

The Weekly
Sabbath



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Sanctify them in the truth. Your word is truth. - John 17:17

Introduction

According to the sacred Scriptures, nearly six thousand years ago life as we know it began on planet Earth. Genesis chapter one records the six days of creation beginning with light and ending with man (Adam). As miraculous an event as all this was, Yahweh the great creator created one last thing to memorialize His spectacular work. He rested on the seventh day and created the weekly Sabbath. *“Thus the heavens and the earth were completed in all their vast array. By the seventh day Elohim had finished the work he had been doing; so on the seventh day he rested from all his work. And Elohim blessed the seventh day and made it holy, because on it he rested from all the work of creating that he had done.”* (Genesis 2:1-3)

To commemorate His physical creation Almighty Yahweh has given humankind a special spiritual gift, His Sabbath. He blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy (Hebrew—*qadash*). The weekly Sabbath has been set aside from the six days of labor and toil. It is a sacred and sanctified day that was given for rest and worship. The Sabbath day makes the vastness of Yahweh’s great creation complete. It is a holy gift from our Heavenly Father to His people.

In this article we will consider the weekly Sabbath and its special significance to those who worship Yahweh in Spirit and in Truth. We will learn why it is necessary to keep it. And, we will learn the proper way to keep it holy. We will consider the history of the seventh day Sabbath and how it has always been and will always be kept on the seventh scriptural day (Friday sundown to Saturday sundown). Let’s learn the truth about Yahweh’s Sabbath day.

Obedience to Yahweh’s Law

An important concept that we will first consider is that down through the ages true worshipers obeyed the Law of Yahweh. From Abraham, in the book of Genesis to the Saints in the book of Revelation, commandment keeping was their hallmark. *“Because Abraham obeyed me and kept my requirements, my commands, my decrees and my laws.”* (Genesis 26:5) *“This calls for patient endurance on the part of the saints who obey Yahweh’s commandments and remain faithful to Yahshua.”* (Revelation 14:12)

Yahweh’s Law is eternal. *“All your words are true; all your righteous laws are eternal.”* (Psalms 119:160) The weekly Sabbath is an important part of that eternal law. It is the fourth commandment given in the Ten Commandments. *“Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy. Six days you shall labor and do all your work, but the seventh day is a Sabbath to Yahweh your Elohim. On it you shall not do any work, neither you, nor your son or daughter, nor your manservant or maidservant, nor your animals, nor the alien within your gates. For in six days Yahweh made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that is in them, but he rested on the seventh day. Therefore Yahweh blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy.”* (Exodus 20:8-11) By properly observing the seventh day Sabbath we pay homage to Yahweh as the creator of all things. We openly express our opposition to the theory of evolution and glorify our great Creator.

Observance of the seventh day Sabbath is an opportunity to show our love for our Creator, Almighty Yahweh. *“This is how we know that we love the children of Yahweh: by loving Yahweh and carrying out his commands. This is love for Yahweh: to obey his commands. And his commands are not burdensome,”* 1 John 5:2-3. What better way to show our love for Yahweh than by keeping the Sabbath day holy?

Take note of the fact that the seventh day Sabbath is an integral part of Yahweh's eternal Law. It is incumbent upon all those who truly love their Heavenly Father to observe the Sabbath along with all the other commandments. Remember that with the exception of the sacrificial laws, the Law of Yahweh is still in effect in New Testament (Covenant) times (Matthew 5:17-20 & 19:17).

This also, and especially, includes the seventh day Sabbath. *"There remains, then, a Sabbath-rest for the people of Yahweh; for anyone who enters Yahweh's rest also rests from his own work, just as Yahweh did from his. Let us, therefore, make every effort to enter that rest, so that no one will fall by following their example of disobedience."* (Hebrews 4:9-11) Remember, Yahweh's Law was given for our good. One of the reasons He has given us the weekly Sabbath is for our physical well being. After six days of labor man needs to recover his physical and spiritual strength. How wonderful it is that our Heavenly Father loves us so much that He gave us the seventh day Sabbath for our spiritual and physical welfare. *"Then he said to them, The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath. So the Son of Man is Master even of the Sabbath."* (Mark 2:27-28)

