

# sabbath-rest2.md

Title: Sabbath Rest and the Week Part2

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Summary: When I keep the Sabbath and some reasons and history. This is Part2. Still the outline, as the writing will take time

*The version used is KJV*

The first part of this essay can be found here. This second part is also available in PDF

Note: that I will use God, Yah interchangeably. Yah is what our Creator likes to be called, per Psalm 68 verse 4.

4. Sing unto God, sing praises to his name: extol him that rideth upon the heavens by his name JAH, and rejoice before him.

## Counting the day of the week

I started numbering days of the week differently than what the world believes. The Gregorian calendar has 7 days each named after some celestial body or myth character. In my reckoning, I just call the days of the week with their proper number. In addition, the day of the week begins in the evening and ends the following Gregorian week day. Therefore, Shabbat is 7th day, beginning Friday evening and ending Saturday evening. The week begins Saturday evening, with Sunday morning being the first day morning and Sunday evening being 2nd day start. Therefore when I reference Sabbath in the biblical sense, I start this on Friday evening after sundown and go till the following day sun-down. Wednesday 8pm will be 5th day, while Thursday 8pm will be 6th day or preparation day. The preparation day will last till sundown Friday, when Shabbat begins as 7th day starts.

## Apostles and Sabbath

From scriptures, we see that everyone till our Messiah's resurrection and ascension, kept the sabbath, as the day of rest, as commanded by God. This starts from Genesis and continues all the way to Acts. Our Messiah, definitely kept it, as if He did not, then that would make Him not perfect, when it came to God's Laws or Torah. Therefore sometime during the first century, the day of rest changed from 7th day to 1st day. The word (H7677) is used 11 times in MT, while (H7676) is used 108 times in MT. The english reference to the word sabbath is used 137 times through the entire bible. Therefore, for the first thousands of years (4000+) 7th day was observed as the day of rest as commanded by our Creator, but at somepoint after Jesus' ascension, we now keep the 1st day as the rest. As I have commented in part1, my belief is that Paul and the early apostles thru John kept the sabbath, as that is what they saw their Messiah do. Now at this point, we might have two contentions from modern day believers. The first is that, the apostles were Jews hence had to keep it. The second being that, the Lords day is now Sunday, so that is our Sabbath. I will only address the second point here, from a historical and cultural standpoint. The reference to *they were Jews, hence they kept it*, will be addressed in a later essay.

Most modern and even some early church leaders adopted 1st day as the sabbath. The primary verse used by 1st sabbath keepers is from Acts chapter 20, verse 7.

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.

I have addressed in my first post about this, in how I read the above verse.

A quick study of Acts20:7 in proper context will reveal the following:

- Paul was coming after keeping the Feast of Passover and Unleavened Bread
- Paul met with the disciples on the 1st day, which begins Saturday evening and went longer than expected which would put closer to midnight, since he will not be seeing them for a while.
- Paul was staying in Troas for a short time (7 days). Following the Torah, he would not have travelled on the 7th day, sabbath, as it was more than few hours. Therefore he met with other disciples on the 7thday, as the day was coming to a close (which would be evening) and preached a long while, through the night, which would take us to the midnight, when Eutychus fell, died and was made alive.
- Paul left the 1st day morning, sunday morning or early AM, to sail away to Assos.

My thesis in this essay is that, the early church leaders, who many of my friends and brothers point to, are in error, as the motivation for their documentation of 1st day rest is no where in the scriptures. My belief is that the ditch of

Judaizing made many of the early church leaders and believers to go to the ditch of abandoning the OT, especially the Torah. This is what I will explore partly in this essay.

### **DISCLAIMER**

The primary question I am pondering and exploring is around sabbath being a day of rest and which day should we rest and it is not about gathering for worship or congregating for fellowship. This is addressed in detail in the end of the essay. I also don't address, the entire law/Torah being done away with which is an entire series of essays in itself, and will be treated separately.

