

He Did God's Ways, Sought God's Pleasure, and Spoke God's Words

A Consideration of Some of the Things Our Lord Did and Said on the Sabbath Days

Some background regarding the Sabbath

Deuteronomy 8:1-3:

Verse 3 teaches us that the Lord God fed the children of Israel with manna so that He might make them know "that man doth not live by bread only, but by every *word* that proceedeth out of the mouth of the LORD doth man live."

Exodus 16:11-30:

In this record God instituted the Sabbath for the children of Israel.

In verse 23 God called it "the rest of the holy sabbath unto the LORD."

In verse 29 it says, "the LORD hath given you the Sabbath."

The Hebrew word that is translated "given" in verse 29 is *nathan* a verb that is used frequently in the Old Testament and translated in various ways. It may be translated "hath given" as it is here in the Authorized King James Version or may be translated "hath made."

God provided the children of Israel with manna every day of the week, but on the sixth day they were told to collect and prepare twice as much so that they could rest on the seventh day, which God called the rest of the holy Sabbath unto the LORD.

Deuteronomy 5:12-15:

The people of Israel were to sanctify or set apart the Sabbath.

They were to labor and do all their work in six days, but the seventh day was to be the Sabbath of the Lord their God.

They were to remember their deliverance from Egypt.

Exodus 31:13:

The Sabbath was to be a sign between God and Israel so that they would know that God was the Lord that sanctified them or set them apart.

Jesus reading from Isaiah on a Sabbath

Luke 4:16-21:

This incident occurred on a Sabbath day.

Jesus read from Isaiah 61:1-2.

Jesus was able to find the exact place in the scroll (without the help of chapter and verse markings).

Isaiah 61:1-2:

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Jesus stopped reading in the middle of a sentence. He did not read the last part of the sentence that says, "and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all that mourn."

The reason for this abrupt stop in reading is given to us in Luke 4:21, which explains that what Jesus cited from Isaiah was being fulfilled that day. The part of Isaiah which says, "and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all that mourn," is still future.

More background regarding the Sabbath

Isaiah 58:1-14:

This chapter relates to things Jesus Christ was appointed to do that we read about in Isaiah 61 and Luke 4. The first part of the chapter deals with fasting and the end of the chapter deals with keeping the Sabbath.

Verse 13 says, "If thou turn away thy foot from the sabbath, *from* doing thy pleasure on my holy day." In other words, if they would change their direction; if they would walk in the right direction, that is, if they would walk away from doing their own pleasure and instead would call the Sabbath "a delight" and "honorable;" if they would honor the Sabbath by not doing their own ways, by not finding, or seeking, their own pleasure, and by not speaking their own words, then they would delight themselves in the Lord, and receive the blessings spoken of in verse 14.

Isaiah 56:1-2:

God said, "Keep ye judgment, and do justice." Then He said, "Blessed *is* the man *that* doeth this [keeps judgment and does justice], and the son of man *that* layeth hold on it [judgment and justice]," by keeping the Sabbath from polluting it, and keeping himself from doing any evil.

More of what Jesus did and said on the Sabbath days

John 5:1-18:

From what we have read from Isaiah 56 and 58 we know that Jesus was not breaking the Sabbath. Jesus was not doing his own ways, his own pleasure, and speaking his own words. To the contrary, Jesus said, "My Father worketh hitherto, and I work."

Jesus Christ was making the Sabbath a delight and honorable by doing things God's way.

Matthew 12:1-8: [There are parallel accounts of this record in Mark 2:23-28 and Luke 6:1-5.]

The incident regarding David and the showbread is recorded in I Samuel 21:1-6, and the statutes regarding the showbread are recorded in Leviticus 24:5-9. From those records it appears that David did in fact break a statute regarding the showbread. However, we should recognize that David was serving God and was in need. He was never reproved or held liable for this incident in the Scriptures.

