

GOSPEL GAZZETTE

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SABBATH WHAT DAY IS IT?

The subject of the Sabbath has been discussed and debated for centuries. Is there a Sabbath that we are to keep, and if so, does it matter what day we keep it? I believe after this study you will find that the bible clearly defines what day is the Sabbath and whether it is important to God that you keep the day "He" chose.

First, I want to take you to the creation week in the beginning pages of the bible. We will learn a couple of things in these passages.

I will not type out "all" of the verses in the first chapter of Genesis, but let me list a few things from Gen 1: 5, 8, 13, 19, etc...you'll get the idea:

⁵ ... And the evening and the morning were the first day.

⁸ ...And the evening and the morning were the second day.

¹³ And the evening and the morning were the third day.

¹⁹ And the evening and the morning were the fourth day.

The rest of the scriptures that define the creation days all end the same way. Are you noticing anything yet? Notice how God's day begins; at night. God's day is from sunset to sunset, unlike our day, which starts in the middle of the night at midnight. This will be important to understand as we go along, but for now, just file it away.

Next, let's look at what day that God rested on:

*Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host of them. And on the **seventh day** God ended his work which he had made; and he rested on the seventh day from all his work which he had made. ³ And God blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it: because that in it he had rested from all his work which God created and made.*

Gen 2:1-2

From the very beginning of creation, God gave an example for us to follow. God's laws

began from the very beginning and we can see that from scripture, although the specific laws were not officially written down until God wrote the Ten Commandments.

The Old Testament is filled with stories that were written for our benefit today. Unfortunately, many of us haven't given much thought as to "why" the stories were actually written, or for that matter have even read the stories at all from the Old Testament.

I will try to close the gap between the Old and New Testament and help identify the reason for the stories. The specific story that I want to talk about is the story of the manna that rained from heaven. Let's go read this story and then see if we understand the meaning for us today for why it was written.

To save space, I will not put the entire story in this article, but after you have gone to read it, then we can continue. Before you read the story though, let me first

sum up for you who these people are and why they are in the desert.

These people are Israelites that were taken into captivity by the Egyptians. They were in captivity for more than 400 years. Through the centuries of being in captivity and being exposed to nothing but Pagan worship by the Egyptians, the Israelites had forgotten the ways of the Lord. God chose Moses as the spokesman that would come before Pharaoh to ask for their freedom. Through many signs and wonders, and unfortunate death of the firstborn males (both man and beast), Pharaoh finally agreed to release the Israelites. This is where we find the story of Passover and of the Parting of Red Sea but we will pass those stories for now to go on to another one of God's miracles. *(Request the Passover Article to learn more)*

God knew that because of the many years that had gone by, his people had forgotten his laws and his ways. This story

is how God took his people and began to re-teach them again of his ways.

One of the first things that God wants to teach them is about his Holy Sabbath day. This is reason that this story was written, and it was written for us today to show us that it is INDEED IMPORTANT to God as to "which" day is to be kept as HIS Sabbath.

The story we will be reading is in Exodus 16. Stop now, and read that chapter before you continue.

There is SO MUCH to learn inside just this one chapter!! Did you even notice the setting that God gave them? God put them in the middle of a desert, with no food, or water or shelter. God understood that "true" learning and faith comes from a COMPLETE reliance on HIM. As the story begins they are complaining and whining about everything, and thinking they were better off as prisoners than to die out there in the wilderness of starvation. Isn't that

just like us today? We would rather stay in misery (because we are familiar with that) than to leave our comfort zone and take a leap of faith and trust God.

He begins to teach them about HIS Sabbath day. (Not the Jewish Sabbath, but HIS Sabbath). He does this by letting manna rain for six days, but none on the seventh. He also allows the manna to remain fresh and not grow worms when it is saved overnight for the Sabbath, unlike any other day of the week.

²²And it came to pass, that on the sixth day they gathered twice as much bread, two omers for one man: and all the rulers of the congregation came and told Moses. ²³And he said unto them, This is that which the LORD hath said, To morrow is the rest of the holy sabbath unto the LORD: bake that which ye will bake to day, and seethe that ye will seethe; and that which remaineth over lay up for you to be kept until the morning.

Gen 16:22-23

He also taught them that they could not be lazy and sluggish. They needed to get up early and get their work done and gather the food, because if they waited, the sun would melt it and they would go hungry.

²¹And they gathered it every morning, every man according to his eating: and when the sun waxed hot, it melted.

