

# **A Day to Remember**



**By Matthew A. German**

## AUTHOR'S NOTES

Scripture quotations are based primarily on the World English Bible, a translation in the public domain.

Unless otherwise indicated, bolded or underlined text in reference materials & quotes was added for emphasis by the author.

Our heavenly Father has a personal, revealed Name – Yahweh. Though occurring 6,823 times in the original Hebrew manuscripts of the Old Testament, it has been replaced in most English versions of the Bible by a generic title, “the LORD”. Similarly, the promised Messiah of Israel has a Hebrew Name, Yahshua, which literally means “Salvation of Yah” or “Yah is Salvation”. In order to be as faithful as possible to the original Scriptures, the proper Hebrew Names & titles of Yahweh and Yahshua have been restored where applicable. Please see the glossary at the end of this booklet for further information. For a detailed study on this subject, ask for our free booklet “In the Name of the Father”.

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# A Day to Remember

## Introduction

**W**e live in a fast-paced, hectic world. Despite all of the incredible technological advances of the last fifty years, with each passing day it seems like there are more demands on our time and fewer hours in the day to meet those demands. People are working more and more hours just trying to “make ends meet”, often to the detriment of marriage, family, and health. In fact, the last few decades have seen an incredible increase in the diagnosis of various stress-related disorders, and society has become characterized by strained family relationships and rampant divorce.

Wouldn't it be wonderful if we could just press the “pause” button on our lives, take a breather, and recharge our batteries? Wouldn't it be even more wonderful if we could do so on a regular basis, take a once-a-week vacation from the world, and dedicate time completely to rest and recuperation – physical, mental, and spiritual?

Most people in the world – particularly those in the United States – would look at you as if you'd lost your mind if you were to ever suggest such a thing: “Take a break from the world? Once a week? Are you crazy?”

Yet that is exactly what we all need. No one can continually work 8, 10, 12-hour days, seven days a week. We're just not built that way. Our Creator knew that and had a better way in mind, a way He instituted at Creation specifically for our benefit. He provided us with the perfect remedy for our breakneck lives – a weekly day of rest.

Imagine that. One day a week – one entire day every week – where we can just STOP what we're doing and REST. Where we can come into communion with the Most High, praising Him for His goodness and all of the wonderful blessings He's given us.

Let's take a look at what the Scriptures have to say about this incredible gift that He has given us – a gift of His time.

## In the Beginning...

*“And the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host of them. And on the seventh day Elohim<sup>a</sup> finished His work which He had made; and He rested on the seventh day from all His work which He had made. And Elohim blessed the seventh day, and hallowed it; because that in it He rested from all His work which Elohim had created and made” (Genesis 2:1-3).*

These verses put a bold exclamation point on the awesome work of Creation detailed in Genesis chapter 1. From them we can glean several important points: first, that our Creator rested on the seventh day. Second, that He blessed it and hallowed it (set it apart) **because** He had rested on it. The simple fact of His resting created special time. The word “rested” is actually translated from the Hebrew *shabáth*. Strong’s Concordance defines this word as meaning “to cease, rest, desist (from labour or exertion) ... to keep or observe the sabbath.” In fact, it is from this word that the word *shabbát* (Sabbath) derives. As we will see from other Scriptures, this seventh day was the **Sabbath**.

This brings up an interesting question – why did Yahweh rest on the seventh day? Was He tired? Had the work of Creation caused Him to get “tuckered out?” No. Scripture states that Yahweh does not tire or grow weary (Isaiah 40:28). Therefore, He did not rest on His own behalf or for His own benefit. As we will see shortly, He actually rested for **us**, His creation!

## Israel & the Sabbath Day

Most people familiar with the Bible understand that the Sabbath was one of the Ten Commandments given by Yahweh to the nation of Israel. However, not many realize that the Israelites were actually commanded to keep the Sabbath after their deliverance from Egypt but **BEFORE** those Ten Commandments were written upon the stone tablets at Mount Sinai.

Only a month after their release from captivity, as the children of

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<sup>a</sup> Elohim [eh-low-HEEM] is a Hebrew term for “Mighty One”. Most English versions of the Bible translate it as “God”.

Israel were journeying they began to grumble and complain because of a scarcity of food. In response, Yahweh said that He would give them supernatural provision in the form of manna – bread raining from heaven – but that this would constitute a test, to see if they would walk in His law or not.

*“Then said Yahweh to Moses, ‘Behold, I will rain bread from the sky for you, and the people shall go out and gather a day’s portion every day, that I may test them, whether they will walk in my law, or not.’” (Exodus 16:4)*

They were to gather this manna each morning, but only enough for their family for that day – they were not to gather extra to have for the next day or to try to stockpile it (v5).

*“And Moses said to them, ‘Let no man leave of it until the morning.’ However they listened not to Moses; but some of them left of it until the morning, and it bred worms, and became foul: and Moses was angry with them. And they gathered it morning by morning, everyone according to his eating: and when the sun grew hot, it melted.” (Exodus 16:19-21)*

The instructions were different, however, for the day before the Sabbath:

*“And it came to pass that on the sixth day they gathered twice as much bread, two omers for each one: and all the leaders of the congregation came and told Moses. And he said unto them, This is what Yahweh has spoken, tomorrow is a solemn rest, a holy Sabbath to Yahweh: bake what you will bake, and boil what you will boil; and all that remains over save it to be kept until the morning. And they saved it until the morning, as Moses commanded: and it did not become foul, neither was any worm in it. And Moses said, Eat that today, for today is a Sabbath to Yahweh: today you shall not find it in the field. Six days you shall gather it, but on the seventh is the Sabbath; in it there shall be none.” (Exodus 16:22-26)*

Notice that this day was referred to as “a holy Sabbath to Yahweh.” While the commandment seems simple enough, the Israelites quickly disobeyed:

*“And it came to pass on the seventh day, that there went out some of the people to gather, and they found none. And Yahweh said to Moses, How long will you refuse to keep My commandments and My laws? See, because Yahweh has given you the Sabbath, therefore He gives you on the sixth day the bread of two days; remain you every man in his place, let no man go out of his place on the seventh day. So the people rested on the seventh day.” (Exodus 16:27-30)*

This episode occurred prior to the giving of the Ten Commandments at Mount Sinai in Exodus 20, yet Yahweh still considered it disobedience of the Sabbath commandment when some people went out to gather manna on that day. Notice that Yahweh also made a point in this passage of saying that He had given the Sabbath to them – it was a gift! Because of their disobedience, however, He basically “confined them to their quarters”.

## **A Double Memorial**

After this the children of Israelite continued their journey until they reached Mount Sinai, where they actually received the Ten Commandments. The 4th commandment was:

*“**Remember** the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days shall you labor and do all your work, but the seventh day is a Sabbath of Yahweh your Elohim; in it you shall not do any work, you, or your son, or your daughter, your manservant or your maidservant, or your cattle, or the stranger who is within your gates: for in six days Yahweh made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is in them, and rested the seventh day: Therefore Yahweh blessed the Sabbath day, and hallowed it.” (Exodus 20:8-11)*

We see that the commandment to remember the Sabbath is tied directly to Yahweh’s rest (*shabáth*) on that seventh day of Creation. The seventh-day Sabbath is, in fact, a memorial of Creation.

