



**“Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant in search of fine pearls, <sup>46</sup> and upon finding a single pearl of great value, he went and sold all that he had and bought it.  
Mathew 13:45**

10/03/2018

Adar 21

## **VaYachel And He Assembled**

Exodus 35:1–38:20

I Kings 7:13–8:21

II Corinthians 9:1–15

Within this week’s Torah Pearl, we will examine the Sabbath along with the offerings brought to Moses for the building of the Tabernacle, the Tent of Meeting where God would meet with His people. As we examine these two aspects of the parsha we will also see God’s grace in action.

We see within the parsha how YHVH seeks to establish a relationship with His people after the events of the Golden Calf, which is a perfect example of the grace of God in action. Many theologians argue that grace is only given through Messiah within the New Covenant however, this is not true. For grace is a characteristic of who God is, as it is part of His very being and nature. Furthermore, grace is given to assist followers of YHVH to walk before Him, as it bridges/fills the gap when we fall short in keeping the commandments. That whoever does not mean we cannot keep them, but rather during our infancy in faith, we will fall short, yet as we mature in our faith we learn how to take captive our thoughts, when we are tempted and bring them into submission to the word of God, His Torah. Thus, bringing us to maturity as we are washed in the word, through allowing it to direct and transform us, through applying it and allow the Holy Spirit to reveal the truth to us.

We need to understand that as a child matures in the natural they adhere to the rulings of society, so too do we as believers. Furthermore, we need to understand that it is a maladjusted child who does not adhere to societies laws and thus becomes lawless, which will lead to them being brought before a court and sentenced accordingly. This is the same in the spiritual sphere, that as children of God, we are to keep His precepts, which if we do not, then we are lawless. However, because for believers there is no condemnation, we will not be judged to go to the lake of fire, but rather we will miss blessings and will not mature in our faith. Thus, failing to fulfill the calling and purpose for our lives. We will, however, stand before the throne of God and give account for our actions. Can you imagine standing before Messiah, the one who died for our sins as we give account for how we have lived? Thus, let us seek to grasp every opportunity to fulfill the calling on our lives. Let us seek to apply the word of God and be obedient to it so that we can bring glory and honour to our Father in

Heaven. Not for reward, but because we love Him, because He has given us everything, and it is the right thing to do.

This week's Parsha commences with God again reaffirming to Israel the importance of keeping the Sabbath.

Exodus 35:1-3

***And Moses assembled the whole congregation of the children of Israel together and said to them, "These are the words which the LORD (YHVH) has commanded, that you should do them. <sup>2</sup> Six days will work be done, but on the seventh day there will be a holy day for you, a Sabbath of rest to the LORD (YHVH): whoever does work on it will be put to death. <sup>3</sup> You will kindle no fire throughout your habitations on Sabbath."***

Have you ever thought or contemplated what day the Sabbath is? Within mainstream Christianity it is remembered on the first day, that of Sunday, but why is this? Who changed it? For some, they will have studied this, but for those who may not have, I will try to give a very brief overview of both scripture and history to assist you in understanding this.

We read in Genesis 2:1-3 ***Thus the heavens and the earth and the entire host of them were finished. 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. <sup>3</sup> And God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it because in it He had rested from all His work which God created and made.***

Here we see that God set aside the Sabbath as part of creation, which we need to understand that there is a prophetic and deep meaning to the Sabbath, which reveals when Messiah will return. Scripture informs us that one day is like a thousand to the Lord (2 Pet. 3:8; Psalms 90:4), thus, for each day we have a thousand years. Therefore, mankind will have six thousand years prior to the Sabbath rest for all of creation, which this is when Messiah will return and establish the Millennium reign, a period of one thousand years. However, we must note that just as every day commences when night comes, and not at midnight, so too will the Sabbath Day commence when it is dark. For the Sabbath of creation, is the seventh millennium, which is referred to in scripture as the Day of the LORD. This day will commence during a time of Great Tribulation, that of Jacob's Trouble, after which Messiah will come and extinguish the darkness of the Tribulation, just as the sun when it rises extinguishes the darkness of night, as it vanquishes it with the brightness of its light. So, too will Messiah put an end to the time of Jacob's Trouble.

### **So, what day is the Biblical Sabbath and did God change it?**

What we must first note is that we find the first mention of the Sabbath within the seven days of creation. That it was the seventh day which God Himself blessed and sanctified as He set it apart from the other days of creation to be holy. Furthermore, that as it is part of creation it informs us that the Sabbath is a fixed day just as creation is fixed.