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The priests that served in the Temple did more work on the Sabbath days than on the other days of the week, but they were considered to be innocent because they were serving God.

Jesus declared, "in this place is *one* greater than the temple."

In verse 7 Jesus cited from Hosea 6:6 which says, "For I desired mercy, and not sacrifice; and the knowledge of God more than burnt offerings." God desire was for them to have mercy, and the knowledge of God.

In verse 8 Jesus declared, "the Son of man is Lord even of the sabbath day."

Mark 2:27-28: [These verses are at the end of the record in Mark that parallels the record that we just read from Matthew 12:1-8].

The record in Mark records an additional statement made by Jesus Christ, namely, "The sabbath was made for man, and not man for the sabbath."

Exodus 16:29 says, "See, for that the LORD hath given [or made] you the sabbath."

Mark 3:1-6: [There are parallel accounts of this record in Matthew 12:9-14 and Luke 6:6-11.]

Jesus asked, "Is it lawful to do good on the sabbath days, or to do evil? to save life, or to kill?" We know from Isaiah 58 and 56 that it was not only lawful or permitted to do good on the Sabbath days, but it was expected.

John 7:14-24:

Earlier we read a record from John 5 in which Jesus healed a man who had an infirmity for 38 years. That event took place in Jerusalem. Following that event Jesus returned to Galilee where the other events that we have been reading about took place. Here in John 7 Jesus was again in Jerusalem for a feast and he spoke of his prior time in Jerusalem when they had sought to kill him because he had supposedly broken the Sabbath, and he had said that God was his Father.

Jesus said as recorded in verses 16-18, "My doctrine is not mine, but his that sent me. If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or *whether* I speak of myself. He that speaketh of himself seeketh his own glory: but he that seeketh his glory that sent him, the same is true, and no unrighteousness is in him."

In verse 22-23 Jesus gives an example of work that the Judeans would do on the Sabbath. If circumcising a child on the eighth day were to coincide with a Sabbath day, then they would still circumcise the child on the Sabbath day.

In verse 24 Jesus told them to "Judge not according to the appearance, but judge righteous judgment," which would be in keeping with what we read about in Isaiah 56:1-2.

Luke 13:10-17:

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Jesus was doing God's ways, seeking God's pleasure, and speaking God's words. He was fulfilling God's true intentions regarding the Sabbath.

The word Sabbath in the Church Epistles

On the day of Pentecost recorded in Acts 2 people received the long awaited promise of holy spirit. They were clothed with power from on high. And that day began a new administration, the administration of the grace of God, the administration of the mystery. People who received spirit are no longer under the law of Moses. Romans 7:6 tells us, "But now we are delivered from the law, that being dead wherein we were held; that we should serve in newness of spirit, and not *in* the oldness of the letter."

We in the Church of God, the body of Christ, have been delivered from the law. We can now serve in newness of the spirit and not the oldness of the law. We are not told to observe the Sabbath in our administration of the grace of God. As a matter of fact, the word Sabbath only occurs one time in the Church Epistles.

Colossians 2:16:

This is the only place that the word Sabbath is used in the Church Epistles.

Colossians 2:1-3:17:

We in the body of Christ should not be beguiled with enticing words, but we should walk in Christ.

We should not be spoiled through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, rather we should walk in Christ.

We should not allow ourselves to be judged with regard to food, drink, holy days, new moons, or Sabbath days, which are a shadow of things to come, but the body is of Christ, and we should walk in him.

We should not allow ourselves to be beguiled by other things that might intrude upon or pollute our walk in Christ, but we should hold the head, which is Christ.

We ought to seek those things that are above, where Christ sits on the right side of God. This would be in keeping with seeking God's pleasure.

We should set our affection on things above, not on things on the earth. We too should do God's ways and seek God's pleasure every day.

We should let the word of Christ dwell in us richly.

We should teach and admonish one another every day. This would be in keeping with speaking God's words.

And whatsoever we do in word or deed, do all of it in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him.