

A Sabbath of Solemn Rest

1. The Day of Atonement (10th day of the 7th month, “Yom Kippur”), reckoned a grand Sabbath
 - a. **Lev 16:29**---do no work at all
 - b. **Lev 16:31**—a Sabbath of Sabbath; a grand Sabbath
 - i. Repeat and enlarge principle at play here (Holy of holies, king of kings, lord of lords) underscoring and amplifying the degree of the solemnity of that day as a Sabbath;
 - c. **Lev 23:28**—do no work that same day;
 - d. **Lev 23:30**—those who work are destroyed
 - e. **Lev 23:31**—do no manner of work
2. **Lev 16:30**---The reason for the repetitious mention of the work prohibition on the Day of Atonement is given: “For on that day, the priest shall make atonement for you to cleanse you. . .”
 - a. **The fact that the command to do no work is repeated many times and the fact that a stern punishment was attached to it, tell us something of the seriousness of the nature of the atonement that was to be effected on the day of atonement**
 - b. **The work of afflicting the soul required a close application of the mind, a fixed engagement of the entire being as not to allow any other work or occupation on that day;**
 - c. **No distraction of any form was to be allowed;**

Moral and Ceremonial Sabbaths

3. The Day of Atonement, although one of the 7 national feasts of Israel, is elevated on the same level as the weekly moral Sabbath
 - a. All the national feasts were considered Sabbaths because rest from labor was enjoined
 - i. **Lev 23:7, 8, 21, 25, 35, 36**—all the 7 national feasts were called Sabbaths, but ONLY servile work or laborious work was prohibited (“servile” means “heavy labor”; this was work typically reserved for servants because they were heavy and laborious);
 - ii. **Lev 23:26-32**—The Day of Atonement however, was unlike the other feasts and more like the 4th commandment Sabbath because no manner of work was prohibited;
 1. Hence, through this, it can be seen that the Day of Atonement as day of rest, was elevated on the same level as the 4th commandment Sabbath;
 2. This makes the time we are living in a most solemn time;
 3. The question needs to be asked, why? Why not the Passover which pointed the crucifixion of Christ?

4. What is it about the 4th commandment Sabbath and the Day of Atonement Sabbath that they should be placed on the same level of significance?
4. **Exo 20:8-11**--The 4th commandment Sabbath was given to Adam before sin as a memorial of creation in order to remind Adam to be totally dependent upon God as the Creator
 - a. **Ezek 20:12**--After sin came, the Sabbath took an added meaning; it also became a sign of God's power to save and sanctify His fallen, sinful people.

The Redemptive Significance of the Sabbath

5. **Deut 5:14-15**—the weekly Sabbath prohibited all work so that the even servants who labored heavily all week long can rest along with his masters;
 - a. thy menservants as well as thou"--On the weekly Sabbath, the master and the slave were now on equal footing, "; this expression is very significant;
 - b. Because the servants did not work on this day, this was a day where they could consider this day no longer servants and slaves; the servants were not to think they were slaves on this day but on the same level as anyone else; the servants looked forward to this day with great anticipation;
 - c. To the servants and to the slaves, the weekly Sabbath had a significant redemptive value because it meant complete rest from all the hard and grueling labor during the six days of the week;
 - i. Life as a servant in Old Testament Mediterranean culture very tough;
 - ii. Slaves did not enjoy the same conveniences that we living in the 21st century all take for granted;
 - iii. No social status; it was the lowest level of social status
 - iv. No civil rights;
 - v. Slaves were unprofitable (**Philem 10-11**)
 - vi. Slaves could not think or decide for themselves;
 - vii. People were normally sold to slavery and servitude for unpaid debts, death of the breadwinner in the family and conquests;
 - d. Not only that. There was a feast celebrated once a year that pointed to the time when their servitude and slavery would be brought to a complete and final end; this feast was the Day of Atonement
 - i. The other ceremonial feasts only offered partial release from servitude because only heavy labor was prohibited;
 - ii. **Lev 25:8-10**--The 10th day of the seventh month was also the beginning of year of jubilee—the year when all debts were cancelled, properties lost reverted back to the original owners and slaves and servants allowed to go free
 - e. Hence, for the servants and slaves, the weekly Sabbath and the yearly Sabbath (the Day of Atonement), were twin signs that had redemptive value:
 - i. The weekly Sabbath-provided rest from labor in the here and now
 - ii. The yearly Day of Atonement Sabbath—a foretaste of the future freedom from slavery which would be full, complete and final; it pointed to the time when slavery would totally end;

- f. **Deut 5:15**—the connection between the 4th commandment Sabbath and slavery is clearly seen here
 - i. God commanded the Israelites to keep that day holy as a token of gratitude for freeing them from their physical bondage and hard labor in Egypt;
 - ii. Hence, the Sabbath is a sign of God’s power to deliver from bondage in whatever form

