

Israel Shall Keep The Sabbath Exodus 31 Verses 12-18

Ex 31:12 ¶ "And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, 13 Speak 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. 14 Ye 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."

What can we learn from this text? The first thing is the commandment is given to Israel, the nation, and it was to be passed down from generation to generation. The commandment was not given to any other nation or group of people.

What was God's purpose in commanding Israel to keep the sabbath? Every sabbath was a day of remembering that God had sanctified Israel to himself as his own nation of people. What does God mean when He says sanctify? Strong's Concordance definition of sanctify is *to be clean ceremonially and/or morally, to consecrate, to dedicate, to hallow, to keep holy, to prepare, to proclaim, to purify wholly*. As we look at these definitions: we understand clearly what God means as He goes on to say **"Ye 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."** God confirms His intent for Israel to observe the sabbath day by applying the death sentence to those who broke the commandment. Which simply means that the dead person no longer exists in that family or in the nation of Israel.

One thing we should also remember about Israel. God was not just their God on the sabbath day but every day. Remember, that he went before them in a pillar of cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night. The same is true for us. Jesus is not our Saviour only on Sunday, but every day of our lives.

15 "Six 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. 16 Wherefore the children of Israel shall keep the sabbath, to observe the sabbath throughout their generations, for a perpetual covenant. 17 It 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."

"Six days may work be done; but in the seventh is the sabbath of rest, holy to the LORD:" Now let's define sabbath: *intermission*, the root definition is *to repose, to desist from exertion, to rest*. This was for the nation Israel a **"perpetual covenant."** The word perpetual, in this context, means *to the vanishing point, eternity, always, continually, from the beginning, without end*.

"It 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." God gives the nation Israel the reason for observing the sabbath, which was to follow his example in creating. Rested has the definition of *to repose, desist from exertion, cease*. Contrary to what many people believe, God was not tired when he completed creating. **"he rested"** simply means that he ceased to create. **"and was refreshed."** Refreshed means *to breathe, passively to be breathed upon*. This says to me: when we do a job, and do it well, we let out a sigh of relief when it is completed, and we rest from that project. What did God do when he completed creating? He ceased from work and He looked it over and saw that it was good, as seen in **Ge 1:31 "And God saw every thing that he had made, and behold, it was very good. And the evening and the morning were the sixth day."**

Mankind, because of the curse we inherited from Adam, must work to eat for God said: **Ge 3:19 "In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken: for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return."** Wherefore, man is always creating, or working, to get food to eat. God knew that this would be an exhausting task for the human body, and that the sabbath day of rest, after laboring for six days, would refresh the natural body and the mind.

However, that was not the sole purpose for the sabbath. Remember, God told Israel that the sabbath was to be a holy day. A day that was a sign, a reminder to Israel that God is the one who chose them out of all the nations of the world. A sign that God had sanctified them to be called by His name. A reminder they were to be identified as children of God.

Israel was reminded, of how serious God was that Israel obey his word and keep the sabbaths, when God put them in captivity to other nations for 490 years, because for 40 years they failed to keep his sabbath.

As we transition to the New Testament and the age of salvation by grace in which we live today, we point out that of the Ten Commandments given by God under the Mosaic law, nine of them are reinstituted in the New Testament scripture. However, the one that is not reinstituted in the New Testament is the keeping of the sabbath.

Many people today have confusion in their minds about whether we should be keeping the sabbath as was commanded of Israel. Wherefore, we want to take a few minutes to give a brief explanation of why we are not under the commandment of sabbath keeping. There are many scriptures that point this out. One reason is that while Jesus was here, he healed people on the sabbath day: his disciples picked corn going through the fields on the sabbath day: which both were to the Jews breaking the sabbath. When questioned about it, Jesus always gave them scriptural reasons why they had not broken the sabbath.

There are two scriptures in which Jesus specifically addressed this question, as it applies in this age of salvation by grace. One is in **Mr 2:27-28; 27 "And he said unto them, The sabbath was made for man, and not man for the sabbath: 28 Therefore the Son of man is Lord also of the sabbath."** Jesus is rebuffing the Pharisees who are questioning him about why his disciples, and himself, do not strictly observe the sabbath. Jesus explains that the sabbath was made for man, which we see clearly under the Mosaic system of ordinances and the Ten Commandments of God. Why was it made for man? To remind man (remember, it was a sign) who their God was, and why they were sanctified as the nation of God's chosen people. Jesus then tells these Pharisees: I am also Lord of the sabbath, as well as every other day of the week, because I am the Son of God, and my Father and I are one, wherefore, as long as I am here my disciples are not breaking the sabbath, because they are in direct communion with God.

