

DISCOVER PROPHECY



A Special Time of Peace

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The Creation Account

The Bible gives us, in the Genesis account, the creation of the world. God takes the span of six days to form our home that we call Earth. During those six days of creation, God creates the light and separates it from the darkness. He made land upon the ground and put the stars into the sky. The Bible tells us that God created the fish of the sea and the birds of the air. On the sixth day of creation, God makes the animals of the ground and his crowning masterpiece, mankind.

The Bible tells us that this process of creation took six literal, consecutive 24 hour days and that when God was finished, everything He had done was wonderful. “Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and the host of them” Genesis 2:1.

Once finished with the first six days of the week, God then does something very special with the next day. “And by the seventh day God completed His work which He had done; and He rested on the seventh day from all His work which He had done. Then God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it, because in it He rested from all His work which God had created and made” Genesis 2:2,3.

God took six days to create the world, but on the seventh day He rested from his work. Now I don’t think that God needed a special day to rest because He was tired, but rather wanted to make a day special for the purposes of enjoying that which He had made.

A Special Day

Adam and Eve had just been created. The very next day, Adam and Eve’s first full day, was a Sabbath day; a day set aside especially to be with God.

There were two things God had instructed Adam and Eve to do (aside from not eating of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil). One was to be fruitful and to multiply (having offspring to fill the earth) and the other was to work in the garden. The very first thing Adam and Eve did after being created by God was to enjoy the special Sabbath day together and with God.

This teaches us something very valuable about the intent of the Sabbath that God made. God made Adam and Eve and instructed them to work. But before they were to work, they were to enjoy the Sabbath. Before

work, there was rest. This so wonderfully teaches us that the intent of the Sabbath is two-fold: First, that the Sabbath represents righteousness by faith. Before we work, we rest in the works of God. Secondly, God has made the Sabbath for us to enjoy each other and His wonderful blessings for us.

Old Testament Sabbath

We find that the Genesis account of creation is the first mention of the Sabbath, the seventh day being sanctified and set aside as holy. There is much more about the Sabbath that is mentioned in scripture. Even before God gave the ten commandments to Moses upon Mount Sinai.

Before the law was given to the people, the people were keeping the Sabbath. The people had been delivered from Egypt and were on their way through the wilderness. Soon the people noticed that there wasn’t much for food. God however, provided this need by daily giving them Manna. This Manna was poured out upon the ground every morning to be gathered. Designed by God, this substance could not be gathered and stored. In fact, it would not last longer than a day before rotting. So the people were instructed to gather what was needed for their household every day except for the Sabbath. Instead they were to prepare for the Sabbath. “And Moses said, ‘Eat it today, for today is a Sabbath to the Lord; today you will not find it in the field. Six days you shall gather it, but on the seventh day, the Sabbath, there will be none....’” When the preparation day came, the day before the Sabbath, the people were then to gather twice as much so that they would not go out and gather on the Sabbath. Instead of partaking in the work of gathering, God wanted them to celebrate the specialness of the Sabbath through worship and family time by experiencing both physical and spiritual rest. However, there were some who expected there to be another outpouring of manna on the Sabbath so they didn’t gather any on the preparation day. “And it came about on the seventh day that some of the people went out to gather, but they found none. Then the Lord said to Moses, ‘How long do you refuse to keep My commandments and my instructions?’” Exodus 16:25-28.

Before the ten commandment were given, God wanted His people to remember the Sabbath day and to celebrate it as He had designed since the creation of the world. Then, we see just a few chapters later as God was giving the ten commandments to Moses, that He includes the Sabbath in them. Notice how God says, “Remember.” “Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days you shall labor and do all your work, but on the seventh day is a Sabbath of the Lord your God; in it you shall not do any work, you or your son or your daughter, your male or female servant or your cattle or your sojourner who stays with you. For in six days the Lord made the heavens and the earth, the sea and all that is in them, and rested on the seventh day; therefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy” Exodus 20:8-11.

In memory of creation and to encourage a special day of worship to God with family, God places within the ten commandments the importance of celebrating the Sabbath. Though it had been observed ever since creation, long before there was a Jew, God places within the moral law the command to observe the Sabbath. It means so much to God that He placed it there.

