

Some Thoughts on Being Prepared for the Sabbath.

Most of us want to be dedicated followers of the true God. What would seem to be an easy subject to cover, namely keeping God's feasts as a day of rest is complicated for some, but not complicated for others. I suggest that we meet somewhere in the middle. This is probably good advice for many things in life. Some people have a high intake of sugar in their diet and over time, end up with the terrible disease of diabetes. We all need sugars, but certain sugars ingested all the time can overload our bodies and cause problems to our health.

What complicates keeping God's days of rest are the multitude of ideas on this topic including those who impose extra laws that sometimes make God's days of rest into a chore.

Deuteronomy 4:2 NKJV says, "You shall not add to the word which I command you, nor take from it, that you may keep the commandments of the LORD your God which I command you." We are supposed to rest on God's Sabbaths which include some days of rest associated with God's feasts days and not just the weekly Sabbath.

Let's begin by talking about the weekly Sabbath. The word Sabbath means to rest. We are to cease from work. Also, holy means separate; essentially, we are to make the sabbath days different. God made the weekly Sabbath a day of rest at creation. Genesis 2:2-3 NKJV says, "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."

Just like God rested on the 7th day, we are to rest on the 7th day.

Exodus 20:8-11 NKJV says,

Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days you shall labor and do all your work, 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 who is within your gates. 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.

It would seem that all we have to do is to make the Sabbath a day of rest, but how do we do that properly? We need to make food, eat, and take care of ourselves, and we should also enjoy our day of rest. We see God resting from His creative work, so it makes sense we should rest from our creative work as well. But how do we do that and to what extent do we do that? The word for work has to do with hard work, doing business, creating goods, one's job or occupation, or doing any type of work even management. Work can include many things in life including planning or applying our minds to a task. So, we need to be aware of what it means to work. Can you see why there are so many different opinions on this subject?

I would like to use the scriptures to help us understand how to keep the Sabbath days of rest. The Bible talks about not gathering the manna on the seventh day. The seventh day is our Friday night to Saturday night. In ancient times, Israel's day began in the evening not in the middle of the night. We have clocks to help us with that; they used the Sun. Genesis 1:5 NKJV says, "Evening and the morning were the first day." It is better to use the Sun for biblical timing. Israel should know when the 7th day is; they kept it for some 40 years in the desert

after they left Egypt. Also, someone in the 19th century went around the world to see when the Jewish people kept the weekly Sabbath, and they found out that the Jewish communities around the world kept the Sabbath on the same day, our Friday night and Saturday during the day.

I should point out that some people think the Sabbath is on a Sunday, but that was started by the pagan Constantine. He became a Christian but continued to worship his other gods. It seemed that he just included a belief in the true God as just another god. Here is his edict.

On the venerable Day of the sun let the magistrates and people residing in cities rest, and let all workshops be closed. In the country, however, persons engaged in agriculture may freely and lawfully continue their pursuits: because it often happens that another Day is not so suitable for grain sowing or for vine planting: lest by neglecting the proper moment for such operations the bounty of heaven should be lost. (Philip Schaff, History of the Christian Church, volume 3 [Edinburgh: 1884]: page 380).

Christianity adopted the pagan day of the Sun god Mithras as its day of rest. Then, Christian philosophers needed to find a reason for changing the day of rest to Sunday, so they say that Christians kept the day of pagan Sun god Mithras before this, or they make up some other reason like that is the day Yeshua rose from the dead. The gospel of John has Mary Magdalene going to Yeshua's tomb and meeting Him there early the first day of the week. Early the first day of the week in Israel began on our Saturday evening in that era. "Evening and the morning were the first day." They did not have clocks to start the day in the middle of the night. The women go back to the tomb at or near sunrise our next day (still the first day of the week in Israel) in the other 3 gospels, Yeshua is no longer there. So, Yeshua rose from the dead on our Saturday before Mary Magdalene got there. Mary Magdalene saw Yeshua when she first went there on our Saturday night and then went back with the other woman on our Sunday morning. Pagans kept the day of the pagan god Mithras so we see evidence regarding this before Constantine made his edict.

Let's talk about how to keep God's days of rest. Based on Exodus 12:16, we are allowed to prepare food and to eat on God's Sabbaths. Exodus 12:16 NKJV says, "On the first day there shall be a holy convocation, and on the seventh day there shall be a holy convocation for you. No manner of work shall be done on them; but that which everyone must eat – that only may be prepared by you." This would include the things we need to do on a regular basis to sustain life, but no work, no talk about work or anything causing tension, especially nothing that is done as a job, a difficult project, or anything taxing or difficult unless it is to save life. Sometimes people have to work on the Sabbath for emergencies or to sustain life. Make sure you are not making up an excuse to work when you do not have to. No one is to work, not our children, servants, the stranger, or even our animals.