We must also understand that God created the Sabbath, the seventh day, as a period of rest for all of humanity, as Adam, kept it and would have taught his descendants to keep it, which Messiah states ... ***"The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath.*** (Mark 2:27) However, God gave it to His people Israel, along with His Feasts and His commandments to assist in them being set apart from the Gentiles, so that God's people could be set apart as holy unto the LORD, different from the gentile nations.

Exodus 31:12 –17 w

*And the LORD (YHVH) spoke to Moses, saying, <sup>13</sup> “Speak to the children of Israel saying, verily you will keep My Sabbaths for a sign between Me and you throughout your generations, so you will know that I AM the LORD (YHVH) Who sanctifies you. <sup>14</sup> Therefore you will keep the Sabbath, for it is holy to you: everyone who defiles it will be put to death. Whoever does any work, that soul will be cut off from among his people. <sup>15</sup> Six days may work be done, but on the seventh is a Sabbath of rest, holy to the LORD (YHVH): whoever does any work on the Sabbath, he will surely be put to death. <sup>16</sup> Therefore the children of Israel will keep the Sabbath, to observe the Sabbath throughout their generations for a perpetual covenant. <sup>17</sup> It is a sign between Me and the children on Israel forever, for in six days the LORD (YHVH) made heaven and earth and on the seventh day He rested and was refreshed.”* Here we see that it was to set them apart, that the Sabbath is a sign between God and Israel, His people. Furthermore, it is one of the main ten commandments which Exodus 20:8-10 states *“Remember the Sabbath, to keep it holy. 9 You will labor six days and do all your work. 10 but the seventh day is a Sabbath of the LORD your God, you will not do any work, you or your son or your daughter, your manservant or your maidservant or your cattle or your stranger who is within your gates. 11 For in six days, the LORD (YHVH) made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is in them and He rested the seventh day, therefore the LORD (YHVH) blessed the Sabbath and sanctified it.*

Have you ever asked yourself, why if as believers in Messiah do we not keep the biblical Sabbath, like the Jews if we worship the same God? Now you may say well we are under the New Covenant and not the old, that we are under grace and not the Law, which I would reply have you ever studied what it means to be in the New Covenant according to scripture, or what under grace means? We do not have time to answer them in this study, but we will answer them in future studies.

Know, you may be saying at this point, well I am not a Jew. Well, that may be true, but God gave the commandment and His Feasts to Israel, which the Jews are but one tribe. Furthermore, Paul writes in his letter to the Ephesians that when we accept Yeshua (Jesus) as the Messiah and give our lives to God, then we are grafted into the commonwealth of Israel and are thus no longer Gentiles, but citizens of Israel (Eph.2:11). Therefore, if you are part of Israel then this pertains to you.

## **In the Millennium**

Isaiah 66:22-23

*For as the new heavens and the new earth, which I will make, shall remain before me, saith the LORD, so shall your seed and your name remain. 23 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, saith the LORD.*

Zachariah 14:16-17

*And it shall come to pass, that every one that is left of all the nations which came against Jerusalem shall even go up from year to year to worship the King, the LORD of hosts, and to keep the feast of tabernacles. 17 And it shall be, that whoso will not come up of all the families of the earth unto Jerusalem to worship the King, the LORD of hosts, even upon them shall be no rain.*

Isaiah 56:6-7

*And foreigners who bind themselves to the LORD to minister to him, to love the name of the LORD, and to be his servants, all who keep the Sabbath without desecrating it and who hold fast to my covenant—7 these I will bring to my holy mountain and give them joy in my house of prayer. Their burnt offerings and sacrifices will be accepted on my altar; for my house will be called a house of prayer for all nations.”*

Ezekiel 45:17

***And it shall be the prince's part to give burnt offerings, and meat offerings, and drink offerings, in the feasts, and in the new moons, and in the sabbaths, in all solemnities of the house of Israel: he shall prepare the sin offering, and the meat offering, and the burnt offering, and the peace offerings, to make reconciliation for the house of Israel.***

The above passages are accepted by Bible scholars and theologians to be a reference to the Millennium period, which we see that during this time we observe the Biblical Sabbath and the Feasts. It even states that the foreigner, which is another word for a gentile who binds themselves to Israel, has been grafted in, who keeps my Sabbath and my covenant will be brought to my holy mountain. What we see in this passage from Isaiah is that the person who was formally a gentile, who was out of covenant, is now grafted into the covenant and keeps the Sabbath of God will be brought to Zion. The question is, if this is what God says then why are we not doing it, furthermore, what happens when we do not? Because it does not say those who do not keep my sabbath will come to my holy mountain. I will leave this to you to answer.

