

God's Eternal Plan #6

The Seventh Day

Genesis 2:1-3

In tonight's study we will move from Genesis 1 to Genesis 2 and our primary focus will be on the *Seventh Day*, but we will spend a few moments looking at the creation from another perspective.

There is an amazing transition in the Hebrew language. In chapter one God is spoken of as “Elohim,” the Creator; in chapter two, He is called “Jehovah” (The Lord) because He enters into covenant relations with man. At first the name “Jehovah” is joined with “Elohim” to remove all doubt as to the identity of the Being designated by the compound word. This accounts for the discriminating use of these two names by the sacred writers, and is an answer to those critics who claim there are contradictory scriptures in this area.

But tonight, we are going to focus on the Seventh Day, because if we get it wrong in Genesis we will have it wrong through the ages. Genesis 2:1-3 simply says, “So the creation of the heavens and the earth and everything in them was completed. On the seventh day God had finished his work of creation, so he rested from all his work. And God blessed the seventh day and declared it holy, because it was the day when he rested from all his work of creation.” Therefore, our goal tonight is to untangle some of the misunderstanding concerning the “Seventh Day” and the “Sabbath.”

A careful study will reveal that what we know as the “Sabbath” was not instituted prior the “Fall of Man.” How do we know that to be true?

The first clue is there is no recording in Genesis that God told Adam to observe the Sabbath, that is, to rest on the Seventh Day. If God instituted the “Sabbath” before the “Fall of Man,” it seems strange that the fact is not recorded in Genesis, and that Adam was not told to observe it. Nowhere in the Book of Genesis do we read of Adam, or any of his descendants, or Noah, or Abraham observing the Sabbath. **The only hint we have of a “seven-fold” division of days is found in Genesis 7:4, 10, when seven days of grace were granted before the Flood came, and in Genesis 8:12, where a seven day period elapsed between the sending forth of the dove.** The first place we read of the Sabbath is in Exodus 16:23-26, in connection with the gathering of the manna. Verse 25 says, “Six days you shall gather it, but on the seventh day, the Sabbath, there will be none.” Here we have the “Seventh” day designated as “The Sabbath.” As we read further in the Scriptures, Exodus 20:11 makes clear that the “Seventh Day” of the “Creative Week” has become a type of the “Sabbath,” “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.” **But we have no evidence that the Sabbath was commanded to be observed until after the Exodus, and the reason is clear.** God’s “Rest Day” was broken by the “Fall of Man,” and there could be no “rest” until redemption was brought in, and this was typically brought in by the redemption of the Children of Israel from Egypt through the offering of the “Passover Lamb,” a type of Christ. The purpose of their deliverance was that they might find rest in Canaan from the weary toil and slavery of Egypt, as seen in Deuteronomy 5:15, “And remember that you were a slave in the land of Egypt, and the Lord your God brought you out from there by a mighty hand and by an outstretched arm; therefore the Lord your God commanded you to keep the Sabbath day.”

It was not until the “Ten Commandments” were given on Mount Sinai, the Lord said to Israel, “Remember the Sabbath Day to keep it holy,” (Ex. 20: 8). A careful study will reveal the Sabbath Day they were to remember was *not* the “Seventh Day” on which *God rested*, but the “Day” that God had appointed as the “Sabbath Day” at the time of the giving of the manna.

The command to observe the Sabbath was given to Israel exclusively. It was not given to the Gentiles and has never been given to the Church. It was given to Israel as the “sign” of the “Mosaic Covenant,” as seen in Exodus 31:13, “Speak also to the children of Israel, saying: Surely My Sabbaths you shall keep, for it is a sign between Me and you throughout your generations, that you may know that I am the Lord who sanctifies you.” Ezekiel 20:12, 19-21 tells us, “Moreover I also gave them My Sabbaths, to be a sign between them and Me, that they might know that I am the Lord who sanctifies them....I am the LORD your God: Walk in My statutes, keep My judgments, and do them; 20 hallow My Sabbaths, and they will be a sign between Me and you, that you may know that I am the LORD your God. Notwithstanding, the children rebelled against Me; they did not walk in My statutes, and were not careful to observe My judgments, which, if a man does, he shall live by them, but they profaned My Sabbaths. Then I said I would pour out My fury on them and fulfill My anger against them in the wilderness.”

It is a biblical fact, the Sabbath Day belongs to the Jews alone and is not binding on the Gentiles (the world), or on the Church (Christians). Nowhere in the Bible do you find God finding fault with any nation or people, except the Jewish nation, for not observing the Sabbath. As a Jewish ordinance it has never been abrogated, changed, or transferred to any other day of the week, or to any other people. The Sabbath has been temporally suspended as foretold in Hosea 2:11, it would be, “I will also cause all her (Israel) mirth to cease, her feast days, her New Moons, her Sabbaths - all her appointed feasts.” This is what Paul is making reference to in Romans 11:25, “For I do not desire, brethren, that you should be ignorant of this mystery, lest you should be wise in your own opinion,

that blindness in part has happened to Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in.”

