

# **THE TRUE SABBATH DAY OF GOD, Part 1**

## **Is it 7<sup>th</sup> day, Sunday, or everyday in Christ?**

### **The Sabbath from the Beginning**

Light on the Rock

*by Philip Shields*

SUMMARY: Most Christians believe the 7<sup>th</sup> Day Sabbath was changed to Sunday in the New Testament to honor the resurrection of Jesus. This 2 or 3 part series will address the major issues: Has the Sabbath been fulfilled and therefore no longer required? Was the Sabbath in force before Mt. Sinai? Is the Sabbath a more important commandment than others? Was the Sabbath just for Israel and not Gentiles? How can we even be sure which day now – since Creation – is the 7<sup>th</sup> day? This first sermon will challenge long held notions, no matter from which camp you come!

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Today I'm starting a 2 or 3 part sermon about keeping, or guarding, the Sabbath. It's one of the 10 commandments. But has the 7<sup>th</sup> day of-the-week Sabbath been abolished as a required commandment? Some keep a 7<sup>th</sup> Day Sabbath, most keep Sunday as their day of worship if they keep a sabbath rest at all, and many others say that since the Sabbath is fulfilled in Christ, we don't have to keep a literal Sabbath DAY any longer but every day is the new Sabbath in Christ? Many claim that since the Sabbath was just a "shadow" that pointed to the reality, and when Jesus came, He did away with the need to keep Sabbath, since HE is our sabbath, all the time, they say. Hmmm....

Who's right – if anyone is!? Wasn't Jesus resurrected on Sunday? Was He? And if He was, is it not correct then that we honor His resurrection with a Sunday "sabbath" or day of worship? Did the early believers meet on Sunday or the 7<sup>th</sup> Day? We'll see what scripture really does say. Bear with me as we cover this topic carefully from the beginning.

Greetings, members of Abba's House, fellow believers in our Messiah. This is Philip Shields. We all filter what we're hearing or are being taught about any subject through our preconceived notions and ideas. I hope today – whether you are a 7<sup>th</sup> day Sabbath keeper or worship on Sunday or don't believe any day is required as a Sabbath – you will give this a fair shot without previous filters.

#### **WHY bother with this topic at all?**

Whenever Elohim says to "keep" the Sabbath, the Hebrew for "keep" is also often translated "GUARD, protect, keep, preserve". We need to guard, cherish and preserve this sacred delight from God so it is never desecrated. That puts a stronger importance to it, doesn't it?

Breaking the Sabbaths of God was one of the reasons God sent ancient Israel and Judah into captivity (see **Jeremiah 17:19-27; Ezek. 23:38-39**; also Lev. 26:33-35 and 2 Chronicles 36:20-21).

We'll find today that the original Sabbath – as originally intended by God – was a day we were to delight in, rest in Him, and rejoice as we worship Him with 2-3 others or more of like mind. Mankind made the Sabbath a burden with hundreds of do's and don'ts never intended by God! We'll see that the Sabbath teaches us to remember creation and our Creator, to remember we have been redeemed from spiritual slavery, and to relish the rest we have being in Christ Jesus. A freed slave – which we

all were – is a joyful person! Our Sabbaths should reflect joy, freedom, liberty, and adoration – or we’re missing something. “...Call my sabbath a DELIGHT....” (Isaiah 58:13).

As in most other things in the Old Covenant, even the Sabbath ultimately pictures Christ and the rest we have in Him. Jesus invited all who are heavy laden to come to Him that He might give us rest (Matt. 11:28-29). The Greek for “rest” there means a *refreshing* kind of pause. But would that therefore negate the need to obey the 4<sup>th</sup> commandment literally, every 7<sup>th</sup> day? That’s the question.

**Today’s sermon lays the foundation. We’ll cover today:**

- Is the Sabbath commandment the most important one, and is it “the test commandment” as some make it out to be?
- was the Sabbath given only to the Jew and Israelite?
- Was the Sabbath kept before Mt. Sinai? Did Noah, Abraham and others keep the Sabbath?
- What day is the “Lord’s Day”?
- Haven’t we lost track of time and so can’t know for sure what day is the 7<sup>th</sup> day anyway?
- Will the Sabbath be kept in the Millennium?

Next time we’ll delve mostly into the New Testament and see how Jesus kept the Sabbath, and if the early believers kept – or didn’t keep – the Sabbath. In part 3, we’ll also see how the 7<sup>th</sup> Day Sabbath was changed to Sunday worship. Plus we’ll also, next time, cover the issues surrounding the resurrection and the Sabbath.

**I WANT TO PUT THIS TOPIC IN ITS PROPER PERSPECTIVE BEFORE WE GET TOO FAR**

*Is it possible to overemphasize the Sabbath?* Many of you 7<sup>th</sup> Day keepers will say “absolutely not”, yet I definitely think we can put more emphasis on Sabbath than scripture does. Some make it out to be the greatest commandment. Others say it is *the* sign of God's people. You’ll see it is “a” sign, but especially in the new Covenant, Jesus gave other signs of His people. If you’re a 7<sup>th</sup> day keeper, I’m confident many of you would of course list Sabbath keeping as a most important distinction or belief of your fellowship.