Later, the significance of the Sabbath was broadened, as Yahweh reminded the ancient Israelites of the wondrous act of their deliverance from bondage in Egypt:

*“Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy, as Yahweh your*

*Elohim commanded you. Six days shall you labor and do all your work, but the seventh day is a Sabbath to Yahweh your Elohim: in it you shall not do any work, you, or your son, or your daughter, your manservant, or your maidservant, your ox, or your ass, or any of your cattle, or your stranger that is within your gates; that your manservant and your maidservant may rest as well as you. And you shall remember that you were a slave in the land of Egypt, and Yahweh your Elohim brought you out from there by a mighty hand and by an outstretched arm: **therefore** Yahweh your Elohim commanded you to keep the Sabbath day." (Deuteronomy 5:12-15)*

Here, Yahweh first instructed them to remember the Sabbath, to keep it holy, then He instructed them to **remember** that they were once slaves but had been delivered from bondage. "Therefore" – because of that fact – Yahweh was commanding them to observe the Sabbath. So the Sabbath was meant as a memorial not only of Creation, but also redemption – deliverance from bondage. This, of course, foreshadows the re-creation and redemption we have in Messiah. What a wonderful picture!

Despite this, these stories might seem to have little relevance for today. After all, why should we be interested in what happened to the ancient Israelites thousands of years ago? What does that have to do with us?

The Apostle Paul, writing to the New Testament Body of believers, expressed the relevance of these events this way: "For whatever things were written before were written for our instruction, that through patience and encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope" (Romans 15:4). To the Corinthian believers he added, "And all these things happened to them (the ancient Israelites) as examples, and it was written for our warning, on whom the ends of the ages have come" (1 Corinthians 10:11). If this was true for the 1<sup>st</sup> century believers, how much more so for those living in this modern world, who are 2,000 years closer to the "ends of the ages"?

## **The Two-Fold Blessing of the Sabbath**

Yahweh had an obvious physical purpose in the giving of the Sabbath – mankind could rest from all its labors and be refreshed. That

in itself is a great blessing. However, the Sabbath commandment also had an important spiritual purpose, for it reminded Yahweh's people that they had a Creator, that there was a higher power and authority at work in their lives and the lives of all mankind. How different would our modern world be if more people recognized that fact?

Ironically, despite this two-fold blessing in the Sabbath, many have perceived the Sabbath as a burden that was imposed upon the ancient nation of Israel. Nothing could be further from the truth, for Yahweh's intent was for the Sabbath to be considered a delight:

*"If you do turn back your foot from the Sabbath, from doing your pleasure on **My holy day**, and shall call the Sabbath '**a delight**,' the holy day of Yahweh 'esteemed,' and shall esteem it, not doing your own ways, nor finding your own pleasure, nor speaking your own words, then you shall delight yourself in Yahweh. And I shall cause you to ride on the heights of the earth, and feed you with the inheritance of Jacob your father. For the mouth of Yahweh has spoken!" (Isaiah 58:13-14).*

Once again we see the emphasis that this is **Yahweh's** holy day. In addition, these verses express how Yahweh's people are to view the Sabbath – as a delight. The Sabbath was intended as a blessing, a gift from Yahweh to His people. He promises that those honoring His Sabbath day will delight themselves in Him.

## **The Messiah and the Sabbath Day**

Many people have been taught that when the Messiah came He changed or abolished the Sabbath day. Let's consider this in light of what Yahshua Himself said:

*"Think not that I came to destroy the law or the prophets: I came not to destroy but to fulfill (literally, 'fill to the full, to overflowing'). For truly I say to you, Till heaven and earth pass away, one yothe or one tittle shall in no wise pass away from the law, till all things are accomplished. Whoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven: but whoever shall do and teach them, he shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven." (Matthew 5:17-19)*



Yahshua clearly stated that He came to fulfill the law, not destroy or “do away” with it. He came to set an example, to show people how to live righteous lives of obedience to the law. Yet, on several occasions He had to contend with accusations from the scribes and Pharisees that He was teaching people to disobey and disregard one of the principle tenets of the law – the Sabbath. Let’s find out from Scripture what His example was, and what He actually had to say about the Sabbath:

*“And He (Yahshua) came to Nazareth, where He had been brought up: and He entered, as His custom was, into the synagogue on the Sabbath day, and stood up to read.” (Luke 4:16)*

*“And He came down to Capernaum, a city of Galilee. And He was teaching them on the Sabbath day, and they were astonished at His teaching, for His word was with authority. In the synagogue there was a man...” (Luke 4:31-33)*

From these and other verses, it is apparent that Yahshua was in regular attendance at the synagogues on the Sabbath. As we will see, He understood the purpose of the Sabbath and kept it faithfully. He just didn’t observe it according to the traditions of the religious authorities.

*“At that time Yahshua went on the Sabbath through the grain fields. And His disciples were hungry, and began to pluck heads of grain, to eat. And when the Pharisees saw it, they said to Him, ‘Behold, your disciples do that which it is not lawful to do on the Sabbath.’ But He said to them, ‘Have you not read what David did, when he was hungry, and they that were with him: how he went into the House of Yahweh, and ate the showbread, which was not lawful for him to eat, neither for them that were with him, but only for the priests? Or have you not read in the law, that on the Sabbath the priests in the temple profane the Sabbath, and are guiltless? But I say to you, that One greater than the temple is here. But if you had known what this means, “I desire mercy and not sacrifice,” you would not have condemned the guiltless. For the Son of man is Master of the Sabbath.’” (Matthew 12:1-8)*

If we look at the parallel account of this in the Gospel of Mark, we find the additional statement: “And He said to them, ‘The Sabbath was **made for man**, and not man for the Sabbath.’” (Mark 2:27)

Notice – the Sabbath was MADE, and it was made FOR man, for his benefit. Yahweh did not institute the Sabbath as some cruel bondage, a yoke enslaving people. Nor was it just for the Jew – or the Israelite – but for **man** – all of mankind. Neither did Yahshua say that people weren't to observe it any more now that He had come. In fact, not once during His ministry did He object to the Sabbath; what he objected to were the man-made rules and regulations that the scribes and Pharisees had imposed upon the people – minute legalistic details on how to keep the Sabbath.

In order to gain some historical insight into the culture in which Yahshua was ministering, let's take a look at the International Standard Bible Encyclopedia:

“It was during the period between Ezra<sup>a</sup> and the Christian era that the spirit of Jewish legalism flourished. Innumerable restrictions and rules were formulated for the conduct of life under the law. Great principles were lost to sight in the mass of petty details. Two entire treatises of the *Mishnah*<sup>b</sup>, *Shabbath* and *Erubhin*, are devoted to the details of Sabbath observance. The subject is touched upon in other parts of the *Mishnah*; in the *Gemara* there are extended discussions, with citations of the often-divergent opinions of the rabbis. In the *Mishnah* (*Shabbath*, vii, 2) there are 39 classes of prohibited actions with regard to the Sabbath, and there is much hair-splitting in working out the details. The beginnings of this elaborate definition of actions permitted and actions forbidden are to be found in the centuries immediately preceding the Christian era. The movement was at flood tide during our Lord's earthy ministry and continued for centuries afterward, in spite of His frequent and vigorous protests.

