

The Sabbath and the Seventh Day II

Michael Heiss—January 26, 2013

I would like to continue on with our discussion of the Sabbath. If you will remember last time, we found two major mistakes, fundamental flaws, that professing Christians of this age—and other ages—and scholars made.

First, to them a law derives its authority from the covenant of which it's a part. Mistake #1! When it came to the Sabbath and the seventh day, we look back to Gen. 2. I brought my little book again to just quote from this one particular scholar. Listen to what he says, and this is typical of this scholar. He's not the only one.

Gen. 2 does not mention the word *Sabbath*. So, unless the reader equates seventh day and Sabbath, there is no reference to the Sabbath here.

He doesn't want to see the Sabbath. It's true, the noun Shabbat does not exist there. It's in the verb form, and that, to him, is meaningless.

Secondly, for professing Christians, Jesus Christ abrogated the Sabbath along with the whole Old Testament, the Old Covenant. Since the Old Covenant is gone, therefore, all the laws that are a part of that Old Covenant are gone; except as specifically innumeralated in the New Testament. And the Sabbath is not there. Of course, they conveniently omit Hebrews 3 & 4 where Paul talks about a Sabbath-keeping. 'That's vague and it refers to some vague time in the future.' That's how they get around that.

We're going to try to pick it up from last time and look at the first area where the Sabbath is equated with the seventh day, and all hands agree.

Exodus 16:1—talking about the children of Israel: "And they took their journey from Elim, and all the congregation of the children of Israel came into the wilderness of Sin... [v 2]: ...Israel murmured... [Nothing new about that, is there?] ...And the children of Israel said to them, 'O that we had died by the hand of the LORD in the land of Egypt, when we sat by the fleshpots, when we ate bread to the full...' That's not the song they were singing a few years before. But times change!

Verse 4: "Then the LORD said to Moses, 'Behold, I will rain bread from the heavens for you. And the people shall go out and gather a certain amount every day, that I may prove them... [v 5]: And it shall come to pass on the sixth day, they shall prepare what they bring in. And it shall be twice as much as they gather day-by-day'" (vs 4-5). We hear

the rest of the instructions about murmuring and murmuring.

Verse 13: And it came to pass, at sunset, that the quails came up and covered the camp. And at sunrise the dew lay all around the camp. And when the layer of dew had gone up, 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?'..." (vs 13-15).

Years ago, back in Oak Park, Illinois, when I was studying history and science, I studied German. I attended my first opera in German. Not a word in English. But there was one phrase in that opera that everybody knew. You couldn't help but know. It's a section where someone yells out 'What is that?' The children of Israel didn't know what it was. "... 'What is that?'..." *Manna!*

Verse 16: "This *is* the thing which the LORD has commanded. 'Each man gather of it according to his eating, an omer for each one, according to the number of your persons. Each one shall take for those who *are* in his tent.' And the children of Israel did so, and gathered, some more, and some less. And when they measured with an omer, he that gathered much had nothing over, and he that gathered little lacked nothing. They gathered each one according to his eating. And Moses said, 'Let no man leave any of it until the *next* morning.' But they did not hearken to Moses... [Again! What else is new?] ...and some of them left *part* of it until the *next* morning. And it became rotten *with* maggots, and stank. And Moses was angry with them" (vs 16-20). I imagine you he would be.

Verse 21: "And they gathered it morning by morning, each man according to his eating.... [v 22]: And it came to pass, on the sixth day they gathered twice as much bread... [v 23]: This *is that* which the LORD has said, 'Tomorrow is the rest of the Holy Sabbath to the LORD....'" This has the emphasis of Holiness attached to it. It's special! It's solemn! A solemn Sabbath followed by a Sabbath of Holiness. So, it is there! Tomorrow is going to be the seventh day.

Verse 24: "And they laid it up until the *next* morning as Moses said. And it did not stink; neither was there any worm in it.... [v 25]: And Moses said, 'Eat it today, for today *is* a Sabbath to the LORD. Today you shall not find it in the field. Six days you shall gather it, but on the seventh day, the Sabbath..." (vs 24-26).

