

The Shabbat and Modern Day Observance

In this study we will take an extensive look at the Sabbath Day and what Torah as well as the rest of the scriptures have to say about it. The purpose of this teaching is to create unity and peace among the body of Yeshua particularly those of Israel dispersed among the nations and of the messianic belief.

The Sabbath was instituted in the book of Breisheet in the 2nd chapter. In Breisheet 2:1-3 we read "**Thus the heavens and the earth were completed in all their vast array. ² By the seventh day God had finished the work he had been doing; so on the seventh day he rested from all his work. ³ And God blessed the seventh day and made it holy, because on it he rested from all the work of creating that he had done.**" Here the Shabbat is given for all of creation and not just Israel. The sages believed that since time began there have always been those who kept the Shabbat to one extent or another from Adam to Abraham. Psalm 92 is a psalm for the Sabbath day that the midrash thinks that Adam composed therefore the sages believe that the Shabbat was kept by non Jews before it was given as a sign for Israel. It should also be noted that here the day never ends this represents the concept of Yahweh's time, which is eternity. The 6 days prior would then represent space. Hebraic thought also teaches that the first 6 days of creation represent man and the past (i.e. the number 6 is the number for man) while the 7th day represents female and the future. The sages state "The six weekdays are masculine in a sense, while the Shabbat is feminine. During the 6 weekdays, the world is renewed through the original momentum of creation and therefore they pertain to the past. But on the Sabbath we partake of the world to come, the ultimate future, when all will be Shabbat." We also see that since women have the ability to bear children it is in this role that women are primarily responsible for creating the future of the human race and Hebraic thought says that in doing this women fulfill the totality of the 248 positive commandments because the Hebrew word for womb *rehem* has the numerical value of 248. I believe this is what Rav Shaul was referring to in 1Timothy 2:15 that states "**But**

women will be saved through childbearing if they continue in faith, love and holiness with propriety". I say this to bring forth another interesting observation. It is in the womb that the soul is placed or created during this time and in relating to the Shabbat in Exodus 31:17 we read **"On the 7th day he rested and was refreshed"**. Here the word refreshed is vayinafash and contains the root nefesh which is the word for soul. Playing on this meaning the rabbis state "On the Sabbath day Yahweh created the soul of the world and all creation was granted an abundance of vitality or life".

Next we see the Shabbat as becoming a commandment and sign between G-d and the 12 tribes of Israel. In Exodus 31:12-17 we read **"Then the LORD said to Moses,¹³ 'Say to the Israelites, 'You must observe my Sabbaths. This will be a sign between me and you for the generations to come, so you may know that I am the LORD, who makes you holy.**

¹⁴ " **'Observe the Sabbath, because it is holy to you. Anyone who desecrates it must be put to death; whoever does any work on that day must be cut off from his people.** ¹⁵ **For six days, work is to be done, but the seventh day is a Sabbath of rest, holy to the LORD. Whoever does any work on the Sabbath day must be put to death.** ¹⁶ **The Israelites are to observe the Sabbath, celebrating it for the generations to come as a lasting covenant.** ¹⁷ **It will be a sign between me and the Israelites forever, for in six days the LORD made the heavens and the earth, and on the seventh day he abstained from work and rested."** Here the Shabbat is given specifically as a identity marker to Israel and in the deepest sense a Bride. It is Israel alone that is set apart from all other nations and chosen to bear his name unto the rest of the world. Here the word for sign is OT it is the same word used throughout the OT. In the Passover story it is the sign that prevented the Angel of Death from the houses marked by the Blood of the Passover lamb. More Interesting is that it is the same word used for the mark that Yahweh placed upon Cain. If one of the signs or marks of Yahweh's bride is the Sabbath then Cain being a picture of the antichrist should also show us a similar mark and because the mark of the beast is a blasphemous religious mark I believe it must be a copy cat sign. Just as the true believers and bride at the end will have the work of the cross