### **Sunday as Sabbath in early church**

From the early church history, whatever the specific years are, we see many references to 1st day gathering and change of the concept of sabbath rest. This can be found in the writings of Justin Martyr in his dialogue with Trypho the Jew, as well as other latter writings. We see from these writings that some of the church leaders were gathering on the first day. This as you will see is evidence that the change occurred early on following various changes that happened in Rome and the broader Roman empire, to distance away from the Jews.

There is also documentation from Sozomen on page 390, from The Ecclesiastical History of Sozomen, that all but Rome and Alexandria were meeting on both sabbath and 1st day of the week. This included believers in Constantinople meeting on both days. A specific reference is noted below

*There are several cities and villages in Egypt where, contrary to the usage established elsewhere, the people meet together on Sabbath evenings, and, although they have dined previously, partake of the mysteries.*

This is further confirmed by Socrates, from page 132 of Ecclesiastical History.

My thought here is that many of the early church leaders wanted to distance themselves from the Jews around them due to

- corruption that was prevalent in the Oral Law followers, similar to what Jesus condemned the Pharisees for.
- the emphasis on traditions and customs outweighed the teachings of our (and their) Messiah, Jesus.
- general malaise over their zeal to continue to fight for the freedom for Israel's nation state, while they already had the world's empire defeated by our Messiah, fulfilling prophecies from Daniel 2. Example is the Bar Kochba revolt which permanently dispersed the Jews from Israel.
- influence of philosophies and metaphysics which was starting to take hold in early church from Greek thought (following Aristotle and Plato)

The first evidence is that of Origen, who spoke highly of all commandments, but when it came to 7th day observance, he wanted that day's practices followed

on the 1st day, contrasting Jewish vs Christian beliefs.. Reference is Origen's Opera, Tome, p. 358, Paris, 1733. Here is the english rendition.

*"But what is the feast of the Sabbath except that of which the apostle speaks, 'There remaineth therefore a Sabbatism,' that is, the observance of the Sabbath, by the people of God? Leaving the Jewish observances of the Sabbath, let us see how the Sabbath ought to be observed by a Christian. On the Sabbath-day all worldly labors ought to be abstained from. If, therefore, you cease from all secular works, and execute nothing to church, attending to sacred reading and instruction, thinking of celestial things, solicitous for the future, placing the Judgment to come before your eyes, not looking to things present and visible, but to those which are future and invisible, this is the observance of the Christian Sabbath."*

Further, Ignatius in his Epistle to the Magnesians (longer form) chap. ix. calls out that Jews had started to mix in carousing and sensuality on the day of rest. Therefore, Origen and others wanted to contrast the sabbath rest with piety and moving away from the Jews idleness and sensuality on the 7th day.

The other example is from Justin Martyr, who was a student of gnostics and a philosopher. His dialogue with Trypho the Jew, emphasizes that the following

- Jews never understood the Old Testament, hence were not following Sabbath properly
- Sabbath was not a perpetually binding covenant, therefore can be removed.

Therefore, the understanding of the Messiah and the prophecies were divorced from the Old Testament, as they tried to divorce Hebrew thought and apply more of a Greek thinking. We will review next the problems in Sabbath observance that the Jews had promulgated thru the second temple period, which was the ditch the early church leaders were trying to avoid and answer: how to keep sabbath holy, rest and sanctify it?

## **Staying away from Jewish Traditions**

As we know from the Word of God, that as early as while in the wilderness, during the 40 years, after receiving the commandments, they found a man collecting wood in Numbers chapter 15

32. And while the children of Israel were in the wilderness, they found a man that gathered sticks upon the sabbath day.

Although we dont know the specifics on what he was trying to do, the punishment from Yah was death. I can only surmise that whatever he was trying to do went against the 4th commandment of resting and keeping that day set-a-part. I also cant infer from this that I cant collect wood (literally) or start fire or any other conclusions our fallen human mind makes from that one verse.

Then we see in Nehemiah chapter 13, that on Sabbath, people were working and trying to make a living, which Nehemiah was zealous to protect and ensured they kept that day holy.