The scholar said, ‘Do you equate the seventh day with Shabbat?’” *God is!* What do you think He’s doing here? Remember, any day can be a Shabbat. Constantine talked about not Judaizing. ‘Let everyone rest on the venerable day of the sun’—Sunday. That was a sabbath. Devout Christians call Sunday the sabbath, because they rested. In fact, anybody remember the song *Never on Sunday*? It was sung by ‘a lady of the evening’ when she said you can ‘kiss me on a Monday, a Monday; a Tuesday, a Tuesday, but never on Sunday, that’s my day of rest. To her, no activity on Sunday.

What is God’s Sabbath? Here it is, v 26: “Six days you shall gather it, but on the seventh day, the Sabbath, in it there shall be none. And it came to pass *that some* of the people went out on the seventh day in order to gather, but they did not find *any*. And the LORD said to Moses, ‘How long do you refuse to keep My commandments and My laws?’” (vs 26-28).

Didn’t the scholar say that this was the first mention of Sabbath; that they didn’t know it before this? God is now angry with them because they did not keep the Sabbath properly. He says, “...‘How long do you refuse to keep My commandments and My laws?’” They knew the laws! They knew those commandments! Why would God be upset if this was the first time that He introduced it to them?

It depends on your perspective. If you’re a modern secular scholar, that’s going to be your position. On the other hand, if you truly believe that the Bible has something to do with God—really has something to do with God—I have my commentary I’ve been using since 1964, Rabbi Hertz says that the people of Israel came down to Egypt with Jacob. They were the brethren of Joseph. They knew the traditions of God. They had the book of Genesis or parts of Genesis. They undoubtedly knew of the seventh day. So, clearly, this is not the first introduction of the Sabbath.

Verse 30: “So the people rested on the seventh day.”

Verse 29: “...Let each one stay in his place. Do not let any one go out of his place on the seventh day.”

If time permits I will show you how the rabbis interpreted this and what they did to it. It is unbelievable! You cannot go out of your place and they created this ‘legal fiction’ on how you can interpret that as being your home, your city block, your town, by transferring food from one spot to another spot you had in common. Therefore, going out of your place to be the farthest end of your town—you can go 2,000 cubits beyond that. You can read about that in Acts 1:10-12—when the

disciples see Jesus descending for the last time, it says it’s about ‘a Sabbath Day’s journey’ back to the city. That’s where they got the term ‘Sabbath Day’s journey’—roughly 2,000 cubits.

Now we’re going to take a look at Exodus 20 and we’re going to take a look at the word ‘rest.’ We’re going to find some interesting things.

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.... [What is the rationale? Why?] ...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).

Remember back in Gen. 2 when God blessed and sanctified the seventh day. Here God is saying, that He blessed and sanctified the Sabbath. They are the same in God’s eyes. Not the world’s eyes, but in God’s eyes! And the rationale for doing this is to follow God. The concept in the Hebrew is that man does what God does. If God ceases and desists on the Sabbath, man is to cease and desist on the Sabbath.

Here it says that He ‘rested the seventh day.’ This word for ‘rest’ truly is the word for *rest*. We saw back in Gen. 2 where it says that God rested. He ceased, desisted, stops. Here it said *He rested, literally*. It doesn’t talk about ceasing, but it means *to rest*. The point is, it’s both. We will see, and it’s brought out in the Hebrew: *you cease your labor on the seventh day in order to be at rest so that you may be refreshed, revitalized*. God is pictured as ceasing, resting, and becoming revitalized.

The Hebrew word for *refresh* means *to take breath*. How does God take breath? *He doesn’t!* But it’s a picture, an illustration. Man does the same thing; the animals are doing the same thing. God tells them. We keep the Sabbath because God tells us in Genesis the reason to do it.

Let’s look a little more at *rest*. We’re going to start out by looking at Exodus. We’re going to see Exo. 23 to start with. Exodus 23:12: “Six days you shall do your work, and on the seventh day you shall rest, so that your ox and your donkey may rest, and the son of your handmaid, and the stranger, may be **rejuvenated**.”