Yahshua Kept the Sabbath

We know that our Savior, Yahshua the Messiah was perfect in every way. He never sinned (transgressed the Law—1 John 3:4). In addition, He correctly observed the Sabbath leaving us an example to follow. The irony in this is that the religious establishment of His day (the Scribes and Pharisees) continually accused Yahshua and His disciples of breaking the Sabbath. Nothing could be further from the truth. He showed, by word and deed that the Sabbath was made for the good of man and that the Pharisees had turned it into a burden. *"At that time Yahshua went through the grainfields on the Sabbath. His disciples were hungry and began to pick some heads of grain and eat them. When the Pharisees saw this, they said to him, "Look! Your disciples are doing what is unlawful on the Sabbath." He answered, "Haven't you read what David did when he and his companions were hungry? He entered the house of Yahweh, and he and his companions ate the consecrated bread—which was not lawful for them to do, but only for the priests. Or haven't you read in the Law that on the Sabbath the priests in the temple desecrate the day and yet are innocent? I tell you that one greater than the temple is here. If you had known what these words mean, 'I desire mercy, not sacrifice,' you would not have condemned the innocent. For the Son of Man is Master of the Sabbath."* (Matt. 12:1-8)

This passage clearly shows the opposition that Yahshua faced throughout His ministry. Falsely accused by the Pharisees, He properly showed that He and His disciples had not desecrated the Sabbath. Yahshua and His disciples were not in violation of Yahweh's Law. On the contrary, their actions showed that they were keeping it. *"If you enter your neighbor's grainfield, you may pick kernels with your hands, but you must not put a sickle to his standing grain."* (Deuteronomy 23:25) Yahshua's disciples were hungry. Through the mercy of Yahshua (the Word of Yahweh made flesh and the Master of the Sabbath) they received food to eat. That is true mercy from above.

Being rebuffed by Yahshua did not stop the Pharisees from once again accusing Him of breaking the Sabbath. The story continues, *"Going on from that place, he went into their synagogue, and a man with a shriveled hand was there. Looking for a reason to accuse Yahshua, they asked him, "Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath?" He said to them, "If any of you has a sheep and it falls into a pit on the Sabbath, will you not take hold of it and lift it out? How much more valuable is a man than a sheep! Therefore it is lawful to do good on the Sabbath."* (Matt.12:9-12)

Truly Yahshua set the perfect example for keeping the Sabbath. From Sabbath to Sabbath He accomplished good by teaching the people the Word of Yahweh and by healing those who were sick. For Yahshua, the Sabbath was without question holy time when good was done and Almighty Yahweh was exalted. It was Yahshua's custom to go to the synagogue on the Sabbath and teach. *"He went to Nazareth, where he had been brought up, and on the Sabbath day he went into the synagogue, as was his custom. And he stood up to read."* (Luke 4:16)

Could there be a better reason to keep the seventh day Sabbath than the fact that our Savior and Redeemer Yahshua the Messiah observed it? If we accept Him as the Messiah, then we must obey His commandments (John 14:15, 21, 23) and understand that He was following His Father's commandments (John 14:10, 31).

Further more, in Matthew chapter 24, when Yahshua prophesied concerning the time of the end, He specifically mentioned the Sabbath. *"Pray that your flight will not take place in winter or on the Sabbath."* (Matthew 24:20) Yahshua mentioned the Sabbath because He knew that end-time true worshipers would be keeping it holy. If it wasn't important to sanctify the Sabbath, He never would have expressed His concern in this prophecy about fleeing in the time of the end.