What is clear from the passages above is that the feasts of YHVH and the Biblical Sabbath are kept during the Millennium. Thus, we need to ask what do we follow, do we follow the doctrines of the church or of God? The churches teaching that God gave the Sabbath at creation and His Feasts to Israel. Then Messiah fulfilled them and did away with them and therefore we do not need to keep them. However, God reintroduces them again during the Millennium, which the church teaches that God does not change, that our yes is to be yes and our no to be no. Personally, it sounds like God is doubleminded and changes His mind, rather like a schizophrenic. I, however, would argue that God gave the Sabbath and His Feasts and never did away with them, for they teach us about Messiah, but at some point, the church has been deceived by the devil and thus changed the festivals, the Sabbath to make Christianity more appealing to people. Yes, Messiah has fulfilled parts of the Biblical Feast of God but fulfilling is different to doing away with them. Scripture informs us that to argue that Jesus sort to change the Sabbath, the Biblical Feast or the Torah is the testimony of a liar, a false witness and not what Jesus or the disciples taught or practices (Acts 6:13-15). God does not change and therefore, He has never sort for us to change His Sabbath or feasts, which I urge those who have never studied this to search for the truth within scripture, which if you have questions on this as you study please feel free to email us.

## **Historical**

Before we look at the historical accounts I need to preface it with the following.

When we look at the history of the church we need to understand that when we see the actions of the early church, particularly with regards to Constantine and the Roman Catholic Church. We need to understand that we are referring to historical events, which transpired sixteen hundred years ago. We further need to understand that within all denominations there are believers, which in future days all believers will have to come out of their specific denominations, for there are no denominations in the Kingdom of YHVH. Furthermore, within many evangelical circles, they believe that the whore of Babylon is the Roman Catholic Church, which they then use the scripture which states come out of her my people or you will share in her judgment (Rev.18:4). If this is the correct interpretation, which I do not ascribe to, then there are believers within that system. However, before I continue, let me outline a further point which will assist in us understanding what I am seeking to say. In last week's parsha (Exodus 32) we read about the sin of the golden calf, which if we understood Egyptian religious customs we would understand that Israel was worship YHVH at this time but through a pagan mediator. We also need to understand that all of Israel took part in this act, Aaron himself made the golden calf, yet he was not removed from office as the High Priest or killed, but why? It is because for most of the Israelites gathered were worshipping YHVH through a

belief system they had learned and witnessed while in Egypt. That you needed a lesser god to mediate for you before the one true God. Thus, when Moses, (who was a prince of Egypt, which in Egypt Pharaoh was a god, thus a prince would be a lesser god) did not come down from being with YHVH, they needed another mediator, which in their fear and despair they reverted back to what they knew and thus transgressed the covenant they had just made. However, we see that only three thousand died by the sword when the Levites went through the camp. Yet, why only three thousand when all Israel had transgressed the covenant and why not Aaron? It is because YHVH judges us by searching our hearts (Jer. 13:10; Psalms 7:9). You see for most of the Israelites, they had not committed spiritual adultery in their heart, but rather they worshiped YHVH through the pagan model they had learned in Egypt. However, three thousand of them had committed spiritual adultery, which was evident when Moses gave them the bitter waters to drink, which this would reveal the condition of their hearts and show if they had committed spiritual adultery. Thus, when the Levites went through the camp they put to death those whose bellies had swollen, and thighbone had become rotten.

So, what am I saying, I am saying just as the children of Israel worshipped YHVH through the familiar practices they learned in Egypt, which their fathers would have passed down to them. So, too are believers in God and followers of Messiah, they too are doing the same. All are guilty, regardless of whatever denomination we belong to or have come out of, we have been guilty of the sin of the golden calf. That of worshiping YHVH through pagan symbolism and customs. Thus, the whole body of Messiah and worshipers of YHVH must come out of the manmade religious systems and into the true worship of YHVH through allowing the Holy Spirit to lead them in the truth of the word of God.