“The rabbis seemed to think that the Sabbath was an end in itself, an institution to which the pious Israelite must subject all his personal interests; in other words, that man was made for the Sabbath: man might suffer hardship, but the institution must be preserved inviolate. [Yahshua], on the contrary, taught that the Sabbath was made for man's benefit. If there should arise a conflict between man's needs and the letter of the law, man's higher interests and needs must take precedence over

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<sup>a</sup> the time of Ezra was approximately 450-500 years prior to the birth of the Messiah

<sup>b</sup> the “Mishnah” refers to the Jewish sages' commentary on the Torah

the law of the Sabbath. There is no reason to think that [Yahshua] meant to discredit the Sabbath as an institution. It was His custom to attend worship in the synagogue on the Sabbath.”<sup>1</sup>

Now we can better understand the mindset with which Yahshua was contending. The Jewish rabbis had turned the Sabbath into a burden with their innumerable rules and regulations. But Yahshua was determined to demonstrate the true spirit of the Sabbath day. As we have seen, He clearly stated that the Sabbath was made – created – for man (all of mankind). In fact, it was Yahshua Messiah Himself who made the Sabbath, for He made all things!

*“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with Yahweh, and the Word was Elohim. The same was in the beginning with Yahweh. All things were made through Him, and without Him was not anything made that has been made.” (John 1:1-3)*

Since “all things were made through Him” (the Word, Yahshua) and “the Sabbath was made for man”, that means that Yahshua made the Sabbath specifically for man, for his benefit. It was given as a blessing.

## “The LORD’s Day”

Many Christians refer to Sunday as “the LORD’s Day”. This phrase only appears one time in the King James version of the Bible, in Revelation 1:10: “I was in the Spirit on the LORD’s day, and heard behind me a great voice, as of a trumpet.” It’s important to note, however, that no correlation is made here between the “first day of the week” (or “Sunday”) and “the LORD’s Day.” As a matter of fact, the phrase “the LORD’s” is translated from the Greek word *kuriakos*, which literally means “belonging to the LORD.” So it is not speaking of a particular day of the week, but rather of the Day “belonging to Yahweh”, i.e., “the Day of Yahweh” – the time of the coming plagues, culminating in the return of the Messiah and His millennial reign. This is the theme of the book of Revelation.

That aside, Yahshua emphatically said that He was the Master or “LORD” of the Sabbath. Therefore, the Sabbath day is the day “belonging to the LORD.”

With these things in mind, let's return to the account in Matthew 12, in which Yahshua declared that He was the Master of the Sabbath:

*“And He (Yahshua) departed from there, and went into their synagogue: and behold, a man having a withered hand. And they asked Him, saying, Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath day? that they might accuse him. And He said to them, What man shall there be of you, that shall have one sheep, and if this fall into a pit on the Sabbath day, will he not lay hold on it, and lift it out? How much then is a man of more value than a sheep! Therefore it is lawful to do good on the Sabbath day. Then He said to the man, Stretch forth your hand. And he stretched it forth; and it was restored whole, as the other. But the Pharisees went out, and conspired against Him, how they might destroy Him.” (Matt. 12:9-14).*

Again, this reiterates the point that the Jewish religious leaders of that time were more interested in maintaining their own rule and authority than in living by the spirit of the law. Yahshua understood the true purpose of the Sabbath, however, and pointedly told them that it is lawful (right) to do good on the Sabbath!

## **The Sabbath in History**

Historical records show that observance of the seventh-day Sabbath was actually prevalent throughout the world during the 1<sup>st</sup> century. Flavius Josephus, the well-known 1<sup>st</sup> century Jewish historian, noted that “the multitude of mankind itself have had a great inclination of a long time to follow our religious observances; for there is not any city of the Grecians, nor any of the barbarians, nor any nation whatsoever, whither our custom of resting on the seventh day hath not come ...”<sup>2</sup>

Philo, an historian of Alexandria, Egypt, and one of Josephus' contemporaries, writes the following: “And in short, it is very nearly an universal rule, from the rising of the sun to its extreme west, that every country, and nation, and city, is alienated from the laws and customs of foreign nations and states, and that they think that they are adding to the estimation in which they hold their own laws, despising those in use among other nations. But this is not the case with our laws which Moses has given to us; for they lead after them the inhabitants of continents,

and islands, the eastern nations and the western, Europe and Asia, in short, the whole inhabitable world from one extremity to the other. **For what man is there who does not honour that sacred seventh day, granting in consequence a relief and relaxation from labour,** for himself and for all those who are near to him, and that not to free men only, but also to slaves, and even to beast of burden.”<sup>3</sup>

Philo is saying that each nation tended to demonstrate its independence and build up its own esteem by deliberately enacting laws different from those in other nations; yet the entire known world at the time held to some of the basic laws given through Moses, particularly the observance of the seventh-day Sabbath.

These historical records demonstrate that most of the known world observed a rest on the seventh day of the week – the Sabbath.

## The Death & Resurrection of Yahshua

Clearly, the seventh day of the week was established as the Sabbath up until the time of Yahshua’s death. But did it change with His resurrection? When was His resurrection?

Traditionally, most Christians have been taught that the Messiah died on a Friday afternoon and was resurrected on Sunday morning. Do the Scriptures bear that out?

First, we must recognize that Yahshua Himself told the disbelieving religious leaders of His day that only one sign would be given to them to show that He was the Messiah: “For as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the great fish, so shall the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth” (Matt. 12:40).

There can be no mistaking the timeframe here. Just as Jonah was in the belly of the great fish for three days and three nights, so Yahshua would be in the grave for three full days and three full nights, i.e., 72 hours. Simple math shows that Friday afternoon to Sunday morning is not three days and three nights. From the Scriptural accounts, we know Yahshua died around 3pm (referred to as “the ninth hour” after sunrise, see Matt. 27:46-50) and that His Body was placed in the tomb before sunset.

If He was resurrected at the same time exactly three days later and was already gone on Sunday morning, then He must have been resurrected late Sabbath afternoon! If we start there and count

backwards 72 hours: Sabbath afternoon to Friday afternoon would be day three; Friday afternoon to Thursday afternoon would be day two; Thursday afternoon to Wednesday afternoon would be day one. So that would indicate that the Messiah died on Wednesday afternoon.

Let's see if there is any Scriptural evidence for this scenario. In the account of Yahshua's death and burial in the Gospel of John, we read the following:

*"The Jews therefore, because it was the Preparation, that the bodies should not remain on the torture stake (cross) upon the Sabbath – for the day of that Sabbath was a high day – asked Pilate that their legs might be broken, and that they might be taken away" (John 19:31).*

Before we go any further we must recognize that "a high day" does not necessarily mean that it was the weekly Sabbath. In fact, the very use of the phrase "the day of that Sabbath was a high day" indicates that there was something unique and special about it; otherwise, the added words would make no sense. A "high day" is a special annual holy day.