**But please consider these concepts:**

- **in the list of “basic doctrines” in Hebrews 6:1-2**, inspired by God Himself, keeping the Sabbath (in any form) is not even mentioned in that list! As I pondered that, it amazed me at first. I’m sure I would have listed it, but Paul doesn’t. As I look over websites of sabbath keeping groups, it is always listed as a major doctrine. But God leaves it off the list in Heb.6.
- Sabbath keeping is definitely **called “a sign”** between God and His people in the Old Covenant as we’ll see later. But in the New covenant, the sign of true believers according to Jesus were other things. In the New Covenant, sabbath keeping per se is never once said to be *the* sign of God's people, though keep in mind the early believers only had the Tanakh, the “old testament”, to read, and there Sabbath keeping is given as the sign of God and his people.
  - But in the New Covenant: “By this shall all men know you are my disciples...” – What? By keeping the Sabbath? NO. “...that you *love* one another as I have loved you” (**John 13:34-35**). Do we Sabbath keepers have that sign? But what too often do

we see among people who call themselves children of God? Not much love sometimes among themselves, let alone for Sunday worshippers.

- Other signs Jesus gave, I listed in my sermon “5 Signs of True Disciples”. These include abiding in His word (John 8:31), producing fruit to God's glory (John 15:8), etc.
- **Greatest commandment?** Some Sabbath keepers talk and act like sabbath-keeping is the greatest commandment and most important doctrine. It becomes their “line in the sand” that determines a true church or not, in their eyes. But what did Jesus say?

**Matthew 22:36-40**

"Teacher, which is the great commandment in the law?"

37 Jesus said to him, "'You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind.' 38 **This is the first and great commandment.** 39 And the second is like it: 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' 40 On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets."

The parallel verse in Mark 12:31 goes on to say something else:

"And the second, like it, is this: 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' ***There is no other commandment greater than these.***"

Now I realize that the first great commandment is a summary of the first four, *including* the Sabbath. However, the Sabbath is nowhere singled out as THE great commandment.

- We also find that all throughout the New Testament, whenever *lists* of the commandments are given, the Sabbath is never listed. I don't believe for a moment that means it's done away, but I'm just making the point that it doesn't come up as a huge commandment in the forefront, like so many want it to be. For example you can read **Rom. 13:8-10 and Matthew 19:16-22**, both of which make my point.

Sabbath is not listed in the partial lists of commandments when they are listed in the New Testament. Never.

- Having said all that, I want to remind us all again though, that Yeshua Messiah taught us he did not come to abolish the law or prophets. He warned those who would teach against even the least of the commandments would be least in His kingdom (Matthew 5:17-19).

So we see the Sabbath is one of the commandments, was given by GOD Himself, and was *one* of the signs of God's people forever. But let's not make it bigger than Jesus, the apostles, or God's word says it is. Neither is Sabbath-keeping the gospel. Neither can you find a single scripture to prove that the “mark of the Beast” is Sabbath breaking per se or is Sunday-keeping per se. So please, let's get the balance to understand Sabbath keeping is important, but it is not the greatest commandment.

**Neither does Sabbath keeping save you or me. Hear me, brethren. I AM a 7<sup>th</sup> day Sabbath keeper, but all the Sabbath keeping in the world has not, will not save me or you. I am, and you are, saved by grace, not of works, lest any man should boast (Ephesians 2:8-10),** but we are created *for* good works in Him, it goes on to say. The Messiah saved me by His grace, and now lives

in me and will live obediently in me – including to keep the 4<sup>th</sup> commandment, just as He kept it as His custom was while on earth (Luke 4:16).

But I do understand my salvation is by grace, not by works. I do understand “I do not set aside the grace of God, for if righteousness could come from the law, then Christ died in vain” – Gal. 2:21. I do understand that the purpose of the Sabbath was to help me understand – as I keep it – that Christ saved me from spiritual slavery and has redeemed me and brought me into His rest.

I do understand that Jesus Christ is the ultimate rest, pictured by the Sabbath, and that He invited me to come to Him, since I am heavily burdened, and He would give me rest (Matthew 11:28). I do understand that. But where does it say therefore I can run roughshod over any of God's commandments?

**Does keeping the Spirit of the Law cancel the need to keep a commandment in the letter of the law?**

Those of you who feel the Sabbath is fulfilled and so we can now feel free to break the letter of the 4<sup>th</sup> commandment, are you ready to use that same logic on all the other commands? You feel the law is done away or fulfilled – against Jesus’ own words – and you feel we are to obey in the spirit and not in the letter at all, let me ask you:

- the spirit of the 7<sup>th</sup> commandment is not to even lust after another. So can I now break the letter of the law, commit adultery, as long as I don’t lust after her? I speak as a fool.
- The spirit of the 6<sup>th</sup> commandment is not to even hate anyone in your heart. So now can I murder someone, as long as I assure him I don’t hate him?
- Can I now profane God's holy name, bow down to idols--in the letter of the law – as long as God knows I love Him?

Do you see how ridiculous that argument is, when people say that if we fulfill the spirit, we don’t have to fulfill the letter? NO, Jesus *magnified* His law by introducing “the spirit of the law”. But as we keep God's commands in the spirit, surely we must also keep the letter as I’ve shown.

My point is obviously, if we are to keep the commandments in spirit now, it does not preclude us from keeping the letter. We now keep the law in and by the Spirit, and not just in the letter (Romans 7:6). The Holy Spirit helps us to obey. And we seek to understand the intent of God's law – which is love for God and man – and to keep that. The letter of the law kills. But it is clear that God's children still keep the commandments. I preach the whole Scripture. We’ve been released from the power of death that the law had over us, but now in Christ, we walk as HE walked, in obedience.

**1 John 2:3-6**

“Now by this we know that we know Him, if we keep His commandments. 4 **He who says, "I know Him," and does not keep His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him.** 5 But whoever keeps His word, truly the love of God is perfected in him. By this we know that we are in Him. 6 He who says he abides in Him ought himself also to walk just as He walked.”

