

Shabbat
SABBATH

GOD'S HOLY SABBATHS AND FEASTS TEACH GOD'S PLAN OF
SALVATION FOR ALL MANKIND

Paul took the time to teach the gentile converts of the Church of God at Colosse about God's Holy Days. He then told them to let "*No One*" judge them regarding their keeping of God's Holy Sabbaths, His Holy Feasts or the new moons (Col 2:16). Paul went on to explain why... it was because God's festivals, new moons and Sabbaths were made in the image of the Son of God – like an image or shadow that is cast by His Body. Please understand the clear words of Paul in this regard:

Col 2:16 So let no one judge you in food or in drink, or regarding a festival or a new moon or Sabbaths, 17 which are a shadow of things to come, but the substance (body KJV) is of Christ.

The apostle Paul likened God's festivals, new moons and Sabbaths to an image or shadow that is cast from the Body of our Messiah as picturing God's plan of salvation and our inspiring future in the Kingdom of God! What a meaningful and beautiful truth. Let's explore this enlightenment briefly in summary before our deeper rewarding journey into Pentecost – God's festival celebrating the firstfruits of His people.

How is the Sabbath a reflection of the Body of our LORD? To begin with, the Sabbath is something that the Father Himself has kept from creation (Gen 2:3). It was also the first of God's listed Feasts (Lev 23:1-3). All God's children are to emulate the Father, for His pattern and Words are life (Matt 4:4)! The Sabbath is the Holy Rest Day established by the God of creation. Each god seems to have his day. For many it is the ancient day of the sun or Sunday – the 1st day of the week. For others it is Friday – the 5th day of the week. For others, it is another day. But the Creator God Himself rested, and His people rest, on the 7th day. Indeed God has established the Sabbath as an IDENTIFYING SIGN to show man who the true Creator God is – as well as to identify God's called and faithful people (Ex 31:13-17, Ezek 20:12, 20). But much more than that – God's weekly Sabbath *makes us free*. It is a day of freedom wherein all people who keep it are equally free. Consider God's Words in His 4th Commandment:

Deut 5:12 – 'Observe the Sabbath day, to keep it holy, as the LORD your God commanded you. 13 Six days you shall labor and do all your work, 14 but the seventh day is the Sabbath of the LORD your God. In it you shall do no work: you, nor your son, nor your daughter, nor your male servant, nor your female servant, nor your ox, nor your donkey, nor any of your cattle, nor your stranger who is within your gates, that your male servant and your female servant may rest as well as you. 15 And remember that you were a slave in the land of Egypt, and the LORD your God brought you out from there by a mighty hand and by an outstretched arm; therefore, the LORD your God commanded you to keep the Sabbath day. (emphasis mine)

In verse 15 God enjoins the Sabbath with freedom from slavery. Consider... the Israelite people were slaves and had to work seven days a week! God' commanded His people that the Sabbath was to be day of rest to commemorate FREEDOM! This is because, God at creation, had made man free from religious or other oppression, as man had not yet disbelieved God in favor of believing Satan in the Garden of Eden (Gen 3). Satan, through deceptively obscuring God's love and truth, leads us to disbelieve and disobey God – bringing us only religious and moral oppression based upon lies and by appealing to our vanity. But the Sabbath is a sign typifying the coming freedom from Satan and from worldly oppression as we celebrate our reunion with God in God's millennial land of rest (Heb 4:1-11). Further, the Sabbath continues to teach us equality and freedom in our societies today. On the Sabbath, both the master (or employer) and the servant (or employee) are BOTH EQUALLY FREE from the burdens of labor and business, and both are equally free to learn and worship the true God on His sanctified day of rest. On this day the master could not require his servants to till his land, pick his crops, work in his factories, stores or restaurants, or to serve the master in his home – nor were God's elect to frequent businesses (restaurants, grocery stores or any business) on the Sabbath (Neh 10:31, 13:15-17). On this day, both master and servant are equally blessed with rest. Normally a servant was forced to perform the will of the master seven days a week, but this changed with the Sabbath! On the Sabbath all men are equally free to rest and learn of God. The poor are to rest as well as the wealthy. The Sabbath is a type of the coming Kingdom of God – an image or reflection of the Body of Christ – because it points to and teaches us of the coming FREEDOM in God's coming Kingdom.

These are only some of the many reasons why the New Testament Church continued to cease from buying, selling, and working on the Sabbath. Notice that Jesus' custom was to keep the Sabbath and to use it as a time to teach the ways of God (Mark 6:2, Luke 4:16-31). Therefore all the apostles and the Church Jesus established (including Paul and the gentile converts) kept the Sabbath rest and assembled to learn of God on the seventh day (Acts 13:14, 42-44, Acts 16:13, Acts 18:4). Even when Jesus was falsely accused of breaking the Sabbath by healing the sick woman and freeing her from the bonds of Satan on the Day of Rest, this event also pointed to the Sabbath as being a day of freedom. Notice how Jesus beautifully pictures the Sabbath as the appropriate day for being loosed from bondage to enter God's true rest:

Luke 13:15 – The Lord then answered him and said, "Hypocrite! Does not each one of you on the Sabbath loose his ox or donkey from the stall, and lead it away to water it? 16 So ought not this woman, being a daughter of Abraham, whom Satan has bound — think of it — for eighteen years, be loosed from this bond on the Sabbath?" 17 And when He said these things, all His adversaries were put to shame; and all the multitude rejoiced for all the glorious things that were done by Him. (emphasis mine throughout)

This is why Paul said, “*There remains therefore a Sabbath rest for the people of God*” (Heb 4:9) NASB. Indeed, Christ proclaimed Himself “Lord of the Sabbath (Mark 2:28)! May all mankind soon learn that the Father's practices and commands are truly given to us in wisdom and in love!