The Sabbath and Christians

- 6. **The spiritual significance of this discussion should be obvious by now:**
 - a. **Sin is the ultimate form of slavery and bondage and servitude**
 - i. **John 8:34**—whoever sins is in bondage to sin; what started as a seemingly an innocent experiment by Eve in the garden of Eden has resulted in a condition of servitude of her children to sin that is galling and objectionable beyond imagination
 - ii. **Heb 2:14-15**—sinners are subject to the bondage of sin all their lives
 - b. **Matt 11:28-29**—the call of Jesus here to enter into rest is for servants of sin who acknowledge their desperate condition;
 - c. **Matt 11:25**--this invitation is rejected by the wise and prudent---those who do not feel their need of freedom from sin and its slavery;
 - d. **Rom 6:16-22**--Just as the servants in Biblical times reckoned themselves free from slavery on the 7th day, Christians who believe in Christ are to consider themselves to be no longer servants of sin;
 - e. **Rom 7:25**---slavery to sin still exists for believers even though they have faith in Christ; the full and final release from the bondage of sin is still future;
 - f. **Rom 8:21**---Just as the servants in those days were only free partially on the 7th day, (they had to work again the following week), Christians who believe in Christ and keep the 7th day Sabbath are not totally and completely free from the slavery of sin;
 - i. They are to reckon themselves as no longer slaves to sin but in reality they still are
 - g. **Lev 16:30**--The final deliverance from the slavery of sin does not happen until Jesus makes the final atonement and gives the command “take away their filthy garments. . .”
 - i. On this day, the high priest makes an atonement to cleanse the people completely from sin; this is the final deliverance
 - ii. The beginning of the year of jubilee
 - h. Note the parallels:
 - i. The weekly Sabbath—provided partial release from slavery (the slave went back to work the following week); this is parallel to the release provided by the daily service which was also partial
 - ii. The day of atonement Sabbath—prefigured the final and full release from sin’s captivity through the final atonement of the high priest

Keeping the Sabbath Holy

- 7. Only as the redemptive significance of the Sabbath is fully grasped will one understand why he needs to keep the Sabbath holy and be able to keep it holy;

8. **Eze 20:12**---the Sabbath a sign of a sanctified (made holy) people by God
 - a. Holiness is nothing but freedom from the slavery of sin
9. When Jesus makes the final atonement resulting in a people standing before the Thorne of God with no fault and no guile upon their lips, He gives the command “he that is holy, let him be holy still, he that is righteous, let him be righteous still;
10. In the meantime, those who cherish this hope by faith will keep the Sabbath holy by refraining from any labor that reminds them of their slavery and servitude to sin; this is why all labor (cooking, bathing, blacking the shoes, shaving, washing the dishes, etc.) were done the previous day---preparation day
 - a. Remember in the keeping of the Sabbath was faith in the promise by God to deliver from slavery and doing things on the Sabbath that pertained to slavery was a denial of that faith
 - i. Preparation for the Sabbath was not a legalistic effort but faith exercised and displayed;
 - ii. EGW injunctions against profaning the Sabbath by doing things on the Sabbath which should be done during the preparation day need to be carefully considered in that context:

Cooking on the Sabbath. The Lord is no less particular now in regard to his Sabbath, than when he gave the foregoing special directions to the children of Israel. He required them to bake that which they would bake, and seethe (that is, boil) that which they would seethe, on the sixth day, preparatory to the rest of the Sabbath. Those who neglect to prepare for the Sabbath on the sixth day, and who cook food upon the Sabbath, violate the fourth commandment, and are transgressors of God's law. All who are really anxious to observe the Sabbath according to the commandment will not cook any food upon the Sabbath. They will, in the fear of that God who gave his law from Sinai, deny themselves, and eat food prepared upon the sixth day, even if it is not so palatable. God forbade the children of Israel's baking and boiling upon the Sabbath. That prohibition should be regarded by every Sabbath-keeper, as a solemn injunction from Jehovah to them. The Lord would guard his people from indulging in gluttony upon the Sabbath, which he has set apart for sacred meditation and worship. -**1SP 225.**

Travelling on the Sabbath. If we desire the blessing promised to the obedient, we must observe the Sabbath more strictly. I fear that we often travel on this day when it might be avoided. In harmony with the light which the Lord has given in regard to the observance of the Sabbath, we should be more careful about traveling on the boats or cars on this day. In these matters we should set a right example before our children and youth. In order to reach the churches that need our help, and to give them the message that God desires them to hear, it may be necessary for us to travel on the Sabbath; but so far as possible we should secure our tickets and make all necessary arrangements on some other day. **6T 359-360.**