A Special Sign

Since the Sabbath is intended as a special day of worship, set aside from the other days of the week when it is necessary that we work and labor, God says that when we choose to observe the Sabbath day, that it indicates a special sign between God and His people. “And also I gave them my Sabbaths to be a sign between Me and them, that they might know that I am the Lord who sanctifies them” Ezekiel 20:12. And then throughout the rest of the Old Testament, God continues to share with the people how special the Sabbath is to Him and how much He wants His people to celebrate it. In fact, looking ahead to the day when we all will occupy heaven; long after sin has been destroyed and we reign for eternity in the presence of God, we will continue to celebrate the Sabbath that the Lord has given. “‘For just as the new heavens and the new earth which I make will endure before Me,’ declares the Lord, ‘So your offspring and your name will endure. And it shall be from new moon to new moon and from Sabbath to Sabbath, all mankind will come to bow down before Me,’ says the Lord” Isaiah 66:22,23.

Jesus And The Sabbath

The Sabbath is more than just an Old Testament ritual, as we have already seen in God placing it within

the moral law of the ten commandments. And though many of the Israelites in Christ’s day misunderstood the meaning and purpose, Jesus upholds it and shares its value. “And He was saying to them, ‘The Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath. Consequently the Son of Man is Lord even of the Sabbath’” Mark 2:27-28. When God made the Sabbath, as we have already noted, He did so for the benefit of mankind. He didn’t design the day to be one of a burden, as the Jews had made it, but rather a special day of worship and celebration to God for providing our needs, for supplying salvation and in anticipation of ultimate redemption from Him.

Jesus also kept the Sabbath. “And He came to Nazareth, where He had been brought up; and as was His custom, He entered the synagogue on the Sabbath, and stood up to read” Luke 4:16. While Jesus was growing up and in His active ministry, He made a point to worship and keep the Sabbath as God desired.

While warning the disciples of the coming destruction of Jerusalem that would occur in AD 70, Jesus, knowing that the Sabbath would still mean a great deal to the Christians, indicates His desire that they not be forced to miss the Sabbath’s blessing by fleeing from the destruction. “But pray that your flight may not be in the winter, or on a Sabbath” Matthew 24:20. Jesus knew that the Sabbath would still be both binding and appreciated long after His ascension to heaven.

Even at the cross of Christ, we see the importance of observing the Sabbath in order to receive its special blessing as God designed. Once Jesus had died, and His body placed in the grave, the women wanted to prepare His body with spices as was the custom. This was a form of embalming. But because the Sabbath was about to begin (as it does at sunset- lasting from sunset to sunset) the women were forced to wait. “And it was the preparation day, and the Sabbath was about to begin. Now the women who had come with Him out of Galilee followed after, and saw the tomb and how His body was laid. And they returned and prepared spices and perfumes. And the Sabbath they rested according to the commandment” Luke 23:54-56. Even at the cross of Christ, we see the Christians valuing the blessing God has given.

New Testament Church And The Sabbath

Continuing in the study of the Bible, looking at the New Testament Church, we will see that the importance of the Sabbath continues. Paul, a radical Christian who spearheaded much of New Testament theology

and expositor of righteousness by faith was always in the habit of keeping the Sabbath. "And as Paul and Barnabas were going out, the people kept begging that these things might be spoken to them the next Sabbath..." As Paul had been preaching, the people wanted to hear more and they were asked to come again to preach on the Sabbath. "And the next Sabbath nearly the whole city assembled to hear the Word of God" Acts 13:42-44.

In time however, the disciples and apostles were no longer welcome in the churches owned by the Jews. Thus when they came into a town, they were forced to begin meeting in another place. Thus providing an opportunity to worship how and when they wanted to. Notice when they did! "And on the Sabbath day we went outside the gate to a river side, where we were supposing that there would be a place of prayer; and we sat down and began speaking to the women who had assembled" Acts 16:13.

Paul later when writing on his theology of righteousness by faith uses the Sabbath as an example of the rest we have in God. "There remains therefore a Sabbath rest for the people of God" Hebrews 4:9.

When Is The Sabbath?

So we have seen that the Sabbath is very important to God and that it has been a part of the church from the creation of earth and will be throughout all eternity. The question then is raised, "Can we really be sure which day the "seventh day" is?"

Though the Bible doesn't mention the days of the week as we have them today, the Bible can give us a clear understanding as to which day the Sabbath is.

"This man went to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus. And he took it down and wrapped it in fine linen cloth, and laid Him in a tomb cut into the rock, where none had ever lain. And it was the preparation day, and Sabbath was about to begin" Luke 23:52-55. In the Bible there are only two days that have names; the preparation day and the Sabbath day. All the others were known by their numbers; the first, second, third days, etc. According to the Bible, Jesus died on the preparation day and the Sabbath was just about to begin.

