

# GRACE GAZETTE

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*Wherefore lift up the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees; And make straight paths for your feet, lest that which is lame be turned out of the way; but let it rather be healed.*

*Hebrews 12:12-13*

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## THE SABBATH

*It is a sign between me and the children of Israel for ever: for in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, and on the seventh day he rested, and was refreshed.* *Exodus 31:17*

Many view the scriptures as, simply, a collection of doctrinal truths, tenets of morality, and various requirements which GOD has set forth to both restrain and guide men. Now it is absolutely true that the scriptures do set forth doctrine, even as the LORD said, *"My doctrine shall drop as the rain, my speech shall distil as the dew, as the small rain upon the tender herb, and as the showers upon the grass."* (Deut. 32:2)

It is also true that one can find in its pages, sound moral teaching which can be of great value to those who take heed thereto. *"Enter not into the path of the wicked and go not in the way of evil men. Avoid it, pass not by it, turn from it, and pass away."* (Pro 4:14-15) *"Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful."* (Psa 1:1)

It is very clear, as well, that the LORD has made HIS demands known unto men as HE has set forth the whole law of GOD which the LORD JESUS made abundantly plain, *"Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets."* (Mat 22:37-40)

In spite of this, plain declaration of the "whole law", there are many who yet desire to hang the carnal minutiae of the coded law as given to Moses on Mt. Sinai, around the necks of those who are made free in CHRIST, who, alone, has fulfilled every jot and tittle of it by HIS life, death, and resurrection. I believe this is largely because they fail to see that the scriptures are not just a collection of profitable teaching and commandments, which can be of help to those who read them, but rather a narrative which is designed to reveal HIS purpose in the creation of the world.

The scriptures reveal CHRIST and HIS work of redemption from the very beginning of the Genesis to its last Amen, in the book of The Revelation. The account of Creation is not given so that we might have ammunition with which to argue with the evolutionists and others who wander in the darkness of human understanding. Rather, the work of Creation, is a summary of the unfolding of GOD's purpose in and for the earth and demonstrates HIS perfection in the completion of that purpose, with the redemption of sinners as HIS crowning achievement. All theories of men concerning this Creation fall short of truth if this basic concept is ignored. It is impossible that a man can have a right understanding of the giving of the law and its function if he is not given a mind to comprehend the completion of that law in CHRIST.

We read that HE rested on seventh day and was refreshed. Now I don't suppose this means that HE got out HIS rocking chair, took HIS shoes off, and began sipping on a nice cool glass of lemonade. Rather, it means that HE fully completed the Creation, exactly as HE wished it to be. *"And God saw every thing that he had made, and, behold, it was very good. And the evening and the morning were the sixth day."* (Gen 1:31)

Thus, HE set forth the concept of the Sabbath day in this fashion. *"And on the seventh day God ended his work which he had made; and he rested on the seventh day from all his work which he had made. And God blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it: because that in it he had rested from all his work which God created and made."* (Gen 2:2-3) The Jews were given a carnal commandment, to remember this day in stark solemnity. They demonstrated their own spiritual darkness as they only could see the outward sign in the keeping of this day, even as many Jews and Gentiles alike still do in the present hour. They had no understanding of that which CHRIST made plain in HIS many disputes with the Pharisees, concerning the "keeping" of this day. *"And he said unto them, The sabbath was made for man, and not man for the sabbath: Therefore the Son of man is Lord also of the sabbath."* (Mark 2:27-28)

In like fashion as the LORD instituted the taking of bread and the cup as a remembrance of HIS death until HE comes again, so too did HE institute the Sabbath as a precursor to that event in order to demonstrate the complete work which HE alone could and did perform.

The error of the Jews and the perpetuators of carnal "sabbath keeping", is that the sign is made (in their mind) to be an end in itself rather than recognizing the purpose of it in the first place. The bread and the cup are mere signs of that which CHRIST has done and are not in themselves to be revered. In the same fashion, one day out of the week is not to be revered either. For it is given to men to remind them of HIS finished work, wherein HE has done all things well.

Now this is not to say that there are not great benefits which are derived from the "rest" of the body on a weekly basis or the setting aside of a day which is primarily given to gathering with the saints. (see Heb. 10:25) We remember that HE said the *"sabbath is made for man."* It is not healthy for the body or the mind to work seven days a week, much less for the spiritual man to neglect that which the LORD prescribes for HIS good. We see this carnal principle repeated not only in the prohibition of labor on the seventh day, but in the institution of seven years related to letting land lay fallow and the ultimate seven sevens in the year of Jubilee. So, we do not deny that these benefits exist and that a man acts foolishly who disregards this principle.

Yet the primary purpose in the institution of the Sabbath (which has been and always will be the seventh day of the week), was not to focus attention on the requirement of it, but to minister blessing to those who are enabled to see the great mercy of GOD in the giving of it. The end of which is that we might be reminded that just as HE rested from HIS labor in Creation, so too has CHRIST "rested" from HIS finished work of redemption. *"But this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God; From henceforth expecting till his enemies be made his footstool. For by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified."* (Heb 10:12-14) *"There remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God. For he that is entered into his rest, as God did from his."* (Heb 4:9-10)

It is this "rest" which the sons of GOD long for and desire. They cannot find it on a calendar or in a date book. Their rest is not enhanced by those who argue for a change of this day from the seventh to the first, regardless of whatever entrenched culture or custom might be cited.

"By GRACE I've found a RESTING place, not in device nor creed; I trust the Ever-living One,  
His wounds for me shall plead. I need no other argument, I need no other plea;

It is enough that Jesus died, and that He died for me." (by Eliza Hewitt, 1891, first line altered)

CHRIST is the SABBATH for the sons of GOD. Just as the LORD pronounced a curse upon those Israelites who dared to work on the seventh day, so too is there a curse upon those who would seek to add their own labor to that which CHRIST has completed. Paul said, *"there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ. But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed. As we said before, so say I now again, If any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed."* (Gal 1:6-9) The preaching of JESUS CHRIST and HIM crucified is the sum total of sound doctrine, when we consider the purpose for which the LORD instituted the SABBATH. To demand anything else is to go about to establish our own righteousness.

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