15. In those days saw I in Judah some treading wine presses on the sabbath, and bringing in sheaves, and lading asses; as also wine, grapes, and figs, and all manner of burdens, which they brought into Jerusalem on the sabbath day: and I testified against them in the day wherein they sold victuals.
16. There dwelt men of Tyre also therein, which brought fish, and all manner of ware, and sold on the sabbath unto the children of Judah, and in Jerusalem.
17. Then I contended with the nobles of Judah, and said unto them, What evil thing is this that ye do, and profane the sabbath day?
18. Did not your fathers thus, and did not our God bring all this evil upon us, and upon this city? yet ye bring more wrath upon Israel by profaning the sabbath.
19. And it came to pass, that when the gates of Jerusalem began to be dark before the sabbath, I commanded that the gates should be shut, and charged that they should not be opened till after the sabbath: and some of my servants set I at the gates, that there should no burden be brought in on the sabbath day.
20. So the merchants and sellers of all kind of ware lodged without Jerusalem once or twice.
21. Then I testified against them, and said unto them, Why lodge ye about the wall? if ye do so again, I will lay hands on you. From that time forth came they no more on the sabbath.

By the time we get to Jesus' time, we see that there were all sorts of regulations that were man made: to do and not do on the sabbath day. Some of this included: not healing the sick, nor traveling, nor walking on grass, nor carrying bed. We know from Talmud and the traditions that are documented that these are man made traditions and not that of Yah, our Creator. The command from Torah is to rest on the 7th day, keep it hallowed/holy/set-a-part and not do any work. How one goes from this to the specific commands that the Jews of second temple period and subsequent followers of Judaism came up with, can only be assumed.

This brings up the salient points that some of the early church leaders warned us about - dont get enamored with the Jewish traditions and fall into that ditch. In modern day it includes,

- no travel, even to visit friends or to fellowship. Some communities only walk
- not lighting of any kind, including praying in the dark

- lighting candles to welcome Shabbat
- fasting

There are also various Hebrew camps, that chastise and condemn believers who gather on 1st day of the week: Sunday.

We need to be careful to not look after the Jews from the 1st century or subsequently, nor the modern Hebrew or alleged Israelite camps.

## **Resting vs Assembly**

My current understanding of the Word of God, shows that there is no restrictions placed on assembly or congregating on any days of the week. There are special days to gather and celebrate, as in some of the feasts of our Creator, but there is no prohibition from assembling with other believers on any day of the week. In fact, from early church leaders we see that several communities met and fellowshiped on several days of the week. We even do some of this today with scheduled bible or fellowship on Wednesday evening or Thursday and Sunday service, in many of the protestant and catholic churches.

The command in the bible is to rest on the 7th day. Cease from work and rest. This also the day to ruminate on our true rest, who is our Messiah, as He is the Master (or Lord) of Sabbath, knowing that sabbath was created for man and not man for sabbath.

Therefore, activities on 7th day needs to be prayerfully meditated on and sought, so that Holy Spirit can reveal what it means to obey our Creator and His Son, our Messiah's command and example. Me making a list of what can be done, is falling into the same trap as what Origen or Clement or the Pharisees did. Each head of household need to pray and seek this for their own household. You can read what we do as our family on the 7th day in the next section or here under section Winter 2019.

## **Can I still attend Church on Sunday?**

Therefore, I dont see any problem with gathering and worshipping on the 1st day. If I find a group of believers who are trying to walk and walking in the path of my Messiah and have the fruits by being on the vine, then I gather with them and partake of whatever I am able to do with them as the body of Christ. If they have church rules and membership regulations, then I will abide by that and enjoy the fellowship that is availabe without being a member.