An Everlasting Sign of the Covenant for Israel and all People

In his Epistle to the Galatians, the Apostle Paul made the point that what really counts is that we are part of spiritual Israel. As such, we are partakers in the rule of Yahweh's everlasting covenant. *"Neither circumcision nor uncircumcision means anything; what counts is a new creation. Peace and mercy to all who follow this rule, even to the Israel of Yahweh."* (Galatians 6:15-16) The seventh day Sabbath is part of the rule that falls under Israel's everlasting covenant with Almighty Yahweh. Consider Exodus 31:12-17 in this regard. *"Then Yahweh said to Moses, "Say to the Israelites, 'You must observe my Sabbaths. This will be a sign between me and you for the generations to come, so you may know that I am Yahweh, who makes you holy."* *"Observe the Sabbath, because it is holy to you. Anyone who desecrates it must be put to death; whoever does any work on that day must be cut off from his people. For six days, work is to be done, but the seventh day is a Sabbath of rest, holy to Yahweh. Whoever does any work on the Sabbath day must be put to death. The Israelites are to observe the Sabbath, celebrating it for the generations to come as a lasting covenant. It will be a sign between me and the Israelites forever, for in six days Yahweh made the heavens and the earth, and on the seventh day he abstained from work and rested."*

The seventh day Sabbath is an eternal sign between Yahweh and His people. The punishment of death is pronounced on those who desecrate the Sabbath (Numbers 15:32-36). It is to be kept holy. It is a day of rest in which no work is to be done. In the prophecy of Isaiah we learn there are blessings to be had for all people who properly keep Yahweh's Sabbath. *"Blessed is the man who does this, the man who holds it fast, who keeps the Sabbath without desecrating it, and keeps his hand from doing any evil."* (Isaiah 56:2) This verse begins a passage which reveals also that the Sabbath was given not just for physical Israelites or Jews, but that it was given to all people everywhere. Yahweh goes on to emphasize this point as He states in Isaiah 56:3-8, *"Let no foreigner who has bound himself to Yahweh say "Yahweh will surely exclude me from his people." And let not any eunuch complain, "I am only a dry tree." For this is what Yahweh says: "To the eunuchs who keep my Sabbaths, who choose what pleases me and hold fast to my covenant — to them I will give within my temple and its walls a memorial and a name better than sons and daughters; I will give them an everlasting name that will not be cut off. And foreigners who bind themselves to Yahweh to serve him, to love the name of Yahweh, and to worship him,*

all who keep the Sabbath without desecrating it and who hold fast to my covenant — these I will bring to my holy mountain and give them joy in my house of prayer. Their burnt offerings and sacrifices will be accepted on my altar; for my house will be called a house of prayer for all nations." The Sovereign Yahweh declares — he who gathers the exiles of Israel: "I will gather still others to them besides those already gathered."

The Sabbath was given for all people everywhere not just physical Jews or Israelites. Spiritually speaking, all people everywhere are part of the exiles who return to Yahweh. Observance of the Sabbath is an important step in the process by which we enter into a covenant with Almighty Yahweh.

Yahweh further states in Isaiah 58:13-14, *"If you keep your feet from breaking the Sabbath and from doing as you please on my holy day, if you call the Sabbath a delight and Yahweh's holy day honorable, and if you honor it by not going your own way and not doing as you please or speaking idle words, then you will find your joy in Yahweh, and I will cause you to ride on the heights of the land and to feast on the inheritance of your father Jacob. The mouth of Yahweh has spoken."*

We can clearly see that the seventh day Sabbath is to be kept holy by ceasing from our labor and to even going so far as to not do as we please. The Sabbath day is meant to be a delight to those who observe it. It is sanctified as Yahweh's day of worship. *"Yahweh said to Moses, "Speak to the Israelites and say to them: These are my appointed feasts, the appointed feasts of Yahweh, which you are to proclaim as sacred assemblies. There are six days when you may work, but the seventh day is a Sabbath of rest, a day of sacred assembly. You are not to do any work; wherever you live, it is a Sabbath to Yahweh."* (Leviticus 23:1-3)

These Scriptures plainly state Yahweh's purpose for the seventh day Sabbath. It is a special day of worship in which all people everywhere have been commanded to gather together to worship Yahweh. In Leviticus chapter 23 it is listed first among Yahweh's sacred feast days. It is the one day of the week on which we set aside doing our own pleasure and concentrate on Yahweh and spiritual things. The Sabbath is a special everlasting sign between Yahweh and His people.