This is the same for Judaism, which Judaism is not the faith of the disciples, nor that of Moses and the patriarchs. Judaism is the rabbinical interpretation, which I must add here that within both Judaism and Christianity (all denominations) there are many truths and many gems which assist us in our walk with God, but we need to show wisdom in what we apply. We need to put aside the teachings of men, the doctrines of our denominations if they contradict scripture, however, if they assist in bringing us closer to God and do not contradict His word, then we continue to apply them. Nevertheless, we must put aside any which go against scripture or are based within pagan practices, it is this we are called to come out of, the Babylonian world religious systems which are engrained within our faith and worship of YHVH. It is denominations which we will have to leave, for it is only when we do this will we have true unity. For we are not called to be members of a denomination, but rather as believers in Messiah we are grafted into the commonwealth of Israel and are therefore citizens of the Kingdom of YHVH, and therefore must adhere to His word and commands. For it is these which all will adhere to in the Kingdom to come, in the Millennium.

Therefore, as we look at the historical events which brought about the change in customs and practices pertaining to the Sabbath, let us not associate this event with believers, but with the historical system of its day. Remember, it is not membership of a denomination or attendance at a church, neither observing the commands of God which brings salvation, but rather faith in God, as we surrender our lives to Him and commit to walking on the path of righteousness, as we repent of our sins and confess them to God, so that He can forgive us. Faith in YHVH requires action from us and from God, from us to confess our sin, to accept His gift of salvation through faith and then for us to commit to following His commands and precepts. For Yah, it is forgiving us of our sins and bestowing His grace upon us to meet the shortfall when we fall short of living a life set apart unto Him. Therefore, let us not judge each other as James writes (James 4:11-12), although we can and should bring correction, which this is different from judging our brothers and sisters. So, in light of this, let us examine very briefly the history of the church.

## **Church historian Socrates Scholasticus in the 5<sup>th</sup> century**

“For although almost all churches throughout the world celebrate the sacred mysteries [of the Lord's Supper] on the Sabbath of every week, yet the Christians of Alexandria and at Rome, on account of some ancient tradition have ceased to do this”

**Socrates Scholasticus, Ecclesiastical History, Book 5, Ch. 22.**

Sozomen writes

“ the people of Constantinople and almost everyone, assemble together on Sabbath as well as on the first day of the week, which custom us never observed at Rome or at Alexandria.” Ecclesiastical History, Book 7, Ch. 19.

Synod of Antioch 341

Canon 1

Whosoever shall presume to set aside the decree of the holy and great Synod which was assembled at Nice in the presence of the pious Emperor Constantine, beloved of God, concerning the holy and salutary feast of Easter; if they shall obstinately persist in opposing what was [then] rightly ordained, let them be excommunicated and cast out of the Church; this is said concerning the laity. But if any one of those who preside in the Church, whether he be bishop, presbyter, or deacon, shall presume, after this decree, to exercise his own private judgment to the subversion of the people and to the disturbance of the churches, by observing Easter [at the same time] with the Jews, the holy Synod decrees that he shall thenceforth be an alien from the Church, as one who not only heaps sins upon himself but who is also the cause of destruction and subversion to many; and it deposes not only such persons themselves from their ministry but those also who after their deposition shall presume to communicate with them. And the deposed shall be deprived even of that external honour, of which the holy Canon and God's priesthood partake.

Synod of Laodicea 4<sup>th</sup> Century

Canon 29

Christians must not Judaize by resting on the Sabbath, but must work on that day, rather honoring 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.

Canon 37

It is not lawful to receive portions sent from the feasts of Jews or heretics, nor to feast together with them.

Canon 38

It is not lawful to receive unleavened bread from the Jews, nor to be partakers of their impiety.

Canon 39

It is not lawful to feast together with the heathen and to be partakers of their godlessness.

Canon 49

During Lent, the Bread must not be offered except on the Sabbath Day and on the Lord's Day only.

The Sabbath was changed as gentiles became believers and a move from a Hebraic understanding of scripture to that of a Greco Roman interpretation, which brought with it an anti-Semitic view and hatred of anything deemed to be Jewish. This hatred was brought about by many factors, but one cannot negate the reality of the venomous anti-Jewish influence which brought about a loss of truth and depth in our understanding of God's word. This assisted in the church ceasing to celebrate

Biblical Feasts and thus, incorporating pagan ideology/practices into Christianity, which was forbidden by God.

In the *Convert's Catechism of Catholic Doctrine*, we read

Q. Which is the Sabbath day?

**A. Saturday is the Sabbath day.**

Q. Why do we observe Sunday instead of Saturday?

**A. We observe Sunday instead of Saturday because the Catholic Church, in the Council of Laodicea, (AD 336) transferred the solemnity from Saturday to Sunday....**

Q. Why did the Catholic Church substitute Sunday for Saturday?

**A. The Church substituted Sunday for Saturday, because Christ rose from the dead on a Sunday, and the Holy Ghost descended upon the Apostles on a Sunday.**

Q. By what authority did the Church substitute Sunday for Saturday?

**A. The Church substituted Sunday for Saturday by the plenitude of that divine power which Jesus Christ bestowed upon her!**

—Rev. Peter Geiermann, C.S.S.R., (1946), p. 50.

