

What Should Guide Our Sabbath Activities?

The Decalogue emphasizes what we should *not* do on the Sabbath day. Yet, as Christians we need to understand what we ought to do to please our Creator, and it is to this end that the Scriptures point. The over-arching prime concept of Sabbath keeping will naturally flow from these guidelines.

1. Desist from “servile work” (Exodus 20:9-10; 31:15; Leviticus 23:3). This command applies to not only the elect, but to foreigners and to livestock ... to *all* people and draft animals. Might I add tractors and lawn mowers? This command is so critical to living in obedience to Elohim that the death penalty was prescribed by the Mosaic Law for disobeying it (Exodus 31:14; 35:2). The man caught gathering sticks on the Sabbath was



Sabbath fellowship can take many forms, but one of the most productive and intimate settings is the home fellowship format. Everyone can participate in a direct way.

summarily stoned to death at Yahweh’s command (Numbers 15:31-36), and kindling a fire on the Sabbath — not a simple task in those days — also received the death penalty (Exodus 35:3). Fires were to be either allowed to go out, or to be sustained on the rest day, not started.

Even when Jesus was lying in the tomb on the Sabbath, the friends of Jesus “... rested on the Sabbath according to the commandment” (Luke 23:56). The law of God took precedence even over the incredible

temptation to attend to His body with spices and fragrant oils!

This does not mean that “servile work” is inherently evil, but that it wears on the body, mind, and spirit of people, who were designed to require rest at least one day a week. We are to be in continual contact and worship of the Creator seven days a week (I Thessalonians 5:17; Galatians 2:20), but on the seventh day we rest.

2. Observe a “holy convocation” (Leviticus 23:3-4). The Sabbath is a day when brethren are to assemble, if possible, even if with two or three, for even then He is

among them (Matthew 18:20). *Holy* is the Hebrew *q o d e s h*, meaning “holiness, holy thing, or sanctuary”, while *convocation* is the Hebrew *rniqra*, “public worship service”. It is highly important

for the elect to meet on this seventh day in order to stir up love and good works, “... *not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as is the manner of some, but exhorting one another, and so much the more as you see the Day approaching*” (Hebrews 10:24-25).

3. Have a feast (Leviticus 23:3-4). The word *feast* in the Hebrew *chag*, meaning “a feast or festal service”. This implies enjoying oneself with good food, lively interac-

tion, singing of praises to God, and encouraging one another (I Thessalonians 4:18; Romans 12:4-16).

4. Do God's pleasure, not your own (Isaiah 58:13). The Hebrew for *pleasure* is *chephats*, "pleasure, delight, desire, request". To do God's pleasure requires us to know Him well enough to appreciate what truly pleases Him, and nothing pleases Him more than obedience to His ways — keeping His laws and commandments (I John 3:4; 5:2-3; Leviticus 26:1-13; Exodus 19:5-6).

5. Make the day a delight (Isaiah 58:13). *Delight* is from the Hebrew *oneg*, which means "luxury", while the root of this word, *anag*, means "soft and pliable". Keeping the

"soft and pliable" also implies we are clay in God's hand's, to be molded into His character, in no small way by keeping the Sabbath holy (Romans 9:21; Isaiah 64:8).

6. Make the day honorable (Isaiah 58:13). the Hebrew word for *honorable* is *kabad*, which means "to honor". Surely by keeping the seventh day holy, and in the manner God prescribes, is an honor to the one who made us.

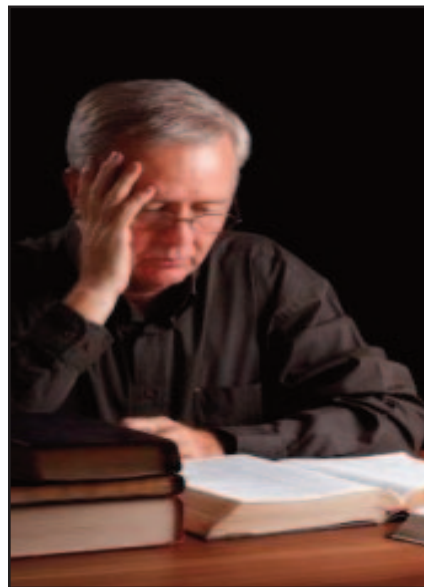
7. Speak God's words (Isaiah 58:13). God's words are in the holy Scriptures, which we read regularly, knowing that He reveals to us His character, our instructions for living, history, and prophecy. The Sabbath day is a special day during which we delve into these words more rigorously, speaking these words to one another to encourage and instruct, knowing that they show us the way of life (John 1:1-14; 5:24; 8:31-32; 17:17; James 1:22; Psalm 119:105).

The Example of Jesus

We know that Jesus set several examples of what is permissible to do on the Sabbath day. These activities included preaching and expounding upon the word (Luke 4:16), healing (Luke 6:6-10), and casting out demons (). He also emphasized the need to remove pain and suffering on the rest day by approving

the pulling of an animal out of a pit into which it had fallen (Matthew 12:11). Christ said, "*It is therefore lawful to do good on the Sabbath*" (Matthew 12:12). By implication, He advocated the feeding and watering of livestock on the Sabbath, allowing them to feast just as people do on that day.

Keeping a Voluptuous Sabbath!



