This is what happened. Their faith, their belief was not in the Bible. They didn't have the foundation. So hopefully, we have that foundation. Hopefully, we can see the Sabbath goes back to creation. ***It's a memorial of what God did and what He's going to do!*** Because we are going to be the ultimate of this creation. The Sabbath is the Kingdom, the Family of God, and we're going to be there.

So now, let's look at one or two Scriptures in addition. In Exo. 16 we do have the story of the men. This does get to be rather interesting.

Exodus 16:10: "And it came to pass as Aaron spoke to the whole congregation of the children of Israel *that* they turned toward the wilderness. And behold, the glory of the LORD appeared in the cloud!"

Verse 12: "I have heard the murmurings of the children of Israel. Speak to them, saying, "Between the two evenings you shall eat flesh, and in the morning you shall be filled *with* bread...."

Verse 14: "And when the layer of dew had gone up... [this is in the morning] ...behold, *there was* a small round thing upon the face of the wilderness, small as the hoar-frost upon the ground. And when the children of Israel saw *it*, they said one to another, 'What *is* that?' [that where manna got it's name] ...For they did not know what it *was*. And Moses said to them, 'This *is* the bread which the LORD has given you to eat.'" (vs 14-15).

Moses goes on to explain that you can have as much as you want, but:

Verse 22: "And it came to pass, on the sixth day they gathered twice as much bread, two omers for each one...."

Verse 23: "Tomorrow is the rest of the Holy Sabbath to the LORD. Bake what you will bake *today*, and boil what you will boil...."

To the scholars this represents the first time the 7th day Sabbath was to be observed; *they just assume* and don't go back to Gen. 2. They don't want to go back to Gen. 2.

There's a very, very interesting quote that I thought was so cute. I like the way these scholars word certain things; this is from Exo. 16:22-30, here's what he had to say:

The first occurrence of the word and concept of Sabbath is found here.

This is what Protestants believe, and those who took over the Church also believed! And because they didn't promulgate it, so many.

Do you remember, we had outward of 140,000 to 150, 000 people keeping the Feast of Tabernacles. Look at today, the various branches, the offshoots of the Church of God. Yes, we CBCG—our fellowship, there's United, COGWA (Church of God a Worldwide Association); there's Living Church of God, and some others. They don't even come close, not at all, to what we had, because they didn't have the foundation. They didn't really believe! They didn't prove it!

Do we understand that the Sabbath goes back to creation? It is the Kingdom, the Government of God! All the Holy Days show us how to get to that Kingdom, long before any old covenant was ever made.

The passages *allows* the view that the institution of the Sabbath was unknown to the people of Israel at that time.

It doesn't say *proves, demonstrates, but says allows!* Meaning that if come up with a harebrained idea that maybe the Sabbath doesn't go back to creation, this verse will ***allow*** us say it first began here. Then it became part of the Old Covenant and when the Old Covenant was superseded, voila! it was gone!

You have 'weasel' words all the way through. No, this is not ----- it's a good reminder of it. Notice they don't say *the Sabbath of the Lord*. Israel know about the Sabbath, but they were able to keep it in Egypt. They were enslaved. They had harsh tasks, but they knew about the Sabbath. They

had to be known, because the Scriptures were there.

Not everybody had access, of course, but they knew by tradition, by what had been taught.

So now, let's look at one or two Scriptures in addition.

Exodus 31:12: "And the LORD spoke to Moses saying, 'Speak also to the children of Israel, saying, "Truly you shall keep My Sabbaths, **for it is a sign between Me and you throughout your generations to know that I am the LORD Who sanctifies you....** [Here God is really laying it down] ...You shall keep the Sabbath, therefore, for it *is* Holy to you. Everyone that defiles it shall surely be put to death, for whoever does *any* work on it, that soul shall be cut off from among his people. Six days may work be done, but on the seventh day *is* the Sabbath of rest, Holy to the LORD. Whoever does *any* work on the Sabbath Day, he shall surely be put to death" (vs 12-15).

Verse 17: "**It is a sign between Me and the children of Israel forever; for in six days the LORD made the heavens and the earth...**"

- hearkening back to creation week
- the foundation of the Sabbath
- this is really hardcore Sabbath-keeping
- the basis for it
- the theology for it
- the exegesis goes back to Gen. 2

When God created the seventh-day Sabbath!

"...and on the seventh day He rested, and was refreshed" (v 17).

Now, this is very, very interesting. The word for refreshed, because it really does mean 'nephesh' *living soul*; it means **rejuvenate**. So, the picture we are giving here is that God created everything in the six days. He rested on the seventh day, ceased from His work, but also rested. It was *a resting cease*.

And once again, as in Psa. 104, 'Oh, that's a grand piece of work I [God] did.'

- He was refreshed
- He was rejuvenated
- He took great satisfaction in the Sabbath

So when we keep the Sabbath, or when we do the Sabbath, however we want to look at it, we should take the same type of satisfaction. Not that we're seeking in some glory, not that we're thinking more of ourselves than we ought, but to realize the Son of God kept the Sabbath.

- He created the Sabbath
- He made it
- He ceased

- He set the example that we should follow

Therefore, in the same way, we should keep that Sabbath. And in our minds, cease, desist, blow out the cobweb, stop at extraneous thought. Or as in 2-Cor. 10, we may remember, 'cast down the imagination; bring every thought from the captivity,' especially on God's Sabbath. Relax, receive joy!