In *Catholic Christian Instructed*,

Q. Has the [Catholic] church power to make any alterations in the commandments of God?

**A. ...Instead of the seventh day, and other festivals appointed by the old law, the church has prescribed the Sundays and holy days to be set apart for God's worship; and these we are now obliged to keep in consequence of God's commandment, instead of the ancient Sabbath.**

—The Catholic Christian Instructed in the Sacraments, Sacrifices, Ceremonies, and Observances of the Church By Way of Question and Answer, RT Rev. Dr. Challoner, p. 204.

In *A Doctrinal Catechism*,

Q. Have you any other way of proving that the Church has the power to institute festivals of precept?

**A. Had she not such power, she could not have done that in which all modern religionists agree with her. She could not have substituted the observance of Sunday the first day of the week, for the observance of Saturday the seventh day, a change for which there is no Scriptural authority.**

—Rev. Stephen Keenan, (1851), p. 174.

In the *Catechism of the Council of Trent*,

The Church of God has thought it well to transfer the celebration and observance of the Sabbath to Sunday!

—p 402, second revised edition (English), 1937. (First published in 1566)

In the *Augsburg Confession*,

They [the Catholics] allege the Sabbath changed into Sunday, the Lord's day, contrary to the Decalogue, as it appears; neither is there any example more boasted of than the changing of the Sabbath day. Great, they say, is the power and authority of the church, since it dispensed with one of the ten commandments.

—Art. 28.

What we see in the very brief overview of the changing of the Sabbath from the 7<sup>th</sup> day to the 1<sup>st</sup> day is that it was done by the church without any authority to do so. A lot of what I have quoted is Catholic sources, however, if we just attribute this act to the Roman Catholic church, then this would be a mistake, let me explain. Yes, the historical Roman Church changed the day of the Sabbath to the

1<sup>st</sup> day, but all Christian churches have accepted this. In fact, we have Anglican, Baptist, Methodist along with Pentecostal churches, to mention a few who continue to perpetuate and accept this change by continuing to celebrate the 1<sup>st</sup> day as the Sabbath. However, the reality is God has not changed the Sabbath, in fact, no scripture can be found to substantiate this change. The reality is most of Christendom have accepted the lies they have been taught from their forefathers. Personally, I do not believe the reformation went far enough, but when we look at reforming something, it is only reforming the established often broken or erroneous system. What is required is a restoration of all things, which it is this restoration process which YHVH bring about.

What we further need to understand is that YHVH has worked and continues to work within the Christian denominations of the church, regardless of its errors. That does not mean God accepts everything which is done, but rather He is working out His purposes in His people. What we need to also understand is that with each subsequent transition within the Body we are seeing a greater move towards a biblical faith. However, to think or even propagate that it has been achieved within the Hebrew Roots would be a mistake and wrong, but rather the Hebrew Roots movement is a part of the revelation of who God is and how we are to worship Him, which this is an integral aspect of the restoration process.

We further need to understand that the prophets repeatedly informed us that it was not because of Israel's holiness why YHVH would bring about His plan of restitution, but rather because of YHVH's Holy name, so that it would not be profaned any longer in the nations where Israel is. Therefore, if the church is part of Israel, which we are, then we need to understand that we have profaned the Name of YHVH in the nations, in the towns we live. You may say, how have we? Well, we have done so because we have not committed to following Torah, but rather accept the teachings of men and the doctrines of denominations over what God says in His word. Thus, just as I have said previously, we all will one day have to leave denominations, if we do not then we will partake in the judgment which will come on the whore of Babylon, which the church is part of, along with Israel the nation. I have said before the nation of Israel will be judged, one because of the sin it has committed, but also because it is has become an Idol for many Evangelical churches, who worship anything Jewish, which in doing so they negate to proclaim the Gospel to them or speak up when they are in error, to bring correction.

What we need to understand when scripture speaks about end times Babylon is that it has many facets, that of a global financial system, a global religious system, a global political system, why global? because the whole system of the antichrist affects the entire earth. This is why the people of God have to leave this system and why God leads His people who are watching and waiting into the wilderness, as He guides, teaches and provides for them during this time. If they stay then they will partake of the judgments coming upon her, that does not mean they have lost their salvation, but they may lose their lives.