That does not mean God has abolished the Sabbath, and it will be resumed when the Jews are nationally restored to their own land. **Isaiah 66:23** says, “And it shall come to pass That from one New Moon to another, And from one Sabbath to another, all flesh shall come to worship before Me, says the Lord.” **Ezekiel shares this same truth in Ezekiel 44:24,** “In controversy they shall stand as judges, and judge it according to My judgments. They shall keep My laws and My statutes in all My appointed meetings, and they shall hallow My Sabbaths.” **And again in Ezekiel 46:1-3,** “Thus says the Lord GOD: The gateway of the inner court that faces toward the east shall be shut the six working days; but on the Sabbath it shall be opened, and on the day of the New Moon it shall be opened. The prince shall enter by way of the vestibule of the gateway from the outside, and stand by the gatepost. The priests shall prepare his burnt offering and his peace offerings. He shall worship at the threshold of the gate. Then he shall go out, but the gate shall not be shut until evening. Likewise the people of the land shall worship at the entrance to this gateway before the Lord on the Sabbaths and the New Moons.” **These verses have to do with the 1000 year Millennial Reign of Christ on this earth after the Tribulation period, when the Jesus will receive Christ as the true Messiah.**

If this is true (and it is), then the "Sabbath" does not belong to the Church, and is not to be observed by Christians, for the "Sabbath Day" is a part of "the Law," and Christians are not under "Law," but under "grace." That is exactly what **Romans 6:14** says, “For sin shall not have dominion over you, for you are not under law but under grace.” **In Galatians 3:10** Paul scolded the Galatian Christians for going back to the “Law,” and declared that those who *did so* were “under the curse,” “For as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse; for it is written, Cursed is everyone who does not continue in all things which are written in the book of the law, to do them.” **He continues in Galatians 4:9-11,** “But now after you have known God, or rather are known by God, how is it that you turn again to the weak and beggarly elements, to which you desire again to be in bondage? You observe days and months and seasons and years. I am afraid for you, lest I have labored for you in vain.” **He deals with this same subject matter in Colossians 2:16** when he says, “So let no one judge you in food or in drink, or regarding a festival or a new moon or Sabbaths.” **If Christians are under obligations to keep the "Jewish Sabbath," then we are also under the Jewish "Ceremonial Law" and should observe all the ordinances and Feast Days of the Jewish Ritual.** **Therefore, as we have already seen, as an institution of Judaism, the Sabbath, with all the "Feast Days," and other ritualistic ceremonies and offerings of Judaism, ceased to function with the close of the Jewish Dispensation.**

Please hear me well tonight, the Jewish Sabbath was not changed to the Christian Sabbath, any more than "Circumcision" was changed to "Baptism." Although Hebrews 4:1-11 speaks of the believer's "rest," there is no such thing as the "Christian Sabbath." Remember, the "Sabbath" has to do with *Law*, and salvation with *grace*, and to join "Law" and "grace" is to unite what God has forever separated. In fact, Paul gives us this warning in Romans 11:16, "And if by grace, then it is no longer of works; otherwise grace is no longer grace. But if it is of works, it is no longer grace; otherwise work is no longer work." **Ladies and gentlemen, it is an unbiblical practice to try to merge law and grace together for the cause of Christ! Why? Because the one will exclude the other!**

After the Resurrection, Christ and His Disciples never met on the "Sabbath" but on the "first day of the week." John 20:1 gives us the setting, "Now the first day of the week Mary Magdalene went to the tomb early, while it was still dark, and saw that the stone had been taken away from the tomb." Verse 19 indicates the pattern is now set, "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, Jesus came and stood in the midst, and said to them, Peace be with you." By the times we get to Acts 20:7 there seems to be no question, "Now on the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul, ready to depart the next day, spoke to them and continued his message until midnight." In 1 Corinthians 16:2 Paul leaves no doubt when he says, "On the first day of the week let each one of you lay something aside, storing up as he may prosper, that there be no collections when I come." Now it is true that they went into the Jewish Synagogues on the Sabbath, but not to worship, but that they might have opportunity to preach the Gospel. The "First Day of the Week" is the day to be observed for rest and worship by the Christian Church.

The Seventh Day Adventists claim the Catholic Church changed the time for Worship from Saturday to Sunday, and that all who worship on Sunday are a part of the anti-Christ. So where did the "ground-work" for the "First Day of the Week" come from? A careful study of the Scriptures will take us back to the book of Leviticus 23:10-11, "Speak to the children of Israel, and say to them: When you come into the land which I give to you, and reap its harvest, then you shall bring a sheaf of the first-fruits of your harvest to the priest. He shall wave the sheaf before the Lord, to be accepted on your behalf; on the day after the Sabbath the priest shall wave it." We know this to be the "Harvest of the First-Fruits," and it was observed on the "eighth day" or the "day after the Sabbath."

With that thought in mind, we need to ask ourselves, "What did that 'First Fruits' typify?" The answer is given to us in 1 Corinthians 15:20, "But now Christ is risen from the dead, and has become the *firstfruits* of those who have fallen asleep." **When did Christ rise from the dead and become the "firstfruits"?** It was not on the "Sabbath," for He lay dead in the tomb on that day, but on the

“first day of the week,” on “the day after the Sabbath.” The fact that the “Birthday” of the Church was at Pentecost, and that fell on the “First Day of the Week,” is further proof that the Church should keep the “First Day of the Week” and *not* the “Seventh” day or “Sabbath.”

The Jewish “Sabbath” links man with the “Old Dispensation,” the “First Day of the Week” links man with the “New.” Soon the New Testament writers simply began to refer to the “First day of the Week” as “the Lord’s Day.” It is a day, like every other day, that should be filled with worship and service and personal praise!

Folks, this is not hard to understand when we allow the Word of God to override our denominational traditions.