I think the Scriptures I read still show me there are still ten commandments, not just nine that we are to keep. I can’t throw out the Sabbath, unless Scripture clearly shows Elohim has thrown it out. But where does it say that?

**“This is the love of God, that we keep His commandments, and they are not burdensome” (1 John 5:3). “If you love me, keep my commandments” –John 14:15,21; 15:10 – Jesus said over and over, in various ways, to His disciples. Was He confused? Of course not! So let’s look carefully at the 4<sup>th</sup> commandment now.**

### **WAS THE ORIGINAL 7<sup>TH</sup> DAY SABBATH FOR ALL MANKIND – OR FOR THE JEW AND ISRAELITE ONLY?**

One of the most common arguments against keeping the Sabbath is that it was given only to the Jews and Israelites to keep. We’re told the vast majority of the world who make up “the Gentiles” have never had to keep the Sabbath. If that argument holds true, then at best the Gentiles have only nine commandments to keep – or maybe none at all! And would someone reasoning that way tell Gentiles they can commit adultery, steal, lie, profane God’s name, and kill? So let’s look at it carefully.

### **THE FIRST SABBATH**

Let’s go right to the beginning, so please turn with me to Genesis 2 and I think you may see some new insights in a very familiar passage. When was the Sabbath first revealed -- in 10 commandments at Mt. Sinai or much earlier?

**Remember there was no Israelite on the earth until Jacob was born** and his name was changed to Israel. There was no Jew until Judah was born. That wouldn’t happen for *two thousand more* years after creation! But when was the Sabbath established?

**Genesis 2:1-3** “Thus the heavens and the earth, and all the host of them, were **finished**. 2 And on the **seventh** day God **ended** His work which He had done, and He **rested** on the seventh day from all His work which He had done. 3 **Then God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it**, because in it He **rested** from all His work which God had created and made.”

**Elohim does several things here:**

- a) **God finishes creating the physical** heavens and earth. Some believe God’s creations continue. At least in the physical creation, they ceased and were ended and finished at the end of 6<sup>th</sup> day.
- b) **Elohim rests (the Hebrew says God “Sabbathed”) on the 7<sup>th</sup> day**, not because He was tired, as YHWH never wearies or needs rest (Isa 40:28) but to signify completion of the physical creation and God’s satisfaction with it. The Sabbath is HIS rest, HIS day, HIS holy presence being in it. In the words **“God rested”, the Hebrew is “God shabbat” ... “He sabbathed on the 7<sup>th</sup> day”**. We miss it in the English. It means to cease, stop, rest, to quit working. It is when God stopped, and later makes it clear that we are to rest in honor and memory of when God “sabbathed” or rested. Sabbath means “stop”. The 7<sup>th</sup> day is the day we stop working.
- c) **Then God bequeaths His BLESSING on this day, and He sets it apart as holy time when He sanctifies it. Only God is holy ultimately – and only God can make things holy by His presence or by sanctifying them.** This is done by the Elohim who is the same yesterday, today and forever, and who changes not. (**Heb. 13:8; Mal 3:6**). James 1:17 this Elohim is one “in whom is no variation, or shadow of turning”. He is consistent.

**Who was this “LORD” who was sanctifying the 7<sup>th</sup> Day Sabbath?**

I think many of you know this, but some listeners may not.

**John 1:1-3**

“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. 2 He was in the beginning with God. 3 All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made.”

The Word was Jesus Christ, Yeshua Messiah! The One who thundered the words “Let there be light” was the same Being who looked up from the cross and said, “Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do”.

If you’re very aware of this, fine. If not, it can hit you like a thunderbolt. What I’ve just said is backed up also in other scriptures which state everything created was created by King Jesus (**Ephesians 3:9; Col. 1:15-17; Hebrews 1:2**) when He shared glory of being God with God the Father long before there was an earth.

When Jesus said he was “Lord of the Sabbath”, now you know why and how he could say that (Mark 2:27-28). He created the Sabbath. He knew what He intended the Sabbath to be, from the beginning: a wonderful delight! A great joy! A day when we can bring rest and relief to people – so He healed on the Sabbath. A day we can do good for others, so that’s what He did. And as LORD of the Sabbath, He doesn’t consider those things work!

This same Jesus is the same yesterday, today and forever (Hebrews 13:8). This same Yeshua, as His custom was, kept the sabbath and went to synagogue (Luke 4:16). This was the same Elohim who also thundered His ten commandments from a smoking, shaking Mt Sinai in Saudi Arabia. This was *His* day. He put His holy presence in it and He sanctified it. He changes not.

**WHICH day does Scripture call “The Sabbath of the Lord”**

*People* may declare days of the week as “their Sabbath” – but to me that’s immaterial. What day of the week did Elohim make as His Sabbath and the one He made holy? Has that changed now?

**Leviticus 23:3**

‘Six days shall work be done, but the **seventh** day is a Sabbath of solemn rest, a holy convocation. You shall do no work on it; **it [the 7<sup>th</sup> day] is the Sabbath of the LORD (YHWH)** in all your dwellings.’

That terminology, “the Sabbath of the Lord” is also used in the very language of the 4<sup>th</sup> commandment in regards to the 7<sup>th</sup> day of each week (**Exodus 20:10; Deut 5:14**). Both passages read, “But the Seventh Day is the Sabbath of the LORD (YHWH) your God”.

God owns the 7<sup>th</sup> Day Sabbath. It is “the Sabbath of the Lord”, according to holy Scripture. It’s His day. It’s the Lord’s Sabbath. Scripture nowhere says any other day is “the Sabbath of the Lord” except for the annual sabbaths, the holydays.