Like many modern holidays, most of Yahweh's "high days" can fall on any day of the week. The first day of Unleavened Bread – the day after Passover – is identified in Scripture as an annual Sabbath (Leviticus 23:5-7) and is considered a "high day".

In the parallel account in the Gospel of Luke, immediately after Yahshua's death, we read:

*"And it was the Preparation day, and the Sabbath was approaching. And the women who had come with Him from Galilee followed after, and saw the tomb and how His body was laid. And they returned, and prepared spices and ointments. **And they rested on the Sabbath according to the command.**" (Lk. 23:54-56)*

This was after Messiah's death, yet here we find these women still obeying the commandment to observe the Sabbath. If the Sabbath had been "done away with", then why did His followers continue to observe this commandment? Were they simply ignorant, blindly following Old Testament law and tradition? If so, why hadn't their Master told them, during the 3 1/2 years of His earthly ministry, that the Sabbath was about to pass away? He preached about the Sabbath on numerous occasions,

yet we find no record anywhere in Scripture that He told His followers that the Sabbath was soon to be “done away with” or changed.

### “The First Day of the Week”

Significantly, the word “Sunday” does not appear anywhere in Scripture. The phrase “first day of the week” occurs a total of eight times, all in the New Testament. Therefore, if there is any Scriptural authority for the Sabbath being changed from Saturday to Sunday, it must be found in one of those eight places. Let’s examine them one by one:

[1] *“Now late on the Sabbath day, as it began to dawn toward the first day of the week [literally ‘as the first day drew on or approached’], came Miriam Magdalene and the other Miriam to see the sepulchre.” (Matthew 28:1)*

This passage, like the rest of the New Testament, was written under inspiration of the Holy Spirit many years after Messiah’s death, burial, and resurrection. The text says that late on the Sabbath day it was drawing toward the first day of the week. So the Sabbath was still the day before the first day of the week – it was still the seventh day.

[2] *“And they returned, and prepared spices and ointments; and rested the Sabbath day according to the commandment. Now upon the first day of the week, very early in the morning, they came unto the sepulcher, bringing their spices which they had prepared, and certain others with them.” (Luke 23:56–24:1)*

This is the second occurrence of the phrase “the first day of the week.” Notice that these ladies rested on the Sabbath day according to the commandment, then, on the first day of the week, they went to the sepulcher.

[3] *“When the Sabbath was past, Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James, and Salome, bought spices, that they might come and anoint Him. Very early on the first day of the week, they came to the tomb when the sun had risen (literally, ‘at the rising of the sun’).” (Mark 16:1-2)*

This account states that Mary Magdalene and others bought spices after the Sabbath was past. To reconcile this passage with the previous one from Luke 23:56, we understand that “the Sabbath” referred to here must have been the annual Sabbath of the 1<sup>st</sup> day of Unleavened Bread, which fell on a Thursday that year.

So the timeline was as follows: Yahshua died on Wednesday afternoon (Passover) and His body was rushed to the tomb because a high day – the first day of Unleavened Bread – was approaching at sunset. From sunset Wednesday to sunset Thursday the people observed the high day. On Friday, the women bought and prepared the spices to anoint His body and made their preparations for the weekly Sabbath. On the weekly Sabbath they rested. Then they went to the tomb early the next morning, the first day of the week, only to find it empty.

[4] *“Now on the first day of the week, comes Mary Magdalene early, while it was yet dark, to the tomb, and sees the stone taken away from the tomb.” (John 20:1)*

So according to the Bible, when Mary Magdalene came to the tomb it was still dark (before sunrise) – and Yahshua was already gone! He was **not** resurrected at sunrise on Sunday.

[5] *“Now when Yahshua was risen, early the first day of the week He appeared first to Mary Magdalene, out of whom He had cast seven devils.”(Mark 16:9)*

Once again there is no indication of a change in the Sabbath from the seventh day to the first.

The sixth occurrence of the phrase “first day of the week” is found in John 20:19:

[6] *“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, came Yahshua and stood in the midst, and said to them, Peace be unto you.” (John 20:19)*

Some maintain that this was a religious meeting to celebrate the Resurrection. However, the text doesn’t say that. The Jewish religious leaders had just taken the Messiah and had Him put to death. The disciples were afraid. The doors were shut (and probably bolted)



because of their fear. They could not have been assembling to celebrate the Resurrection, as they did not yet believe that Yahshua was risen (Mark 16:11; Luke 24:37, 39, 41). Nothing in this text calls this day “the Sabbath” or “the LORD’S Day,” nor is there anything here that sets the day apart or makes it holy. There’s certainly no Scriptural authority for changing a commandment of Yahweh!

Many years later, the apostle Paul journeyed to Troas with his companions and shared fellowship with the disciples there:

[7] *“And we sailed away from Philippi after the days of unleavened bread, and came to those at Troas in five days, where we stayed seven days. And upon the first day of the week, when the disciples were gathered together to break bread, Paul talked with them, intending to depart on the next day, and continued his speech until midnight. And there were many lights in the upper chamber where we were gathered together.” (Acts 20:6-8)*

The disciples were gathered together to break bread, which simply meant to share a meal. Also, we must remember that the Scriptural day begins at sunset. So the “first day of the week” actually begins as the Sabbath ends on Saturday at sunset. Paul began speaking to these disciples early Saturday evening and continued until midnight. Again, there’s no reference here to the Sabbath being changed.

The eighth and final place where the term “first day of the week” occurs in Scriptures is in 1 Corinthians 16:

[8] *“Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I commanded the assemblies of Galatia, you do likewise. Upon the first day of the week let each one of you lay by him in store, as Yahweh has prospered him, that there be no collections when I come.” (1 Corinthians 16:1-2)*

This speaks of a collection, but what was its purpose? Who was it for? According to the context, it was a special collection “for the saints.” Paul had given similar instruction to the Roman believers:

*“But now I am going to Jerusalem, serving the saints. For it has*

*been the good pleasure of Macedonia and Achaia<sup>a</sup> to make a certain contribution for the poor among the saints who are at Jerusalem... When therefore I have accomplished this, and have sealed to them this fruit, I will go on by you to Spain." (Rom. 15:25-28).*

The poor saints at Jerusalem were suffering from draught and famine. This collection wasn't money, but fruit (food) that was being sealed for shipment to help alleviate their suffering!

Now let's return to 1 Corinthians 16. Paul instructed the believers that upon the first day of the week each of them was to "lay by him in store." That means to store up by himself – at home. What was Paul purpose in this specific instruction? "That there be no collections (gatherings) when I come." Men gather fruit out of orchards and vegetables out of the ground. Paul wasn't speaking of putting money into a collection plate at a worship service or handing a tithe envelope to the minister. He went on to say:

*"When I arrive, I will send whoever you approve with letters to carry your gracious gift to Jerusalem. If it is appropriate for me to go also, they will go with me." (1 Corinthians 16:3-4).*

Apparently it was going to require several men to carry this collection to Jerusalem. Were it simply a monetary tithe or offering for the minister or the spread of the Gospel, Paul could have carried the money alone.