Gen 16:21

(Work before Play! How many of us have heard that from our parents? See where it started?)

Do you think it was important to God as to which day was to be kept as his Holy Sabbath?
ABSOLUTELY.

Did people disregard his teaching and go out on the seventh day to gather it anyway?
ABSOLUTELY.

²⁷And it came to pass, that there went out some of the people on the seventh day for to gather, and they found none.²⁸And the LORD

said unto Moses, How long refuse ye to keep my commandments and my laws?

Gen 16:27-28

We are no different than the people of the Old Testament. We always think we have a better way, or that we do not need to follow God's way. There is never a positive result in following our way instead of God's, just like the people in the Old Testament.

We see here that the seventh day was called the Sabbath, and what did the people do?

³⁰So the people rested on the seventh day.

Gen 16:30

Of all the lessons that God could have started with, he did not chose lessons that dealt with man, but rather lessons that taught man to look to our heavenly creator for EVERYTHING.

The people in the desert were at the mercy of God to provide absolutely every "need" they had. Then, once he had a captive

audience, He wanted to teach them about His Sabbath. God always wants us to keep our minds focused on Him, and He used our daily necessity for food as a teaching tool. This lesson wasn't a short lesson either. Did you notice how long they practiced this?

³⁵And the children of Israel did eat manna forty years, until they came to a land inhabited; they did eat manna, until they came unto the borders of the land of Canaan.

Gen 16:35

This lesson lasted 40 years to teach them to rely on God for their needs, to understand when God's Holy Sabbath was to be kept, and to not be lazy.

While the people were in the desert, God called Moses up into the mountain and wrote out the Ten Commandments in stone and presented them to the Israelites.

Exodus 20

God made a covenant (agreement) with the Israelite people. The people agreed to obey

the laws of God, and God in turn would bless them as a nation.

⁵...: for I the LORD thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me; ⁶And shewing mercy unto thousands of them that love me, and keep my commandments.
Ex. 20:5-6

God says that the sins of those that hate God will carry over to the third and fourth generation of children, but His mercy will carry on to thousands of generations to those that love him and KEEP His commandments.

The Sabbath was one of the Ten Commandments that were given. It is the 4th commandment.

⁸Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy. ⁹Six days shalt thou labour, and do all thy work: ¹⁰But the seventh day is the sabbath of the LORD thy God: in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy

manservant, nor thy maidservant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates:
Ex. 20:8-10

Just as God rested on the seventh day after he created everything, we are also to rest from our labors as well. This isn't for "us" to decide, but rather it is a command (thou shalt not). God commands us to stop working and to rest.

¹¹For in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day: wherefore the LORD blessed the sabbath day, and hallowed it.

WHAT DOES HALLOW MEAN?

What does it mean when he says he hallowed the day?

Let's look at Strong's Concordance to see the definition:

6942 { kaw-dash' }

- 1) To consecrate, sanctify, prepare,

dedicate, be hallowed, be holy, be sanctified, be separate

The Sabbath was made Holy, set apart and made different than the rest of the days. No one has the ability to make anything Holy except God. His example in the Old Testament with the Israelite people shows that it matters to God what day we keep as the Sabbath.

WHAT IF WE DON'T KEEP IT?

Does God give any warning to those that do not keep his Holy Sabbath? Yes he does:

¹²And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, ¹³Speak thou also unto the children of Israel, saying, Verily my sabbaths ye shall keep: for it is a sign between me and you throughout your generations; that ye may know that I am the LORD that doth sanctify you. ¹⁴Ye shall keep the sabbath therefore; for it is holy unto you: every one that defileth it shall surely be put to death: for whosoever doeth any

work therein, that soul shall be cut off from among his people. ¹⁵Six days may work be done; but in the seventh is the sabbath of rest, holy to the LORD: whosoever doeth any work in the sabbath day, he shall surely be put to death. ¹⁶Wherefore the children of Israel shall keep the sabbath, to observe the sabbath throughout their generations, for a perpetual covenant. ¹⁷It is a sign between me and the children of Israel for ever: for in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, and on the seventh day he rested, and was refreshed.

Ex 31:12-17

God makes it very clear that those that do not keep his Sabbath are cut off from his people. Notice also that he says it is a SIGN between Him and US that we are the children of God if we are keeping his Sabbaths.