So when Jesus says, “The Son of Man is LORD of the Sabbath” (**Mark 2:28**) He is asserting His claim and His right to this day, His day, and that He knows what He intended from the beginning for this day. He is Lord of the 7<sup>th</sup> day Sabbath, for that is what the Sabbath of the Lord is, and that is the

Sabbath Day He kept when He walked the earth. We'll discuss Jesus and the Sabbath much more in Part 2. He certainly wasn't abolishing what He Himself had created. He was officially showing He did not sanction the long list of do's and don'ts the Pharisees and religious leaders had decided on.

Some claim Jesus broke the 4<sup>th</sup> commandment. If he truly did – rather than just breaking the Pharisees' interpretation of how it should be kept – then Jesus would have sinned, for “sin is the transgression of the law” (1 John 3:4). Scripture is clear that Jesus was tempted in all points, yet without sin (**Hebrews 4:15**). He was without sin so He could take away our sins (**1 John 3:5; 1 Pet. 2:22**). So Jesus *could not have* truly broken the Sabbath day which He Himself created, made holy and instituted.

### **What about “the Lord’s Day”?**

That is so misunderstood. In **Revelation 1:10**, there is a reference to “the Lord’s Day” but that is simply another way of saying “The Day of the Lord” – which is not referring to a day of the week, but to the time immediately preceding the return of King Jesus, when God more actively intervenes in world affairs. That’s the day of the Lord. More on that later. Rev. 1:10 is about the time pictured by the visions leading up to the return of our King. *In any case, it certainly took John much more than one day to see and record everything he recorded!* Compare 2 Pet 3:10; Acts 2:20; 1 Thess. 5:1-2 and numerous Old Testament references. So the “Lord’s Day” is not at all about the Sabbath day, and it certainly is a misnomer not supported by scripture to call Sunday “the Lord’s day”.

We’ve just read Lev. 23:3 that says the seventh day “is the Sabbath of the LORD...” But the Lord’s Day is about the Day of the Lord, leading up to the return of King Jesus.

### **Scripture says “7<sup>th</sup> day” – not one day in 7; God establishes the 7 day week**

The Lord’s Sabbath in Lev 23:3 at least, is clearly shown to be the 7<sup>th</sup> day of the week, not just 1 day in 7. Neither is it just “the hour of worship” – but a full 24 hour period originally.

**God also creates at this time a period of time that is not clearly shown by anything in nature: the 7 day WEEK.** The movements of the earth, moon and sun dictate days, months and years. But GOD set aside this period called “the week”. The holy Sabbath caps off each week. Seven is the number of perfection in Scripture. You can see that Noah was aware of the week (Genesis 8:10-12) and Jacob and Laban were aware of the week (Genesis 29:27-28).

Many also believe the first 6 days of the week picture our first 6,000 years of man trying to work things out on this earth and the 7<sup>th</sup> day sabbath as the 7<sup>th</sup> thousand years of Millennial rest under the Messianic reign. Don’t forget that. I believe that is true.

We’re still on the subject of was Sabbath given only to Israel? The common teaching is that only Israelites were expected to keep the Sabbath.

### **IN ADAM/EVE, THE SABBATH WAS GIVEN TO ALL MANKIND**

**At the end of creation week, only 2 humans were on the earth. Neither was a Hebrew or a Jew or Israelite. Eber, Israel and Judah would not be born for more than 2,000 more years, in fact.** Why do I bring that up? To make it clear that the first humans to experience a holy Sabbath were Adam and Eve, and they were not of Judah or Israel.

So we've also seen that the One resting was Holy God, and since He made the Sabbath, He knows what He meant and intended as we keep it.

***Now turn to Mark 2, where Jesus Himself made it clear that the Sabbath was not to be a burden and was intended for mankind, not just Jews.***

In **Mark 2:23-28**, we read how when Jesus' disciples plucked heads of grain (not corn, as KJV says), shucked them in their hands and ate them, they were accused of "harvesting" on the Sabbath. The Pharisees saw no difference between that and someone harvesting a whole field with a combine harvester. Jesus teaches the Sabbath is about helping man, serving man, doing good. He teaches that even David ate of the unlawful shewbread, reserved for the priests alone, when he and his men were super hungry.

I'm sure Jesus and the disciples didn't make a habit of eating grain off stalks on the Sabbath, but this Sabbath, they were hungry and they found food as best they could. The Lord of the Sabbath, who created the Sabbath, is teaching us something here. It is interesting here too, that for whatever reason, Jesus and His disciples had not prepared their meals on the 6<sup>th</sup> day for the 7<sup>th</sup> day. Think about that. This particular Sabbath was a special Sabbath during the barley or wheat harvest, according to Luke 6:1 – "the second Sabbath after the first". It is not my purpose today to explain that, but it was not an ordinary weekly Sabbath. Certainly we know the wheat or barley was ready to be eaten. Ponder that.

#### **Mark 2:27-28**

And He said to them, "***The Sabbath was made for (on account of) MAN***, and not man for the Sabbath. 28 Therefore the Son of Man is also **Lord of the Sabbath**."

Some read into this passage that Jesus had the power to annul the Sabbath and did so here, but in fact He is *establishing* the Sabbath by asserting that it was made to serve mankind, not to have mankind serving it in a long list of do's and don'ts. In context He is saying, "guys, guys, you're all missing the point of what I wanted to have when I instituted it 4,000 years ago. I made the Sabbath *for* mankind. I never intended it to be a joyless day of bondage and don'ts, but a delight!"