Preparing for the Sabbath in order to keep it holy. Make Friday the Preparation Day.-- On Friday let the preparation for the Sabbath be completed. See that all the clothing is in readiness, and that all the cooking is done. Let the boots be blacked, and the baths be

taken. It is possible to do this. If you make it a rule, you can do it. The Sabbath is not to be given to the repairing of garments, to the cooking of food, to pleasure seeking, or to any other worldly employment. Before the setting of the sun, let all secular work be laid aside, and all secular papers be put out of sight. Parents, explain your work and its purpose to your children, and let them share in your preparation to keep the Sabbath according to the commandment. {CG 528.2} In many families [on Sabbath] boots and shoes are blacked and brushed, and stitches are taken, all because these little odds and ends were not done on Friday. They did not "remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy." . . . **CG 528** (read the entire chapter, The Sabbath—A Day of Delight, p.527 and onwards)

- iii. Anyone who refuses to follow these counsels thinking that they are legalistic are refusing to keep the Sabbath holy and denying their faith (skewed concept of legalism)
- iv. We keep the Sabbath holy by not doing slave labor on that day. . .

Less than one in hundred keeping the Sabbath holy. The Lord gave me His Spirit on that occasion and sent home the word spoken. Those who will honor the Lord in keeping His Sabbath holy will be blessed of the Lord. There is not more than one in one hundred who do honor to God in keeping His Sabbath from polluting it. The Word of God is not practiced by thousands who profess to be Christians. The looseness of the habits and practices in observing the Sabbath has become a customary thing. God help us to see that great blessings are enfolded in the observance of the Sabbath of the fourth commandment. The human agent cannot afford to lose these blessings by dishonoring God in their loose habits and practices. This is a day of meditation and of closely examining our own spiritual condition before God. "Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith. **21MR 295.**

Those who fail to receive the benefit of the final atonement which is total freedom from sin and perfection of character will give up the Sabbath. "A decree went forth to slay the saints, which caused them to cry day and night for deliverance. This was the time of Jacob's trouble. Then all the saints cried out with anguish of spirit, and were delivered by the voice of God. The 144,000 triumphed. Their faces were lighted up with the glory of God. Then I was shown a company who were howling in agony. On their garments was written in large characters, "Thou art weighed in the balance, and found wanting." I asked who this company were. The angel said, "These are they who have once kept the Sabbath and have given it up." I heard them cry with a loud voice, "We have believed in Thy coming, and taught it with energy." And while they were speaking, their eyes would fall upon their garments and see the writing, and then they would wail aloud. I saw that they had drunk of the deep waters, and fouled the residue with their feet--trodden the Sabbath underfoot-- and that was why they were weighed in the balance and found wanting. **EW 36-37.**

Conclusion

11. **The glory of the Sabbath will be sensed as its connection with the gospel is more fully understood.**

I saw that we sensed and realized but little of the importance of the Sabbath, to what we yet should realize and know of its importance and glory. I saw we knew not what it was yet to ride upon the high places of the earth and to be fed with the heritage of Jacob. But when the refreshing and latter rain shall come from the presence of the Lord and the glory of His power, we shall know what it is to be fed with the heritage of Jacob and ride upon the high places of the earth. Then shall we see the Sabbath more in its importance and glory. {3SM 388.1}

But we shall not see it in all its glory and importance until the covenant of peace is made with us at the voice of God, and the pearly gates of the New Jerusalem are thrown open and swing back on their glittering hinges, and the glad and joyful voice of the lovely Jesus is heard richer than any music that ever fell on mortal ear bidding us enter.-Letter 3, 1851. {3SM 388.2}

Counsel to Medical Professionals

A spirit of irreverence and carelessness in the observance of the Sabbath is liable to come into our sanitariums. Upon the men of responsibility in the medical missionary work rests the duty of giving instruction to physicians, nurses, and helpers in regard to the sanctity of God's holy day. Especially should every physician endeavor to set a right example. The nature of his duties naturally leads him to feel justified in doing on the Sabbath many things that he should refrain from doing. So far as possible he should so plan his work that he can lay aside his ordinary duties.

Often physicians and nurses are called upon during the Sabbath to minister to the sick, and sometimes it is impossible for them to take time for rest and for attending devotional services. The needs of suffering humanity are never to be neglected. The Saviour, by His example, has shown us that it is right to relieve suffering on the Sabbath. But unnecessary work, such as ordinary treatments and operations that can be postponed, should be deferred. Let the patients understand that physicians and helpers should have one day for rest. Let them understand that the workers fear God and desire to keep holy the day that He has set apart for His followers to observe as a sign between Him and them. --7T 106.