So here again we find that "the first day of the week" is viewed as a common workday – a day to gather fruit and food out of the orchards, fields, and gardens, storing it up. This was to be the first labor of the week, hence the first day of the week, as soon as the Sabbath was past.

Having examined each of the eight occurrences of the phrase "the first day of the week", we can safely conclude that it is never once called the Sabbath or identified as being "set apart". On the contrary, in every case it was considered a common workday.

There is no scriptural authority for Sunday observance, nor is there any record in the Scriptures of anyone celebrating the Resurrection on

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<sup>a</sup> the Corinthian congregation was located in the region of Macedonia & Achaia (roughly corresponding to modern-day Greece)

Sunday.

## The Apostles' Example

Earlier we saw that Yahshua said that He was Master of the Sabbath. Obviously, His disciples did NOT interpret this to mean that the Sabbath had been or was soon to be abolished – otherwise why would they have continued observing it even YEARS after His death? Nor is there anything in the New Testament Scriptures about the apostles changing their day of worship to Sunday. They continued observing the seventh-day Sabbath.

Still, many people believe that the disciples met together every Sunday and celebrated the “Lord’s Supper”. But is that what the Scriptures say?

*“And they were continuing steadfastly in the teaching of the apostles, and in fellowship, and in the breaking of bread, and in prayers... And continuing steadfastly with one mind day by day in the Temple, and breaking bread from house to house, they shared food in gladness and simplicity of heart.” (Acts 2:42, 46)*

Notice that these new believers were steadfast in their devotion to their new faith. “Breaking of bread from house to house” simply refers to them sharing fellowship meals. No Scriptural connection is made to “the Lord’s supper” or “the first day of the week.” In fact, the text actually says that they continued “day by day [daily] in the Temple.”

Paul and Barnabas preached in Antioch on the Sabbath:

*“But passing on through Perga, they (Paul and company) came to Antioch in Pisidia, and went into the synagogue on the Sabbath day and sat down. And after the reading of the law and the prophets the rulers of the synagogue sent unto them, saying, You men and brethren, if you have any word of exhortation for the people, say on.” (Acts 13:14-15)*

Then Paul stood up, and spoke, preaching the Messiah to them (see v16-41). Those present were so touched by his words that they begged

Paul and Barnabas to come back and tell them more:

*“And as they went out, they asked that these words might be spoken to them the next Sabbath. Now when the synagogue broke up, many of the Jews and devout proselytes followed Paul and Barnabas; who, speaking to them, urged them to continue in the grace of Yahweh. And the next Sabbath almost the whole city was gathered together to hear the word of Yahweh.” (Acts 13:42-44)*

Now since Paul and Barnabas were exhorting them to “continue in the grace of Yahweh,” (v43), here was their opportunity to explain to these Jews and Gentile converts that the Sabbath had been done away. They didn’t do that. On the other hand, Paul and Barnabas undoubtedly ministered during the week, yet when it came time for formal teaching and preaching of the Word, why did they make the eager proselytes wait a whole week, in order to preach to them on the next Sabbath?

## **The Jerusalem Council**

Sometimes people will point to the Jerusalem Council (Acts 15) and say that, since the keeping of the Sabbath wasn’t mentioned as part of the requirements levied upon a new Gentile convert, it must no longer be valid for believers. However, we must understand that the core issue before this gathering of elders was the necessity of physical circumcision for salvation (Acts 15:1).

Let’s read the conclusion reached by James (Jacob), bishop of Jerusalem and one of the presiding elders at the Council:

*“Therefore my judgment is that we don’t trouble those from among the gentiles who turn to Yahweh, but that we write to them that they abstain from the pollution of idols, from sexual immorality, from what is strangled, and from blood. For Moses from generations of old has in every city those who preach him, being read in the synagogues every Sabbath.” (Acts 15:21)*

Notice that he did not say they should not keep the Ten Commandments. The Ten Commandments were not in question – physical circumcision was. James didn’t address other tenets of the Ten

Commandments (e.g., taking Yahweh's Name in vain, murder, or stealing), yet we certainly can't assume that those actions are now okay because he didn't mention them. James was merely highlighting the minimum requirements in order for Gentiles to join the assembly. Ironically, the significance of this verse is that it shows that Gentile converts were expected to gather for worship on the Sabbath, where they would hear the law of Moses being read. The other apostles and elders concurred with James' opinion (v22).

### More in Acts

*"And on the Sabbath day, we went outside the gate by a river side, where it was customary for prayer to be made; and we sat down, and spoke to the women that had gathered together." (Acts 16:13)*

*"And Paul, as his custom was, went in to them, and for three Sabbath days reasoned with them from the Scriptures..." (Acts 17:2)*

The Apostle Paul actually worked during the week and kept the weekly Sabbath:

*"After these things Paul departed from Athens, and came to Corinth; and found a certain Jew named Aquila ... with his wife Priscilla ... and came unto them. And because he was of the same craft, he abode with them, and wrought; for by their occupation they were tentmakers, and he reasoned in the synagogue EVERY SABBATH, and persuaded the Jews and the Greeks." (Acts 18:1-11)*

Here Paul worked weekdays, but went to services and taught Greeks (Gentiles) as well as Jews every Sabbath. To these same Gentile-born believers at Corinth, Paul commanded: "Be imitators of me, even as I also am of Messiah." (2 Cor. 11:1). He expected them to follow his example, which would include observation of the seventh-day Sabbath, just as the Messiah before Him.

## Addressing Some “Troubling” Texts

Despite these many clear examples, some have stumbled over a few things that Paul wrote in his epistles.

The key to properly understanding a Bible verse is to take it in context and compare it to the rest of Scripture. If all Scripture is truly inspired by Yahweh (2 Tim. 3:16), then one passage cannot contradict another. In addition, when reading Paul’s epistles we must bear in mind the apostle Peter’s warning:

*“Regard the patience of our Master as salvation; even as our beloved brother Paul also, according to the wisdom given to him, wrote to you; as also in all of his letters, speaking in them of these things. In those are some things hard to be understood, which the ignorant and unsettled twist, as they do also to the other Scriptures, to their own destruction. You therefore, beloved, knowing these things beforehand, beware lest, being carried away with the error of the wicked, you fall from your own steadfastness.” (2 Peter 3:15-17)*

Peter said that Paul wrote some things in his epistles that are hard to understand, which the unlearned and unstable twist to their own destruction. So we must be very careful not to misinterpret what Paul wrote. And of course it’s important to interpret what he and the other apostles wrote based on their own example – how they lived their lives.