Before we go on, I would dare say many strict 7<sup>th</sup> day sabbath keepers would have been very condemning of David to see him eating unleavened shewbread that was for priests only. **The incident with David – see 1 Samuel 21:3-6 and Lev. 24:8 – also occurred on a Sabbath. We know that because Abiathar says the shewbread was being replaced. That happened only on the Sabbath.** The shewbread for the holy place in the Tabernacle was baked and replaced every Sabbath by the priests. Common Israelites were not allowed to bake on the Sabbath (Ex. 16:23) but the priests were allowed and in fact were *commanded* to bake the holy bread for the Tabernacle on Sabbath. Remember that as we go along. The priests were involved in works picturing salvation and redemption. God intended it to be a delight!

#### **Isaiah 58:13-14 – GOD speaking:**

"If you turn away your foot from the Sabbath, From doing your pleasure on My holy day,  
And call ***the Sabbath a delight***, **The holy day of the LORD** honorable,  
And shall honor Him, not doing your own ways,  
Nor finding your own pleasure, Nor speaking your own words,  
14 ***Then you shall delight yourself in the LORD***;



And I will cause you to ride on the high hills of the earth, And feed you with the heritage of Jacob your father. The mouth of the LORD has spoken."

So that's clearly the main point He is making in context in Mark 2:27. But we should also note that Jesus could have clearly said, "the Sabbath was made for the Jew...", but He did not. He said Sabbath was made *for mankind*.

**In Genesis 2, we see very clearly that when it was first created, it was given to the father and mother of us all—to Adam and Eve. When God made Sabbath, the only mankind on earth were Adam and Eve, who represent all humanity since they were the father and mother of every single human being** who has ever lived, including you, regardless of race or ethnic group.

Just as by one man sin entered into the world and his sin was imputed to all mankind (Romans 5:12, 19), in the same way when Adam learned about the Sabbath, and no doubt kept it with YHWH, all mankind was taught about Sabbath in Adam – using the same reasoning Paul uses in Romans 5.

The Sabbath is in existence the very next day after man and woman are created, 6,000 years ago. This is 2,500 yrs+ before Mt Sinai, long before the 10 commandments are codified on to two small tablets.

Therefore in the beginning, the Sabbath was clearly made for all mankind – both by historical report and by Jesus' account. Were the 10 Commandments known and obeyed by the Patriarchs before Sinai?

"Sin is not imputed where there is no law" (**Rom. 4:15; 5:13**), for the law reveals what sin is. Since we know Cain was a guilty murderer, God must have given all ten of His commandments to Adam and Eve, or else there would have been no sin prior to Mt. Sinai! We know Enoch was a preacher of righteousness. "All your commandments are righteousness" (**Ps. 119:172**).

Joseph knew fornication or adultery was a great sin (Gen. 39:9), and resisted it. Abimelech was furious with Isaac and Abraham for almost causing a great sin (Gen. 20:9; 26:10). So it is clear: the ten commandments – including the 7<sup>th</sup> day Sabbath -- were known and kept by God's servants from the beginning.

Now I know that our commandment keeping can't save us or make us righteous for salvation, or else Christ died in vain (**Gal. 2:21**). I preached a 3 part sermon recently showing Scripture's teaching that Christ's obedience is imputed to us and when He comes to live in us by His Spirit, we once again will walk as Christ walked, through the power of His Holy Spirit. It is HIS strength, HIS righteousness working in us, if we are "in Christ", part of HIS body and have His Spirit – even as Jesus Himself said HE could do nothing except by His Father. His Father was the One doing the works we see in Jesus. In the same way, we have to strive to abide in Him, so the works people see in our lives is really Christ working mightily in us – when we're doing it right!

So I know that. But the point still has to be made that Abraham's faith was accounted to him for righteousness (Gen. 15:6), but he also proved His faith by obeying God's commands (**James 2:20-24**). Scripture is clear that Abraham walked with God, was a friend of God, obeyed God, and kept the commandments, statutes and laws. Faith without obedient works is dead! We're not saved by our works, but we'll sure be rewarded by our works (**Rev. 22:12**). We're saved by grace, without works (Eph.2:8-10). But we still have to show we value that salvation by changing to a life of obedience.

**Notice what God told Isaac, and notice the message of Commandment: Gen 26:2-5**

“Then the LORD appeared to him and said: “Do not go down to Egypt; live in the land of which I shall tell you. 3 Dwell in this land, and I will be with you and bless you; for to you and your descendants I give all these lands, and I will perform the oath which I swore to Abraham your father. 4 And I will make your descendants multiply as the stars of heaven; I will give to your descendants all these lands; and in your seed all the nations of the earth shall be blessed; 5 **because Abraham obeyed My voice and kept My charge, My commandments, My statutes, and My laws.**”

So it’s clear the commandments were taught and expected to be obeyed from creation onwards. It’s clear to me that the righteous men and women from Abel onwards kept the commandments of God, including the Sabbath. And that is how God could say, when wording the 4<sup>th</sup> commandment, “**Remember** the Sabbath Day to keep it holy...” (Ex. 20:8). You “remember” something you’ve been shown or told earlier!

But my point is this: the only humans around when God created the Sabbath were the father and mother of all humanity: Adam and Eve. And so God gave the Sabbath to ALL mankind when He revealed it to Adam and Eve in the garden. They were not Jews or Israelites. Abraham was not a Jew or Israelite. Abel, Enoch and Noah were not Jews or Israelites, but they were righteous and they walked with God, and so – like Abraham – they knew and taught the commandments of God, long, long before Mt. Sinai.