We should worship all days of the week, with setting apart the 7th day. To me setting apart 7th means the following:

- strating preparation day, Friday, we clean and get some of the preparation done so we dont have to do any strenuous labor or work on 7th day. This includes cleaning, cooking elaborate meals, doing laundry dishes as well as

- any work items that need response over the weekend. We try to take care of as much of this Friday before evening or it waits till Saturday evening.
- starting Friday evening, which is the beginning of the 7th day in how I reckon the week, I start with bible reading with my family and any believers in Jesus Christ who can join us. This is *reading thru the bible* we started in 2018 and are on the book of Daniel, as of this post.
  - we sleep in on the 7th day morning (Saturday) and do the chores needed to care for the animals - this includes only one day of feeding as I will have loaded them up before 7th day begun, Friday evening.
  - I still go for walks with the dogs and spend time with them, by brushing them and playing
  - We gather as family and read the bible with specific portions of the scriptures - Psalms, Torah, Prophets, Gospel, Epistles and any history. I select the scriptures ahead of time and we read, discuss.
  - for the last few months, we have been ordering our food from outside, so my wife doesnt need to cook on the 7th day. We feast as a family. Is this violation of Torah? At this point, I dont think so, but I will continue to pray and seek Yah's wisdom.
  - we either take naps or rest reading other scriptural books, play games or do other forms of fellowship as a family. We might do more of this with other believers as Yah brings them into our circle.
  - we start the 1st day of the week (Saturday evening) with prayer and planning for the next 7 days.

## **Balance with how Jesus observed it**

As many of the believers in Jesus Christ are seeking to follow what Yah our Creator is placing in their heart, here is a word of caution as you embark on the 7th day sabbath. We are in the New Covenant with Jesus Christ/Yeshua as our High Priest seated at the right hand of God, the Most High in heavens as I pen this. Jesus is our mediator of this new covenant. This new covenant is from Jeremiah 31 and Ezekiel 36, which talks to the Torah being written in our hearts and, we getting a new heart of flesh with our heart of stone being taken away. We also get a new spirit that is Holy from God. These things, places an extra burden on us to not just go with traditions of men, which are on either side as ditches- follow the Jewish traditions, or more recent Christian traditions. We must seek Yah's face to be diligent in our walk and show ourselves approved and worthy of His calling.

Be in constant prayer, fasting and study if any of what you are uncovering is unclear. Dont take what this essay portrays as anything but a believers's journey on his walk with His Messiah.

## **Conclusion**

Here are then some parting words as I close this essay.

- Believe God and not man. If you want traditions of man to dictate your spiritual life, then know that is what it is and don't call what man created as decreed by God. If on the other hand, you want to follow God, then ask God for the strength that you may be true to His Word and calling.
- Beware of philosophy and worldly wisdom. As much as the western thought was progressive and formalized knowledge, we know that Salvation is of the Jews, as our Messiah stated in the Gospel of John. Let's not look for signs as the Jews did nor seek knowledge as the Greeks did, but be true to the Holy Scriptures that Yah has preserved. We need to not fall for these traps that sound logical and intuitive as presented by various systematic theologies, but try to follow the teachings of our Messiah Jesus Christ and beg and pray that He will show His mercies to teach you His ways, through His word.
- As some of us try to go far away from Jewish traditions, let's not adopt traditions and customs or the land or man-made traditions of the western or Greek thought. In the same token, as some of us try to go far away from the western and Greek thought, we should not embrace the Jewish traditions and the Talmudic philosophies and teachings, which our Messiah fought against.
- When in doubt, stick to simple observance of the sabbath and worship. No need for elaborate setup, gathering, studies, ceremonies and practices. Stick to what has been given in the documented word of God and apply it to the best of our abilities.
- Seek after Yah's face and don't fall in either of the ditch we have referenced. Stay on the strait and narrow path, which our Messiah warned us about and ask for His grace and mercies to preserve you on the vine. Know that the vine is Jesus and God our husbandman to care and tend us, to produce good fruits.
- Repeating myself again, be in constant prayer, fasting and study if any of what you are uncovering and understanding is unclear. Don't take what this essay portrays as anything but a believer's journey on his walk with His Messiah.

May God of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ bless you abundantly!