

THIS IS THE DAY

A new Pastor came to our little church when I was about eleven years old. He had a son my age, and we became friends. One Saturday afternoon as we were hiking along the railroad tracks, we stopped to have the sandwiches our mothers had packed. We talked about the deep things of pre-teen life. My friend broke a brief silence with some earth-shaking news: "Want to know a secret?"... "Sure!"... "I HATE SUNDAYS!". Wow! And this was the Pastor's kid. In a moment of bravery, and in keeping with the flow, I declared: "SO DO I!". From that moment our friendship took on a new dimension. We shared a forbidden secret; and we had to stay tight. You see, our church was of the "hell-fire and brimstone" variety; and hating Sundays was up there with beer, cigarettes and dancing.

Sunday was "church day"... they called it "the sabbath day". And the problem with this day for me, my new friend, and probably a whole bunch of others, was the overpowering presence inside the church-house on Sundays... FEAR! It was not the fear of God; a most important quality; no, it was the gut-fear of going to hell... something we were told about continually. So "the sabbath day" meant "scare day". It helped a little bit to know I wasn't the only one.

Despite this troublesome fact, until my early fifties I dutifully went to church every Sunday (and lots of other days too). In my last church I was an elder, and the teacher of the adult Bible class. It was around this time when I began to have some of the mysteries of the kingdom of Heaven revealed to me as I studied my Bible. As a concerned teacher, I gently touched some of these things in my Bible class. Boy, did I pay a price. Within the year I was most unceremoniously expelled. What a blessing!

One of the truths which began to unfold in my heart concerned the sabbath. This is the fourth of the ten commandments, handed down by the Almighty...

"REMEMBER THE SABBATH DAY, TO KEEP IT HOLY. Six days shalt thou do thy labour, and do all thy work: but the seventh day is the sabbath of the Lord thy God; in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy manservant, nor thy maidservant, nor thy cattle, nor the stranger that is within thy gates: for in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea and all that in them is, and He rested on the seventh day: wherefore the Lord blessed the seventh day, and hallowed it."
(Exodus 20:8-11 K.J.V.)

This seems pretty straight-forward on the surface. Let's do some digging beneath the surface of the Bible's pages. My examination will be in two parts: first - is it necessary to keep the sabbath in this day of enlightenment; or was it just a ritual for Bible times? Secondly - if ("if") it is to be kept today, what day is it?

The English word "sabbath" is the translation of two Bible words: "shabbath" (Strong's #7676), the Hebrew word used in the Old Testament; and "sabbaton" (Strong's #4521), the Greek word used in the New Testament. The Hebrew word means "a day of rest"; and the Greek word means "a day of repose"... the same thing. So this was a day of no working, and was very carefully observed by the children of Israel in both the Old and the New Testament times.

Why was it so scrupulously observed back then?...

"And YHWH spoke to Moses, saying, And you speak to the sons of Israel, saying, YOU SHALL SURELY KEEP MY SABBATHS; FOR IT IS A SIGN BETWEEN ME AND YOU FOR ALL YOUR GENERATIONS; TO KNOW THAT I AM YHWH YOUR SANCTIFIER: AND YOU SHALL KEEP THE SABBATH, FOR IT IS HOLY FOR YOU; THE PROFANERS OF IT SHALL SURELY BE PUT TO DEATH; for every one doing work in it, that soul shall be cut off from the midst of his people. Work may be done six days, and on the seventh day is a sabbath of rest, holy to YHWH; every one doing work on the sabbath day surely shall be put to death. AND THE SONS OF ISRAEL SHALL OBSERVE THE SABBATH, TO DO THE SABBATH FOR ALL THEIR GENERATIONS; A NEVER ENDING COVENANT. IT IS A SIGN FOREVER BETWEEN ME AND THE SONS OF ISRAEL..."
(Exodus 31:12-17 Hebrew Bible)

Boy... the reason's pretty obvious. I'd keep it too. I'm sure that I had read this passage in my early years; probably more than once. But it's one thing to read with eyes, and quite another to "see" with "eyes to see". Notice three important phrases in this passage: "FOR ALL YOUR GENERATIONS", "A NEVER ENDING COVENANT", and "A SIGN FOREVER". To my heart now, this is as forever as it gets. Add to this the fact that it is included in YaHWeH's ("YHWH" - the true sacred name of God is the subject of another paper) Ten Commandments, and any "optional" or "temporary" claim is void.