,torah and Shabbat. I believe that the mark in relation to the bride of the beast or seed of the serpent will be a cross, his torah (the Quran) and a corrupted Sabbath. We see these in the catholic circles and Islam which worships on the Sabbath or Friday night. From ancient sources we get the following **"Nevertheless, a number of facts about the origin of the Friday service emerge clearly from those accounts: (1) There was no Friday service in Mecca, the 'caravan city,' in which Muhammad began his prophetic career. Al-Tabari, in his *Annals*, part i, p. 1256, l. 20, says so expressly, while all the other sources confirm this fact by implication.⁴ (2) Public worship was held by the new Muslims, at their own initiative, in Medina even before Muhammad arrived there in 622 and made it his permanent domicile, but it was Muhammad who ordered that it should be held regularly on Friday. (3) Some sort of address (rather than: sermon) used to be made at that gathering, although the ancient sources do not contain any reliable information as to the regularity and contents of those speeches.⁵ (4) The ancient accounts on the establishment of the Muslim weekly holiday indicate only one connection between it and that of the preceding religions: the instruction given by Muhammad to his representative in Medina to hold the public service on the day when the Jews bought their provisions for their Sabbath.⁶"** Here we see the importance of the Sabbath as an identity marker but this brings us to several questions. Can we keep the Sabbath corporately in modern times with their being no temple standing and living in the diaspora, in societies that don't? How do we do it if it can be done? (give people a chance for ideas and thoughts here). If we as believers can truly keep the Sabbath to the "Letter of the Law so to speak then according to Exodus 31 we should be put to death and cut off from

the household of Israel? This goes for any of us that work on the Shabbat or travel in a car (because technically we are kindling a fire). In fact in Yeshua's time there had to be a synagogue within a certain distance that you were allowed to walk on the Sabbath (i.e. a Sabbath days walk) to prevent you from violating the Sabbath. So why aren't we cut off or put to death or are we in a sense? (pause for comments)

Working on the Shabbat

In Hebrew the word for work first used in Breisheet regarding the Shabbat is melachah and should be understood as creative acts of production even if done miraculously. According to Exodus 31:1-17 & 35 the sages have come to a conclusion that because the Mishkan is being built at the onset of the verse that there are 39 categories of work that are not allowed on the Shabbat. These are called "Melachah". The aspect of positive purpose is derived from the context where the term "Melecheth Macashevet" appears in the Bible, namely that of the construction of the Mishkan (Tabernacle) corresponding to the operations that were performed during the construction of it. These different types are. Carrying, Burning, Extinguishing, Finishing, Writing, Erasing, Cooking, Washing, Sewing, Tearing, Knotting, Untying, Shaping, Plowing, Planting, Reaping, Harvesting, Threshing, Winnowing, Selecting, Sifting, Grinding, Kneading, Combing, Spinning, Dyeing, Chain Stitching, Warping, Weaving, Unraveling, Building, Demolishing, Trapping, Shearing, Slaughtering, Skinning, Tanning, Smoothing and Marking. The sages also correlate this with the punishment of 40 lashes in that they believed that there was actually 40 levels of work but subtracted one category to keep from going over showing mercy. From the Jewish encyclopedia we get **"This number is derived from the phrase הדברים אלה ("These are the words") in Ex35. 1 (Yer. Shab. 9b; Shab. 70a; Num. R. xviii.; Tan., קֹרַח), the numerical value of אלה being 36; and as "debarim" is plural it must signify at least "two," while the article prefixed indicates that it stands for "three" (36 + 3 = 39). The misreading in Tan., קֹרַח, where מלקות ("beatings") appears for מלאכות ("labors"), discloses the true nature of the number. "Forty," in Hebrew, denotes the extreme number or quantity in the connection in which it is used; for instance, "forty" lashes means the utmost number of lashes that may be inflicted in any given case. Hence, in order to remain within the limit, forty less one was fixed upon as the greatest number of lashes that might be inflicted upon the culprit. The mishnah in regard to the classes of prohibited actions follows the precedent, and borrows the phraseology("forty, less one") used in regard to flagellation".** I believe our sages were on to something and this commentary gives us a big piece to the puzzle in that both Exodus 31 & 35 links

