

## The Sabbath: For Man's Benefit

When our Father formally established Israel as His very own possession, whom He loved, He gave them His instructions (*Torah* means instruction) to live by, and the Ten Commandments, so that it would go well with them — so that they would be able to exist in peace and protection against all alien forces, so as to allow them to continue to exist in an enemy-free land.

One of those commandments (Jn 14:21) was that they would rest on the seventh day of the week from all their normal labor or work. He made this day of rest for His people because He loved them so much, and was looking out for their best interests. He wanted them to be healthy and to be a light to all other nations. He wanted them to remember that they were serving their Creator as well, and therefore their day of rest was a sign that Israel was His holy nation, set apart from all others, and that they were in a covenant relationship with Him, and He with them (Ex 19:5-6; 1 Pet 2:9-10; Mt 21:43).

So anyone who would not keep this day of rest obviously did not love Him and did not care whether they would be protected from foreign aggression or have the enemy-free land promised to Abraham. They were proud of their own strength and power. Such a person had to be executed, for as it says, it is better for one to die than the whole nation (Jn 11:50). This was a good law for the good of the nation and everyone's eternal destiny. This day was set apart especially for Yahweh's holy name, for remembering His creation (Ex 20:8-11; 31:13-17; Num 15:32-36; Dt 5:12-15). But today on the Sabbath in Israel, night clubs are open and the Jews go wild, and the Arabs blow them up.

Every Sabbath in Old Israel, there would be the placing and setting in order of the bread of presence (showbread) and the offering of sacrifices (Lev 24:5-9; Num 28:9-10). Lev 24:5-9 — Twelve cakes, one for each of the tribes of Israel. Every Sabbath, new

loaves replaced the ones that had been there for a week, and the priests would eat them in a holy place. Verse 7 — With the bread they would offer frankincense as a memorial offering, as also Lev 7:11-15 describes the peace offering as a sacrifice of thanksgiving. These offerings foreshadowed the bread of the supper we partake of as a memorial to our Master's death and resurrection (Jn 6:35).

On the Sabbath, the priest who served two weeks on a rotation basis in the temple for the Levitical priesthood, offered sacrifices and renewed the showbread in the tabernacle.

Also, the rest of the tribes would let their animals rest from work on the Sabbath (Dt 5:14; Neh 13:15-22), and even the land had rest one year in seven (Lev 25:3-4). Any festival day, such as Passover, was also called a Sabbath rest day, even though it did not necessarily coincide with the usual seventh-day Sabbath (Lev 16:29-31; 23:30-32), such as Passover fell on Thursday at the time our Master was crucified, and was called a "high day" (Jn 19:31; Mt 12:40).

Most of old Israel's Sabbath-keeping was not pleasing to our Father, so He could not answer their prayers, and their offerings were not acceptable to Him since they had wrong attitudes, as we also can (Phil 2:5; 1 Jn 3:22). Some were annoyed because it interfered with or interrupted their money-making activities (Amos 8:5), and others used the day for their own pleasure, or to do their own thing (Isa 58:13-14; Jer 17:21-23). Through despising or profaning our Father's covenant sign, the people brought destruction upon the whole nation (Eze 20:23-24; 23:38; 2 Chr 36:21). Even after 70 years of captivity in Babylon, in spite of the reason they were taken captive and the temple destroyed, they soon began desecrating the Sabbath again (Neh 13:15-22).

The Babylonian captivity, which lasted 70 years, was the direct result of Israel's neglect of the Sabbatical year (2 Chr 36:20-21) — one year of captivity for each Sabbath year unobserved. They had ignored the scriptures for 490 years. So during their exile, the land could enjoy the Sabbath rests it had been denied (Lev 26:40-45).

So over the next few centuries, the teachers of the Law, due to their evil heart and attitude, built up a system of countless Sabbath regulations to add to the simple rest day our Father made for them to honor Him by being healthy and wise — a sign of the covenant. He made this covenant with them to bless them above all nations, but they were cursed above all nations instead.

Our Master Yahshua is Lord of the Sabbath (Mk 2:23-28; 1 Sam 21:6). The Law is good, not as some who consider it oppressive, since they hate God, the lawgiver. To save a human life, or even an animal in the ditch, takes precedent over the Law — to love your neighbor, or your animal, etc. Ahimelech, just as our Master, kept the spirit of the Law. Only the sons of God are led by the Spirit (Acts 20:6-7; Rom 8:4). In Mk 2:25-26, the showbread from the tabernacle was for the priest, and was not lawful for others to eat, except in this certain circumstance to save life, doing the good that our Father approves (Jn 7:22-24).

Through schools and synagogues the teachers of the Law spread and enforced their regulations and disregarded the work of God, and as a result came into conflict with our Master (Lk 6:6-11; 13:10-17). It's always right to do good on the Sabbath. Resting is good, and pulling an ox out of a ditch is also very good (Mt 12:9-13).

Jn 5:16-18 — Life is more important than having an evil attitude about the Sabbath, kept as a mere ritual for eye service. Our Father gave man the Sabbath for his benefit, not for his discomfort. The Sabbath is meant to ease man's burden, not increase it! (Mt 12:1-8; 23:4). Our Master opposed the traditions of the scribes and Pharisees (Mk 7:6-9), but He knew the Law of Moses, the commandments regarding the Sabbath, given to Israel to fulfill His purpose, which was being trampled upon (Mt 21:43). Mt 9:16-17 — To patch up old Israel is as impossible as to patch up Christianity.

Rom 8:4 — The Law will now be kept under His grace for those who have the same mind or attitude as our Master (Phil 2:5). So now, since Mt 21:43, we shall continue the Sabbath rest on the seventh day to bring in the new age – the Sabbath rest

for all (Acts 26:6-8; Rom 11:15; Col 2:16-17 in the *Interlinear Greek-English New Testament*).

Deuteronomy 27 and 28 speak to Israel, the curse or the blessing (Dt 28:1,15,25,36,58,64; Eze 36:22-23).