Exodus 31:13—where God is saying, “Speak also to the children of Israel, saying, ‘Truly you shall keep My Sabbaths... [‘shbththi’—that is

indeed Sabbaths, and it's in the plural, no question] ...for it *is* a sign between Me and you throughout your generations..." This is where many modern scholars will point out that it's just for Israel—a sign between God and Israel—and nobody else. They just don't understand.

Verse 14: "You shall keep the Sabbath therefore, for it *is* Holy to you. Everyone that defiles it shall surely be put to death..."

Verse 15: "Six days may work be done, but on the seventh day *is* the Sabbath of rest..." This truly is a *resting* Sabbath.

Verse 16: "Therefore, the children of Israel shall keep the Sabbath, to observe the Sabbath..."

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, and **on the seventh day He rested, and was refreshed.**"

Read in the Hebrews we will see some very interesting things. The Hebrew word for 'refreshed' means *take breath*.

Genesis 1:20: "And God said, 'Let the waters abound *with* swarms of living creatures, and let fowl fly over the earth on the face of the firmament of heaven.'" Living creatures—'nephesh chie'

Verse 21—we have *living creatures*—same Hebrew word. Verse 24—we find *living creatures*. How is God like a living creature? Remember Gen. 2:7 where it talks about He breathes the *breath of life* and man became a *living being*? A *living* 'nephesh'

When it talks about being refreshed, it's talking about a being *revitalized*. God is pictured as taking such great satisfaction in culminating His work in Gen. 1 & 2, when He sits back and He describes it as *it was good*. This is *very good*, *exceedingly good*—it is a superlative.

God ceased on the Sabbath. He then 'rested.' Remember, when you cease from something you are resting from what you were doing. And with such satisfaction it was as though He recharged His batteries. Although we know He didn't. When it comes to man and animals, they literally do.

Now we're coming back to Exodus 23:12: "Six days you shall do your work, and on the seventh day you shall **rest**, so that your ox and your donkey may **rest**..." That is the same English word, but it is not the same Hebrew word. We've got two words for resting here.

"...you shall rest..."—'ba inuch' is the word for rest. Remember, in English you can have a word that can mean several different

things. Example, run: run a race, score runs in baseball, run in your stockings, run on the bank.

In Hebrew that cannot be. If you have a three-letter word, wherever you see those three letters it always means the same thing. Maybe a subtle nuance, maybe a slight variation, but it means the same. Here you 'cease from work' in order to have rest. That is the whole point.

"...and the stranger, may be **rejuvenated**" (v 12).

Herman Wouk was a great playwright and author. The book that read of his *This is My God*, he also wrote *The Winds of War*. Herman Wouk was a playwright, a producer, and he would work long and hard, but he was an observant Jew. Every Friday at sundown he would close up everything and home he would go. Meanwhile, the rest of the people were there trying to solve problems, and they would say, 'Herman, where are you going?' He would say, 'Don't worry, I'll be back tomorrow night or Sunday morning and all these problems will still be there; they're not going anywhere. Don't worry about them, I'll be there to tackle them then.'

One of the individuals said to him, 'I don't envy you your religion, but I do envy you your Sabbath. The way you can wrap things up, go off and leave all your cares and worries behind, and come back with this renewed vigor, you're not the same person exactly. You're not worn down.'

This is what the Sabbath was supposed to be, and that's what God is instructing us—ceasing from the labor in order to rest so we can be rejuvenated. That is the fundamental concept of the Sabbath, and it works beautifully, it really does. It is truly *rest!*

Now let us look at Psalm 95. This is referred to by the Apostle Paul in Heb. 3 & 4. Psalm 95:8—God is speaking, "Harden not your heart as in the rebellion, as in the day of temptation in the wilderness when your fathers tempted Me, tried Me, even though they saw My work. For forty years I was grieved with that generation, and said, 'It is a people who go astray in their hearts, and they have not known My ways'—to whom I swore in My wrath that they should not enter into **My rest**'" (vs 8-11). What does it mean "...enter into My rest"? Let's take another look at the word *rest*.

