

The Sabbath I

Michael Heiss—December 1, 2012

Good morning, everyone! We're going to start out with an introduction to what I consider the most important institution in the entirety of the Bible, aside of course, from Jesus Christ and His rule. That is the Sabbath, known as 'Ha Shabbat' in the Hebrew. It is a fascinating subject, it's meaning, it's origin, and a lot of it we normally just have a surface understanding of what it really means. We're going to take a look

- at its origin
- what scholars think of it
- what the Christian world thinks of it
- why they don't keep it

—and there are reasons why they don't, and the mistakes in their understanding.

To start out I'm going to make somewhat of a provocative statement, but not really. *The Sabbath can exist without the Holy Days, but the Holy Days cannot exist without the Sabbath!* The Holy Days hang on the hook of the Sabbath.

Remember, in the Bible the Sabbath is the *rest* of God. It represents the totality of God's reign:

- His rule
- His kingdom
- everything that He is

The Holy Days show how we get there. God was in process of recreating Himself, to colonize the entire universe.

Whether we want to say that He ran into a snafu, whether He planned the snafu, or whether He just allowed it to happen, difficult to say. But Paul said in Rom. 5, 'by one man sin entered into the world.' That blew the whole plan. As it was, how can you have God's rest with sin? *You can't!* What does He do? Enter the:

1. The Passover

Must have a Lamb to take away the sin of the world. So, that shows us that there had to be a sacrifice.

2. Days of Unleavened Bread—*had to get rid of sin!*

The fact that Jesus Christ came to die for our sins doesn't do any good if we stay in them. So, we have to move out of them; thus, we have the Days of Unleavened Bread—'ha mtzuth'

3. Pentecost:

- the birthday of the nation of Israel

- the giving of the Law
- the organization
- the birthday of the New Testament Church
- the giving of God's Holy Spirit

Can't really get rid of sin without the Spirit of God, so we have to have Pentecost. Then, at the end:

- the resurrection

But we're on the Sea of Glass kind of hanging in the air. That's not going to do any good. We've got to get down to earth—don't we?

4. Feast of Trumpets—'yom thruoe':

'In that day His feet shall stand on the Mt. of Olives.' That shows us that Jesus Christ and the saints coming down to earth to defeat the armies of the Beast Power.

That's still not good enough, because the *author of sin* is still there—we've got to get rid of him—Lucifer, Satan the devil. Enter:

5. The Day of Atonement:

A fit man taking the Azazel goat off into the wilderness. An angel comes down, fit and strong with a chain and takes Satan, just picks him up and just throws him into the bottomless pit (Rev. 20). He's gone and now begins the Millennium:

6. Feast of Tabernacles—the reign of God on earth

We're still not finished, what about all the people who have lived and died? Enter:

7. The Last Great Day:

When that is finished, the new heaven and the new earth and now we have the *rest* of God; can't have it until those things happen.

The Sabbath is the sum total of everything!

Where did it come from? It's fascinating, scholars don't know! They can't figure it out. First of all, it's contrary to every known astronomical measurement of time. There are 24 hours in a day, approximately. There are 30-1/2 days in a month; the moon revolving around the earth. Roughly 365 days in a year. Where does the *seven* come from? *Nowhere!*

Remember in the 1992 Presidential election, there was a phrase, a slogan, used by Bill Clinton and the Democrats? *It's the economy, stupid!* Remember that? Well, we can say without arrogance

and without disdain or contempt to the secular world, *it's God, stupid!* He's the Author of it! They can't find it in any other way.

I want to take a couple of quotes from a particular book. Many of you have probably read *From Sabbath to Sunday* by Samuele Bacchiocchi, but this from a more scholarly work *From Sabbath to the Lord's Day*, written by a series of scholars, how it came about and why it's no longer in effect. I want to just read a couple of passages to show you what they think, and you'll find it rather interesting in there in their conclusions:

From Sabbath to the Lord's Day

Since all available sources have failed to produce conclusive evidence for an alternative origin of Sabbath, we suggest that the Sabbath originated with Israel, and that with the Sabbath came the seven-day week.

All right, I can remember sitting in class at the Hebrew University, the University of Judaism, and we were discussing how Israel got its 'religion.' It was generally concluded that they borrowed it from the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Hivites, and so forth, along with the Sabbath and everything else.