The other is in **Col 2:16; 13 ¶ "And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath he quickened together with him, having forgiven you all trespasses; 14 Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross; 15 And having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a shew of them openly, triumphing over them in it. 16 ¶ Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holyday, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath days: 17 Which are a shadow of things to come; but the body is of Christ."** Paul is addressing the Colossian church; about the issues of trying to live by the law ordinances; after you have been saved by the grace of God. As we are all aware; the eternal remission of sins, and eternal life in the new birth, came through Jesus, the Christ, and not by observing the law ordinances, which Jesus did away with when he sacrificed Himself on the cross, for the salvation of all of God's people, both Jew and Gentile. Paul is telling the Colossian church that it is not grace plus anything else, that brings eternal salvation to a person. It is all the finished work of Jesus, and it is manifested in the lives of the Saved by the indwelling of the Holy Spirit power. We see this manifested in verse **17 "Which are a shadow of things to come; but the body is of Christ."**

Every child of grace should understand that the sacrificial and ceremonial law was fulfilled through the death of Jesus on the cross. Consider **Heb 10:26-29; 26 "For if we sin willfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins, 27 But a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries. 28 He that despised Moses' law died without mercy under two or three witnesses: 29 Of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden underfoot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace?"** God is telling the Hebrew church: if you are saved by the grace of God, and then you try to go back under the sacrificial law for forgiveness of sins, you are annulling the finished work of Jesus. God is telling them: you cannot sacrifice bullocks, goats, heifers, and the prescribed things under the law, for the sacrificial law has been fulfilled in Jesus, the Christ. In other words, if you are trying to add anything to salvation by the grace of God for eternal salvation or eternal remission of sins, you are literally spitting with defiance in the face of God.

Ex 31:18 "And he gave unto Moses, when he had made an end of communing with him upon mount Sinai, two tables of testimony, tables of stone, written with the finger of God."

When God had finished his instruction to Moses: God gave him the two tables of stone, which were engraved upon, by God's finger, the Ten Commandments. These two tables of stone were placed in the ark of the covenant, and they were covered by the mercy seat. God has given us the King James Bible, which is the Word of God breathed into the writers by the breath of God.

Where does God write his laws today? We are told in scripture that he writes them in our hearts, seen in: **Heb 8:10-13; 10 "For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith the Lord; I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts: and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people: 11 And they shall not teach every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for all shall know me, from the least to the greatest. 12 For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more. 13 In that he saith, A new covenant, he hath made the first old. Now that which decayeth and waxeth old is ready to vanish away."**

Wherefore, it is easy to understand that God has left the sacrificial and ceremonial system in the past, because Jesus has implemented this new age of salvation by grace. Therefore, God no longer writes upon the tables of stones as he did under the Mosaic system, but now he writes in the fleshy tables of the heart and instills his word of truth in our minds.

This is confirmed in: **Heb 10:9-18; 9 "Then said he, Lo, I come to do thy will, O God. He taketh away the first, that he may establish the second. 10 By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all. 11 And every priest standeth daily ministering and offering oftentimes the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins: 12 But this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins forever, sat down on the right hand of God; 13 From henceforth expecting till his enemies be made his footstool. 14 For by one offering he hath perfected forever them that are sanctified. 15 Whereof the Holy Ghost also is a witness to us: for after that he had said before, 16 This is the covenant that I will make with them after those days, saith the Lord, I will put my laws into their hearts, and in their minds will I write them; 17 And their sins and iniquities will I remember no more. 18 Now where remission of these is, there is no more offering for sin."**

As we consider all these scriptures, and many more, it is easy to understand that there is no eternal life or eternal salvation in keeping the sabbaths. What was the sabbath to Israel? It was a day of rest for the body, and a sign of remembrance for the heart and mind of who their Saviour and God was.

What is the sabbath to us today? The same as for Israel but with a different application. What do you mean? The gift of salvation by grace in the new birth releases every child of God from trying to redeem themselves from their sins, and from under the law ordinances. How? Because, they have already entered into the eternal rest of the eternal remission of sins wrought for them on the cross by Jesus. We should remember every day, who our Saviour and God is.

Well, what about having a day set aside to worship God? We believe that Jesus set the example for us. Jesus arose from the dead on the first day of the week, which is Sunday on our calendar today. Jesus appeared to his disciples on the first day of the week. Consider these scriptures of the appearance of the risen Jesus:

- **Joh 20:19 ¶ "Then the same day at evening, being the first day of the week, when the doors were shut where the disciples were assembled for fear of the Jews, came Jesus and stood in the midst, and saith unto them, Peace be unto you."**
- **Ac 20:7 ¶ "And upon the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul preached unto them, ready to depart on the morrow; and continued his speech until midnight."**

Jesus resurrected on the first day of the week, establishing a new way as seen in **Heb 10:20 "By a new and living way, which he hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, his flesh; 21 And having an high priest over the house of God; 22 Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water."** We remind you: if you are born again; you have entered into the eternal rest of Christ. Prophetically, on the seventh day of rest set forth by God, will be fulfilled at the return of Jesus Christ the second time. Jesus will return a second time, and in the resurrection of the dead in Christ, and the change of those who are alive and remain, creating will be completed and every child of God will rest in the eternal seventh day. Seven being the number of perfection or completeness, which is indicative of what the eternal heaven will be. Hallelujah! Amen!