Many times I've been told that as long as we "love" God, He understands our heart; and things like keeping sabbaths are not important to Him. The reason so many think like this is precisely because they've lost their fear of Him (not fear of hell; fear of Him). And that's because they equate love with warm gushy feelings... misty eyes when the slow hymns are played. But I've seen a different equation in the Bible...

"IF YOU LOVE ME, KEEP MY COMMANDMENTS."
(John 14:15 K.J.V.)

"He that hath My commandments, AND KEEPETH THEM,
HE IT IS THAT LOVETH ME..."
(John 14:21 K.J.V.)

"FOR THIS IS THE LOVE OF ('toward') GOD, THAT
WE KEEP HIS COMMANDMENTS..."
(I John 5:3 K.J.V.)

Throughout the Bible, love for YahWeH is proven by obedience to YahWeH. Yes, one will grow into great feelings of love for their Abba Father, but that is never the evidence of love... obedience is. So if we are going to obey His commandments, should this not include number four?

I don't feel it necessary to belabour the "if" of sabbath importance today (indeed - "forever"). Those who don't buy it, won't, no matter how many Scriptures I quote. Time and paper would be better spent examining the "when" of sabbath, for those serious about obeying their Father.

As kids we'd ride our bikes around the neighbourhood aimlessly and endlessly; especially on Saturdays. Four doors down the street from my house was a Seventh Day Adventist church. It was a tiny building, as there were only about twenty of these odd people in my hometown. When they came out from their service, we'd be circling the blocks on our bikes. All of us: the Methodist kid (me), the Catholic kid, the Presbyterian kid, the atheist kid, and the who cares kids, would stop to watch these Saturday-church people and comment on how crazy they must be. Everybody knows the only day you have to go to church is on Sunday. And the concept of going on the only fun day of the week was preposterous. They HAD to be crazy. The fact of the matter was, however, when I'd talk to my mother or father about them, they'd always concede: "Well the Bible does say that the seventh day really is the sabbath." And I always asked them why everyone goes to church on Sunday. Then I'd hear that it doesn't matter to God, as long as we go on some day.

But as I became a young adult, this seventh-day vs. first-day incongruity began to needle me. I even got brave enough to ask a couple of Pastors about it. They recited the same mantra as my Mum and Dad... it doesn't really matter; God's too big to care about which day of the week we worship Him. Okay! It wasn't until decades later that it wasn't okay for me any more. I had to know. Is it the first day of the week, or the seventh day of the week? Then I read these two Scriptures...

"And God said, Let there be lights in the firmament ('arch') of the heavens to divide the day from the night; and let them (the sun and the moon) BE FOR SIGNS AND FOR SEASONS, AND FOR DAYS, AND YEARS. And God made two great lights; the greater ('brighter') to rule the day (i.e. the sun), and the lesser ('dimmer') light to rule the night (i.e. the moon): He made the stars also."
(Genesis 1:14-16 K.J.V.)

"HE APPOINTED THE MOON FOR SEASONS."
(Psalms 104:19 K.J.V.)

Interesting... YahWeH created the sun to light the earth (I already knew that); and the moon to reflect that light at night (I knew that too). But I didn't know the moon had anything to do with "seasons". But deeper than that, I did not know what "seasons" meant here. I discovered that "seasons" in this Scripture is the Hebrew word "mowed" (Strong's #4150). It means "the signal for assembly". The moon is YahWeH's instrument to tell His children when to

assemble together to worship Him. That's really amazing...

"Six days shall work be done: but the seventh day is
the sabbath of rest, AN HOLY CONVOCATION..."
(Leviticus 23:3 K.J.V.)

"Holy convocation" means "sacred assembly". But wait a minute; if we are to worship Him on each sabbath, and that's the seventh day of the week, why on earth do we need the moon to tell us? All you do is count to seven, right? When you stop asking questions, you stop learning. When you stop getting good answers, you start learning... the right way. Indeed, if we only had to count to seven, we would not need the moon for anything other than some light at night. The problem with just counting by sevens is, the "seven-day week" is the invention of a man, Julius Caesar. In YahWeH's calendar, and indeed until the year 46 B.C., there was no "week", no seven-day division of time, no day with a name. The "month" was the only division of the year. That's why every time a date is pinpointed in the Scriptures, it's: "in the ___th day of the ___th month of the ___th year of the reign of _____", for example... never was a "week" mentioned... there were none. Further to this, the month was determined from one "new moon" to the next "new moon". The new moon is the day when no moon is visible. The day prior is the last visible sliver of the waning moon; the day after is the first visible sliver of the waxing moon. And you do need the moon to observe this. The sabbath days do NOT coincide with a seven-day week. That's why there was no seven-day division of time in YahWeH's calendar.