Then one scholar said: 'Wait a minute, none of those civilizations had a seven-day week with the Sabbath. How can you borrow from a nation something that that nation did not have in the first place?' Back to the drawing boards: *okay, it originated with Israel! NO! It originated with God Who gave it to Israel!*

Today, of course, the Christian world and the scholarly world rejects the Sabbath today, and they do it for two main reasons:

There is a major assumption that a law derives—in this case the Sabbath—and all the laws of the Bible derive their authority from the covenant from which it was a part.

WRONG!

The Sabbath does not derive its authority from the covenant of which it is a part. It derives its authority from God Who gave it at creation. But if you take the assumption that the Sabbath derives its authority from the Old Covenant, make no mistake, the Sabbath was part of the Old Covenant. But just because the Old Covenant is waxing doesn't mean that God ever withdrew His authority from the Sabbath.

That is their fundamental mistake. Those who do agree that it's of a creation ordinance will tell you that it all ended with Christ, that's it.

Genesis 2—we are going to dissect this Scripture, we really are. We are going to read it in Hebrew and in English and we are going to see what it says, what it means and we are going to see multiples of sevens and threes in the Hebrew that you cannot possibly imagine. Gen. 1 and 2 are laced with threes and sevens—God is putting His stamp of approval and finality on His creation.

Genesis 2:1: "Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host of them."

Verse 2 (FV): "And **by** the beginning of the seventh-day God finished His work which He had made...." God completed His work in the seventh-day.

To start with, it might give the impression that the seventh-day came then He stopped His work. This word—'b ium'—is a preposition and is translated *in, with* or *by*. What would be the correct translation here?

Verse 2 (FV): "And **by** the beginning of the seventh-day God finished His work which He had made...."

If you've seen the horizon, you know that it's a transition. It's Friday, the sun is going down, it's sitting on the horizon. Has the Sabbath arrived? *No!* You see less and less of the sun; it's a transition period. The old day is waxing, the new day is beginning, so there is a transition time.

I don't want to speculate, was God doing His work until He saw the sun hit the horizon? I don't know! I don't care to know. What I do know is that by the time the seventh-day came, by the time the sun dipped below the horizon, He stopped His work.

You will see and scholars will tell you in this ordinance Shabbat it not mentioned. There is no command of God to keep it. Only if you equate the seventh-day with the Sabbath can you do that. We're going to see that *God does equate the seventh-day with the Sabbath*.

"...And He **rested** on the seventh-day from all His work which He had made" (v 2). Rest in this case does not really mean *to rest*. There is a Scripture that shows you that *rest* is connected with the Sabbath, but not here. God is not talking about *resting*. He's talking about *ceasing, stopping*. The Sabbath is a day where you cease and desist from your normal work.

In fact, I took German when I was going through college, and I didn't know I was going to wind up doing taxes in Southern California. Three guesses as to which language I should have studied—*Spanish!* But I do know at least one word in Spanish: 'alto'—stop. That's what God did, He stopped—'b ium eshbioi'—in the seventh-day, from

all His work, which He made. So, He stopped it.

Then it says, v 3 (*Int*): And blessed [‘uibrk’] God the day seventh and sanctified it...” All blessings start out with this formula: *blessed art Thou, oh Lord, our God, King of the universe*, and then whatever the blessing is. God blessed the seventh-day! Scholars will tell you that there’s no blessing on the seventh-day. What am I reading? *Yes!* He [God] blessed the seventh-day.

Then it says, “...and sanctified it...” He set it apart; He hallowed it. What is He hallowing? *The seventh-day!* What we’re going to see it, He didn’t sanctify the Sabbath. No, He did not! The Sabbath is a title; it is *a day of ceasing*. Does anybody remember the fourth century Constantine? What did he say? *No more Judaizing! No more keeping the seventh-day Sabbath! You shall rest on the venerable day of the sun!* Well, Sunday is a sabbath, a day of rest.

Look at the Protestant world, Oliver Cromwell, the Puritans—they kept Sunday and they called it the sabbath. Any day can be a sabbath. But God doesn’t call it the Sabbath here. He uses the term ‘Shabbat’ to show what He did.

Verse 3: “Because on it He rested...”—‘shabbat’—He ceased from His labor. That’s how He sanctified it.