We find other passages where God speaks of keeping his Sabbaths:

¹And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, ²Speak unto the children of Israel, and

say unto them, Concerning the feasts of the LORD, which ye shall proclaim to be holy convocations, even these are my feasts. ³Six days shall work be done: but the seventh day is the sabbath of rest, an holy convocation; ye shall do no work therein: it is the sabbath of the LORD in all your dwellings.

Lev 23:1-3

¹²Keep the sabbath day to sanctify it, as the LORD thy God hath commanded thee. ¹³Six days thou shalt labour, and do all thy work: ¹⁴But the seventh day is the sabbath of the LORD thy God: in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, nor thy manservant, nor thy maidservant, nor thine ox, nor thine ass, nor any of thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates; that thy manservant and thy maidservant may rest as well as thou. ¹⁵And remember that thou wast a servant in the land of Egypt, and that the LORD thy God brought thee out thence through a mighty hand and by a stretched out arm: therefore the LORD thy

God commanded thee to keep the sabbath day.
Deut 5:12-15

God always offers us a choice. Choose Him and choose blessings, or choose not to follow him and bring cursings and death. These are truly our only choices, and it seems so obvious which one we should choose. Unfortunately, we as humans are incredibly stiff necked and hard headed. Our own human nature (something we should be attempting to overcome) is against God. It takes work to overcome ourselves, to put our own way by the wayside to follow after God. We have seen in several scriptures where God is just waiting for us to make that decision to follow him, and he's waiting there ready to give us his blessing when we do.

Just like us when we choose not to follow after God's ways, the same people (the Israelites) that God freed from slavery, and who witnessed unbelievable miracles, signs and wonders as they were being freed, began to turn back to their

“comfort zone” and to worship their false gods and they rebelled against God and his laws.

⁵..Thus saith the Lord GOD; In the day when I chose Israel, and lifted up mine hand unto the seed of the house of Jacob, and made myself known unto them in the land of Egypt, when I lifted up mine hand unto them, saying, I am the LORD your God; ⁶In the day that I lifted up mine hand unto them, to bring them forth of the land of Egypt into a land that I had espied for them, flowing with milk and honey, which is the glory of all lands: ⁷Then said I unto them, Cast ye away every man the abominations of his eyes, and defile not yourselves with the idols of Egypt: I am the LORD your God. ⁸But they rebelled against me, and would not hearken unto me: they did not every man cast away the abominations of their eyes, neither did they forsake the idols of Egypt: then I said, I will pour out my fury upon them, to accomplish my anger against them in the midst of the land of Egypt

Ezek. 20:5-8

¹¹And I gave them my statutes, and shewed them my judgments, which if a man do, he shall even live in them. ¹²Moreover also I gave them my sabbaths, to be a sign between me and them, that they might know that I am the LORD that sanctify them. ¹³But the house of Israel rebelled against me in the wilderness: they walked not in my statutes, and they despised my judgments, which if a man do, he shall even live in them; and my sabbaths they greatly polluted: then I said, I would pour out my fury upon them in the wilderness, to consume them.

Ezek 20:11-13

Because the people of Israel would not follow after God’s ways, but instead wanted to do things “their way,” he gave them over to their own desires...desires which were contrary to God’s way. God will not force his way upon us. After several attempts to show you his ways, and you still “refuse” to do it his way,

he will finally say, “Ok, Have it your way.” We can see though that having it “our way” only leads to death.

²⁴Because they had not executed my judgments, but had despised my statutes, and had polluted my sabbaths, and their eyes were after their fathers’ idols. ²⁵Wherefore I gave them also statutes that were not good, and judgments whereby they should not live; ²⁶And I polluted them in their own gifts, in that they caused to pass through the fire all that openeth the womb, that I might make them desolate, to the end that they might know that I am the LORD.

Ezek 20:24-26

The end result of the people of Israel is that God allowed them to wonder in the wilderness for 40 years until everyone that was 20 years and older died not having the ability to go into the Promised Land.

The scriptures tell us that God means what he says and he “expects” us to follow him. Yes, it is

true that we can choose not to, but the end result will be that we too, will not enter into the promise land. (Eternal life)

In the book of Isaiah is a prophetic scripture that discusses the end time just before Christ returns. He promises blessings to those who are keeping his commandments and not polluting his Sabbaths:

¹Thus saith the LORD, Keep ye judgment, and do justice: for my salvation is near to come, and my righteousness to be revealed. ²Blessed is the man that doeth this, and the son of man that layeth hold on it; that keepeth the sabbath from polluting it, and keepeth his hand from doing any evil.
Isa 56:1-2

Again in Isaiah, we see another passage where God is letting his people know that if they follow after his ways, and they turn from doing what “they” want to do, they will be blessed:

¹³If thou turn away thy foot from the

sabbath, from doing thy pleasure on my holy day; and call the sabbath a delight, the holy of the LORD, honourable; and shalt honour him, not doing thine own ways, nor finding thine own pleasure, nor speaking thine own words: ¹⁴Then shalt thou delight thyself in the LORD; and I will cause thee to ride upon the high places of the earth, and feed thee with the heritage of Jacob thy father: for the mouth of the LORD hath spoken it.