### **What did the disciples do?**

***Acts 20:7 And upon the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul preached unto them, ready to depart on the morrow; and continued his speech until midnight.***

We see in the above text that Paul was preaching and broke bread on the first, which for Christians who know nothing of Jewish culture, this sounds like a church service with communion, which this is far from the truth. Part of the custom for keeping the Sabbath holy and setting it apart is to commemorate its start but also its end. Therefore, at the end of the Sabbath, it is customary for Jews to gather and thank God for His Sabbath and look forward to the next. During this service, you would break bread, have a meal and share fellowship, which the day commences when it is dark. So, the first day (Sunday) would commence when it becomes dark on the 7<sup>th</sup> (Saturday night).

Therefore, Paul started speaking when it became dark to commemorate the end of the Sabbath (Saturday night) until midnight. This is not a reference to them meeting on Sunday for worship, which the service went on until midnight.

Acts 15:20-21 infers that believers will go to the synagogue on Shabbat and here the word of God, that of the books of Moses being read. As it sets out what is expected of new converts and then states, Moses is read in all synagogues on the Sabbath, meaning they can go to Shull and learn the rest, as they take on the yoke of Messiah bit by bit.

Revelation 1:10 *I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day and heard behind me a great voice, as of a trumpet,*

This passage is often used to argue John was worshiping God on the Lord's day (Sunday) when the Holy Spirit came, however, I would propose that it is a reference to the fact that he was having a revelation of the LORD's day, that being the Day of the LORD, the tribulation, the time of Jacob's Trouble, rather than it being a Sunday.

### **So, how is one supposed to keep the Sabbath?**

It is not my intention to give an exhaustive study on this, but rather give an overview of a common-sense approach to the keeping of this Sabbath.

We see in scripture that the Jerusalem council sort for believers in Messiah to take on the yoke of following Messiah slowly, as they are disciplined, through a process of line upon line, precept upon precept. Thus, one is not expected to do everything at once, but we note that the Sabbath was the starting point, as it states Moses has those who teach him in every synagogue on the Sabbath, meaning that new believers will go to the synagogue on Shabbat and learn about God.

So, what to do? Many think they must keep it like the Jewish people do, which is not true, much of what a Jewish family does is tradition, yet the traditions assist them in observing the Sabbath and setting it aside as holy. One thing I would say is to make traditions within your own home, family so that the Sabbath becomes personal to you, although ensuring that you keep the biblical requirements.

So, the Sabbath commences from the evening on the 6<sup>th</sup> day (Friday) through till evening on the 7<sup>th</sup> day (Saturday). That no work is permitted, unless it is work which saves or maintains life, that being health and social care, police, fire brigade, Forces, even those who work during a disaster or state of emergency to re-establish electricity and gas could be seen as life-sustaining.

It is about setting the day aside as holy unto the LORD (YHVH), that we focus on Him and our family, it is a time of rest. Furthermore, the week should focus on the Sabbath as the Sabbath should be our focus, that of spending time with God and resting. We should, therefore, prepare for it, get provisions in prior to Shabbat and then relax. In our home, we do not do any cleaning or tidying up, unless necessary, but we relax and spend time as a family, and with God. Whoever is cooking the Shabbat Friday meal, will prepare it and spend time setting things out, as with all meals it is part of our worship to God. Therefore, every part of the process is an offering of worship to God and a love offering to the family. We usually commence Shabbat with dips and tortillas, which is one of our traditions. We then during the evening light the candles, the number of candles doesn't matter, we then have bread and wine, we say the blessings and then have a meal.

On Saturday morning I usually make a late breakfast for everyone, which often includes pancakes, (one of our traditions) along with a hearty breakfast, which sets us up for the day. After breakfast, we study the Torah portion and then spend time as a family relaxing. In the evening we have a meal, to close the Shabbat as we thank God for the rest and look forward to next Shabbat.

One of the customs within the Jewish community which I love is that no one spends Shabbat on their own, as the community opens up their homes for others to share it with them. One of my friends, a young single Jewish man, always gets invited to one of the families for Shabbat after the Friday evening service. It is usually a family who have a single daughter they are trying to match him with. It is a bit like the scene out of my big fat Greek wedding when the father is trying to matchmake his daughter, so she will not marry a non-Greek. The reality is, within a Jewish community no one spends Shabbat on their own.

The above brief overview on how to keep Shabbat is given to assist you, but I encourage you to start by just setting it aside as a day holy unto the LORD, which as you do seek God on what to do and study scripture. Remember tradition is ok if it brings you closer to God, but if it hinders or contradicts scripture then stop doing it.