One passage that has been misunderstood and misinterpreted can be found in Paul’s epistle to the Colossians, which in the King James Bible reads this way:

*“You were dead through your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh. He made you alive together with him, having forgiven us all our trespasses; having blotted out the bond written in ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us: and he has taken it out that way, nailing it to the cross; having stripped the principalities and the powers, he made a show of them openly, triumphing over them in it.” (Col. 2:13-15)*

Some have taught that “the bond written in ordinances” is referring to the law. But what Paul was actually referring to was the record of our sins – the list of charges against us – our lawbreaking. That is what Yahshua took out of the way, “nailing it to the cross” (v14).

Paul goes on to say: “Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holyday, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath days: which are a shadow of things to come; but the body *is* of (Messiah).” (Col. 2:16-17, KJV)

Notice the italicized words. In the King James Version of the Bible, words in italics mean that they were not there in the original manuscripts but were added to the English in order to clarify the meaning of the text. In this case, however, the addition of the word “is” doesn’t clarify, it completely **changes** the apparent meaning. A more correct rendering of the verse is: “Let no one therefore judge you in eating or in drinking, or in respect of a festival or a new moon or Sabbaths – which are a shadow of what is to come – but the Body of the Messiah.” In other words, the Body of Messiah is to rule over such issues, not any individual.

Also notice that the Sabbaths “are a shadow of things to come”, not that they were a shadow. Paul was dealing with man-made ordinances in how to observe these special days, not commandments from our heavenly Father (see verses 20-22).

Another challenging passage can be found in Romans 14:

*“One person esteems one day above another; another esteems every day alike. Let each be fully convinced in his own mind.”*  
(Rom. 14:5)

Was Paul saying that it’s up to each individual to decide whether or not to esteem the Sabbath day? Not at all! The context of the passage deals with JUDGING OTHERS. In fact, Paul wasn’t even addressing the weekly Sabbath, but rather how one regards certain fast days and those who chose to be vegetarians. The Jews of that time had a tradition of fasting on certain days of the week or month.

Paul’s epistle to the Galatians has also caused some confusion:

*“But before faith came, we were kept in custody under the law, shut up to the faith which should afterwards be revealed. So that the law has become our tutor to bring us to Messiah, that we might be justified by faith. But now that faith is come, we are no longer under a tutor. For you are all sons of Yahweh, through faith in Messiah Yahshua.”* (Gal. 3:24-26)

1 John 3:4 tells us that “sin is the transgression of the law”. Without law there can be no sin. So this passage refers to the sacrificial system, the law that was “added because of transgressions” (Gal. 3:19), which would have been unnecessary had sin not already existed.

The next chapter of Galatians goes on to state:

*“However at that time, not knowing Yahweh, you were in bondage to them that by nature are no elohim; but now that you have come to know Yahweh, or rather to be known by Yahweh, how turn you back again to the weak and beggarly rudiments, to which you desire to be in bondage again? You observe days, and months, and seasons, and years. I am afraid of you, lest by any means I have bestowed labor upon you in vain.” (Gal. 4:8-11)*

We must remember that this was written to Gentile converts, people who at one time did not know Yahweh and were in bondage to false “gods” (elohim). Paul asked these converts why they were returning to weak and beggarly (elementary) matters – their days, months, seasons, and years. This had nothing to do with the weekly Sabbath or annual feast days of Yahweh.

Some will also point to Paul’s statement in the book of Romans that “Messiah is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes” (Rom. 10:4). The word translated “end” is the Greek word *telos*, which can mean ‘end’ but literally means “the end to which all things relate, the aim, purpose”. It derives from *tello*, “to set out for a definite point or goal”. The purpose of the law is to point us to Messiah as its goal or target. Yahshua was the ultimate fulfillment of the law, demonstrating it in all its fullness.

Paul actually said that the law is good, if it is used properly (1 Tim. 1:8), not as a means to salvation but as a guide for how to live our lives. He said that we don’t nullify the law through faith, but that we actually establish the law (Rom. 3:31), and went on to ask, “Shall we continue in sin (law-breaking), that grace may abound? May it never be!” (Rom. 6:1-2).

There is absolutely nothing in the New Testament Scriptures to indicate that the apostles changed the day of worship to Sunday. On the contrary, they continued to observe the seventh-day Sabbath, and Paul



did the same.

## More Historical Evidence

Athanasius, the patriarch of Alexandria, Egypt, wrote the following in 340 AD: “We assemble on Saturday, not that we are infected with Judaism, but only to worship Christ, the Lord of the Sabbath.”<sup>4</sup>

Socrates Scholasticus, a Byzantine church historian, adds this historical note from 412 AD: “Touching the Communion, there are sundry observations; for almost all the churches throughout the world do celebrate and receive the holy mysteries every Sabbath. Yet the Egyptians adjoining Alexandria, together with the inhabitants of Thebes, of a tradition, do celebrate the Communion on Sunday, when the festival meeting throughout every week was come. I mean the Saturday, and the Sunday, upon which the Christians are wont to meet solemnly in the church.”<sup>5</sup>

Taken together, these two historical sources show that, at least as late as 340 AD, followers of Messiah throughout much of the known world were still assembling for corporate worship on the seventh day of the week (Saturday) and still considered it the Sabbath. Sometime between 340 and 412 AD, there was a gradual shift away from the 7<sup>th</sup> day Sabbath towards Sunday.

When and how did this change come about? If it is not in Scripture, where is the authority that made the change?

## Sabbath Day Changed – By Man!

The prophet Daniel wrote in the Old Testament of a future ruler who would “wear out the saints of the Most High and think to change times and laws” (Daniel 7:25).

The Roman Emperor Constantine is considered the first “Christian” emperor-pope. However, even after his supposed conversion to Christianity, Constantine had his own wife (Fausta) and son (Crispus) murdered and his own brother-in-law (Licinius) and his son executed. His “Christianity” was a mixture of Mithraism (sun worship) and the true faith – something which both Old and New Testament Scriptures explicitly forbid (see 2 Cor. 6:14-18, for instance). It was this same

Constantine who issued an edict in 321 CE mandating Sunday worship:

“On the venerable day of the Sun let the magistrates and the people residing in cities rest, and let all workshops be closed. In the country however, persons engaged in agriculture may freely and lawfully continue their pursuits because it often happens that another day is not suitable for grain-sowing or vine planting; lest by neglecting the proper moment for such operations the bounty of heaven should be lost. – Given the 7<sup>th</sup> day of March, Crispus and Constantine being consuls each of them the second time.”<sup>6</sup>

This decree was issued nearly **300 years** after Messiah’s death, burial, resurrection, and ascension! However, did Constantine have the authority to change the law of Yahweh? Does any man have such authority?

