

## **THE BIBLE, the CHRISTIAN, and the SABBATH Day: Toward a Proper Biblical View**

### **A. The Jewish Sabbath in Jesus' Day**

1. The Rise of Rabbinic Judaism (Rabbi Telushkin) –
2. The “Oral Law” (“a hedge about the ‘Mosaic Law’) –
3. The Jewish “Mishna” –

### **B. The Biblical Origin of the Sabbath –**

*Gen. 2:2-3; (v.2) “... and [God] rested on the 7<sup>th</sup> day from all His work that He had done. (3) So God blessed the seventh day and made it holy (i.e., ‘set apart to God’), because on it God rested from all His work that He created and made.”*

### **C. The Sabbath and God’s Covenant with Israel –**

*Exodus 20:8-11; (v.8) “Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. (9) Six days you shall labor, and do all your work, (10) but the seventh day is a Sabbath to the LORD your God. On it you shall not do any work, you, or your son, or your daughter, your male servant, or your female servant, or your livestock, or the sojourner who is within your gates. (11) For in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is in them, and rested on the seventh day. Therefore the LORD blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy.”*

- Ex. 16:4-5, 22-30 – What? The ordinary work of food preparation was not to be done.
- Ex. 35:3 – the kindling of a fire on the Sabbath was forbidden.
- Ex. 31:14 – the penalty for profaning the Sabbath by doing any work was death.
- Num. 15:32-36 – a man that gathered sticks on the Sabbath was stoned to death.
- Leviticus 23:3 – the Sabbath is described as a “holy convocation” (or, *assembly*)
- HOWEVER, the Sabbath was not a day of total INACTIVITY ...
- Lev. 24:8 - Priests carried on their duties; the bread of the presence was set out.
- Num. 28:9,10 – A special sacrifice was offered in addition to the daily offerings.

- Lev 12:3 (John 7:22) – circumcision on the eighth day was still practiced.
- 2 Kings 4:23 – Shunammite’s husband says, “Why will you go to him (Elisha) today? It is neither new moon nor Sabbath.” (1<sup>st</sup> ref. to Sabbath in Historical bks)
- For Israelites, the Sabbath was a day of welcome rest from labor and of gathering for holy purposes, most often at the sanctuary of God. (ZPEB, vol. 5, p.184)
- The Prophets denounced Israel’s hypocritical worship on the Sabbath. (Isa. 1:10-17; Jer. 17:**19-27**; others, Ezek. 22:8; Amos 8:1-5; Hosea 2:11)
- During Israel’s 70 years of exile under God’s judgment in Babylon, the Sabbath rose in importance since it was independent of the Temple, now destroyed. (ZPEB, vol. 5, p.185)
- Nehemiah 13:**15-22** – God used Nehemiah’s leadership to restore the Sabbath as a day set aside (holy) to the LORD, and the commands of God concerning it.

#### D. The Sabbath in the Inter-Testamental period (i.e., 400 years between the OT and NT)

“In the years following the reforms of Nehemiah and Ezra, their successors – the scribes – developed an elaborate code of regulations and restrictions governing Sabbath observance [Note: the “Oral Law”]. These were intended to safeguard and preserve the spirit of the Sabbath, just as the shell protects the kernel. They were an attempt to “hedge in” the law so that its proper observance would be guaranteed.” (ZPEB, vol.5, p.185)

Thus, the rise of the “Oral Law” in Israel. It was these regulations that dominated the religious life of Israel and that put Jewish people in bondage and covered them with a shroud of deep darkness. The advent of Jesus brought them desperately needed light!

One of the outstanding features of these 400 silent years was the rise of the synagogue; for the synagogue became the center of religious life in Judaism.

#### E. The Sabbath and Jesus Christ: “the Lord of the Sabbath”

By the time of Jesus, the true meaning of the Sabbath had been obscured by the mountainous restrictions placed on its observance.

On 6 separate occasions Jesus confronted Jewish false teaching regarding Sabbath.

#### F. The Sabbath and the Christian’s Life Under the NEW Covenant – 2 Cor. 3:5-6; Heb. 8:1-13; Col. 2:16-19; 1 Cor. 11:25; Gal. 2:11-14.