Here, I think, was an interesting question for you. You may get a kick out of it; I did. In one of my classes at the University of Judaism, we were going through Gen. 2, and we were going through it word by word. One of the students asked the question:

- Is it okay to go to a concert on Shabbat, the Sabbath?
- Is it okay to go to the mountains?

I'll never forget the rabbi's reply! Oh, it was a beauty! He was sharp, he really was. He replied this way:

Are you asking me as a rabbi or as a student of the Bible? If you can get his drift, because, if you're asking me as a rabbi, no, you need to be in Sabbath services. You need to be reciting the Shabbat! You need to be saying your prayers, worshipping God!

That's a rabbinic answer!

Now, clearly, we learned back in Gen. 2, commentary, that doing the Sabbath that way, *putting a blessing on it, sanctifying it, just setting it aside for a religious purpose, to worship God*. But then, is it wrong for me to be on a vacation over a weekend?

Here in Southern California, my favorite national park is Yosemite. I love Yosemite. I've been there many times. Oh, you can get lost in Yosemite. Same thing for Sequoia, or Glacier National Park, or any of the other national parks. You can really get close to God in one of those parks. *But not as a general rule!* So, the point of my bringing that out was:

Are we thinking in terms of rabbinic thinking, Church thinking, that we have to be in Church every Sabbath? *No, as long as God is our focus!* So, I thought his answer was very clever. Are you asking me as a rabbi, or a minister, or are you asking as a student of the Bible. What does the text say?

- Does the text say I have to be in a house of worship? *No!*

Look at Adam!

- Was there a house of worship for him? *We don't know!*
- How about Abraham? *Abraham was in the tent*, or he was out working the fields, for example, digging a well!

I don't know that he was in any house of worship! Melchizedek happened to be operating in the area and delivering sermons, and it may well have been.

But again, the Sabbath, mine, body and thought, honoring God, looking to Him, because He is the One Who is going to raise us from the dead. He is the One Who wants us to be as He is.

A Scripture that has always blown my mind, and this is what the Sabbath pictures.

This is the night of the Passover, where Jesus is instructing His disciples for the last time.

John 17:20: "I do not pray for these only, but also for those who shall believe in Me through their word."

So, **if** we ever

- get down
- feel bad
- feel low
- I'm alone
- am I really good enough
- does God really love me

That type of thing? Jesus already prayed for us!

- Is God with me with us?
- Does God hear the Son?
- Does God listen to what his beloved Son says?

And says today, oh, you get it, absolutely.

Verse 21 is the culmination of the Sabbath. The Kingdom of God, the reign of God, the Divine ruling Family of God:

Verse 21: "That they... [you and me] ...all may be one, even as You, Father, *are* in Me, and I in You..." ***You and I are to be one in spirit!***

- pray for each other,
- talk to each
- encourage each other

all well and good.

I know about the Son, and I know about the Father, and they're one. But what blows my mind, when I really think about it, is the next section.

"...**that they also may be one in Us...**" (v 21).

That's equality! You cannot be one with Christ and the Father unless you are, They are!

Remember Romans 8:16, where Paul is talking about suffering, and says, 'We are heirs, and joint heirs with Christ.'

Now, I'm in the income tax business, and I deal with inheritances. I mean, I'm not the attorney. I don't deal as the attorney does. What are the tax consequences? And I know what a joint heir is. If you've got three siblings, and they're joint heirs, they're equal. They get an equal amount of the corpus, whatever the inheritance is.

Well, if we inherit what Jesus inherits, that means we're His equal. *We're going to be!* As I commented on before, I really enjoy, and I haven't read it in a long time, that swashbuckling novel: *The Three Musketeers* by Alexander Dumas. Remember that? 'All for one, and one for all.'

The Father, the Son, and us, all unified as one! That is the culmination of Shabbat, the Sabbath, which indeed means:

- the Kingdom of God
- the reign of God
- the rule of God
- the Divine ruling Family of God

And the memorial of that creation is back there in Gen. 2:2-3!

That Shabbat, that seventh day, is the memorial of God's creation from beginning with the humanoid that man—Adam—clear through to whenever Christ returns, and all the Holy Days are fulfilled. The Father comes down, and we are in New Jerusalem, and we are all at one.

That's what the Sabbath quenched; that is the seventh day. Let us never forget, because that's what keeps us going, seeking that unity with God commemorated by the seventh day, God resting, to give us time to reflect on the meaning of that seventh day.

Glory! Glory! Glory!' as the angels cry out, 'Lord God Almighty, Holy, Holy, Holy.'

- let us strive to be that way
- let us strive to reverence the Sabbath
- let us ask God for more guidance and direction
- let us understand

So we will see greater aspects of the magnificent seventh of day!

Scriptural References:

- 1) Exodus 20:8-11
- 2) Genesis 1:31
- 3) Psalm 104:30-31

- 4) Genesis 26:5
- 5) Genesis 2:1-3, 2-3
- 6) Exodus 16:10, 12, 14-15, 22-23
- 7) Exodus 31:12-15, 17
- 8) John 17:20-21

Scriptures referenced, not quoted:

- Exodus 2:2-4, 21-24
- Exodus 16:22-30
- 2 Corinthians 10
- Romans 8:16

Also referenced: Books: (amazon.com)

- *From Sabbath to the Lord's Day* by Donald Carson
- *The Pentateuch and Haftorahs* by J.H Hertz
- *The Critical Experimental and Practical Commentary* by Jamison, Fawcett, and Brown
- *The Three Musketeers* by Alexander Dumas

MH:bo/po
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