The Bible continues with the women preparing the body for burial, "And they returned and prepared spice and perfumes. And on the Sabbath day they rested according to the commandment" Luke 23:56. Note that after Jesus' body was placed in the tomb, the ladies watched. Afterwards, they returned to their homes and prepared spices and perfumes on the preparation day before the Sabbath was to begin. Then, once the Sabbath

began, they rested. They waited to prepare the body of Jesus until after the Sabbath was over. The next day they came.

"But on the first day of the week, at early dawn, they came to the tomb, bringing the spices which they had prepared, and they found the stone rolled away from the tomb" Luke 24:1,2.

When the women returned the day after the Sabbath day, they noticed the stone rolled away from the tomb and that the body of Jesus was gone. Where had the body of Jesus gone? He had resurrected from the grave. He was alive!

So, retracing the sequence of events along with the biblical account of the days, we see that Jesus died on Preparation day, rested in the tomb on Sabbath and was raised on the First day. The women prepared spice on the Preparation day, rested on the Sabbath day and returned to the tomb on the First day.

Which day was that First day? What day of the week was it that Jesus was raised from the grave? Resurrection Sunday! Jesus was raised from the tomb on Sunday. All history points to that.

If Jesus was raised from the grave on Sunday, what day would the Sabbath and the Preparation day be? Using the Bible as our guide, we can clearly see that Jesus died on the cross on Friday, late afternoon. He rested in the tomb on the Sabbath, Saturday and was resurrected from death on Sunday morning.

What day then is the Sabbath day? Saturday. What day is the Bible Sabbath? Saturday. What day did God rest after creating the world? Which day did He sanctify and set aside as holy? Which day did He especially bless? Saturday. Which day did Jesus keep? Which day did He prophecy would still be kept in AD 70? What day did the disciples and apostles keep? Saturday. And what day will we be worshiping upon when we get to Heaven throughout all eternity? According to the Bible, Saturday!

There is also much extra-biblical evidence (evidence that exists outside the canon of holy scripture) of the seventh-day Sabbath being Saturday. First, there are many languages that identify Sabbath as Saturday. Our Russian friends call Saturday Sabbath. Our Spanish friends do too.

The weekly cycle has never been changed since the life of Christ. Since His time on earth (in which he revealed which day the Sabbath was) the weekly cycle has never been changed. The seventh day of the week has always been Saturday. Research, history and technology all indicate that the same seven day cycle we

operate with today is the same as was kept in Jesus' day, thus pointing once again to Saturday being the Sabbath.

The Lord's Day

Some ask me whether there is a difference between the Sabbath and the Lord's day. Whether the Revelator John in the Bible said that he was in the Spirit on Sunday. As always, we need to look at the text for ourselves and let it explain itself. John, while imprisoned on the island of Patmos, wrote the book of Revelation. To show His authority to write the book and that it wasn't a matter of his own words but inspired by God he wrote, "I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day" Revelation 1:10. Read on and you'll see he doesn't identify the day by traditional names (ie, preparation day, Sabbath day, first day) but calls it only the Lord's day.

The question then comes, what day is the Lord's day? Does the Bible anywhere, identify what day the Lord's day is? It does. In three places. "For the Son of man is Lord even of the Sabbath day" Matthew 12:8. "The Son of man is Lord also of the Sabbath" Mark 2:28; Luke 6:5. So, according to the Bible, what day is the Lord's day? The Sabbath is the Lord's day! To come to any other conclusion is not biblical but otherwise.

Does It Matter?

The question always then comes up? Does it matter what day the Sabbath is? As long as I keep one day holy isn't that enough?

Friends, all I want to do is uplift the Bible and the importance of following Jesus Christ. If we claim to be Christians, if we really want to follow Him, then we will do whatever He asks us to do. "I am the way, and the truth, and the life," Jesus said (John 14:6). If we love Jesus, we will follow Him. The Bible says that in the last days His people would be identified by two characteristics. "Here is the perseverance of the saints who keep the commandments of God and their faith in Jesus" Revelation 14:12. Does it matter? Yes, God placed the Sabbath within the commandments and instructed us to keep it and not to forget it by saying, "Remember."

Does it matter? If you love Jesus it does! "If you love me, keep my commandments" John 14:15. Out of the motivation of love, we will keep the commandments and not forget the fourth one. Does it matter? If you would rather follow the Bible over tradition it does!