2-Samuel 7:1: "And it came to pass when the king dwelt in his house, and when **the LORD had given him rest** round about from all his enemies." The *Lord gave him rest!* God gave David rest; in other words, *peace*. The word here really means *at ease, a settled place, peaceful, lack of fear*. We are going to enter God's ultimate rest. I just

wanted you to get the feel for this rest.

Verse 11: “And even from the time that I commanded judges *to be* over My people of Israel, so will **I cause you to rest** from all your enemies....” Again, *rest*. Ultimately, this is the Millennium. Frankly, ultimately the Kingdom of God. Remember that we talked about the Sabbath being the Kingdom of God, the rest of God, the totality of God. That’s why He’s *causing rest*.

Hebrews 3:7: “”For this reason, even as the Holy Spirit says, ‘Today, if you will hear His voice, harden not your hearts, as in the rebellion, in the day of temptation in the wilderness.... [we just read that] ...where your fathers tempted Me *and* tried Me, and saw My works forty years. Because of this, I was indignant with that generation, and said, ‘They are always going astray in their hearts, and they have not known My ways.’ So I swore in My wrath, “If they shall enter into My rest—”’ (vs 7-11). The rest of God, the peace of God.

Verse 18: “And to whom did He swear *that they* would not enter into His rest, except to those who had disobeyed?”

Hebrews 4:3: “For we who have believed, we ourselves are entering into the rest, as He has said, ‘So I swore in My wrath, “If they shall enter into My rest—”’ although the works were finished from *the* foundation of *the* world.... [talking about Gen. 1] ...For He spoke in a certain place about the seventh *day* in this manner: ‘And **God rested** on the seventh day from all His works”’ (vs 3-4). Concerning this, if they shall enter into My rest.

Verse 5: “Consequently, since it remains *for* some to enter into it, and those who had previously heard the Gospel did not enter in because of disobedience, again He marks out a certain day, ‘**Today**,’ saying in David after so long a time (exactly as it has been quoted *above*), ‘**Today**, if you will hear His voice, harden not your hearts.’ For if Joshua had given them rest, He would not have spoken *long* afterwards of another day. There remains, therefore, Sabbath-keeping for the people of God” (vs 5-9).

If we were to take the Hebrew concepts into this, *if Joshua had given them true rest*, then he would need to speak of another day. “There remains Sabbath-keeping...” *the keeping of the seventh day!*

Verse 10: “For the one who has entered into His rest, he also has ceased from his works, just as God *did* from His own *works*.” The Sabbath is the ultimate rest of God. You and I are privileged to one day enter into that. If we did not have the Sabbath, we would not know that.

When it says that God rested on the Sabbath,

and we rest, it doesn’t mean that you literally rest and do nothing and do no work. It’s the type of work. Remember what Jesus said to the Pharisees and Sadducees, ‘Oh, the priests, they do work, but they’re blameless.’ It’s hard work. If you were priest in that temple—hoisting those animals, slitting their throats, draining them—that was work.

Jesus also said in John 5, ‘I work, and My Father works.’ They didn’t like that! First of all, ‘My Father works, and I work’? Who are You? What do you mean ‘You and Your Father’? He had equated Himself with the Father. Of course, He was the Son of God; He had been in heaven before. And then He said that He works.

- Who keeps this whole universe running?
- Who, by His thought command, keeps every molecule, electron, proton, neutron—the whole universe—going? Mental activity!

God does!

- Didn’t you work to get here?
- Didn’t you get dressed?
- Didn’t you get in your car?
- Didn’t you drive?

Yes, you were working! But it was working to attain education, to learn about the Sabbath.

So, in all conclusion, the Sabbath rest, the complete rest, the total rest of God, that is the seventh day rest of God. That was the basic concept I wanted to get across.

At some future time, I would like to show you two Scriptures about kindling fire on the Sabbath and about not going out in the concept of the rabbi. I want to leave you one concept of the rabbis that is of great important, and it’s not all bad, it really isn’t:

We know what Jesus said in Mark 7, ‘You make void the Law of God by your tradition.’ That’s true! But all the Jews had were *traditions*. They had nothing else. How are you going to pass on to generation after generation *your truth*, if you don’t have the Spirit of God? All they had was their tradition, and to them, life consisted of a multitude of minimalisms. You get up in the morning and you say this, you do that,

- you eat with a blessing
- you go to work with a blessing
- you come home with a blessing
- you go to bed with a blessing

Remember *Fiddler on the Roof*? When someone rose up to the rabbi and says, ‘Rabbi, Rabbi, is there a blessing for the Czar?’ *Of course*,

my son, may God bless and keep the Czar far away from us! There's a blessing for everything!

