

THE SABBATH

INTRODUCTION

The sacred assemblies of the Jews in the Old Testament are prophetic: they point to events in days to come. In this paper we explain what the Sabbath symbolizes. Christians can apply that knowledge to their life and to their interpretation of the Scripture.

This study will incorporate the spiritual meaning of numbers to help identify the meanings of the feasts. By two or three witnesses every fact shall be established. When Scripture makes a clear identification there is no debate. When it does not we will look to other witnesses, such as spiritual numbers.¹

SUMMARY

The holy day of the Sabbath is prophetic of the Age of Grace, the period of time when people can put faith in the death of Jesus Christ on the cross as a payment for their sin.

SHOULD CHRISTIANS OBSERVE JEWISH HOLY DAYS?

Christians are strongly recommended not to observe the Jewish rituals and holy days.

There was a group in New Testament times who wanted to bring believers under obedience to the rituals and ordinances of Moses and the patriarchal rite of circumcision. Even some apostles drifted towards this way of thinking. This approach was condemned in the strongest possible terms by Paul: anathema! (Galatians 1:9) Anathema means 'accursed', devoted to destruction, or eternally damned. Regarding observing feasts and holy days Scripture says:

“But now that you know God – or rather are known by God – how is it you are turning back to those weak and miserable principles? Do you wish to be enslaved by them all over again? You are observing days and months and seasons and years! I fear for you that somehow I have wasted my efforts on you.” (Galatians 4:9-11)

BIBLICAL INTERPRETATION

The Bible contains types and shadows. A type is an allegory, a figure of meaning. In Galatians Paul identifies Hagar, the slave woman, as representing the Old Covenant, and Sarah, the free woman, as representing the New Covenant.² In the same passage he connects Isaac with believers in Jesus, since we are born of the free woman. A shadow is a type with a prophetic fulfillment, speaking of things to come:

¹ For a complete presentation of spiritual numbers please refer to www.biblenumbersforlife.com The spiritual meanings of Bible numbers and the validation of those meanings is presented there.

² Gal. 4:21-31 “these things may be taken figuratively, for the women represent two covenants...”

“Therefore do not let anyone judge you by what you eat or drink, or with regard to a religious festival, a New Moon celebration or a Sabbath day. **These are a shadow of the things that were to come: the reality is found in Christ.**” (Colossians 2:16)

SIMULTANEOUS PROPHETIC FULFILLMENTS FOR CHRISTIANS AND JEWS

A single prophetic event can have implications for both Jews and Christians. For example: when Christ died “**at that moment the curtain of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom.**” (Matt. 27:51) The New Testament began when Christ’s blood was shed on the cross. The Old Testament covenant ceased at the exact same time. Many prophetic fulfillments of the appointed feasts and sacred assemblies apply to Jews in one way and to Christians in another way. Some feasts have no prophetic fulfillment for Jews, but often, prophetic events for Christians and Jews are linked. This is not a contradiction, this is the divine plan.

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The seventh day of the week is the Sabbath. It is not enumerated in the lists of “appointed feasts and sacred assemblies” (Lev. 23:2) but it is a holy day. Hebrews chapter 2 explains the spiritual meaning of the Sabbath.

We note there are 52 Sabbaths a year. The spiritual meaning of 52 is “**gospel work**”. Every Sabbath Paul explained to the Jews in the synagogue that Jesus is their Messiah and by believing in his Name they can be saved (Acts 18:4). The Sabbath is symbolic of entering God’s rest, or being saved: “**...since the promise of entering his rest still stands, let us be careful that none of you be found to have fallen short of it**” (Heb. 2:1). On the Sabbath no work was to be done. This shows our salvation is accomplished only by the work of God. We receive our salvation by grace through faith, not by our own works, lest any man boast.

In terms of prophecy, the Sabbath points to the **Age of Grace**. It is not a specific event, like the appointed feasts and sacred assemblies: it points to an age between events. It is interesting to note that the first appearance of the regulations for the Sabbath (Exodus 20:8-11) occur after the account of the Passover. No grace is available to anyone until Christ dies on the cross (Passover).