Clearly the sabbath is very important to YahWeH. He pronounced a death penalty for violating it; and He hung the moon in the heavens to regulate it. From these we can see the correct day is just as critical as keeping a day. It must therefore be important to all His obedient children. And let me tell you, the correct day is also very important to satan. He has worked hard, with his usual stellar success, to hide the correct day...

"And he (satan) shall think ('conspire') TO CHANGE
(YahWeH's) TIMES AND LAWS..."
(Daniel 7:25 K.J.V.)

And indeed he HAS changed YahWeH's times and laws. He used the Roman Emperor to do this regarding the hiding and confusing of the sabbaths. Julius Caesar invented a seven-day time division called the "week". And he named each of the days to honour a Pagan god...

- * Sunday - in honour of the sun-god
- * Monday - in honour of the moon-god
- * Tuesday - in honour of the god Tue
- * Wednesday - in honour of the god Woden
- * Thursday - in honour of the god Thor
- * Friday - in honour of the god Frigg
- * Saturday - in honour of the god Saturn

This, in 46 B.C., was the first time in history a month was sub divided.

But indeed, satan went further than this. He changed the cycle of the year; having it start and end in the winter, rather than the spring, when all life begins anew. In YaHWeH's calendar the year's new beginning is nature's new beginning. Later on, Pope Gregory made more changes to the invented calendar of man. The calendar which the world marches in step with is known as the "Julian / Gregorian" calendar (after Julius Caesar and Gregory XIII). But YaH-WeH Almighty doesn't march to it, neither should His children.

Interfacing the true sacred calendar with the satanic invention is impossible, and not by chance. You see, we are repeatedly reminded in the Bible that the sabbath is the "seventh" day. But this is NOT the seventh day of a non-existent week, rather, the seventh day AFTER six work days. BUT!... there is something else in the mix...

"And it shall come to pass that FROM ONE NEW MOON TO ANOTHER, AND FROM ONE SABBATH TO ANOTHER, shall all flesh come to worship before Me, saith the Lord."
(Isaiah 66:23 K.J.V.)

"Likewise the people of this land shall worship at the door of this gate before the Lord IN THE SABBATHS AND IN THE NEW MOONS."
(Ezekiel 46:3 K.J.V.)

What's this mean? It means that separating each group of six work-days is a sabbath day, but the new moon days, which separate every four groups of work-days (once each month, in other words) are also sabbaths of rest. But wait, there's more. Depending on the "conjunction" time - the exact time of the moon's disappearance - some months have 30 days rather than 29 days, making the new moon sabbath a two-day, rather than a one-day observance. I know this all sounds quite complicated; but that's because we instinctively see things in terms of our seven-day week... they don't mesh! But trust me, once you keep YaHWeH's sabbaths according to His calendar, it is simple... even though we function in a Julian / Gregorian calendar. I'll outline a typical lunar month...

- Day 1 - new moon (worship / assembly)
- Day 2-7 - six work days
- Day 8 - sabbath day (worship / assembly)
- Day 9-14 - six work days
- Day 15 - sabbath day (worship / assembly)
- Day 16-21 - six work days
- Day 22 - sabbath day (worship / assembly)
- Day 23-28 - six work days

- Day 29 - sabbath day (worship / assembly)
- Day 30 - Some months have 30 rather than 29 days. And in such a month, this day is observed as a new moon day - the first of a two-day new moon observance - day 1 of the following month being the second new moon day.

In every lunar month the sabbath is always the 1st, the 8th, the 15th, the 22nd and the 29th day of the month. The first sabbath (the 1st day) is always the new moon sabbath; and the 30th day of each month which has 30 days is also a new moon sabbath. This cadence does indeed become simple to grasp over time. One can spot the sabbaths by simply looking at the moon if need be. But sacred lunar calendars are available, overlaid on the Julian / Gregorian calendar, so one never needs to be in doubt.