### **Giving for the work of the LORD**

Exodus 35:4 – 10

***And Moses spoke to the whole congregation of the children of Israel saying, “This is the thing the LORD (YHVH) commanded saying, <sup>5</sup> Take from among you an offering to the LORD (YHVH). Whoever is of a willing heart, let him bring it, an offering for the LORD (YHVH); gold, silver, bronze, <sup>6</sup> blue, purple, scarlet, fine linen, goats’ hair, <sup>7</sup> rams’ skins dyed red, badgers’ skins, acacia, <sup>8</sup> oil for the light, spices for anointing oil, for the sweet incense, <sup>9</sup> onyx stones, and stones to be set for the ephod and for the breastplate. <sup>10</sup> And every wise-hearted among you will come and make all that the LORD has commanded;***

We read in the above passage how the LORD instructed the people through Moses to bring an offering for the purpose of making the Tabernacle, a dwelling for YHVH. That those who have a willing heart to give are to give unto the LORD whatever they have which is needed for the building of a sanctuary so that YHVH can dwell amongst His people. What is crucial is that God sort to dwell with His people and that He sort to partner with them to do this.

Exodus 35:20-22; 29

***<sup>20</sup> And the entire congregation of the children of Israel left from the presence of Moses. <sup>21</sup> And they came, each one whose heart stirred him up and each one whose spirit made him willing, and they brought the LORD’s offering for the work of the Tent of Meeting, for all its service, and for the holy garments. <sup>22</sup> And they came, both men and women, as many as were willing hearted, bringing bracelets, earrings, rings, and beads, all jewels of gold: each person who offered an offering of gold to the LORD.***

***<sup>29</sup> The children of Israel brought a willing offering to the LORD, every man, and women whose heart made them willing to bring for all manner of work, which the LORD had commanded to be made by the hand of Moses.***

We then see how the entire congregation departed once Moses had informed them what the LORD desires from them, and they thus returned with their freewill offering due that their hearts had been stirred and the spirit within was willing to give as the LORD desired.

***36:5- 7 and they spoke to Moses saying, “The people are bringing much more than enough for the service of the work, which the LORD commanded to make” <sup>6</sup> Then Moses gave a command, and they caused it to be proclaimed throughout the camp saying, “Let neither man nor women make***

***any more work for the offering of the Sanctuary.” So the people were restrained from bringing. <sup>7</sup> For the stuff they had was sufficient for all the work to make it, even too much.***

We then see that they gave so much that Moses had to instruct them to stop giving because they had been stirred, as their hearts had been willing to give towards the work of the LORD that much that they had everything and more.

Can you imagine a minister standing before his congregation and saying we will not be taking up any further offerings for the foreseeable future due to that we have more than enough for the work of the LORD? How the hearts of the people must have been moved and started to give. Within today's church, we have a move referred to as the prosperity gospel which encourages people to give to receive a blessing. Yet, we must understand that whenever we give to the LORD we are blessed, but the reasoning behind our giving should not be to get a blessing, it should be to bless the LORD and to thank Him for what He has done for us. As I have stated before, everything we have is what God has given us, which has believers who have given everything to Him. All we have is His anyway and should be used for His glory and Kingdom purposes.

Psychologists today understand that when someone gives and invests into something they are more likely to remain steadfast, committed and will look after it due to that they have invested resources, be it time or money and thus take ownership of it. It is the same when we buy something or receive something for nothing. If I buy a coat for instance for £200 then I am more likely to look after it because of the cost. However, if that same coat was given to me and I did not know the value, then I am less likely to care for it, because of the value placed upon it. I do not know about you, but I often have to remind my children to turn lights off, to not use as much hot water, or to not put clothes out to wash which do not need washing, because of the cost incurred in doing these things. Yet, the reality is they do not understand what I or my wife say as they do not have to pay the bills. I remember when I moved out from my parents and had to pay the bills, it was a big culture shock, one which I will never forget.

Why have I mentioned this? Often within the body of Messiah, we do not invest in the things of God, especially if we have come out of the prosperity gospel phenomena, yet the reality is God gives us what we have so that we can use it for His glory, for the proclamation of the Gospel of the Kingdom. You see the price of an item is worth, is in how much someone will pay for it. The reality is we have been purchased/redeemed by the King of King's ransom and thus are worth so much. In fact, that worth is not just what we are worth, but all of humanity. Therefore, out of what we have been blessed with, we should give so that others can hear and know the truth, the Good News of the Gospel of the Kingdom. Friends, what I am trying to say is this, whatever God has blessed us with, we should give back to God to use to build His living temple, that of the Body of Messiah so that others can hear and receive salvation.