Gematria Study:

There are seven passages relating to regulations for the Sabbath in the Torah:

Passage	Gematria	Factors
(1) Exodus 20:8-11	17,303	(11 x 11 x 11 x 13)
(2) Exodus 31:13-17	30,044	(28 x 29 x 37)
(3) Exodus 35:1-3	8,101	[1019 th Prime] [1019 = 171 st Prime] [171 = 9 x 19]
(4) Leviticus 23:3	7,230	(2 x 3 x 5 x 231 [53 rd Prime])
(5) Leviticus 24:5-9	20,500	(2 x 2 x 5 x 5 x 5 x 41)
(6) Numbers 28:9-10	7,798	(2 x 7 x 557 [102 nd Prime])

(7) Deut. 5:12-15	<u>18,377</u>	(17 x 23 x 47)
Total	<u>109,353</u>	3.36451 [3863 rd Prime] [536 th Prime] [536 = 8 x 67]

The spiritual interpretation of the gematria of the Sabbath passages reveals truths central to the gospel message:

- (1) 11 cubed means “Holy Mystery” and 13 means “Rebellion”.³ This recalls the rebellion of the Jews to the first coming of the Messiah to Israel. In spite of multiple miraculous messianic signs, they rebelled against the self-evident Son of David and refused to accept Jesus as their king. They ignored all the prophecies in Scripture that Jesus fulfilled. They sinned against the Holy Spirit and called him a devil. Rather than bowing before him, they crucified the Lord;
- (2) 28 means “Christ in You”, 29 means “Holy One”, and 37 means “Chosen Servant”. Whosoever accepts Jesus as the “Chosen Servant” becomes a saint, a “holy one”, and the spirit of Christ indwells them;
- (3) 9 means “Judgment” and 19 means “Faith”. God’s judgment will depend on our faith response to Jesus’ death on the cross. If we believe, God will forgive our sins. If we will not believe, we are dead in our trespasses;
- (4) 30 (2 x 3 x 5) means “Blood” and 53 means “Faithful Witness”. Jesus was obedient to the Father unto death, even death on the cross. Jesus was without sin and is qualified to offer his blood as an atonement for our sin. His blood speaks a better testimony than the blood of Abel;
- (5) 82 (2 x 41) means “Throne of God”, 10 (2 x 5) means “Testimony”, and 25 (5 x 5) means “Forgiveness of Sins”. The main message (testimony) of the cross is the forgiveness of sins. By his perfect sacrifice, Christ destroyed the power of sin and death and now sits at the right hand of the Father on the throne of God in heaven;
- (6) The number 102 means “Destitute and Abandoned”, the number 14 (2 x 7) means “Righteous”. Christ was abandoned by his disciples, even denied by Peter, and left to die with nothing, not even his own clothes to pass on. But his sacrifice was deemed acceptable to God and righteous in every respect and so God has exalted him to his right hand in glory;
- (7) 17 means “Victory”, 23 means “Death”, and 47 means “Self Abasement”. We can’t imagine how humbling it was for the Son of God to leave heaven’s glories and come down to Earth, taking the form of a man in the flesh. But he abased himself even further by allowing wicked men to pummel his face, lash his back, and nail him to a cross so he would die naked before the ogling masses, writhing in pain and suffering. However, his death on the cross became a tremendous spiritual victory;
- (8) It should be noted there are seven passages relating to the Sabbath. Seven is the number of fullness or completeness. Jesus life and death were full and complete: short of nothing God desired. His sacrifice was perfect and so he can offer us eternal life through faith in his blood;
- (9) The total gematria of the seven passages equals 3 x 36,451. The large number is the 3,863rd prime, which is in turn the 536th prime. 536 is equal to 8 x 67. 3 means “God” or “Truth”, 8 means “New Man” or “Born Again Man”, and 67 means “Gentiles Praise God”. The sum of the gematria for all seven passages has this meaning: “Truth: Born Again Gentiles will Praise God” It

³ The number 11 means “Mystery”. Any spiritual number cubed becomes holy to the Lord.

was a deep mystery hidden from the Jews but through the cross of Jesus Christ, the despised Gentiles would come forward to praise the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.