**The Sabbath**

First Friday; July 2019

I recognize that what we have begun to embrace as a community of faith is not only foreign to many, but you may have grown up in a church that taught these things have passed away, are no longer relevant, or even forbidden for New Testament Christians. So, let’s start at the beginning and simply see what the Scriptures have to say about the Sabbath. I want to speak about the meta-narrative, the over-arching sweep of Scripture with regards to Restoration as in Acts 1 and 3; not a revival as in resuscitating something dead or dying, and not re-forming something into a new image, but a real RESTORATION (Shuv) as in: “to return *something* alive to it’s original place, position or purpose, and to return *someone* to their originally intended place, position and purpose.” The prophetic thrust of the Word of God, seems to me to be pressing forward towards a former time when men walked with YHVH in a garden in the cool of the day; and it seems to me that this is where we are headed as a people of God whether we perceive it…or even understand it…from Eden to Eden, as Yeshua taught us to pray…”Your Kingdom come, and Your will be done **ON EARTH AS IT IS IN HEAVEN.”**

One of the great take-aways from the encounter pastor Stovall had the first night of Passover 2018 was that while we were celebrating the Passover here in Jacksonville, heaven was celebrating the same Passover with Jesus in heaven! So, the question arises, does heaven continue to worship YHVH during the MOEDIM, the Lord’s appointed times today and through eternity even as He commanded Israel to do so many centuries ago (and the early Ecclesia most certainly did).

Some 40 or so years ago, Derek Prince wrote a book titled, “The Parallel Restoration of the Church and Israel.” I believe this word is just now coming to a fullness of expression and perception where the rest of the world can plainly see what he was speaking about by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. So let’s take a closer look at the Sabbath, perhaps even through the eyes of Yeshua, the Lord of the Sabbath, and see what is here for us to understand today.

I want to consider the Shabbat in three dimensions as**; Declaration, Demonstration, and Activation.** What do I mean by this? I see the Word of God as the Declaration of the Kingdom, our Loyalty as the Demonstration of the Kingdom, and the Covenant as the Activation of the Kingdom (on earth as it is in heaven!).

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**DECLARATION**

1. **Gen. 2:1,2;** “By the seventh day God had finished the work he had been doing; so on the seventh day he rested (ceased) from all his work. And God blessed the seventh day and made it holy (other, separate) because on it he rested (ceased) from all the work of creating that he had done.”
2. **Lev. 23:1-3;** “The Lord said to Moses, “Speak to the Israelites and say to them: ‘These are my appointed feasts, the appointed feasts of the Lord, which you are to proclaim as sacred assemblies. “ ‘There are six days when you may work, but the seventh day is a Sabbath of rest, a day of sacred assembly. You are not to do any work; wherever you live, it is a Sabbath to the Lord.’ “
3. **Ex.** **20:8,11; “**Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy…Therefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy.” (The name of YHVH is holy, the Sabbath is holy, and WE are holy…because He has given us His family name, the same Holy Spirit that raised Jesus from the dead lives in us, and YHVH says we are a Holy Nation! Ex.19:5,6; 1Pet.2:9,10)
4. **Isaiah 66:22,23;** “As the new heavens and the new earth that I make will endure before me,” declares the Lord, (this is after the 1,000 year Millenial reign of Jesus on the earth!) “so will your name and descendants endure. From one New Moon to another and from one Sabbath to another, all mankind will come and bow down before me,” says the Lord.
5. **Isaiah 58:13,14;** “If you keep your feet from breaking the Sabbath and from doing as you please on MY holy day, If you call the Sabbath a delight and the Lord’s holy day honorable, and if you honor it by not going your own way and not doing as you please or speaking idle words, then you will find your joy in the Lord, and I will cause you to ride on the heights of the Land and to feast on the inheritance of your father Jacob.” The mouth of the Lord has spoken. (Do you remember that many of the healing miracles recorded for us in the Gospels were performed on the Sabbath? This was not done simply to tick off the religious leaders, but to display the fact that the Sabbath was especially to be a day of freedom in His presence, and not bondage to the rules and regulations of men thinking they were pleasing God by placing yokes of responsibility on the necks of God’s family!)

**DEMONSTRATION**

Now let’s talk about our loyalty as the **Demonstration of the Kingdom**. How do we demonstrate our loyalty to Jesus by celebrating the Shabbat? In John 5:19 Yeshua said that He could only do what He saw the Father doing. In John 8:31, and John 14:15 Jesus says the same to the disciples; “if you love me you will keep my commandments, you will do what you see me do.” And the Word says to ‘Remember the Sabbath and keep it holy, separate, other.’ So how do we do this in demonstration?

First, we sanctify the space by lighting the sabbath candles. Many things are used to sanctify or set apart: fire, water, words, oil, prayer, laying on of hands, blood, an altar. For the Sabbath we light the candles with fire and set apart our homes, our table, and our family as holy to the Lord, and invite God’s presence. How about this? ALL these elements for sanctifying are a part of the Sabbath remembrance!

Next we pray for our wives, our children and our guests and carry them to the Lord in prayer. Some might sing songs of praise here like “Shabbat Shalom” or “Praise Adonai”.

**ACTIVATION**

Now we come to the **Activation of the Kingdom.** We said earlier that the **Covenant is the activation of the Kingdom.** As we partake of the Kiddish, Communion, the bread and the wine, the Body and Blood of the King, we are entering into a blood covenant with the King of the Universe, the King of the Jews, the Lord of all lords, and the Son of God. Jesus said that unless we drink His blood and eat His flesh we would have no life in us (John 6:53). He also said that apart from Him we could do no good thing (John 15:5; Ps.16:2). The table is where all this comes together, we make a covenant of family together with Jesus, we confess loyalty to Him, and He empowers us to be sons and daughters by the power of the indwelling of the Holy Spirit.

Is it possible that the Sabbath was always intended to be the great Family covenant stop-gap against a culture that continuously tries to tear the family apart, pitting fathers and mothers against sons and daughters and vice versa? Doesn’t the last words of the TENACH, the Old testament say that in the last days YHVH will turn the hearts of the fathers to the children and the hearts of the children to the fathers? What is one of the greatest attributes of the Jewish community that is admired by the world? Is it not the sense of family, the honoring of the elders and the caring for each generation without the need for outside help? Is it possible that the Sabbath table is an appointed time where families welcome the presence of God into their homes, set themselves and their families apart as ‘holy unto the Lord’, honor and pray for one another, and thank God for His lovingkindness, His provision, and a day to Restore, refresh, and cease from our labors? Is this possible?

So let’s once again cut covenant with our King and Lord, Yeshua/Jesus the Messiah by receiving His body and blood, with all the promises and benefits of being sons and daughters of the Kingdom.