

Harmony Between G-d and Man

The Sabbath points mankind towards freedom-- from bondage to works. It brings man closer to the goal of having perfect harmony between G-d and His creation during a future day that will be All Sabbath. The Sabbath also prefigured a *spiritual* freedom from works. Those individuals that attain to this *spiritual* freedom will be those who inherit the day known in Rabbinical teaching as the Sabbath Day of Rest or the Sabbath Day of Eternity.

The Bible calls the Sabbath a "Feast of the L-rd" and is listed first among the Feasts, to be treated as a holy convocation which is a prophetic ritual or 'rehearsal'. In reality, the Sabbath was established at the creation long before G-d gave the Israelites His commandments:

"Then God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it, because in it He rested from all His work which God had created and made." (Genesis 2:3)

"Speak to the children of Israel, and say to them: 'The feasts of the L-rd, which you shall proclaim to be holy convocations, these are My feasts. Six days shall work be done, but the seventh day is a Sabbath of solemn rest, a holy convocation. You shall do no work on it; it is the Sabbath of the L-rd in all your dwellings.'" (Leviticus 23:2, 3)

The Sabbath also holds the distinction of being the only Feast mentioned in the Ten Commandments:

"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 L-rd your G-d. In it you shall do no work. For in six days the L-rd made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that is in them, and rested the seventh day. Therefore, the L-rd blessed the Sabbath day and hallowed it." (Exodus 20:8-11)

In Rabbinical teaching, each Sabbath is to be regarded as the day the Messiah could come. In preparation, the Sabbath table is set with one's finest china, two candlesticks, two loaves of challah bread, and a white tablecloth symbolizing the dew that covered the ground when G-d rained down manna to feed the Israelites. No knives are placed on the table or the knives are covered to demonstrate the peace that will exist during the Messiah's reign which will be All

The Sabbath

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"They shall beat their swords into plow-shares, and their spears into pruning hooks; Nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war anymore" (Isaiah 2:4).

The two candlesticks and two loaves of challah represent the double portion of manna allotted to the Israelites in the wilderness before each Sabbath. Manna was given for six days only. On the sixth day, they received a double portion, one portion to be reserved for the Sabbath. The candlesticks also stand for the light of creation and the light of redemption. The challah loaves are covered, like a bride is veiled before her wedding. When the blessing is said over the meal, the challah is uncovered, just as the bride is unveiled after a blessing is recited. Each Sabbath symbolically pictures the wedding day of G-d to His covenant people.

The Sabbath was G-d's final and highest level of creation. At that time, G-d descended, making the world His dwelling place. G-d gave man six days during which to rule, but the Sabbath was reserved for G-d. Isaiah records that G-d will pour out special favor on those who keep the Sabbath rest:

"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 L-rd 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 L-rd; and I will cause you to ride on the high hills of the earth, and feed you with the heritage of Jacob your father." (Isaiah 58:13, 14)

The Sabbath is a weekly rehearsal of the day that will be All Sabbath when the Messiah will come and G-d will once again descend to the earth and dwell among His people. Celebrating the Sabbath is an activity that not only demonstrates one's faith in the physical, observable coming of the Messiah, but also expresses a longing for the day that will usher in complete harmony between G-d and His creation.

The future Sabbath Day of Rest is a time when man will no longer rule the earth, when every day will be a Sabbath. The seventh day (i.e., the seventh millennium) will be the day of G-d's

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rule, when He will descend to dwell with His creation.

The Spiritual Sabbath Rest

For believers in Yeshua, there is also a spiritual Sabbath rest. Believers in Yeshua should be living in the Sabbath Day of Rest in a spiritual context. G-d is supposed to be ruling the lives of believers every day in every way because He has descended in the person of the Holy Spirit to dwell with man, His creation. This reality should be visibly evident in the lives of all who call themselves by His name. Their lives should testify that G-d rules fully. This involves doing nothing by one's own initiative; but instead, living by the Spirit of G-d, doing only the things shown by the Father just as Yeshua did.

The importance of living spiritually in the Sabbath rest cannot be stressed enough. The writer of Hebrews admonishes:

"For He has spoken in a certain place of the seventh day in this way: 'And G-d rested on the seventh day from all His works'. There remains therefore a rest for the people of G-d. For he who has entered His rest has himself also ceased from his works as G-d did from His. Let us therefore be diligent to enter that rest, lest anyone fall according to the same example of disobedience." (Hebrews 4:4, 9-11)

G-d wanted man to know the importance of this truth so much that He decreed the death penalty for Sabbath violators. Spiritually, this punishment foreshadowed eternal death. Living by the Spirit of G-d rather than by the sinful nature (the flesh) was not a suggestion, but a command. The apostle Paul said:

"If you live according to the sinful nature (the flesh), you will die; but if by the Spirit, you put to death the misdeeds of the body, you will live, because those who are led by the Spirit of G-d are sons of God." (Romans 8:13, 14)

The celebration of the weekly Sabbath is meant to be a reminder to Christians that the Lord is supposed to rule their lives. G-d will use only the individuals He rules! Barukh HaShem (Blessed is the Name)