–Save This Page as a PDF–

Remember the Sabbath by Keeping It Holy 20: 8-11

Remember the Sabbath and keep it holy DIG: What is the difference between observing the Sabbath and worshiping on Sunday? Are there differences between the way Hebrew Christians and Messianic Jews observe the Sabbath day and keep it holy? Why is the Sabbath a sign of the everlasting covenant between God and the Israelites? What is replacement theology? What is the difference between the first four commandments and the last six?

REFLECT: Do I choose to observe the Sabbath or to worship on Sunday? Do I fail to take time off for rest, spiritual rejuvenation, and worship? Is my day of worship just like any other day of the week? Is a Christian Gentiles' worship on Sunday any better, or worse, than a messianic Jew observing the Sabbath? Why or why not?

The TaNaKh pictures **the wedding ceremony** of **ADONAI** to the nation of **Isra'el**, just the B'rit Chadashah pictures the wedding ceremony of **Yeshua** to **the Church** (see the commentary on **Revelation, to see link click Fg – Blessed Are Those Who are Invited to the Wedding Feast of the Lamb**). After **the engagement (6:7a), the separation of the bride (5:1),** and **the segulah (19:5),** we now come to **the** actual **wedding ceremony.** First, we saw **the people purify themselves** in **the mikveh (19:10** and **14),** then we saw **them** standing under **the chupah** where the wedding takes place **(19:16a).** Now we come to the central part of the wedding called **the ketubah**. **In traditional Jewish weddings the ketubah is the marriage contract or covenant. It is the legally binding agreement between the bride and groom which governs their marriage. It is always a written agreement, which is how the word ketubah derives its name, from the Hebrew "to write." The ketubah is read and signed during the wedding ceremony.**

In this **wedding ceremony** at **Mount Sinai**, what is **the ketubah**? What is it that is the legally binding marriage contract or covenant between **YHVH** and **His bride,**

Isra'el? **It is Torah!** For here, in **Chapter 20, ADONAI** begins to give **His Torah** to **Isra'el**. The first part of the revelation of **the Torah** is what the Bible calls **The Ten Words,** otherwise known as **the Ten Commandments** (see **Dj – The Ten Commandments**). However, the reality is that the entire **Torah** is **the ketubah**.

But what is a **wedding** without **a ring**? **A wedding ring** is an outward symbol of the marriage. It is given as a token or a pledge that the person who made the promises will, in fact, keep those promises. It also serves as an outward sign to others that a particular man or woman is married. **The ring is Shabbat**! We are told that **the Sabbath** is a **sign** (see **Er – The Sabbath, the Sign of the Covenant**). Consequently, just as **the ring** is an outward **sign** that the husband and wife belong to each other, so is **Shabbat** an outward **sign** that **the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob** and **Isra'el** belong together.

Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy. Six days you shall labor and do all your work, but the seventh day is a Sabbath for ADONAI 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. For in six days God made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that is in them, but He rested on the seventh day. Thus, God blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy (Exodus 20:8-11).

Remember that you were slaves in Egypt, and ADONAI your God brought you out of there with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm. Therefore, ADONAI your God has commanded you to observe the Sabbath day (Deuteronomy 5:15).

Of the Ten Commandments, nine of them are fulfilled in **the Torah's** true meaning, which **Messiah** upholds, and often made more stringent, so we are obligated to

obey them. However, this particular commandment regarding **the Sabbath day**, or ***Shabbat*** as it is called in Hebrew, is not found in the New Covenant and as a result, while Gentile Christians may obey it for the blessing **(Genesis 11:3a)**, most choose not **to observe** it. It is not for the Church. But while keeping the **Sabbath** saves neither Gentile believers nor **Jewish** believers; for **the Jew**, just as the rainbow was the **sign** of the Noahic Covenant **(Genesis 9:12-13)** and circumcision was the **sign** of the Abrahamic Covenant **(Genesis 17:11)**,[373] *Shabbat* on Saturday is **a** special **sign between God and the Israelites forever (Exodus 31:13-17; Ezeki'el 20:20)**. In other words, this passage explicitly states that **the Israelites** are to keep **the Sabbath**.

Christians worship on Sunday, the first day of the week, to celebrate the resurrection of **Jesus**. **Jews** observe **the Sabbath** on Saturday, the seventh day of the week, for the blessing, and to be obedient to **the Torah**. **Moses**, under the inspiration of **the Holy Spirit**, wrote when speaking of the Day of Atonement: **This is to be a lasting ordinance for the generations to come, wherever you live. It is a Sabbath rest (Leviticus 23:31b-32a). Israelites** were to keep **the book of the Torah on their lips, and meditate on it day and night, so that** they would **act according to everything written in it (Joshua 1:8). The Sabbath** is the most important appointed feast day on the Jewish calendar, even greater than Yom Kippur (see the commentary on **Leviticus – Yom Kippur**). For messianic **Jews**, the messianic synagogue is a practical way to express the New Covenant faith within the **Jewish** cultural framework from where it originated.

An allegory. At the beginning of time was One, eternal. But time undivided, time eternal, would be unrelated to the world of space. So time was divided into seven days and entered into an intimate relationship with the world of space. With every single day, another realm of things came into being, except the seventh day.