keeping the Shabbat with the tabernacle standing. I believe that these verses point to corporate Israel in the millennial reign when the fallen tabernacle of David is restored under the Mashiahs kingship when he will rule with a rod of iron or torah. We know that the thousand years is the 7th festival of tabernacles and represents a Shabbat. Now what about the correlation with the 39 lashes? I believe we can find an allusion to this in Luke 12:35-47 which reads ³⁵**"Be dressed ready for service and keep your lamps burning, ³⁶like men waiting for their master to return from a wedding banquet, so that when he comes and knocks they can immediately open the door for him. ³⁷It will be good for those servants whose master finds them watching when he comes. I tell you the truth, he will dress himself to serve, will have them recline at the table and will come and wait on them. ³⁸It will be good for those servants whose master finds them ready, even if he comes in the second or third watch of the night. ³⁹But understand this: If the owner of the house had known at what hour the thief was coming, he would not have let his house be broken into. ⁴⁰You also must be ready, because the Son of Man will come at an hour when you do not expect him."**

⁴¹Peter asked, "Lord, are you telling this parable to us, or to everyone?"

⁴²The Lord answered, "Who then is the faithful and wise manager, whom the master puts in charge of his servants to give them their food allowance at the proper time? ⁴³It will be good for that servant whom the master finds doing so when he returns. ⁴⁴I tell you the truth, he will put him in charge of all his possessions. ⁴⁵But suppose the servant says to himself, 'My master is taking a long time in coming,' and he then begins to beat the menservants and maidservants and to eat and drink and get drunk. ⁴⁶The master of that servant will come on a day when he does not expect him and at an hour he is not aware of. He will cut him to pieces and assign him a place with the unbelievers.

⁴⁷"That servant who knows his master's will and does not get ready or does not do what his master wants will be beaten with many blows. ⁴⁸But the one who does not know and does things deserving punishment will be beaten with few blows. From everyone who has been given much, much will be demanded; and

from the one who has been entrusted with much, much more will be asked."

Going along with the thought in Luke's parable the Master returns from a wedding banquet So it has to be after Roshashanna, It's not Yom Kippur because we know that the "doors are closed" at that time and note that the master comes and knocks to tabernacle at verse 36. Again I believe that this alludes to the time when we will tabernacle with the Lord and All will be Sabbath. At that point we see the various forms of punishment for violating it. (Beating with many lashes, beaten with few and being cut off matching with the Hebraic thought on the matter) Again this correlates with the Fallen tabernacle of David being restored and until it is restored we are all rehearsing for the day when we will be able to keep Shabbat in its fullness. This is why the scripture in Hebrews 7 makes reference to the priesthood

being set aside because there were certain things that we could not partake of in their fullness and by setting that order aside temporarily G-d gives us mercy from the penalty of death and being cut off. We must also understand that if the Exodus 31 scripture relates to a sign of the covenant between Israel and Yahweh we can look at it as the wedding ring. More importantly according to scripture they broke the first covenant even before Moses came off the mountain with the golden calf. Later when the houses split the covenant is broken to the point of where the diaspora happens. So if they broke the covenant then they themselves never entered into the Sabbath. Is their scripture for this? In Hebrews 4:1-13 we read "**¹Therefore, 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. ²For we also have had the gospel preached to us, just as they did; but the message they heard was of no value to them, because those who heard did not combine it with faith. ³Now we who have believed enter that rest, just as God has said, "So I declared on oath in my anger, 'They shall never enter my rest.' " And yet his work has been finished since the creation of the world. ⁴For somewhere he has spoken about the seventh day in these words: "And on the seventh day God rested from all his work." ⁵And again in the passage above he says, "They shall never enter my rest."**