There is a big difference between fishing and studying God's word on the Sabbath. One practice leads to life, and the other to death. Proper observance is that important!

day luxuriously hardly implies sitting in a church pew and listening to someone speak all day, with folded hands and fearful hearts. This is not to say one is not to approach God's word with humility, fear, and trembling (Isaiah 66:2), but rather this attitude is to be expressed toward God and not toward the people who preach it. The fear of man is a trap and against God's will (Psalm 27:1; 146:3-4; 56:4). To be made

All of these commands regarding the Sabbath day are interestingly the essence of what we know the millennial age of Jesus Christ will be like! Mankind will not be performing “servile work”, but will be tending and keeping — serving and uplifting — the renewed earth like Adam and Eve did in the Garden of Eden. Work will not be the sweat-provoking, 8 to 5, often unpleasant quest for survival that it is today, forcing people to earn money to raise their families and pay their bills. It will likely be a moneyless society wherein love of neighbor will preempt the need to struggle for survival like a jungle animal (Isaiah 55:1-2; Matthew 5:42; 22:37-40). Activities will be serving God and one’s fellow man, doing good to all without the need for receiving payment in return. Joy unending will be the theme of this age (Philippines 4:4).

All nations will live in peace with one another, even as peace and love will pervade families of all nations. War will be unknown (Isaiah 9:7; Micah 4:3-4). A whole new heaven and earth will be established (Isaiah 65:17), replacing the chaos and confusion of this present evil age.

The earth will see a continual feast, with the highest quality food available in abundance throughout the year (Revelation 22:2), deserts will turn to productive lands (Isaiah 35:1-7), and the nature of animals will become kind and gentle (Isaiah 11:6-9). Because Jesus Christ and the saints will rule the earth, God’s laws will proceed from Jerusalem and encompass all nations across the earth (Micah 4:2).

Delight amongst all people will erupt as nations walk in the way of the Eternal, and lives molded into the ways of Almighty God will give luxury and plenty to all, the earth cleansed of wars, famines, earthquakes, hurricanes, tsunamis, and hatred. Old animosities among people and nations will be gone. People will honor the God who made them, not some vision of homo sapiens painted by deceived scholars, having

evolved from green ocean slime through evolutionary processes.

All residents of the earth will speak God’s words (Acts 3:23), and over the years learn to live in the footsteps of Jesus Christ. The Scriptures will be the foundation upon which people live. Because of that, blessings of obedience will shower the earth, creating a literal Eden throughout all nations. The restoration of the world to a Garden of Eden, as predicted by all of the prophets throughout history, will become reality!

The commands regarding keeping the Sabbath day are indeed the ways of millennial, day-to-day life, the life the prophets promised is coming to restore the earth to the Eden once lost. Is it not logical, then, that Yahweh would add Exodus 20:11 and Deuteronomy 5:15 to the command regarding keeping the Sabbath? Buried in these two inclusions are the implications that the restoration of the earth in six days would yield a true Garden of Eden, the perfect environment for man to live in, in luxury, softness, pliability, and voluptuousness ... for Eden means in the Hebrew “pleasure, voluptuousness”.

Mankind was created to live in physical, mental, and spiritual pleasure from a Godly perspective, to the honor and glory of his Creator. We all crave that life, but Satan and the society he has created has perverted such pleasures, skewing them towards what Paul termed the “lusts of the flesh”; sexual immorality, uncleanness, lewdness, idolatry, sorcery [drug usage], hatred, contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, dissensions, drunkenness, and so forth (Galatians 5:19-21; II Timothy 3:2-5). The proper use of the emotions and impulses of human kind is a glory to God and to others.

Moreover, by tying coming out of Egypt as former slaves, to the Sabbath command in Deuteronomy 5, reveals that the coming millennial age will be



The renewed creation of the Garden of Eden and the exit of Israel from Egypt both illustrate the realities of the Sabbath day, as well as the nature of the coming age in a renewed earth!

one of love and brotherhood — Godly government — not controlled by the governments of man under Satan’s domain. Mankind’s governmental system is a hierarchy whereby people are controlled by other men through fear and force ... the diametric opposite of Godly government. “Fear has torment” (I John 4:18), and the fear of men is not to be practiced by the elect (I Timothy 1:7; Psalm 56:4; 146:3-4); rather, we did “*not receive the spirit of bondage again to fear, but you received the spirit of adoption by whom we cry out, ‘Abba, Father’*” (Romans 8:15. With the hierarchy gone, and the knowledge of God pervading the earth, the fear of men will be gone and the fear of God restored!

God’s Sabbath Commands Point to the Renewed Earth

We have seen that God’s Sabbath commands — so critical to follow that death resulted from their being disobedient — quite literally point towards the millennial reign of Jesus Christ, that 1,000 years of peace and prosperity following 6,000 years of man’s misrule. With Satan the devil deposed (Revelation 20:1-3), unable to influence mankind for that 1,000 years, we have

no idea how lovely and productive a world there will be. It will be a worldwide voluptuous Garden of Eden indeed ... and the Sabbath commandment tells us so. ***God tells us in Exodus 20:11 that the Sabbath is a reminder of the creation of an Eden on earth, and Deuteronomy 5:15 reminds us of Israel coming out of a sinful authoritarian government in Egypt.***

We have seen that the purpose of the Sabbath is not just to remind us of the six-day recreation of the earth and the coming out of sin (Egypt), but it is a prophecy of the coming age, the new earth after Jesus Christ returns to rule with the saints. Let us be diligent to remember the Sabbath day and keep it holy. This day identifies us, along with the other nine commandments, as His people, ready to inherit salvation at His return.

Let us pray often that Jesus Christ will return quickly (Matthew 6:10), and the resurrection will arrive wherein we will be given power to rule the nations in love, compassion, and joy as this world’s governments do not understand. ***Let us keep the Sabbath day as if we were living in the millennium today!***

Paul W. Syltie — August 29, 2014