Remember, at the end, Tavier says, 'Without our tradition, we would be as shaky as a fiddler on the roof.' You look at the Churches of God—this is where I'm going to put in a kind word for the rabbis—they succeeded. Look at all of Israel, going back to the days of ancient Israel—talking about the ten tribes—did they know who they are? Do they teach any of the lessons that they learned from Moses, David, Elisha? *No! They had no traditions, and they didn't have the Spirit of God either!* But at least the rabbis had their traditions, and what they did was transmit it. Look at the Church of God—Radio Church of God, Worldwide Church of God—today; o a hundred thousand strong at one point. *Nothing!*

Paul even talked about the Church had its traditions. I'm not here praising traditions. I'm simply pointing out that because the rabbis did what they did, they passed it on successfully. If they hadn't done that, we would not have the Old Testament. We would not have the sacred Hebrew Scriptures, because it was by *tradition* that they translated and copied.

So, a partially kind word for the rabbis and traditions. Not compared to the Truth of God. We're not talking about traditions that transgressed the Law of God, or the rule of God.

Look at you and me today. We started out Sabbath services and sang a couple of songs.

- Has God commanded people get together and have two songs before services? *No!*
- Does God say you shall have two messages in the morning? *No!*
- Is it wrong? *No!*

It's tradition! Tradition of the Church of God! Nothing wrong with it! It's a way of doing things. If I may put it this way, think in terms of giving offerings—seven days we take up an offering.

- Does God command us to take up an offering seven days? *Frankly, no!*

Three seasons in the year you shall come before God; don't come before Him empty.

Today it is convenient for us to do it, because we have money, dollars, we can write a check out. We're paid by the week, month, every other week. Go back 3,000 years ago and they didn't have that. They brought a turtledove, or maybe a goat, a lamb, a bullock. What were they going to do? On the Feast of Trumpets they were going to chop off the head and give the head? On the Day of Atonement they were going to cut off the hind-end

and give the hind-end? Then later on cut off the first half on the first Holy Day and the second half on the second Holy Day? *Nonsense!*

If they had a bullock they gave it on whatever day there were to give, because God said, 'During those seasons, don't come before Me empty.' He didn't mean to say you got to give each Holy Day. Well, we take up offerings on each Holy Day. Why? *It's convenient! It's a very effective way of doing it!* Is it commanded? *No!* Is it wrong? *No!* It's just the way we feel is best at this time. That is an example of a good tradition.

There are all kinds of traditions. So, before we clobber the rabbis for every tradition and let's set back and say that some of these traditions are good. On the other hand, some of them are terrible. We know what Jesus said about the person who said, 'I could give this to you, my father, but I'm devoting it to the temple.' *Oh, you make void the Law of God, you break the law of honoring your father and your mother.* They did some of those things, no question.

I'm going to, hopefully, show you some of those traditions and how they came down and how they were effective. I think you'll find it very, very interesting into their thought patterns.

Scriptural References:

- 1) Exodus 16:1-5, 13-28, 30, 29
- 2) Exodus 20:8-11
- 3) Exodus 23:12
- 4) Exodus 31:13-17
- 5) Genesis 1:20
- 6) Exodus 23:12
- 7) Psalm 95:8-11
- 8) 2 Samuel 7:1, 11
- 9) Hebrews 3:7-11, 18
- 10) Hebrews 4:3-10

Scriptures referenced, not quoted:

- Genesis 2
- Acts 1:10-12
- Genesis 1:21, 24
- John 5
- Mark 7

Also referenced: Books:

- *From Sabbath to the Lord's Day* (by a series of scholars)
- *This is My God* by Herman Wouk
- *The Winds of War* by Herman Wouk

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