In the resurrection, all God's people from Abel to the last one converted, will be familiar with the same commandments and they will all be of one mind on it. Later God forms a covenant relationship with one nation, and re-reveals to them the Sabbath, but we’ll see some interesting wording about that in a minute.

We’ll get into Hebrews 3-4 carefully later, but also note that **Heb. 4:9** says “there remains therefore a *sabbatismos* – a keeping of the Sabbath (in the Greek)—*for the PEOPLE OF GOD*”. Who are the “people of God” today? Just the Jews and Israelites? No, God is now calling people from all nations, tribes, kindred, colors and races.

Every other place where “rest” is used in Hebrews, it is the Greek word “*katapausin*”. We now can enter into that *sabbatismos*, in its fullest intent and meaning, in Christ. But we shall continue to see if that means we can discard the literal resting every 7<sup>th</sup> day or not.

In part 2 of this message, we’ll carefully examine how Jesus and the early believers in the New Covenant kept the Sabbath, and all the important things we can learn from that. But let’s continue laying the groundwork of the Sabbath in Scripture first. Remember, when “Bereans searched the Scriptures”, the only scriptures they had to search are ones we would call “The Old Testament”. The “New Testament” hadn’t been written yet. When Paul and Peter preached from Scripture, all they had to work with was the “Old Testament”. And they used it powerfully. All of it is God's word.

**Sabbath before Sinai; IDENTIFYING WHICH day is the 7<sup>th</sup> Day**

Sometimes people wonder how we can know which day is the correct 7<sup>th</sup> day after all these years. Or how Israel could even know.

Before they arrived at Mt. Sinai, before the 10 Commandments were given in codified form, God made it real clear which day was the correct Sabbath by having them collect 2x as much manna on the 6<sup>th</sup> day, and on the Sabbath there was no manna at all. That would make it very clear. But I want you to notice it was *before* the law was given at Sinai. We've already seen it was established on day 7 of Creation week 2,500 years before Mt. Sinai.

**Ex 16:22-30 God reveals which day is the correct 7<sup>th</sup> day**

22 And so it was, on the sixth day, that they gathered twice as much bread, two omers for each one. And all the rulers of the congregation came and told Moses. 23 **Then he said to them, "This is what the LORD has said: 'Tomorrow is a Sabbath rest, a holy Sabbath to the LORD. Bake what you will bake today, and boil what you will boil; and lay up for yourselves all that remains, to be kept until morning.'"** 24 So they laid it up till morning, as Moses commanded; and it did not stink, nor were there any worms in it. 25 Then Moses said, "Eat that today, **for today is a Sabbath to the LORD**; today you will not find it in the field. 26 Six days you shall gather it, but on the seventh day, the Sabbath, there will be none." 27 Now it happened that some of the people went out on the seventh day to gather, but they found none. 28 And the LORD said to Moses, **"How long do you refuse to keep My commandments and My laws?** 29 See! *For the LORD has given you the Sabbath*; therefore He gives you on the sixth day bread for two days. Let every man remain in his place; let no man go out of his place on the seventh day." 30 So the people rested on the seventh day." (Nehemiah 9:14 refers to this)

So by gathering 2x as much manna on Fridays and there being no manna on Sabbath, God made it very clear which day was the 7<sup>th</sup>.

Who gave the sabbath? The Eternal has (V.29). He's the One who became Jesus the Christ. And notice God refers to them breaking his commandments before they arrive at Mt. Sinai in chapter 19 onwards, and before the 10 commandments are given in codified form on 2 slates.

I assure you, the "mixed multitude" – non-Israelites – who went out with Israel had to also keep the Sabbath, on pain of death if they didn't. So when we read scripture where God speaks to Israel about His sabbath, remember all who identified with Israel had to be included. And today, God's people – including Gentiles-- are still considered "Israel" – but now **the "Israel of GOD"** (Gal. 6:16).

In the New Covenant, we certainly know that we have accurate dating and calendar keeping since the days of Jesus and the Roman empire. Jesus kept the Sabbath on the same day the Jews did (Luke 4:16). That tells us a couple things:

- the Jews had the right day as the Sabbath, or else Jesus would have kept a different day, as He didn't have any leeway to sin.
- the Jews have the right day today as well, as we know accurate records of dates and times have been kept since Jesus' day

Now let's read the 4<sup>th</sup> commandment of GOD as He thundered it on Mt Sinai, so loud, that Israel asked Moses to have Elohim speak directly to Him, and not to all Israel. I pray that whoever you are, listen to this fresh, without past filters whether you keep a 7<sup>th</sup> day Sabbath or not. If you read the 4<sup>th</sup> commandment itself, it is clearly NOT just for Israel. Please read it with me with your own Bible in Exodus 20:8-11.

**Notice the first words: “REMEMBER the Sabbath Day”.** You can’t remember something unless it has already happened or been given in your life. Even the opening words make it CLEAR that it had already been given officially. Remember it, God says, so what do most of humanity say? They teach us that we can forget it. Not so! **Also notice that the 4<sup>th</sup> commandment is not just to rest on the 7<sup>th</sup> day, but to work for 6 days. God intends us to work and be productive.**

*Now as we read it, notice for whom Sabbath is given.* Sure, God was not *forcing* all mankind around the world yet to keep the Sabbath at that time, for God was working by that time only with one nation as His nation, as His bride: ISRAEL. Now notice the wording of the 4<sup>th</sup> commandment:

#### **Exodus 20:8-11**

***"Remember* the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. 9 Six days you shall labor and do all your work, 10 but the seventh day is the Sabbath of the LORD your God. ***In it you shall do NO work: you, nor your son, nor your daughter, nor your male servant, nor your female servant, nor your cattle, nor your stranger [ALIEN, foreigner] who is within your gates.*** 11 For in six days the LORD made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that is in them, and rested the seventh day. Therefore the LORD blessed the Sabbath day and hallowed it."**

Did you catch that? **Even their servants, strangers(foreigners) and animals were to rest on the 7<sup>th</sup> day. Most of the time, their servants or slaves would have been foreigners.** So the 4<sup>th</sup> commandment has within its wording that the Sabbath is not just for Israelites or Jews.

