

A Gift from God

Are you aware that God has given you a wonderful gift to be cherished? Many people, including Christians are not. This gift is the Sabbath.

Jesus said, “the Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath.” (Mark 2:27) The gift was designed and established during the days of creation. After the 6th day of creation, God rested from his work and “God blessed the 7th day and sanctified it, because in it he rested from all His work which he created and made.” (Gen. 2) Did God need to rest? We would probably think God doesn’t need rest, but the Bible says He did rest. This is the only day of the week set apart with a name, proclaimed as holy and, as Jesus said, made for man.

Why this gift from God? The commandment in Ex. 20:8-11 says to “remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy.” Holy means set apart, sanctified which is what God said He did to the 7th day at creation. This day was not instituted with the commandments given to Israel. They were simply told to “remember” to keep it holy, the way He created it. God says we make it holy by not doing any work—not you or any of those who work for you. Would we consider resting from our work a gift? Well, of course, we call that a vacation! If your boss said to you, “I’m going to give you one day off every week from your work, but you will receive the same pay as you did for seven days of work, you’d be pretty excited. God, as our ultimate provider, says rest from your work on the 7th day and I will provide for you.

God tells His people in Lev. 23:1-3 that the 7th day is “the Sabbath of the LORD”. This is His day and He instructs that we have a “solemn rest and a holy convocation” on His day. A holy convocation is an assembly, a gathering of people together. He calls it a “feast day” (verse 1). Those instructions make for quite a special day. No work, and assembling with others to enjoy a feast day—sounds pretty good!

The commandment repeated in Deut. 5:12-15 relates this day of rest to Israel being freed from slavery. This day is a picture of liberty and freedom. God gave his people freedom from slavery and it is He who provides freedom and liberty for us. Hebrews 4 talks about a future rest that is a promise from God—“we will enter His rest,” and “let us labor therefore to enter that rest (Greek-‘katapausin’ meaning reposing down, abode.” This future rest is related to the 7th day Sabbath rest in this passage and it says “therefore there remains a rest (Greek-‘sabbatismos’ meaning Sabbath day rest) for the people of God.” The 7th day rest not only gives us rest from our work, but also reminds us of our Creator who made it for us. We are also reminded that He delivered His children from slavery to freedom, pointing to our future rest and abode. (Heb. 4:1, 9, 11)

Such a wonderful gift...why does mankind, to whom it was given, not want it? The people of Israel were reminded of the Sabbath, and then were punished for ignoring it. They were taken into captivity for idolatry and not keeping the Sabbath day holy. (Neh. 13:17-18) God spoke through his prophet Isaiah and said, “If you turn away your foot from the Sabbath, from doing your pleasure on My holy day, and call the Sabbath a delight the holy day of the Lord honorable, and shall honor Him, not doing your own ways, nor finding your own pleasure, nor speaking your own words, then you shall delight yourself in the Lord; and I will cause you to ride on the

high hills of the earth, and feed you with the heritage of Jacob your father. The mouth of the Lord has spoken.” Not only is the Sabbath a special gift from our God, but He also blesses us when we delight in and honor Him on this day. It is His day, He made it for us as a day of rest from our work. It is a day to assemble with others of like mind, to feast—enjoy the blessings of food and drink from God. It is a day to delight in and to show honor and glory to Him. Have you accepted and enjoyed this gift from God?

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