⁶It still remains that some will enter that rest, and those who formerly had the gospel preached to them did not go in, because of their

disobedience. ⁷Therefore God again set a certain day, calling it Today, when a long time later he spoke through David, as was said before:

"Today, if you hear his voice,

do not harden your hearts."⁸For if Joshua had given them rest, God would not have spoken later about another day. ⁹There remains, then, a Sabbath-rest for the people of God; ¹⁰for anyone who enters God's rest also rests from his own work, just as God did from his. ¹¹Let us, therefore, make every effort to enter that rest, so that no one will fall by following their example of disobedience.

¹²For the word of God is living and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart. ¹³Nothing in all creation is hidden from God's sight. Everything is uncovered and laid bare before the eyes of him to whom we must give account."

Here we see that this verse is saying that this is not only referring to those who wandered in the wilderness and died but also those who actually entered into the land with Joshua because at verse 8 we read "**For if Joshua had given them rest, Yahweh would not have spoken about another day**". This however does not erase the fact that as we read in Genesis there still is the 7th day in creation that we can rest on and I believe this is what it means in verse 9 that says "**There remains, then, a Sabbath rest for the people of Yahweh**". Again we must realize that because of the breaking of the first covenant that Yeshua had to come, die and resurrect to reconcile Israel to himself. That being said the process of the wedding started over which is why we have another exodus to look forward to in Jeremiah, The catching away and tabernacles.

We are in a rehearsal stage right now or as in a Jewish wedding the betrothal period and the wedding ring isn't given till the bridegroom is standing under the chupa with his bride at the end. This being said I do not believe that we will have the Shabbat in its fullness till the very end again when all will be Sabbath. If we cannot keep the Shabbat corporately in its fullness what do we do until then. Are we allowed to buy and sell on the Shabbat or do we just come to congregation and that's enough? What about hiring a Sabbath goy? As we have already ascertained there will be a universal keeping of Shabbat when all Israel will keep

the Sabbath I would like to draw your attention and compare two more scriptures in regards to keeping it. They are Deuteronomy 5:12-18 and Exodus 20:8-11.

In Deuteronomy 5:12-18 we read "**Observe the Sabbath day by keeping it holy, as the LORD your God has commanded you. ¹³ Six days you shall labor and do all your work, ¹⁴ but the seventh day is a Sabbath to the LORD your God. On it you shall not do any work, neither you, nor your son or daughter, nor your manservant or maidservant, nor your ox, your donkey or any of your animals, nor the alien within your gates, so that your manservant and maidservant may rest, as you do. ¹⁵ Remember that you were slaves in Egypt and that the LORD your God brought you out of there with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm. Therefore the LORD your God has commanded you to observe the Sabbath day**".

In Exodus 20:8-11 we read "**Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. ⁹ Six days you shall labor and do all your work, ¹⁰ but the seventh day is a Sabbath to the LORD your God. On it you shall not do any work, neither you, nor your son or daughter, nor your manservant or maidservant, nor your animals, nor the alien within your gates. ¹¹ For in six days the LORD made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that is in them, but he rested on the seventh day. Therefore the LORD blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy**".

Here in both of these scriptures I believe we have Two commandments within the text. One for the whole community of Israel in the context of being regathered with the Tabernacle & Temple standing as was discussed earlier and the other within the context of being in the diaspora and on an individual basis. In both of these scriptures we are told to Not do any work, neither our sons or daughters, menservants, maidservant, animals, nor the alien living within our gates. I believe this is a corporate commandment for us during the time of the tabernacle and that during the millennial reign this will be in full effect going right up to the end when everything will absolutely Shabbat. Within these same two Scriptures we are commanded to Remember the Sabbath day or remember what day is the Sabbath and remember the Passover as part of this observance. These two things can be done anywhere and at any time so I believe these are a start for us, both as individuals and to some degree corporately, towards keeping Shabbat, though we are able to keep it in its fullness due to the society and dispersion that we live in.