We’ve already seen it was given to man (Mark 2:27), at the Garden of Eden to the parents of us all – Adam and Eve. Jesus was teaching them it was made FOR us, to serve US, not the other way around.

We’ve also just seen that the 4<sup>th</sup> commandment says even visitors, strangers, aliens and servants must keep the Sabbath holy. Everyone in Israel had to keep the Sabbaths (Ex. 31:14), and God gave His sabbaths as a sign between Him and Israel and everyone – including Gentiles and servants – who lived in Israel, forever (Ex. 31:17).

#### **A SIGN of the Covenant People**

God says he gave His Sabbaths – plural – as a sign of His people. Let me hasten to add that we should realize this is not the only sign! In fact, **in the New Covenant**, the clearest sign that we are God's people is the **obvious love we demonstrate for God and for one another** - - for anyone and everyone. Many unfortunately who are Sabbath keepers are failing that sign (**John 13:34**) **as they fight and go to war against one another, sue one another, and do not act like children of God.**

In the Old Covenant, the Seal of God's people was circumcision (**Romans 4:11**). The Sign of God's people was keeping the 7<sup>th</sup> day Sabbath as we’ll now read.

#### **Exodus 31:12-17**

And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, 13 "Speak also to the children of Israel, saying: 'Surely ***My Sabbaths*** you shall keep, for **it is a sign** between Me and you throughout your generations, that you may know that I am the LORD who sanctifies you. 14 You shall keep the Sabbath, therefore, for it is holy to you. Everyone who profanes it shall surely be put to death; for whoever does any work on it, that person shall be cut off from among his people. 15 Work shall be done for six days, but the seventh is the Sabbath of rest, holy to the LORD. Whoever does any work on the Sabbath

day, he shall surely be put to death. 16 Therefore the children of Israel shall keep the Sabbath, to observe the Sabbath throughout their generations as a perpetual covenant. **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."

### **Plural sabbaths God calls "MY Sabbaths"**

- Annual sabbaths, the holydays of God listed in Leviticus 23 and kept by Paul and the early Christians in the New Covenant
- There was the Year of Jubilee every 50<sup>th</sup> year when the land reverted back to the family, etc.
- There was the LAND Sabbath every 7 years to restore the land so it wouldn't be overworked

It is correct to call the true Sabbath a sign of God's people.

**It's also important to know there was one law for the Jew and the foreigners in their midst** – so that had to include the Sabbath also. Uriah the Hittite, Ruth the Moabitess, Rahab and other Gentiles would have been required to rest and worship on Sabbath like everyone else.

### **Numbers 15:15-16**

**"One ordinance shall be for you of the assembly and for the stranger who dwells with you, an ordinance forever throughout your generations; as you are, so shall the stranger be before the LORD. 16 One law and one custom shall be for you and for the stranger who dwells with you."** This is repeated in Num. 15:29 and Num. 9:14.

So this notion that God's laws for Israel was for Israel alone, just doesn't hold water! That's repeated further in Leviticus 17:15-16 and Lev. 16:29.

Paul, in fact, uses this same argument when quoting the Old Testament scriptures and applying them to Gentiles. Over and over, Paul makes case after case that all scripture is given for everyone --- not just Abraham, not just the Jews – but everyone who becomes a Spiritual Jew, or **"the ISRAEL OF GOD"** (Gal. 6:16). Over and over Paul uses things that applied to Abraham, or Israel, or any stories in the Old Testament and we find him applying them to Gentile readers. So we'll see in the next sermon, that regardless of what you read believers were practicing 200 or more years after the Resurrection, we'll see next time that the earliest Christians and the 12 apostles and Paul, did keep the 7<sup>th</sup> day sabbath and the annual holydays as well.

### **Romans 3:29-30**

**"Or is He the God of the Jews only? Is He not also the God of the Gentiles? Yes, of the Gentiles also, 30 since there is one God who will justify the circumcised by faith and the uncircumcised through faith."**

That is why when Paul says in Heb. 4:9 that the "people of God" have to keep a sabbatismos (in the Greek), "a keeping of the sabbath" – we know it has to include the Gentiles, for they can also be among the people of God if they have God's spirit (Rom. 8:9, 14; Rom 2:28-29). We'll cover New Testament scriptures far more in part 2 of this sermon.

### **The "TEST Commandment"?**

Over the years, many have called the Sabbath commandment "the test commandment", probably because of the wording of Ex. 16:4. Actually, scripture is clear that all of God's commands are there

to test us if we will believe and obey or not. God tested Abraham by telling him to sacrifice his son Isaac (Genesis 22:1). Other scriptures make it clear God tests us with ALL His commandments (Ex. 15:25; Ex. 20:20; Deut 8:2 and many more).

### **SABBATH will be KEPT IN THE NEW WORLD under Messiah**

One more thing: when King Yeshua, Jesus King of Kings sets up His Messianic reign on earth eventually with all nations, including the Gentiles, what does scripture say about the Sabbath? And those of you who feel the Sabbath is done away with, how do you explain this verse? Christ died and was resurrected almost 2000 years ago – so keep that in mind as we read Isa 66.