Sabbath Preparation

A person must prepare for the Sabbath if they are to observe it properly. As already noted we cease from our labors on the Sabbath and observe it as holy time. That means preparing ahead of time. The sixth day of the week (Friday) is looked upon as the day of preparation for the Sabbath. Almighty Yahweh taught Israel to prepare for the Sabbath when He gave them the manna from heaven while they were in the wilderness. *"Then Yahweh said to Moses, I will rain down bread from heaven for you. The people are to go out each day and gather enough for that day. In this way I will test them and see whether they will follow my instructions. On the sixth day they are to prepare what they bring in, and that is to be twice as much as they gather on the other days."* (Exodus 16:4-5)

We also are being tested to see if we will be prepared to keep the Sabbath. Preparing our food for the Sabbath is but one way that we make ready for that holy day. Yahweh even commanded Israel to cook their food on the sixth day of the week so that He could emphasize how to keep the Sabbath holy. *"Each morning everyone gathered as much as he needed, and when the sun grew hot, it melted away. On the sixth day, they gathered twice as much — two omers for each person — and the leaders of the community came and reported this to Moses. He said to them, "This is what Yahweh commanded: Tomorrow is to be a day of rest, a holy Sabbath to Yahweh. So bake what you want to bake and boil what you want to boil. Save whatever is left and keep it until morning."*

So they saved it until morning, as Moses commanded, and it did not stink or get maggots in it. "Eat it today," Moses said, "because today is a Sabbath to Yahweh. You will not find any of it on the ground today. Six days you are to gather it, but on the seventh day, the Sabbath, there will not be any." Nevertheless, some of the people went out on the seventh day to gather it, but they found none. Then Yahweh said to Moses, "How long will you refuse to keep my commands and my instructions?"

Bear in mind that Yahweh has given you the Sabbath; that is why on the sixth day he gives you bread for two days. Everyone is to stay where he is on the seventh day; no one is to go out. "So the people rested on the seventh day." (Exodus 16:21-30)

Yahweh used a miracle to teach Israel to prepare for the Sabbath. Sadly, some of the people didn't believe and weren't prepared. They went out on the Sabbath to gather manna. As Yahweh taught physical Israel then, so He teaches spiritual Israel today. We must prepare to keep the Sabbath holy.

Closing the Gates to the World

Along with restricting work, the sanctity of the Sabbath was also maintained by restricting business transactions on that day. Laboring, buying and selling were all prohibited. Nehemiah took drastic measures to reinstitute the sanctity of the Sabbath. He zealously believed in sanctifying the Sabbath to keep it holy. He used his authority righteously as a true spiritual leader of the people. *"In those days I saw men in Judah treading winepresses on the Sabbath and bringing in grain and loading it on donkeys, together with wine, grapes, figs and all other kinds of loads. And they were bringing all this into Jerusalem on the Sabbath. Therefore I warned them against selling food on that day. Men from Tyre who lived in Jerusalem were bringing in fish and all kinds of merchandise and selling them in Jerusalem on the Sabbath to the people of Judah. I rebuked the nobles of Judah and said to them, "What is this wicked thing you are doing—desecrating the Sabbath day? Didn't your forefathers do the same things, so that our Elohim brought all this calamity upon us and upon this city? Now you are stirring up more wrath against Israel by desecrating the Sabbath." When evening shadows fell on the gates of Jerusalem before the Sabbath, I ordered the doors to be shut and not opened until the Sabbath was over. I stationed some of my own men at the gates so that no load could be brought in on the Sabbath day. Once or twice the merchants and sellers of all kinds of goods spent the night outside Jerusalem. But I warned them and said, "Why do you spend the night by the wall? If you do this again, I will lay hands on you." From that time on they no longer came on the Sabbath. Then I commanded the Levites to purify themselves and go and guard the gates in order to keep the Sabbath day holy.*

Remember me for this also, O my Elohim, and show mercy to me according to your great love." (Nehemiah 13:15-22)

What a truly valiant act it was on the part of Nehemiah to bring the people of Jerusalem into subjection on Yahweh's Sabbath day. Do we have the same zeal and fervor to sanctify Yahweh's Sabbath each week in our homes? Do we enter the Sabbath by closing the gates to the outside world? Are we prepared each week to enter Yahweh's holy Sabbath rest? By closing the gates to this world we open the gates to Yahweh's Heavenly Kingdom. For you see the Sabbath is a foretaste of that Kingdom to come!