Buying and Selling on Shabbat

What about buying and selling on the Shabbat? Nehemiah 10:31, 13:15-21 & Jer. 17:21-24 are the most common scriptures used to support the idea that we should not buy or sell on the Shabbat. There are several things that stand out to me about these verses. First they are not Torah they are the prophets and we have to look at them from the point that they may very well be scriptures that are specific to a group of people for a given time or situation and not universal in scope. I believe this is the case with the Nehemiah verses. Secondly buying and selling is not only not included in the 39 prohibited works derived by the sages from the scriptures in Exodus. The mandate not to buy and sell is not found in any of the commandments in torah relating to the Sabbath. If we look at both verses in Nehemiah we see that in both instances these scriptures are referring to Judah and the exiles returning from Babylonian captivity. In 10 the people make an oath to not buy or sell and to abstain from intermarrying with pagan women to avoid following their G-ds this is confirmed Nehemiah 13:26-27 where we read "²⁶ **Was it not because of marriages like these that Solomon king of Israel sinned? Among the many nations there was no king like him. He was loved by his God, and God made him king over all Israel, but even he was led into sin by foreign women.** ²⁷ **Must we hear now that you too are doing all this terrible wickedness and are being unfaithful to our God by marrying foreign women?**"

I truly believe that these scriptures had more to do with keeping a group of people who had freshly come out of a captivity full of paganism and idolatry from going back in than anything. At this point I would like to say that if the spirit of Yahweh convicts you as an individual from buying or selling on Shabbat it is for you and your walk. However there is not enough evidence that torah forbids it for us to be doing it corporately. Let's look at the scripture in Jeremiah 17:19-22 where G-d himself speaks. Here we read "**This is what the LORD said to me: "Go and stand at the gate of the people, through which the kings of Judah go in and out; stand also at all the other gates of Jerusalem.** ²⁰ **Say to them, 'Hear the**

word of the LORD, O kings of Judah and all people of Judah and everyone living in Jerusalem who come through these gates. ²¹ This is what the LORD says: Be careful not to carry a load on the Sabbath day or bring it through the gates of Jerusalem. ²² Do not bring a load out of your houses or do any work on the Sabbath, but keep the Sabbath day holy, as I commanded your forefathers."

Here when G-d speaks we get the same mandate as is in the torah. It is also addressed to Judah and those living in Jerusalem in a society that is supposed to be keeping the Shabbat as a whole. Finally let's look at what messiah himself had to say about the matter and what about the Shabbat Goy and Gentiles coming to the faith.

Messiah Addresses the Shabbat

There are several places where Yeshua addresses the Sabbath we will be looking at Matthew 12:1-12 and the same incident found in the other two of the synoptic gospels (Mark 2:23-27,3:1-4, Luke 6:1-9). In Matthew 12:1-12 we read **At that time Jesus went through the grain fields on the Sabbath. His disciples were hungry and began to pick some heads of grain and eat them. ²When the Pharisees saw this, they said to him, "Look! Your disciples are doing what is unlawful on the Sabbath." ³He answered, "Haven't you read what David did when he and his companions were hungry? ⁴He entered the house of God, and he and his companions ate the consecrated bread—which was not lawful for them to do, but only for the priests. ⁵Or haven't you read in the Law that on the Sabbath the priests in the temple desecrate the day and yet are innocent? ⁶I tell you that one greater than the temple is here. ⁷If you had known what these words mean, 'I desire mercy, not sacrifice, 'you would not have condemned the innocent. ⁸For the Son of Man is Lord of the Sabbath."** ⁹Going on from that place, he went into their synagogue, ¹⁰and a man with a shriveled hand was

there. Looking for a reason to accuse Jesus, they asked him, "Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath?" ¹¹He said to them, "If any of you has a sheep and it falls into a pit on the Sabbath, will you not take hold of it and lift it out?" ¹²How much more valuable is a man than a sheep! Therefore it is lawful to do good on the Sabbath."