We are to value life and therefore life-threatening emergencies need to be taken care of even if it is the Sabbath. We are to save life based on Hosea 6:6 NKJV which says, "For I desire mercy and not sacrifice." Also, the Bible tells us that God's commandments give life. Talking about God's commandments in Proverbs, Proverbs 3:16-18 NKJV says, "Length of days is in her right hand, in her left hand riches and honor. Her ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace. She is a tree of life to those who take hold of her, and happy are all who retain her." The Sanhedrin (the ruling body in Jerusalem) had made up extra inappropriate

laws to keep the people in line and in doing so made the people to work to keep God's Sabbaths.

Because we can warm food without it being a lot of work in our era, it is not work to warm our food but be careful with this. Doing work is forbidden on the Sabbath and therefore making some foods can be a lot of work. The process of baking bread often requires a lot of work, we should not butcher on the Sabbath, or harvest food. If we merely cook the bread in our oven, it does not require much work. We should buy or harvest our food ahead of time. Things that require work should be done in preparation for the Sabbath. This scripture in Exodus took place the day before the Sabbath. Exodus 16:23-24 NKJV says, "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.' So they laid it up till morning, as Moses commanded."

There are some verses that we do not fully understand. Did they boil and bake the manna ahead of time because it spoiled and therefore, we do not have to prepare our food ahead of time? I think we need to be thoughtful about this. Why not make the Sabbath a day of rest for everyone? We can make tasty food ahead of the Sabbath and still have a day of joy and celebration. This scripture in Nehemiah took place on Yom Teruah, a day of rest (also known as Rosh Hashanah). Nehemiah 8:10 NKJV says, "Then he said to them, 'Go your way, eat the fat, drink the sweet, and send portions to those for whom nothing is prepared; for this day is holy to our Lord. Do not sorrow, for the joy of the LORD is your strength.'" We might think, how can we have a day of celebration without making food? We can have a wonderful feast prepared ahead of time for Friday night and Saturday during the day.

Also, Exodus tells us that the people are told to stay in their place. Exodus 16:29-30 NKJV, "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." This must refer to doing daily chores associated with going out to work and not the everyday things of life. For example, they would surely leave their place to go to the bathroom. They lived in tents with no running water.

The Sanhedrin made an exhaustive list of things prohibited on the Sabbath based on the jobs people had at that time. The judges, magistrates, and the ruling body in Jerusalem were tasked with maintaining order, but they broke the commandment to not add or subtract from God's commandments. Deuteronomy 4:2 NKJV says, "You shall not add to the word which I command you, nor take from it, that you may keep the commandments of the LORD your God which I command you."

The Sanhedrin, the ruling body in Jerusalem, based their extra commandments on God resting from work on the Sabbath. Nehemiah 9:6 NKJV says, "You alone are the LORD; You have made heaven, the heaven of heavens, with all their host, the earth and everything on it, the seas and all that is in them, and You preserve them all." God still preserved the earth and all living beings on the Sabbath, so it makes sense that we are to still take care of ourselves and the necessities of life on the Sabbath. They made the Sabbath a day of work keeping their man-made commandments.

Also, Jeremiah tells us not to carry things on the Sabbath. We carry things everyday so this cannot be referring to not carrying things that are necessary for life. People will "carry" this too far and make up extra commandments and so break the commandment not to carry things on the Sabbath. This must have had to do with bringing in goods to the city to buy and sell on the Sabbath. Jeremiah 17:21-22 NKJV says, "Take heed to yourselves, and bear no burden on the Sabbath day, nor bring it in by the gates of Jerusalem; nor carry a burden out of your houses on the Sabbath day, nor do any work, but hallow the Sabbath day." Since people did not have to work on this day, it would be convenient to buy and sell goods then. Do not bring burdens out of your house to sell and so do work. We also should not buy things or go out to eat on the Sabbath; that encourages people to work on the Sabbath.

Also, most of us live with modern conveniences that do not require work. We are not supposed to start a fire on the Sabbath. Turning on a light switch is not starting a fire. You will argue about you are not allowed to carry your house key, using the right spoon, and the list goes on and on for all kinds of nonsense made up by people. If it seems like nonsense, it is nonsense. The Bible tells us not to argue with people about the scruples they have regarding God's commandments.

I always admire the person who wants to follow God the best they can. So, be kind to those who you think are following man-made commandments. We should be kind to each other and not squabble about trivial things. Isaiah 29:13 NKJV says, "Inasmuch as these people draw near with their mouths and honor Me with their lips, but have removed their hearts far from Me, and their fear toward Me is taught by the commandment of men." Most of these people who are following extra non-biblical laws are more concerned about following people. I tend to be conservative and careful to keep God's commandments. Our family tends to only take care of the necessities of life on the Sabbath. There are other issues not talked about here like emergencies, having to do your job on a Sabbath, medical care, or a more in-depth study about saving life on the Sabbath. This short work is intended to help you have a true day of rest. The Sabbath should be like no other day.