"This is what the Sovereign Yahweh says: The gate of the inner court facing east is to be shut on the six working days, but on the Sabbath day and on the day of the New Moon it is to be opened. The prince is to enter from the outside through the portico of the gateway and stand by the gatepost. The priests are to sacrifice his burnt offering and his fellowship offerings. He is to worship at the threshold of the gateway and then go out, but the gate will not be shut until

evening. On the Sabbaths and New Moons the people of the land are to worship in the presence of Yahweh at the entrance to that gateway.” (Ezekiel 46:1-3)

How glorious it is to observe the Sabbath now in anticipation of the time when the Prince of Peace will return and all mankind will observe the Sabbath together in the Kingdom of Yahweh, in the very presence of Almighty Yahweh.

Was the Seventh Day Sabbath Changed to Sunday?

Most people are under the impression that the seventh day Sabbath was changed to Sunday. They have been given various arguments in support of the change from Sabbath to Sunday. But what do the sacred Scriptures say? Let's look at these arguments and compare them to the Bible.

The most prominent argument given is that the Messiah was resurrected on Sunday morning. Let's consider Matthew 28:1-2. *“Now late on the Sabbath day, as it began to dawn toward the first (day) of the week, came Mary Magdalene and the other Mary to see the sepulcher. And behold, there was a great earthquake; for an angel of Yahweh descended from heaven, and came and rolled away the stone, and sat upon it.” (ASV)* It should be pointed out that the scriptural (Jewish) day begins and ends at sundown. Late on the Sabbath would mean near (within one hour or less of) sundown. The context shows that the earthquake (which occurred when the tomb opened) occurred before sundown. Therefore the resurrection of Yahshua took place on the weekly Sabbath just before sundown. He was not resurrected early Sunday morning as you may have been led to believe.

This agrees with the one true sign of Yahshua's Messiahship as given in Matthew chapter 12. *“He answered, A wicked and adulterous generation asks for a miraculous sign! But none will be given it except the sign of the prophet Jonah. For as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of a huge fish, so the Son of Man will be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.” (Matthew 12:39-40)* The fact that the Messiah was placed in the grave just before sundown on Passover day and was resurrected literally three days and three nights later means that Yahshua was resurrected just before sundown on the weekly Sabbath. The confusion over Sunday comes because mainstream Christianity believes that the Messiah died on a Friday. They apply the scriptures that relate to the first high holy day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread to the weekly Sabbath (Compare Mark 15:42; Luke 23:54 & John 19:14, 31, 42 to Lev. 23:4-8 & Num. 28:16-18). However, the Year Yahshua died Passover occurred on a Wednesday. Counting three days and three nights from Wednesday just before sundown takes you to the weekly Sabbath just prior to sundown. This being the case there is absolutely no reason for moving the Sabbath to Sunday.

Another argument that is made for changing the Sabbath to Sunday is found in Acts 20:6-7. Let's examine those two verses. *“But we sailed from Philippi after the Feast of Unleavened Bread, and five days later joined the others at Troas, where we stayed seven days. On the first day of the week we came together to break bread. Paul spoke to the people and, because he intended to leave the next day, kept on talking until midnight.”* It is assumed to mean that Paul was worshipping on Sunday. A close examination of the text reveals just the opposite. In actuality the mention of the first day of the week in conjunction with the Feast of Unleavened Bread shows that Paul was meeting with the brethren on the first weekly Sabbath of the seven Sabbath count to the Feast of Weeks (Pentecost). “The Companion Bible” contains the following note with Acts 20:7, *“first, = first day of the Sabbaths, i.e. the first day for reckoning the seven Sabbaths to Pentecost.”* Once again a close look at the scripture reveals that the Apostle was keeping the weekly Sabbath. It should also be noted that he and the brethren were keeping Passover and the Feast of Unleavened Bread and not Easter.