Because the sabbaths appear to float (when compared to man's weeks); that is, they occur on a different day of the week after every five, it makes life complicated for YaHWeH's sabbath keepers. Imagine telling your boss you can't work the next five Teusdays, then the following five Wednesdays, then the five Fridays after that. And this is precisely what satan wants... to make obedience to the Almighty as difficult as possible. Many obedient sheep have lost their job by keeping sabbath; and have a tough time finding another employer who will go with it. Keeping His sabbaths and new moons is part of the cost YaHWeH's children need to count as they consider which path to walk.

For any sceptic reading this paper who is worth his salt, this is the time to play the ace up your sleeve...

"And He (the Messiah) said unto them, THE SABBATH WAS MADE FOR MAN, AND NOT MAN FOR THE SABBATH."
(Mark 2:27 K.J.V.)

Geepers. I'll have to admit, this doesn't look good for my claim that we have to observe the day, at any cost. In fact, it looks like we CAN move the day for our convenience; or even not keep it at all... I mean, gee, the day's made for us, we aren't made for the day. HMMMMMM?

So what are we to make of this? THIS! The Messiah is responding to the Phari-sees who are questioning Him about His disciples taking corn from a field and eating it on a sabbath day. This was considered work (harvesting), and therefore unlawful. And our Saviour informs them that it is always lawful to do good (including healing, saving a life, and yes... letting the hungry get food) on the sabbath. He follows His declaration, quoted above, by saying...

"Therefore the Son of Man (Himself - YaHWeH in a flesh body) is Lord also of the sabbath."
(Mark 2:28 K.J.V.)

These men (the disciples - sheep of His fold) are His, and the sabbath is His; and He can do as He sees fit on the sabbath, and any other day. His sheep are hungry, and He can allow them to eat. And yes, the sabbath IS made for His

sheep... for the blessing of His sheep and not their enslavement. The keeping of YaHWeH's sabbaths is to free us, not bind us; it's to enlarge us, not constrict us; and to bring us closer to our Father, not chain us to law.

One summer as a teen, I worked in the shipping and receiving department of an office supply company. Outside the receiving door was a posted sign with the hours when shipments would be received. One day a large shipment came at an off-hour... no one responded when the driver rang the bell. So he came to the front door, and tore a strip off the first person at the counter. The boss heard the commotion, and came from his office to intervene. The young hothead started in on him. The boss's response was classic; I wish I had it on video. When the driver finished his tantrum, the boss looked at him sternly for a while. Then he said, "I AM THE OWNER; CAN'T YOU READ THE SIGN?... I'M NOT HOME!" He calmly returned to his office. The poor guy was beet-red and speechless. He left. The shipment came back the next day, at the proper time.

Some think the sabbath is just a day to not work up a sweat; so it becomes a day of frustration. Especially if there's an important project on hold. You might spend the day watching the clock. This will profit you nothing; and will not impress YaHweH. That's not it at all. The sabbath is not so much a "day", as it is a "gate"... a "time-gate". It's when the Boss is home, if you will...

"Likewise the people of this land (His land; His 'sheepfold') SHALL WORSHIP AT THE DOOR OF THIS GATE ('time-gate') before the Lord (their Shepherd) IN THE SABBATHS AND IN THE NEW MOONS (the hours posted on the sign)."
(Ezekiel 46:3 K.J.V.)

"But God is always there!" Yes, He is. Any one of His obedient children can cry out to Him for rescue at any time, and He will respond. But He's not your door-mat. His Kingdom operates according to rules... "times and laws". Don't think you are above them...

"YE ASK, AND RECEIVE NOT, BECAUSE YE ASK AMISS..."
(James 4:3 K.J.V.)

The throne room of Heaven is approachable "boldly", according to Hebrews 4:16. And that "boldness" means "confidence". But try bursting in with "Hey God!" and see how you fare. The "confidence" you may have is directly proportional to the "FEAR" you have for Him. Modern churchianity has morphed us into impudent brats... "I'll do it my way!" Oh no you won't! Have you ever noticed how many times in the Bible, great men, Prophets and Kings, had to beseech YaHWeH to "hear" them? Nehemiah said, "Let Thine ear now be attentive to me." King David cried, "Give ear to my prayer... and hide not Thyself from my supplication." Many others begged Him to not turn away from their cry. Now why on earth would they waste their time and His, IF He hears whatever we say, whenever we say it? Your boldness can equal your fear; and your fear will equal your obedience to His rules. We have COMPLETELY forgotten this in this age of enlightened entitlement. And we wonder why God isn't tending to us more quickly...

