

## The Seventh-Day Sabbath

*Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy. Six days you shall work but the seventh day is the Sabbath of the LORD your God... 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.*

*Exodus 20:8 – 11*

These words were spoken by God to the children of Israel at Mt. Sinai (Horeb) after they had been delivered from slavery in Egypt. They were a part of one of the covenants God made with Israel. (Exodus 19:3 – 9; Deuteronomy 4:13; Exodus 34:27 – 28) This covenant was not made with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob [the fathers]. (Deuteronomy 5:2 – 3) This would lead some to believe that the Sabbath was only for Israel or the Jews. But what are the facts?

First of all, the Sabbath existed prior to becoming a part of the covenant made at Mt. Sinai. That is why God began the fourth commandment with the word “remember”. Knowledge must first exist in one’s mind before it can be remembered. The Israelites already knew about the Sabbath. We know this because prior to arriving at Mt. Sinai, the children of Israel complained to Moses and Aaron that they were hungry. (Exodus 16: 1 – 3) At the time, God provided manna and quails for them to eat in the wilderness. (Exodus 16:4 – 21) They were instructed to gather the manna every morning and to leave none of it for the next day lest it stank. (Exodus 16:19 – 21) However, on the sixth day of the week, they were instructed to gather enough manna for two days because the seventh day was the Sabbath when everyone was to rest. (Exodus 16:22 – 26) Those who obeyed found that the manna did not stink nor were there worms in it on the Sabbath. However, those who did not obey went out on the Sabbath and there was no manna. (Exodus 16:27)

God then asked Moses, “How long do you [Israel] refuse to keep **My** commandments and **My** laws? This proves that God’s (not Moses’) commandments and laws existed prior to them being given at Mt. Sinai. The people kept the Sabbath before they entered into a covenant with God. (Exodus 16:29 -30) It was actually also used as a test commandment to see whether or not Israel would obey Him. (Exodus 16:4)

Did the fathers, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, also keep the Sabbath? Well, if God included the Sabbath in His commandments and laws as previously mentioned, and if the fathers kept those same commandments and laws, then it can be concluded that they also kept the seventh-day Sabbath. We know from Scripture that Abraham did keep those commandments and laws and that he did teach his children to keep them.

*Genesis 18:17 – 19 ~ And the LORD said, “Shall I hide from Abraham what I am doing, since Abraham shall surely become a great and mighty nation, and all the nations of the earth shall be blessed in him? For I have known him, in order that **he may command his children and his household after him, that they keep the way of the LORD, to do righteousness and justice, that the LORD may bring to Abraham what He has spoken to him.***

*Genesis 26:1 – 5 ~ ...Then the LORD appeared to him [Isaac] and said: “Do not go down to Egypt. Live in the land of which I tell you. 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.*

*And I will make your descendants multiply as the stars of the heaven: I will give to your descendants all these lands; and in your seed [Jesus]**all the nations of the earth shall be blessed; because Abraham obeyed My voice and kept My charge, My commandments, My statutes, and My laws.**”*

Abraham knew about the Sabbath. He taught his descendants to keep the Sabbath holy. That is why Israel knew about the Sabbath in Exodus 16. Even when they were in Egypt, the Scripture seems to indicate that they knew to rest on the seventh day. (See Exodus 5:1 – 5)

The Sabbath existed before the flood in Noah’s time. Adam and Eve knew about the Sabbath because God created the Sabbath at the end of creation week – after He had created Adam and Eve. He did not speak it into existence as He had done for the rest of His creation during the first six days of the week. He created the Sabbath by resting.

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

The Sabbath has not changed because God does not change.

*Malachi 3:6 ~ For I am the LORD, I do not change...*

*I Chronicles 17:26 – 27 ~ And now, LORD, You are God, and have promised this goodness to your servant. Now You have been pleased to bless the house of Your servant, that it may continue before you forever; **for You have blessed it, O LORD, and it shall be blessed forever.***

When God blessed the seventh-day Sabbath, it was blessed forever. When Balak wanted Balaam to curse Israel, Balaam answered this way:

*Numbers 23:19 ~ “God is not a man, that He should lie, nor a son of man, that He should repent. Has he said, and will He not do? Or has He spoken, and will He not make it good? Behold, I have received a command to bless; **He has blessed, and I cannot reverse it.**”*

When God blesses something, no matter what it is, **no man** can reverse it. It has never changed because God does not change. The seventh day was the only day sanctified [set apart as holy] by God. It is a holy day.

*Leviticus 23: 1 – 3 ~ And **the LORD** spoke to Moses, saying, Speak to the children of Israel, and say to them: **The feasts of the LORD**, which you shall proclaim to be **holy** convocations, **these are My feasts**. 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 is **the Sabbath of the LORD** in all your dwellings.*

When Jesus lived on the earth, He kept the seventh-day Sabbath.

