**MY NEED FOR THE SABBATH**

***Our Spiritual RESToration***

Sometimes I wish I could just say what I’m really thinking. I wish I could say, “Why didn’t God carry over ALL of the Ten Commandments into the New Testament?” While there are Sabbatarians who believe this, like the Seventh Day Adventist, we know from our New Testament that God never commanded us to “keep the Sabbath day holy.”

The word Sabbath is taken from the Hebrew word *Shabbat.* It simply means “to rest.” Here is how it reads as God gave it to Moses on Mount Sinai:

"*Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days you shall labor and do all your work, 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 cattle, nor your stranger who is within your gates. For in six days the LORD made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that is in them, and rested the seventh day. Therefore the LORD blessed the Sabbath day and hallowed it*.”

Exodus 34:21 clarified the meaning of the Sabbath. There are no exceptions!

"*Six days you shall work, but on the seventh day you shall rest; in plowing time and in harvest you shall rest*.”

God meant for this previous slave nation, that had spent 400 years in hard labor without any rest, to finally have a blessing they had longed for --- rest! No labor. No toil. No sweat. These former slaves who lived under harsh taskmasters in the brick kilns and back-breaking construction projects for the Pharaohs were now free to take the day off every seventh day! It was meant to show God was a benevolent, caring, loving Father of His people. Night and day a slave’s life was never their own. You lived at the beck and call of your foreign masters. Suddenly, God not only gives them the day off, but literally commands it. No company boss, husband, father or master who had purchased a slave could now make them work. It was built into their new “Constitution” as a Bill of Rights.

The United States Constitution begins with the 10 Bill of Rights. They are:

1. **Freedom of religion, speech, press, assembly, and petition.  
2. Right to keep and bear arms in order to maintain a well regulated militia.  
3. No quartering of soldiers.  
4. Freedom from unreasonable searches and seizures.  
5. Right to due process of law, freedom from self-incrimination, double jeopardy.  
6. Rights of accused persons, e.g., right to a speedy and public trial.  
7. Right of trial by jury in civil cases.  
8. Freedom from excessive bail, cruel and unusual punishments.  
9. Other rights of the people.   
10. Powers reserved to the states.**

These precious freedoms we enjoy are all but sacred to Americans. We describe them as our “*inalienable rights.*” They are the bedrock of our nation and the envy of the world.

The Nation of Israel was not founded by a Revolution, as was America, but founded by God. The first order of business was to march them to Mount Sinai and issue them a Constitution known as “The Ten Commandments.” The people stood in rapt attention as they heard them read. I can only imagine the looks on their faces when they heard these new laws, especially the fourth one. To these slaves it seemed too good to be true.

**1. "You shall have no other gods before Me.**

\* Finally, freedom from Egyptian pagan gods **2. "You shall not make for yourself a carved image.**

\* Finally, freedom from false idols **3. "You shall not take the name of the LORD your God in vain.**

\* Finally, freedom from irreverent talk **4. "Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy.**

\* Finally, freedom to rest and worship our own God! **5. "Honor your father and your mother.**

\* Finally, restored authority in the home **6. "You shall not murder.**

\* Finally, freedom from tyranny and the threat of evil taskmasters **7. "You shall not commit adultery.**

\* Finally, freedom from suspicion from living in an immoral society **8. "You shall not steal.**

\* Finally, freedom to keep what I own in a society that respects my property **9. "You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor.**

\* Finally, freedom of speech **10. "You shall not covet your neighbor's house, wife, servant, anything.**

\* Finally, freedom to live life!

As I watch so many today observe the Lord’s Day (the first day of the week – Acts 20:7; Revelation 1:10) by giving God two or three hours of “worship” time, but then using the other 20+ hours for their own purposes, I wish God had given more specifics to us like He did to Israel. Sadly, tragically, many do not even give Him that much time, choosing to assemble in the morning but then “resting” at home in the evening.

Honestly, I don’t get that. I just don’t get it. If I know God’s people are singing, praying and praising Him in fellowship at that very moment, while I am resting at home, or doing some other activity that pleases me, my conscience would haunt me unmercifully.

Israel’s Sabbath rest was to be a holy day, not just a restful day. It was meant to stop their physical labors in order to renew and restore their spiritual lives back into balance. It was a day of special connection with God and with God’s family. It was a day of rest from labor, to be sure, but a day of holiness as they focused on God: “*Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it* ***holy***.” God’s kind of rest intended for His people was one of spiritual *rest*-oration.

Yes, I wish I could say what I’m really thinking. I wish I could say I believe the spirit of that fourth commandment is still meant to be honored by “*the Israel of God*” today (Gal. 6:16).

Let’s come together to “rest” on Sunday night. There, I’ve said it. - Rick