Here we see several things first at no point does Yeshua say that the disciples didn't break Shabbat but on the contrary cites two passages of scripture where the Shabbat was violated technically and the people that did it were held to be innocent. He then quotes Hosea 6:6 of which both Hosea 6 and 7 are prophecies dealing with the dispersion (please read). At verse 8 we get him saying the Son of man is Lord of the Sabbath. Here the Hebrew equivalent is Ba'Al HaShabbat and can be translated as "Husband of the Shabbat". There are several Rabbinic rulings that allow for the Sabbath to be violated. To save a life and to rescue an animal are two of these. However Yeshua brings it home by quoting Hosea to show that they are in the diaspora and that as we receive mercy in the exile so should we be doing the same , using the teaching technique of kalvehomer ,while citing one of their precedents, to show the value of a human need being met if the animals need is able to met and finally ruling that it is lawful to do good. There are many other places in the gospels where Yeshua is confronted with healing on the Sabbath two being Luke 13:10-17 and John 9, which is the messianic miracle of healing the

man born blind. He responds in similar fashion using their precedents to set the stage but more importantly I believe in these episodes what was being missed is the fact that one of the original mandates regarding the Shabbat is to remember the Passover. Part of that deliverance was a miraculous healing as the scripture states Psalm 105:37 " **He brought them forth also with silver and gold: and there was not one feeble person among their tribes**".

The Alien and Ger Toshav

Many of us in messianic circles wonder about Gentiles and are concerned that we may be teaching them to break the covenant or conversely that when they come into the faith they are mandated to keep the Shabbat. There is strong evidence from Josephus and early Church documents that many did keep the Shabbat however this was not mandated upon them. In Acts 15:19-21 the Shabbat is inferred because it is on the Shabbat that they will hear Moses preached but not mandated with a set of prohibitions. Believing in the two house restoration we understand that this message is to the returning house of Israel that includes the lost 10 tribes as well as Prosolytes. I believe these in modern day times are the Christian Zionist that have a genuine love for Israel. In Isaiah 56:3-8 we read

**"Let no foreigner who has bound himself to the LORD say,
"The LORD will surely exclude me from his people."
And let not any eunuch complain,
"I am only a dry tree."**

**⁴ For this is what the LORD says:
"To the eunuchs who keep my Sabbaths,
who choose what pleases me
and hold fast to my covenant-**

**⁵ to them I will give within my temple and its walls
a memorial and a name
better than sons and daughters;
I will give them an everlasting name
that will not be cut off.**

**⁶ And foreigners who bind themselves to the LORD
to serve him,
to love the name of the LORD,
and to worship him,
all who keep the Sabbath without desecrating it
and who hold fast to my covenant-**

**⁷ these I will bring to my holy mountain
and give them joy in my house of prayer.
Their burnt offerings and sacrifices**

**will be accepted on my altar;
for my house will be called
a house of prayer for all nations."**

**⁸ The Sovereign LORD declares—
he who gathers the exiles of Israel:
"I will gather still others to them
besides those already gathered."**

This verse shows the essence of what this teaching has been about that these aliens and eunuchs hold to the Shabbat and the things of Yahweh because they Love him and not because of fear of death or any other reason other than that. It is my belief that as long as we strive in unity and love with mercy and compassion in our hearts towards keeping the Shabbat we will never go wrong and in the day when the tabernacle is standing we will both know the Shabbat in its fullness and how to keep it in its fullness. As for having a "shabbas goy" I am personally at a stalemate. As Acts 15 is also a mandate for us to teach other believers as a starting point I think it incumbent upon us to realize that if we were to hire someone to perform a service in the house of Yahweh because it is in service to him, they will be in his house interacting with his people and spirit that to a degree this is ok. There are just so many variables to this equation that to be honest with you I am not convinced either way so I will leave this area open for our discussion.