*Mark 1:21 ~Then they went into Capernaum, and immediately on the Sabbath He entered the synagogue and taught.*

*Luke 4:16 ~ So 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 to read.***

The apostles, Paul, and the New Testament Christians also kept the seventh-day Sabbath. (Acts 13:13 – 14, 42 - 48; 16:1 – 13; 17:1 – 4; 18:1 – 4)

The Sabbath was a part of the covenant God made with Israel at Mt. Sinai. Some believe that the laws given to Israel were abolished when Jesus was crucified. However, when Jesus gave His sermon on the mount, recorded in Matthew, He said this:

*Matthew 5:17 – 19 ~ “Do not think that I came to destroy the Law or the Prophets. I did not come to destroy but to fulfill. For assuredly, I say to you, **till heaven and earth pass away, one jot or one tittle will by no means pass from the law till all is fulfilled**. Whoever, therefore, breaks one of the least of these commandments, and teaches men so, shall be called least in the kingdom of*

*heaven; but whoever does and teaches them, he shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven.*

Jesus was the One who created all things, including the seventh-day Sabbath.

*John 1:1 – 3 ~ In the beginning was the Word, and **the Word was with God, and the Word was God.** He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made.*

*Colossians 1:15 – 16 ~ He [the Son of God] is the image of the invisible God [the Father], the firstborn over all creation. For by Him [the Son] **all things** were created that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers. **All things** were created through Him and for Him.*

He is, therefore, Lord of the Sabbath.

*Mark 2:27 – 28 ~ And He said to them, “The Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath. Therefore, the Son of Man is also Lord of the Sabbath.*

(Also read Matthew 12:1 – 8; Luke 6:1 – 5)

God [the Word] created the seventh-day Sabbath. He created it for man. Man still exists on the earth. Therefore, the seventh-day Sabbath still exists on the earth.

But why does man need the Sabbath? Well, what did Jesus, as a man, do on the Sabbath? He healed others and He did good things. (Mark 3: 1 – 5, Matthew 12:9 – 13; Luke 6:6 – 10) Man needs a day that is set apart in which he can rest and do good things for others. It is also a day set apart to worship God and to teach and learn His ways. (Luke 4:16 – 21; Mark 1:16 – 22; 6:1 – 2; Luke 13:10 – 17; 14:1 – 6; John 5:1 – 9; 9:1 – 14)

Although the Sabbath is a day for resting, doing good, teaching, and learning, it is also a day that has even greater significance. It is a day that pictures a future time – a day of rest for the people of God. Ancient Israel came out of Egypt and were instructed by Moses. He was to lead them into the Promised Land – a land of rest – a land promised to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. (Genesis 12:1 – 5; 15:12 – 21; 17:7 – 8; 26:1 – 3; 28:12 – 15) However, Israel hardened their hearts and did not believe God. Therefore, those who originally came out of Egypt (with the exception of Caleb and Joshua) did not enter God’s rest. They did not enter the Promised Land but died in the wilderness. (Hebrews 3:7 -19) Although Moses was a servant of God, he was not the ultimate leader of Israel. He was not the one ultimately in charge of the house of Israel.

*Hebrews 3:4 – 6 ~ For every house is built by someone, but He who built all things is God. And Moses indeed was faithful in all His house as a servant, for a testimony of those things which would be spoken afterward, but Christ as a Son over His own house, whose house we are if we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm to the end.*

Jesus is the Head of the church. (Colossians 1:17 – 18; Ephesians 5:23). He is the Seed of Abraham to whom all the promises were made. (Galatians 3:7 – 29) Those promises made to Abraham pertain to all those who are considered to be Abraham's seed through Jesus. (Romans 4:1 – 25)

Ancient Israel did not enter the true rest of God – the rest pictured by the seventh-day Sabbath that was originally created when God rested from His works. (Genesis 2:2 – 3) That rest was interrupted when man sinned. That rest has not yet been experienced by man. The children of God, along with the entire creation, are waiting for that time to come. (Hebrews 4:1 – 9; Romans 8:18 – 25)

*Hebrews 4:8 -9 ~ For if Joshua had given them [ancient Israel] rest, then He [the Word] would not afterward have spoken of another day. **There remains therefore a rest for the people of God.***

That time will come when Christ returns to earth the second time as Lord of lords and King of kings. (Daniel 7:13 – 14) Initially, for one thousand years, the earth will be at rest from the adversary of God. (Revelation 20:1 – 6; Daniel 7:26 – 27) Then, the adversary will be released again for a little while. (Revelation 20:7 – 10) Next, there will be the White Throne judgment, when everyone will be judged according to their works. (Revelation 20:11 – 15; Matthew 25:31 – 46) God will make all things new. (Revelations 21:1 – 7) God's kingdom will continue for eternity and will consist of those who voluntarily follow God. God will wipe away all tears. There will be no more sorrow, no more crying, and no more death. (Revelation 21:4) Finally, at that time, the universe will at last be at rest.

*Revelation 22:12 – 13 ~ And behold, I am coming quickly, and My reward is with Me, to give to everyone according to his work. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End, the First and the Last. Blessed are those who do His commandments, that they may have the right to the tree of life, and may enter the gates into the city.*