

THE SABBATH DAY

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First mentioned in Genesis 2:3.

God labored six days, rested (ceased) on the seventh. He sanctified it.

Adam's first day was the Sabbath Day, though not so called until after Adam was created.

So, Sabbath predates the law. For 2500 years, no mention made of it.

In Exodus 19, Israel asks for a written law. God gives it and commands Sabbath observances (Exodus 20:8-11). Five reasons:

1. God rested on the Sabbath (Exodus 20:8-11).
2. Deliverance from Egypt (Deuteronomy 5:15). A commemoration of their deliverance.
3. Sign of the Mosaic Covenant (Exodus 31:12-18).
4. Sake of man and the land (Leviticus 25)
5. Shadow of things to come (Colossians 2:17).

While God rested on the Sabbath, man is never commanded to do so until the law (Exodus 16, 20).

The Sabbath was given only to Israel, not the gentiles or the church. Only under the law is a penalty imposed for violations (Exodus 31:13-15).

Note Colossians 2:9-13. For the church, circumcision is spiritual (v.11) and baptism is spiritual (v.12). The church has no physical ordinances necessary for spiritual relationship. We are not answerable for law-related impositions (v.16, note "Sabbath days"). They are but shadows of extant realities (v.17), as we are complete in Christ (v.10a) and need nothing else.

Jews worked six days seeking to please God; rested (ceased), but then had to work six more, as God's requirements were never satisfied (Hebrews 10:8). God, through Christ, replaced this process with permanent peace and rest, in Christ (Hebrews 10:9). Now we are perfect in Christ (Hebrews 10:10-14).

As the first Adam was created on the sixth day, with the seventh being a day of rest, or God, so the last Adam has origin on the 8th day (or the first day of the week). Christ rested (in the grave) on the 7th day, having finished His work on the sixth day (John 19:30 "It is finished"). He then arose on the 8th day (or first day of the new week), to offer eternal rest to all who trust in Him.

He met the disciples in the upper room on the first day (John 20:19), and a week later on the first day of that week (John 20:26).

Paul went to the Jews and ministered to them on three consecutive Sabbath days (Acts 17:1, 2), being all things to all people (I Corinthians 9:22). He did similarly in Corinth (Acts 18:4) and Ephesus (Acts 18:19), and in Ephesus on his third missionary journey for a three month period (Acts 19:8). In

Athens, on the second journey, he preached both in the synagogue and in the market place. This adequately suggests that this was his pattern everywhere: On the streets during the week, and in the synagogues on Saturdays? It would have been sort of foolish for Paul to preach in the synagogues on Monday or Friday. The Jews assembled on Saturday (the sixth day), so that is when Paul ministered to them. People, of course, frequented the Temple every day, but the sixth day was the day of assembly.

But, what did he preach? The resurrection, in every case (Acts 17:3, 31; 18:5, by implication, for if Jesus is not raised, how could He be Christ? "...Witnessing to the Jews the Christ Jesus," and similarly, in verse twenty-eight. One might indeed wonder if included in these arguments was the fact of the cessation of the Sabbath observances.

But now, on his third journey, he returns to the local churches established from among the Jews converted in the synagogue ministries, and the gentiles, in the marketplace ministries. In Acts 20:6, Paul arrives in Troas on a Sunday or Monday, depending on the method of counting seven days. He goes right past the seventh day, waiting for the first day of the week, the normal day in which the disciples were accustomed to assembling, and breaks bread with them, and preaches a sermon. (As a sidelight, if this text requires a church to partake of communion every Sunday [v.7], then does verse 11 [which occurs on Monday following], teach we should do it every Monday, also? Or, every time someone is raised from the dead? Or, every time we start a new church service? Or maybe it has no significance at all, except to show that whenever they chose to observe the Communion, they did so; that there is no time cycle imposed on us, for we are not under law, but under grace.) Of course, neither is there any command to meet on the first day of the week. But, if the church is to meet, it must meet on some day of the week. The first day is the pattern established by Christ, and has deep spiritual significance, and the example of the early church. But neither the first day, nor any other day, provides any merit for obtaining a right standing with God (Colossians 2:16-23; Galatians 4:8-11).

The Sabbath was ordained, under the law, a day to cease from working. Christ finished His work on the sixth day on the cross, rested on the seventh, and arose on the eighth, in eternal rest, or cessation of the work which he had finished. Through faith, we enter into that rest Hebrews 4:1-11).

To assemble on the sixth day suggests we are still trying to find the rest we need. Assembling on the first day demonstrate our faith, under grace, in the finished work of Christ.

Assembling on the seventh day is identifying with the First Adam, the Old Man, created on the sixth day. The First Day declares new life in Christ, the Last Adam: The New Man, created on the first day of the week—the day following the day of Rest!

A BRIEF CONSIDERATION OF THE IDEA OF THE SABBATH, PROPHETICALLY.

According to II Peter 3:8, God views one day as a thousand years, and a thousand years to be but one day. God is timeless, the eternal Being. We are creatures of time, which thing God created, as recorded in Genesis 1:1. God has a plan. His plan had a beginning, and it has an ending. It began with the onset of time, and shall end when time shall be no more (Revelation 10:6).

Our calendars are all out of whack, apparently. We don't know what time it really is. Of these we are assured, that the earth is of recent origin, and not the extensive age of evolutionary theory. Adam was created an adult (if otherwise, who fed him and changed his diaper?). So was Eve, obviously, and very soon after Adam was created, not after years of waiting on him to grow up. The food producing vegetation was created with mature fruit in place, for mature humans to eat. Then, likewise, the whole creation was

created in maturity, complete with the marks of age built in. Consequently, science detects long age in the elements of earth, but the age was built in by God. It is not deception, but a logical necessity, so the universe can function with everything it needs immediately in place. Biblically, evolution, whether atheistic or theistic, is erroneous.

We, Biblically, record about six thousand years of earth history. Can it be, then, that we are indeed about to embark on the seventh thousand year period? That is, six days of labor with the seventh slated to be a day of rest. Christ is indeed prophesied to return and establish a day of rest, a thousand years of peace on earth. Then, the eighth day shall be a day of eternal rest, as eternity again resumes, without time, in the new heaven and new earth.

The theology of this is so extensive that this author will not attempt here to expound the concept in detail. It is a good study for another thesis. One Scripture, however, that is very interesting, in light of the above, is found in Hosea 5:13 - 6:3. It is interesting to note the prophetic context, ranging all the way from Israel of Hosea's day to the prophetic latter rain of the last days at the return of our Lord. Consider the going away and returning to "my" place, viewed as Christ ascending to the Father? Then, Israel returns to her God, as all the prophets prophesy she will. Two days after Christ ascends (two thousand years!), she returns to God and is healed and raised up in the third day (the seventh day, the millennial kingdom which Christ shall establish when He returns). In 5:15, the one speaking says he will return to his place (the ascension back to Heaven) "(un)til...." The implication is clear--then he will return back to this place. Chapter six, verse three declares it to be so.

Surely, we are near to His return. The prophetic years of labor are about over. The Millennial Day of Rest is about to begin. How much closer, the Rapture (I Thessalonians 4:13-17)? Are you ready?