#### **Isaiah 66:18, 23**

"For I know their works and their thoughts. It shall be that **I will gather all nations and tongues; and they shall come and see My glory. ....**

Verse 23: And it shall come to pass That from one New Moon to another, *And from one Sabbath to another, All flesh shall come to worship before Me," says the LORD."*

You can also see Ezek 44:20-24 to see that Sabbath keeping will be the norm in the Millennial world under Messiah. In the next sermon, we'll see how the Gentiles also kept the Sabbath throughout the book of Acts.

Let's switch gears now and look into some main reasons for having the sabbath:

### **WHY GOD GAVE THE SABBATH COMMANDMENT**

\* **The 4<sup>th</sup> commandment says we keep the Sabbath partly to remember YHWH is creator of all things. True sabbath keeping helps us reject the false theory of Evolution, for the FACT of creation by an Almighty Creator.**

You didn't come from scum, climb from slime – no, you and I are a clod from God! We are creatures of His creation and we remember that on Sabbath as we worship Him as Creator.

\* *Another reason for the Sabbath is to remind us of the salvation and the rest we have in Christ. Turn to Deut. 5, and we'll certainly cover this in much more detail in the next sermon when we get into the New Testament much, much more. God saved us from spiritual slavery!*

#### **Deuteronomy 5:12-15**

**'Observe the Sabbath day, to keep it holy, as the LORD your God commanded you. 13 Six days you shall labor and do all your work, 14 but the seventh day is the Sabbath of the LORD your God. In it you shall do no work: you, nor your son, nor your daughter, nor your male servant, nor your female servant, nor your ox, nor your donkey, nor any of your cattle, nor your stranger who is within your gates, that your male servant and your female servant may rest as well as you. 15 And remember that you were a slave in the land of Egypt, and the LORD your God brought you out from there by a mighty hand and by an outstretched arm; therefore the LORD your God commanded you to keep the Sabbath day.'**

There are some deep spiritual implications in the passage we just read. We keep the Sabbath to praise God for freeing us from spiritual slavery. God doesn't want us forgetting that. I once was a slave, but

now I'm free in Christ my Redeemer. The Sabbath teaches me that. And it teaches me to go easy with everyone else too. To be gentle and give others rest as well.

Next time we'll study Jesus' miracles on the Sabbath and how they pictured His role as Healer, Savior and Redeemer. We'll study Hebrews 3 and 4 as well, showing how the Sabbath pictures Jesus our ultimate Rest, the time we stop our works and rest in Him. We'll certainly study all that carefully in the next sermon.

- **We also keep the Sabbath as a sign of who God's people are, forever. (we read Ex 31:16-17 earlier) It's also evident in Ezekiel 20:12. The "seal" of God's people in the Old Covenant was circumcision (Romans 4:11). In the new covenant, it is receiving and being led by God's Holy Spirit (Eph. 1:13; 4:30). The Seal is not the Sabbath.**

**If you keep the Sabbath, but disobey God in every other way and do not seek and follow the leading of the Spirit, all the sabbath-keeping in the world doesn't signify you are any more a child of God than your pet dog or cat is!**

- *The Sabbath was also given as a day for holy assembly (Lev. 23:1-3) and a day to worship and honor God (Isa. 58:13-14.) Next time I will cover on what day the early new covenant believers met on, and some things are sure to surprise you, no matter where you're starting from.*

So we covered this time:

- Sabbath was established by God at creation, on the 7<sup>th</sup> Day, by HIS presence and resting in it
- Sabbath was known before Mt Sinai
- Sabbath was originally made for man, in the Garden – not just for Jews and Israel. All gentiles living in Israel also had to keep it. We are the Israel of God today.
- The several reasons God gave the Sabbath
- There is validity to the reasoning that Jesus is the ultimate Sabbath
- There's no question which day was the 7<sup>th</sup> day due to manna and record keeping since then
- The Sabbath is A sign of God's people, but not the Seal
- The relative importance of the Sabbath compared to the other commandments
- Sabbath keeping is not what saves us.

**I'M OUT OF TIME for this first PART – so let's stop here, and next time we're going to cover:**

- why doesn't Genesis 2 say, after the 7<sup>th</sup> day, "and the evening and the morning were the 7<sup>th</sup> day"?
- Do New Covenant believers have to keep the Sabbath Day – or is Jesus now our sabbath?
- The Spiritual rest in Christ that we can have now, even AS we keep the 4<sup>th</sup> commandment
- We'll very carefully look at what Jesus did on the Sabbath and what that teaches us
- When was Jesus really resurrected? The answer will shock some of you.
- Did the resurrection force a change of the Sabbath?
- We'll see what the earliest Christians – Jew and Gentile alike --did about the Sabbath
- We'll also study the Jerusalem Council of Acts 15 in relation to what the Gentiles were told
- We'll also study the passages in Gal. 4:10; Col 2:16-17; Romans 14:5 and other verses commonly used to try to prove the Sabbath was done away.

- We'll also cover Hebrews 3 and 4 in detail where it says there remains a "Keeping of the sabbath" for the people of God.
- Probably in a part 3 message, we'll look into the history of how Sunday became the official day of worship – and whether that change was authorized by God and scripture, or not.

And I can already see that this may turn into a 3 part sermon unless I move fast next time.

Brethren, the Sabbath is a delight and it's an honor to have a day to focus more on God than we normally can and to rest from our works. It's wonderful to have the Sabbath in Christ as well. We'll certainly talk more about all that next time. SO until next time, this is your brother – Philip Shields.