“According to church history the seventh-day Sabbath was observed by the early church, and no other day was observed as a Sabbath during the first two or three centuries ... The festival of Sunday, like all the other festivals, was always only a human ordinance, and it was far from the intentions of the apostles to establish a Divine command in this respect, far from them, and from the early apostolic church, to transfer the laws of the Sabbath to Sunday ... Gradually, however, as the first day of the week came into prominence as an added day, but finally by civil and ecclesiastical authority as a required observance. The first legislation on this subject was the famous law of Constantine, enacted 321 A.D. The acts of various councils during the fourth and fifth centuries established the observance of the first day of the week by ecclesiastical authority, and in the great apostasy which followed, the rival day obtained the ascendancy. During the centuries which followed, however, there were always witnesses for the true Sabbath, although under great persecution. And thus in various lands, the knowledge of the true Sabbath has been preserved.”<sup>7</sup>

Hulton Webster, in his book Rest Days, states, “This legislation by Constantine probably bore no relation to Christianity; it appears, on the contrary, that the emperor, in his capacity of Pontifex Maximus, was

only adding the day of the Sun, the worship of which was then firmly established in the Roman Empire, to the other ferial days of the sacred calendar.”<sup>8</sup>

Cardinal Gibbons, in an article in the Catholic Mirror, made this startling admission: “The Catholic Church for over one thousand years before the existence of a Protestant, by virtue of her divine mission, changed the day from Saturday to Sunday.”<sup>9</sup>

Finally, the Catholic Encyclopedia, states: “In the decision to celebrate the weekly festive day of rest on Sunday, (rather than Saturday) it may be that Pagan Roman usages played as large a part as in the fixing of the Christmas festival.”<sup>10</sup>

The problem with this is that the Messiah NEVER gave any man or any organization of men this authority to change a divine commandment.

Several decades after Constantine’s edict, the **Council of Laodicea** (c. 364 CE) forbade “judaizing” through observance of the seventh-day Sabbath.

“Christians must not Judaize by resting on the Sabbath, but must work on that day, rather honouring the Lord’s Day; and, if they can, resting then as Christians. But if any shall be found to be Judaizers, let them be anathema from Christ.”<sup>11</sup>

Notice that the day observed by the Jews was still called the Sabbath – it hadn’t changed. Now contrast this edict with what we’re told in Scripture:

*“For if Joshua had given them rest, he would not have spoken afterward of another day. There remains therefore a Sabbath rest (sabbatismos – literally, “the keeping of a Sabbath”) for the people of Yahweh. For he that is entered into His rest has himself also rested from his works, as Yahweh did from His. Let us therefore give diligence to enter into that rest, that no man fall after the same example of disobedience” (Hebrews 4:8-11).*

This instruction seems clear: there remains “the keeping of a Sabbath” to the people of Yahweh, and it’s not something we can just “spiritualize away”, for we are to keep it by resting from our works, just as Yahweh did from His during Creation.

## “Wasn’t the Sabbath Just for the Jews?”

Many sincere seekers of truth have asked this question. In answering it, there are a few things to keep in mind: first, as we’ve seen, the Sabbath was actually instituted at Creation, and there were no “Jews” at Creation! Second, the term “Jew” actually refers to the descendents of Judah, who was only one of the twelve sons of Israel, yet all of Israel was commanded to keep the Sabbath. Third, the Sabbath is never identified in Scripture as only for the Jews:

*“And Yahweh spoke to Moses, saying, Speak to the children of Israel and say to them, Yahweh’s appointed times which you shall proclaim as holy convocations – My appointed times are these: For six days work may be done, but on the seventh day there is a Sabbath of solemn rest, a holy convocation. You shall not do any work; it is a Sabbath to Yahweh in all your dwellings” (Leviticus 23:1-3).*

So it was not the “Jewish Sabbath” or even the Sabbath of the nation of Israel. It was and is Yahweh’s Sabbath, His appointed time (appointment). In fact, all of the feast days identified in Leviticus 23 are “feasts of Yahweh.” Over and over again, Scripture states that there is to be one law for the foreigner & the native-born Israelite (see Exodus 12:48-49, Leviticus 16:19, 19:34, 24:22, Numbers 9:14, 15:15-16).

Some might wonder if we can just choose any day during the 7-day week to honor Yahweh. This is a valid question. However, the Scriptures never say “one day in seven”; rather, they are very specific – “the seventh day.” (see Exodus 20:8-11).

Others might wonder how we can know that the day we call “Saturday” is actually the same “seventh day” that Yahweh originally set apart and sanctified at Creation.

This is another good question, as even a cursory study of the Bible will show that the Israelites were often susceptible to the pagan influences around them. We also know that our Messiah, Yahshua, frequently came into conflict with the religious leaders of his day due to their erroneous teachings and hypocrisy. Even the apostles had to fight against corrupt practices. How can we be sure that knowledge of the true Sabbath day wasn’t lost?

We do know this: Yahshua lived a sinless life, which means that He faithfully observed the seventh-day Sabbath, as it was one of the original 10 Commandments. So we must look to His example in Scripture in answering this question. Which day did He observe?

As we have seen, Yahshua was frequently in the synagogues or the temple on the Sabbath – and there were multitudes there for worship. So the day referred to as the Sabbath in the New Testament was the day of worship for the Jewish nation.

History attests that the knowledge of seventh day of the week has been preserved since that time, as witnessed by many historians, including Philo, Josephus, Athanasius, and Socrates Scholasticus.

“From the testimony of Josephus it is clear that the Jews, as a nation, continued to observe the seventh day Sabbath until their overthrow, when Jerusalem was captured by Titus, 70 A.D. As colonies, and as individuals, scattered over the face of the earth, the Jews have preserved a knowledge of the original Sabbath, and the definite day until the present time.”<sup>12</sup>

The weekly Sabbath observed by Yahshua and His disciples is the same day observed by the Jewish people today – the seventh day of the week (Saturday). Indeed, even linguistics from around the world point to which day is the Sabbath. The word for ‘Saturday’ in many languages bears a striking resemblance to the word “sabbath”:

Spanish	<i>sabado</i>	Russian	<i>sabbota</i>
Italian	<i>sabato</i>	Greek	<i>sabbato</i>
Portuguese	<i>sabado</i>	Japanese	<i>Sabato</i>

Ironically, the words for ‘Saturday’ in Norwegian and Swedish, respectively, are *Lørdag* and *lördag* – “Lord’s day”!

## **The Eternal Sign of the Covenant**

How important is the Sabbath? Well, in Scripture it is actually designated as an eternal sign or mark of Yahweh’s people:

*“And Yahweh spoke to Moses, saying, ‘And you, speak to the children of Israel, saying: “My Sabbaths you are to **guard**, by all*

means, for it is a **sign** between Me and you throughout your generations, to know that I, Yahweh, am setting you apart. And you shall guard the Sabbath, for it is holy to you... Six days work is done, and on the seventh is a Sabbath of rest, holy to Yahweh ... And the children of Israel shall **guard the Sabbath**, to observe the Sabbath throughout their generations as an **everlasting covenant**. Between Me and the children of Israel it is a **sign forever**. For in six days Yahweh made the heavens and the earth, and on the seventh day He rested and was refreshed.” ” (Exodus 31:12-17)

There are several interesting points in this text. First, the ancient Israelites were told to **guard** the Sabbaths of Yahweh. The original Hebrew word, *shamár*, #8104 in Strong's Concordance, means "to keep, guard, observe, give heed, watch." Second, the seventh day Sabbath is, indeed, a **sign** between Yahweh and the children of Israel. The Hebrew word is *'owth* (#226 in Strong's) and means a sign, signal, distinguishing mark, banner, remembrance, omen, warning, token, ensign, standard, miracle, or proof. It's a reminder to us that He is setting us apart. Third, the Sabbath is an **eternal** sign and an **everlasting** covenant.