Isa 58:13-14

God does not force his ways upon us. He wants us to willingly choose to follow him. When we do, there is no limit to the joy and blessings that he will rain down in our lives.

So far, everything we’ve read has been in the Old Testament.

WHAT DOES THE NEW TESTAMENT TEACH?

We know that Abraham was counted righteous because of his faith, and his faith was seen in his actions. Isn’t it interesting that Abraham

followed God’s ways LONG before the time of Moses and the giving of the Ten Commandments?

⁴And I will make thy seed to multiply as the stars of heaven, and will give unto thy seed all these countries; and in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed; ⁵Because that Abraham obeyed my voice, and kept my charge, my commandments, my statutes, and my laws.
Gen 26:4-5

People think that the law didn’t exist until the writing of the Ten Commandments, but the bible clearly shows that the law existed even in the time of Abraham.

FOR THE JEWS ONLY?

Abraham was not a Jew, but he followed God’s commandments. We have come to believe there is a difference between how and when a Jew should worship from how a Gentile should worship, but that is not founded on scriptural truth. Abraham was an

example for us to follow, both in faith and in works.

God lets us know that there is no division between Jew and Gentile, male or female:

²⁶For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus.

²⁷For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ. ²⁸There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus.

²⁹And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.

Gal 3:26-29

Many people believe that the seventh day Sabbath (Saturday) was for the Jews only, and Sunday was for the Gentiles, but that is not what the bible teaches at all. God did not have a set of laws for the Jews, and then a completely different set of laws for the gentiles. That would make him a respecter of persons, which the bible clearly says he is not:

³⁴Then Peter opened his mouth, and said, Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons:

³⁵But in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him.

Acts 10:34-35

WHO DOES THE BIBLE SAY A JEW IS?

Since there isn't a division between Jew and Gentile (Greek), and we are all the same in the eyes of God, then who does the bible say a Jew really is:

²⁸For he is not a Jew, which is one outwardly; neither is that circumcision, which is outward in the flesh:

²⁹But he is a Jew, which is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter; whose praise is not of men, but of God.

Rom 2:28-29

We see that if we are Christ's, we are also Abraham's seed, and we are in fact a "spiritual Jew." We are not a Jew

from birth (outward flesh) but we are a Jew inwardly, if we have the laws of God written on our hearts.

Jesus Christ kept the Sabbath. He gave us an example to follow as well:

¹⁴And Jesus returned in the power of the Spirit into Galilee: and there went out a fame of him through all the region round about. ¹⁵And he taught in their synagogues, being glorified of all. ¹⁶And he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up: and, as his custom was, he went into the synagogue on the sabbath day, and stood up for to read.

Luke 4:14-16

The Sabbath was a "gift" to us, so that we would truly rest and celebrate as a memorial the creations that God made. It is not a law or commandment that is burdensome, but rather a time for joy and something to look forward to. Jesus healed on the Sabbath, giving us an example that it is lawful to do "good" on the Sabbath. It's a time for healing, and so many

of us need the healing words of the bible, and the comfort and support of others as we assemble together.

The Jews of that time made their own laws which were intertwined with God's, and the end result was a yoke around their neck and burdensome. This was never God's intent for the Sabbath, and the gospels teach that Jesus spent much of his time correcting them.

Paul was an apostle of Jesus Christ, and he was commissioned to preach the gospel to the gentiles. This gospel was not something different for them, but in fact the same doctrine. We find in this next passage that Paul taught both Jew and Gentile (Greek) on the Sabbath in the same church:

¹Now when they had passed through Amphipolis and Apollonia, they came to Thessalonica, where was a synagogue of the Jews: ²And Paul, as his manner was, went in unto them, and three sabbath days reasoned with them out of the

scriptures, ³Opening and alleging, that Christ must needs have suffered, and risen again from the dead; and that this Jesus, whom I preach unto you, is Christ. ⁴And some of them believed, and consorted with Paul and Silas; and of the devout Greeks a great multitude, and of the chief women not a few.
Acts 17:1-4

Paul taught both Jew and Gentile together and we can see from this passage that a GREAT MULTITUDE believed.