There are 21 words—3 times 7—in the first three verses. What we have here is God is signing off on His creation.

- 7—the number of completeness
- 3—the number of finality

We use that terminology today, anyone ever hear of the phrases: *third time’s the charm; three strikes you’re out?* Where do we get it? *Right here from the Hebrew!* God is finalizing the creation week, and He’s doing it by 3 times 7. Incredible!

What blessing is He? He is sanctifying the seventh-day. That is why you don’t see God blessing the ‘shabbat.’ He doesn’t say that. He wants you to know that it is the seventh-day. Any day can be a ‘shabbat.’ You can call it that way. I remember reading in the literature and it threw me for a while. Reading some Protestant literature that talked about the Sabbath. I didn’t know they were keeping the sabbath.

Well, they were keeping a sabbath, the first-day sabbath. The sabbath is just a title. What God is trying to tell us here is, ‘My Sabbath you shall keep; the days that I sanctify, and *I’m sanctifying the seventh-day*. I’m not sanctifying any other day.’ When you’re keep the seventh-day Shabbat, this is what God wants to get across.

In these three sentences (Gen. 2:1-3) the words

- Elohim is mentioned 3 times
- Seventh-day is mentioned 3 times
- His work is mentioned 3 times
- done is mentioned 3 times

Can you get more explicit? Is it possible? *No!*

In Gen. 1, for example, you’ll find—among other things—that the term ‘God’ is mentioned 35 times—5 times 7. We can go through the rest of Gen. 1 and show how so many words are multiples of seven. God is equating the Sabbath with the seventh-day. That is the whole point!

Exodus 20:8: “Remember the Sabbath Day to keep it Holy.” Why? *Because:*

Verse 11: “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....”

Remember a man named Noah? It says that he shall give us rest. What is Noah? *The Hebrew word for Noah means rest!* That’s what his name means. In his days the curse of Adam ended and the land would produce more. There is rest that is associated with the Sabbath, but the reason for keeping the Sabbath is because of what God did back Gen. 2:2-3.

Exodus 31:14: “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. Therefore, the children of Israel shall keep the Sabbath, to observe the Sabbath throughout their generations *as* a perpetual covenant. It *is* a sign between Me and the children of Israel forever; for in six days the LORD made the heavens and the earth... [again, hearkening back to Gen. 2] ...and on the seventh-day He rested... [He ceased] and was refreshed”” (vs 14-17).

This *refreshment* mind you is most interesting because it is ‘u inphsh’—Gen. 1, the living creatures. God was revitalized. How is God revitalized? God doesn’t slumber; He doesn’t sleep. What is it trying to tell us? *When God finished His work, He took pride in it!*

There is a phrase in Gen. 1 that says *very good*. After each day it says that it was good. The Lord saw and it was good. But the phrase at the end of Gen. 1 is the superlative: magnificent, stupendous, outstanding. You can’t get a greater compliment. He signed off His creation, and it was

though He went *YES! That is good!*

By accomplishing what He did, it was as though He was *refreshed*. The concept in the Hebrew is *man is to imitate God*. As He was refreshed by taking solace in the Sabbath, so we are to do the same thing. We are to follow Him in keeping the Sabbath. We are to rest because He rested. It doesn't matter that the Old Covenant is no longer in effect for begotten sons of God. That doesn't matter at all.

What does concern us is the Sabbath is *His sign*. He says, 'My Sabbaths...' Again, not the sabbath of Dagon or Chemosh. They all had sabbaths. They had all different days, which they were worshiped, but the seventh-day Sabbath.

We're going to look at many different Scriptures next time. We're going to look at the changing of the guard that took place on the Sabbath, the showbread that was changed on the Sabbath. There are many activities that took place on the Sabbath that, believe me, constituted work. Yet, that was not considered a violation of the Sabbath.

Why? We'll see that next time.

Scriptural References:

- 1) Genesis 2:1-3
- 2) Exodus 20:8, 11
- 3) Exodus 31:14-17

Scriptures referenced, not quoted:

- Romans 5
- Revelation 20
- Genesis 1

Also referenced: Books:

- *From Sabbath to Sunday* by Samuele Bacchiocchi
- *From Sabbath to the Lord's Day* (by a series of scholars)

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Transcribed: 12-9-12