The seventh-day Sabbath is holy to Yahweh, and it is supposed to be holy to us, too, for we are spiritual Israelites (see Romans 11:17,24; Galatians 3:28-29).

## A Glimpse into the Future

Yahshua, prophesying of the end-times, said "pray that your flight be not in the winter, nor on the Sabbath day" (Matt 24:20). This obviously implies that the Sabbath would still be in existence in the end-times and that Yahweh's people would know when it was.

The prophet Isaiah also spoke of the Sabbath in the end-times:

*"So says Yahweh: Keep justice and do righteousness, for My salvation is near to come, and My righteousness to be revealed. Blessed is the man who does this, and the son of man who lays hold on it; keeping Sabbath, from defiling it; and keeping his hand from doing every evil... And the sons of the alien who join themselves to Yahweh to serve Him, and to love Yahweh's Name, to be His servants, everyone who keeps from defiling the Sabbath, and takes hold of My covenant. Even them I will bring*

*to My holy mount and make them joyful in My house of prayer...”*  
(Isaiah 56:1-2, 6-7).

When we keep Yahweh’s Sabbath, we are “taking hold” of the covenant and identifying ourselves with the One Who called us into covenant in the first place. We are demonstrating that we know Him. Scripture says that we demonstrate our love for Yahweh and Yahshua through our obedience: “Hereby we do know that we know Him, if we keep His commandments.” (1 John 5:3. See also Rev. 14:12, 22:14, and Exodus 20:6)

Isaiah went on to say:

*“For as the new heavens and the new earth, which I will make, shall remain before Me, says Yahweh, so shall your seed and your name remain. And it shall come to pass, that from one new moon to another, and from one Sabbath to another, shall all flesh come to worship before Me, says Yahweh.” (Isa. 66:22-23)*

The context of these verses is clearly future – the time of the new heavens and the new earth – and they reveal that all flesh will, indeed, be observing Yahweh’s seventh day Sabbath.

## **Conclusion**

The Scriptural evidence is overwhelming – the seventh-day Sabbath remains. Following the six days of Creation, Yahweh established the Sabbath as His holy day, setting in motion a weekly cycle that continues to this very day. When Yahshua the Messiah came, He kept the Sabbath, setting an example for us, so that we should follow in His footsteps. The apostles, including Paul, all kept the Sabbath. And history shows that for at least two full centuries after Messiah’s resurrection, the Body of true believers continued to keep and observe the seventh day Sabbath. Nowhere in Scripture do we find that it was changed – by Yahweh or Yahshua. No one else has the authority to change it, for it is not theirs to change. Even secular history shows that there has always been a remnant of believers who kept the 7th day Sabbath.

The Sabbath is a commanded day of rest and fellowship with other believers and is, in fact, designated as a sign or mark of Yahweh’s

people (Exodus 31:13-17), but it is also meant to be a delight to us. What an incredible blessing from Yahweh, one day a week on which we can rest and be refreshed, leaving behind the cares and concerns of this world, and focus on worship of the Creator of the heavens and the earth!

As followers of Messiah, the seventh-day Sabbath should hold a special place in our lives – a memorial not only of Creation, but also of our redemption through the Blood of the Lamb. It shouldn't be seen as an imposition or burden but rather as a delight (recall Isaiah 58:13-14).

Messiah Himself said that true believers must worship the Father in Spirit and in Truth (John 4:23-24). If we love Him, we will keep His commandments (John 14:15) – not out of a sense of obligation or because we're trying to earn anything, but out of a pure desire to please Him; we want to do His will in all things. In fact, if we have been crucified with the Messiah and He lives in us, then Messiah in us will still keep the Sabbath, for He is the same, yesterday, today, and forever!

## **The Sabbath truly WAS made for man!**

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### **Keeping the Sabbath Today**

Ironically, although there is much in Scripture about the importance of keeping the Sabbath, there isn't actually a lot of detail about how to keep it. Perhaps that's why the ancient Jewish sages felt compelled to come up with so many rules governing its observance.

As believers in Messiah, we don't need to develop a set of rules and regulations that Yahweh Himself didn't see fit to establish; rather, we ought to adhere to the Spirit of the Sabbath commandment, neither adding to nor taking away from His Word.

The best place to start is to ask ourselves a couple of questions. First, what does it mean to “keep the Sabbath holy”? “Holy” means to set apart for a sacred purpose. We don't make the Sabbath holy – Yahweh has already done that; no, we keep the Sabbath holy. How? By doing “holy” things, activities sanctified by the Word, and by not doing things that would profane it – make it common.

This brings us to a second principle: rather than asking, “Can I do this on the Sabbath?” we should ask, “Should I do this?” There's a popular acronym in Christian circles: WWJD. It stands for “What Would Jesus Do?” It's actually a good question. As far as the Sabbath



is concerned, we might ask, “What would Yahshua do?” If we’re not sure, we can ask another question, “What did Yahshua do?” What was His example? The following are a few basic guidelines:

<b>Don’t:</b>	<b>Do:</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Forget the Sabbath or treat it as a common day</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Remember the Sabbath and treat it as special and holy (set-apart for a sacred use) (Ex. 20:8-9)</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work a secular job or business</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rest from our works and assemble with other believers (Lev. 23:3)</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Do our own pleasure</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• View the Sabbath as a delight (Isa. 58:13-14), seeking to do Yahweh’s will (pray, read the Word, praise and worship Him)</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conduct business (buy and sell, go shopping) (Neh. 10:28-31)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Be about our Father’s business</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Regard the Sabbath as a burden</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bear one another’s burdens</li> </ul>

And always remember: **“it is lawful (right and proper) to do good on the Sabbath.”** (Matt. 12:12)

### *Glossary of Terms*

**God** – a generic English word used to indicate any object of worship, but commonly used to refer to the Creator.

**Elohim** – Eh-low-HEEM – Hebrew term meaning “Mighty One(s).” Usually rendered as “God” in English translations of the Bible.

**LORD** – a common term for “master, ruler”. Used as a title which translators substituted for the Father’s true Name – Yahweh.

**Yahweh** – transliteration of the 4-letter Name for our heavenly Father. It is pronounced “Yah-way”.

**Yah** – shortened, poetic form of the Father’s Name.

**Yahshua** – transliteration of the Hebrew Messiah’s Name. It literally means “Yah is Salvation” or “Salvation of Yah.”

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- <sup>8</sup> Rest Days, by Hulton Webster, page 122-123.
- <sup>9</sup> Article by Cardinal Gibbons in the Catholic Mirror, Sept 1893. Quoted in Rome's Challenge, page 21.
- <sup>10</sup> The Catholic Encyclopedia, p. 781, vol. 12.
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