Again in this next passage we see a great multitude of gentiles being preached to by Paul, and they understood and believed:

⁴⁷For so hath the Lord commanded us, saying, I have set thee to be a light of the Gentiles, that thou shouldest be for salvation unto the ends of the earth. ⁴⁸And when the Gentiles heard this, they were glad, and glorified the word of the Lord: and as many as were ordained to eternal life believed.

Act 13: 47-48

God is not the author of confusion, nor is he a respecter of persons.

³³For God is not the author of confusion, but of peace, as in all churches of the saints.
I Cor 14:33

Jesus came here and taught one law, one way to do things, one way to worship him, and he made one day Holy.

WHERE DOES THE CONFUSION COME FROM?

Satan – he wants us to be confused so that strife and envy will increase. He does not want us to understand the truth.

¹⁶For where envying and strife is, there is confusion and every evil work. ¹⁷But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be intreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy. ¹⁸And the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace of them that make peace.

James 3:16-18

Let us recap what we have learned:

The Bible clearly shows that the Sabbath is the seventh day of the week. That is Saturday not Sunday. Genesis shows us that God's days begin at sunset. (from evening to evening). God's Holy Sabbath starts at sunset. We know then that God's Sabbath is from sunset on Friday night, to Sunset on Saturday night.

The bible is also clear that God's laws started long before they were written on tablets of stone, and that the Sabbath was created at the end of the creation week, as God rested on that day and made it Holy, Sanctified and set apart from the other days.

God has offered everyone the same choices throughout history; to keep his Holy Sabbaths for sign that we are his people, or to choose our own ways, which are the traditions of men. When we make the choice to follow man instead of God, we bring

condemnation onto ourselves.

WHAT DOES GOD SAY ABOUT THE TRADITIONS OF MEN?

⁶He answered and said unto them, Well hath Esaias prophesied of you hypocrites, as it is written, This people honoureth me with their lips, but their heart is far from me. ⁷Howbeit in vain do they worship me, teaching for doctrines the

commandments of men. ⁸For laying aside the commandment of God, ye hold the tradition of men, as the washing of pots and cups: and many other such like things ye do. ⁹And he said unto them, Full well ye reject the commandment of God, that ye may keep your own tradition
Mark 7:6-9

¹³Making the word of God of none effect through your tradition, which ye have delivered: and many such like things do ye.

Mark 7:13

³..Why do ye also transgress the commandment of God by your tradition?

To transgress the commandment of God means to "break" his commandment by keeping our own traditions.

We see that keeping our own traditions and not the ways of God, makes our efforts useless and God's word ineffective in our lives. We also know from the scriptures we have read that our own way leads to death and not the blessings he intended for us to have.

⁸Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ.

Col 2:8

What tradition should you keep?

¹⁴Whereunto he called you by our gospel, to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.

¹⁵Therefore, brethren, stand fast, and hold the traditions which ye have been taught, whether by word, or our epistle.

2Thes. 2:14-15

We are told that we are called to obtain the Glory of God and to observe all things that have been taught to us by the word of God and not by the traditions of men.

HOW DID WE GET TO WHERE WE ARE TODAY?

We can spend much of our time studying works outside of the bible to understand how the seventh day Holy Sabbath was changed to Sunday, but I would rather focus on what God asks us to do, than to study why or how we got to where we are today. But, for your sake, I will give you some direction as to where to find those answers.

Quoting from "History of The Church"... Constantine was a leader in part of the observance of Sunday in which alone the religious observance of it in the church could be made universal and could be properly secured. In the year 321 A.D. a law was issued prohibiting manual labor in the cities and all judicial

transactions stating that all should rest on the Venerable Day of the Sun. That was a pagan title for the worship of the Sun.

Those that adhered to the observance of the 7th day Sabbath, were hunted down and imprisoned, or cut to pieces or burnt alive.

The Nicean Council of 325 A.D. is another research item having to do with the replacement of Passover with the pagan Easter festival.

Another good book is "From Sabbath to Sunday" by Samuel Bacchiocchi

It is not as important to research the laws of man as much as it is important to research the laws of God. All the answers we need are found in the pages of the Bible. When we read His words, and understand them, then it is our responsibility to then apply them to our lives.

May you be richly blessed in your studies and equally blessed in your walk.