I do not know about you, but I want to ensure that everything God has blessed and given me with, is used for His glory and His Kingdom, especially in the days ahead, as days are getting short. I do not want to waste what gifts and resources God has given me on my own desires, but rather on serving God and seeing others saved.

God could have provided everything Moses needed, He could have given everything and just asked Moses to build it, but God understood the need for people to give and invest in His dwelling. As God has always sort to work with humanity to bring about His purposes for in doing so people will remain steadfast and focused. It is like this, the more the church waters down the Gospel the more we get flaky believers, who seek a watered-down faith. However, when the fullness of the Gospel is preached without being watered down, then you get committed followers, willing to sacrifice everything for God. This is because it's part of our DNA, we see this in other faiths, who have strict

ethical and religious rules, like that of Islam or the JW's, which we as a body of believers could learn something from them. That of being fervent in our endeavors to see people living a biblical lifestyle, to come into a relationship with God. Being a follower of Messiah is not easy, nor is it for the fainthearted, but rather for those who do not want to go along with the status quo within society, but rather stand up for truth and the things of God.

As believers, we are called to live a life set apart holy unto the LORD, which as we do we will be a peculiar people, someone who stands out from the crowd as being different. This is one of the reasons God gave us commandments, and Sabbaths, that as believers we would be set apart, different from the gentile nations. The question is, will we do what the LORD seeks, desires and commands or will we conform to the things of this world, so not to cause offense? Will we give everything we are and have for the glory of God or will we seek to give the minimum? With regards to keeping the Sabbath, for those who do not observe it, I would encourage you to seek to do so, and see what happens. It is a blessing to keep this holy day unto the LORD, what I would caution is do not become religious in your observance, as that is not what the LORD wants. Rather observe it as a day to relax, spend time with the LORD and family. Let the week prior to Shabbat be centered around preparing for the Sabbath, as you get ready to meet with the LORD. Let us continue to seek to be a people who sacrifice our all for God, and give Him everything as we commit to living a biblical lifestyle regardless of the cost.

May YHVH bless you this Sabbath

Shabbat Shalom

Nathan

## Reference

Midrash: In Judaism, the **Midrash** is the genre of rabbinic literature which contains early interpretations and commentaries on the Written Torah and Oral Torah (spoken law and sermons), as well as non-legalistic rabbinic literature (*Aggadah*) and occasionally the Jewish religious laws (*halakha*), which usually form a running commentary on specific passages in the Hebrew Scripture (*Tanakh*)

Targum: **Targum Onkelos** (or **Onqelos**), is the official eastern (Babylonian) Targum (Aramaic translation) to the Torah. However, its early origins may have been western, in Israel. Its authorship is attributed to Onkelos, a famous convert to Judaism in Tannaic times (c. 35–120 CE)

Targum Jonathan: **Targum Jonathan**), otherwise referred to as **Targum Yonasan/Yonatan**, is the official eastern (Babylonian) Targum to the Nevi'im/Prophets. Its early origins, however, are western (i.e. from

the Land of Israel), and the Talmudic tradition attributes its authorship to Jonathan ben Uzziel of Jerusalem in the time of King Herod

Tannaim: Tannaim were the Rabbinic sages whose views are recorded in the Mishnah, from approximately 10-220 CE. The period of the Tannaim, also referred to as the Mishnaic period, lasted about 210 years.

Talmud: The **Talmud** means "instruction, learning", "teach, study") is a central text of Rabbinic Judaism. The term "Talmud" normally refers to the collection of writings named specifically the **Babylonian Talmud** (*Talmud Bavli*), although there is also an earlier collection known as the Jerusalem Talmud (*Talmud Yerushalmi*) or Palestinian

Jubilees: The Book of Jubilees claims to present "the history of the division of the days of the Law, of the events of the years, the year-weeks, and the jubilees of the world" as revealed to Moses (in addition to the Torah or "Instruction") by angels while he was on Mount Sinai for forty days and forty nights. The chronology given in Jubilees is based on multiples of seven; the jubilees are periods of 49 years, seven "year-weeks", into which all of time has been divided

Vulgate: This is the Latin Bible. Translated from the Hebrew and Aramaic by Jerome between 382 and 405 CE, this text became known as the 'versio vulgata', which means 'common translation'.