"Thus saith the Lord God, The GATE (the time-gate) of the INNER COURT (the throne room) that looketh toward the east, SHALL BE SHUT THE SIX WORKING DAYS; BUT ON THE SABBATH IT SHALL BE OPENED, AND IN THE NEW MOONS IT SHALL BE OPENED (the hours of business are posted)."
(Ezekiel 46:1 K.J.V.)

It seldom gets much clearer than this folks. But is it not shocking how a Scripture like this is downright unacceptable to this "do it now" generation? How dare God not take requests 24 / 7! If you are an obedient child of YahWeH you can cry out to Him in any emergency, and He will hear and respond. But the sabbaths are the special times, the time-gate to the throne room for worship and making your petitions...

"IF YOU TURN YOUR FOOT AWAY ON THE SABBATHS FROM DOING WHAT YOU PLEASE ON MY HOLY DAY, AND CALL THE SABBATH A DELIGHT, GLORIFIED TO THE HOLINESS OF YHWH; AND SHALL GLORIFY IT, AWAY FROM DOING YOUR OWN WAYS, FROM FINDING YOUR OWN PLEASURE OR SPEAKING YOUR WORD; THEN YOU SHALL DELIGHT YOURSELF IN YHWH. AND I WILL CAUSE YOU TO RIDE ON THE HEIGHTS OF THE EARTH, AND MAKE YOU EAT THE INHERITANCE OF YOUR FATHER JACOB. FOR THE MOUTH OF YHWH HAS SPOKEN."

(Isaiah 58:13,14 Hebrew Bible)

"EVERYONE WHO KEEPS FROM DEFILING THE SABBATH, AND TAKES HOLD OF MY COVENANT: EVEN THEM WILL I BRING TO MY HOLY MOUNT AND MAKE THEM JOYFUL IN MY HOUSE OF PRAYER."

(Isaiah 56:6,7 Hebrew Bible)

Well worth any cost, I'd say.

Let me conclude with some nuts-and-bolts of sabbath keeping. In YahWeH's division of time, the "day" is NOT from midnight to midnight; it is from sun-down to sundown. So, for example, if Tuesday is the sabbath, it begins at sun-down on Monday, and ends at sundown on Tuesday. In a 29-day lunar month, say the 29th (always a sabbath) is a Tuesday; sundown on Monday would begin your sabbath observance, but since the 1st day of the next month is always a new moon day, your sabbath observance would end at sundown on Wednesday. And if it was a 30-day month, the 29th is still the regular sabbath, but the 30th becomes a new moon day as well. So in this example, it would be a longer sabbath observance... from sundown Monday to sundown Thursday. Request a "Lunar YahWeH Calendar" to make this easier to follow.

The new moon (no visible moon) is always a sabbath; the first quarter moon is always a sabbath; the full moon is always a sabbath; and the last quarter moon is always a sabbath. If you have no calendar, and aren't sure, just look up at the moon.

Now, about "worship and assembly". What do you do if you are the only one

you know, or are close enough to (in distance) to assemble with? This is a good question, and will apply to many. Our Messiah reminded us repeatedly that "few" would find the "gate" that leads to the path to life. Being an island in a sea of unbelief is par for the course today. So you simply worship Him by yourself. Talk to Him, praise Him, thank Him, enter your altar (another paper) and offer up your petition to Him. Study His Word. In time, He may bring a like-minded believer across your path. But this I can tell you for certain... you will NOT find a traditional, denominational church keeping YaHWeH's sabbaths. And if you study what the Bible says about the true church (the "called-out ones", "the body of Christ"); and about the false church, and her many daughters, you will soon see that you are to "come out from her My people, and be ye separate". But this, as I say so often, is another paper.

Since I began keeping the true sabbaths of YaHWeH, my life has changed greatly for the better. My prayers get answers like never before. I am learning to actually feel love coming from my Abba Father. I could never go back, not for the world. If this effort has touched a chord in your heart, I urge you to make it a matter of prayer. There is a cost, for sure; but the rewards are beyond price.