All through the book of Acts you find Paul and the other Apostles observing the seventh day Sabbath. It was Paul's custom to go into the synagogue on the Sabbath. *"As his custom was, Paul went into the synagogue, and on three Sabbath days he reasoned with them from the Scriptures,"* Acts 17:2. He reasoned with Jews and Greeks alike on the seventh day Sabbath. *"Every Sabbath he reasoned in the synagogue, trying to persuade Jews and Greeks,"* Acts 18:4. Contrary to what is taught in mainstream Christianity, the Apostle Paul supported the keeping of Yahweh's Law, (Romans 7:7-25). He taught that circumcision of the flesh was unnecessary for our salvation (Galatians 6:15-16), and that the Law serves as our tutor so that we can be justified by faith, (Galatians 3:24). He understood and taught that the sacrificial law had been set aside through the sacrifice of Yahshua the Messiah—the Lamb of Yahweh. As stated in Hebrews 10:8-10, *"First he said, 'Sacrifices and offerings, burnt offerings and sin offerings you did not desire, nor were you pleased with them' (although the law required them to be made). Then he said, 'Here I am, I have come to do your will.' He sets aside the first to establish the second. And by that will, we have been made holy through the sacrifice of the body of Yahshua Messiah once for all."*

What is the Real Reason behind Christianity Changing Sabbath to Sunday?

The adoption of Sunday for the Christian Sabbath has nothing to do with the Bible and everything to do with Constantine the Great. Constantine was emperor of the Roman Empire from 306 to 337 CE (AD). He was a sun worshiper who near the end of his life (literally on his death bed) converted to Christianity. In 321 CE (AD), (while still a sun worshiper), Emperor Constantine established Sunday as a "venerable day," distinct from the Jewish (seventh day) Sabbath. It is believed by some scholars that this act was at least partially due to his hatred of the Jews. His edict did not affect the "Jewish True Believers," as they continued to worship on the seventh day Sabbath. However, his edict started a chain of events within the Catholic Church which culminated in 364 CE (AD) at the Council of Laodicea with a denouncement of anyone keeping the seventh day Sabbath. This and other denunciations lead to the persecution of true believers who still observed the seventh day Sabbath. From that point on Sunday as the Sabbath became a matter of church policy even though this change nothing to do with the Scriptures.

Conclusion

Almighty Yahweh has blessed His people by giving them the seventh day Sabbath. Observance of this day provides True Worshipers with an opportunity to show their love and respect for Yahweh as their creator and sustainer of life. Yahshua the Messiah has set the example for us to keep the Sabbath holy and thereby receive special spiritual and physical blessings from our Heavenly Father. As Master of the Sabbath He strictly observed it and did good deeds on the Sabbath. He showed us that the Sabbath was made for man so that we can rest from our labor and worship Yahweh.

The seventh day Sabbath is an everlasting sign of the covenant between Yahweh and His people. Those belonging to spiritual Israel, who have entered into Yahweh's everlasting covenant observe that day. They have learned the lesson of preparing properly for the Sabbath. They sanctify the Sabbath and keep it holy by guarding their gates. The Scriptures teach us that from Genesis, to the book of Revelation, True Worshipers have always observed Yahweh's seventh day Sabbath and that Yahweh has never changed His Sabbath to another day. It is truly a sad commentary on Christianity that they use scripturally unfounded reasons to observe Sunday when the truth is that a pagan sun worshiper was the one who was responsible for the change. No man has the authority to change what Yahweh ordained at creation. We must

answer those who say otherwise with the words of the Apostle Peter in Acts 5:29, "*Peter and the other apostles replied: "We must obey Yahweh rather than men!"*"

This article merely skims the surface of biblical information proving that Yahweh's seventh day Sabbath is to be observed now, as it was in times past, and as it will be in the future when our Savior returns and establishes the Kingdom of Yahweh on this earth. Let us conclude this important article by looking through the eyes of Isaiah the prophet, into the not too distant future and see the Sabbath being observed by all man kind. "*As the new heavens and the new earth that I make will endure before me, declares Yahweh, so will your name and descendants endure. From one New Moon to another and from one Sabbath to another, all mankind will come and bow down before me, says Yahweh.*" (Isaiah 66:22-23)

*All Bible quotes are from the New International Version unless noted otherwise.
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