***The Sabbath** was a lonely day. It may be compared to a king who had seven sons. To six of them he gave his wealth, but to the youngest he gave nobility, with the privilege of royalty. The six older sons, who were commoners, found their mates, but the noble one remained without a mate.*

*After the work of creation, the seventh day pleaded: Master of the universe, all that You have created is in couples; to every day of the week You have given a mate. Only I was left alone. And **God** answered: The community of Isra'el will be your mate. That promise was not forgotten. When the people of Isra'el stood before Mount Sinai, **the Lord** said to them: **Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it***

holy. *Here is your mate.*[374]

Are there differences between the way Hebrew Christians and Messianic **Jews** observe the **Sabbath day** and keep it **holy**? Yes, most certainly. Historically Hebrew Christians are those believers in Christ that are **Jewish** but are not affiliated with Messianic Judaism. As a result, they faithfully attend church but do not keep Shabbat. Messianic **Jews**, on the other hand, are those **Jewish** believers in **Messiah** who fully keep and retain their Jewishness in theology and practice. In this context, a "Messianic Jew" would never consider himself or herself either a "Christian" or "Hebrew Christian". Paul defines the Christian for us in **Acts 11:26** as being a person or congregation of Gentile believers. The Antioch church of **Acts 11:26** was exclusively a Gentile congregation, while **the** Messianic **Jews** of the first century were commonly called **followers of the Way (Acts 24:14)**, or simply **The Way (Acts 9:2)**.

In the messianic Siddur, or prayer book, it states that, "The children of **Isra'el** shall keep **the Sabbath**, observing **the Sabbath** throughout their **generations** as an everlasting covenant. It is **a sign** between **Me** and the children of Isra'el forever, that in six days **the Lord** made the heavens and the earth, and on **the seventh day** he ceased from work and rested". For the Jew, it is not a question of salvation, but a question of blessing. **God blessed the seventh day and made it holy (Gen 2:3;** also see **Exodus 20:11b** and **Isaiah 56:2-7).** If a **Jew** is saved and chooses to worship in church on Sunday, it has no effect on his or her salvation, but he or she will lose the blessing of **Sabbath** worship. If a Gentile chooses to worship with a Messianic congregation on Saturday, he or she will also be **blessed** greatly. The blessing will be a result of the Abrahamic Covenant where **ADONAI** said: **I will bless those who bless you (Genesis 11:3a).** It is interesting to note that **the Sabbath day** rest will be reestablished during the messianic Kingdom **(Ezeki'el 44:24, 45:17, 46:1-4, 46:18)**.

The fourth commandment was given to **the Jews** in **the Torah** to set apart **the seventh day** of the week, which would be Saturday, as a day of rest. **God** ceased **His** work on **the seventh day (Genesis 2:1-3)**, and **He** wanted them to do the same. There was to be no gathering of manna **(16:25-30)**, no traveling **(16:29)**, no plowing or reaping **(34:21)**, no lighting a fire for cooking **(35:3)**, no gathering wood **(Numbers 15:32-36)**, they were not to make wine or transport it **(Nehemiah 13:15)**, no burden bearing **(Jer 17:21-22)**, and no trading **(Amos 8:5)**. In **the Torah**, **the Sabbath** was a day of individual or corporate worship.

In the gospels, there were three major areas of conflict between **Jesus** and the Pharisees and Sadducees: First, **His** claim that **He** was **the Messiah**; secondly, the authority of the Oral Law, or **the traditions of the men** (see the commentary on **The Life of Christ Ei – The Oral Law**)**;** and thirdly, the correct way of observing **the Sabbath**. In the **day** of **Jesus, the Sabbath** had become an end to itself. In fact, certain Jewish religious leaders had developed a theology that **Isra'el** had been created to observe **the Sabbath**. But by adding so many rules and regulations, the Pharisees made **the Sabbath** a burden instead of a blessing. By building 'the fence around **the Torah'** with the Oral Law, they detracted from its true meaning. It was supposed to help man, not enslave him. The Jewish religious leaders missed the human element, because **the Sabbath** was made for man and not man for **the Sabbath (Mark 2:27)**. Furthermore, **Jesus** was, and continues to be, **Lord of the Sabbath (Matthew 12:8)**.

There is no question that **Jesus** observed **the Sabbath** in the manner given by **the Torah**, though not always in the manner given by the rabbis. However, this is not sufficient ground to insist that Jewish or Gentile believers be obligated to keep **the Sabbath** today for salvation. **Yeshua** lived under **the Torah** and perfectly obeyed every one of the 613 commandments applicable to **Him**, be they moral, civil, or ceremonial. To insist that **Jewish** or Gentile believers keep **the Sabbath** today to be saved would also require them to perfectly keep all of the same commandments, **down to the smallest letter, or tiniest part of a letter of Scripture (Matthew 5:18)**, including the civil and ceremonial laws.[375]

For the Gentile believer, Sunday, or **the first day of the week (Acts 20:7)**, is not the same as Saturday, **the seventh day**. Although Sunday is the most common day of worship for the Christian today, no specific **day** is assigned. **One man considers one day more sacred than another; but another man considers every day alike. Each one should be convinced in his own mind. He who regards one day as special, does so to the Lord (Romans 14:5-6a).** We are commanded to come together in fellowship **(Hebrews 10:25)**, but today the local church determines what **day** we choose to worship, and most churches have chosen Sunday. Messianic synagogues worship on Saturday. But there are Gentiles whose jobs require them to work both Saturday and Sunday. They should take a **day** of rest on some other **day** of the week. The point is that, for our own well being, we need to take a rest from our normal **work** every week.[376]

*So, are Gentile believers obligated to rest and abstain from **work** on **the Sabbath**? No. If you take one **day** of the week to rest and do something other than your*

*normal **work**, you will have a richer, fuller, and more rewarding life. But for the Jew, **Shabbat** can only be celebrated on Saturday.*

Although the Christian should have their day of rest, whether Sunday or any other day, it should never be called a “Christian Sabbath”, in that, it does not exist. Certainly, they should all have a designated day or time to rest and be with **the Lord** in worship, ministry, and service – still that would never be **the** prescribed **Sabbath** of **the Torah**. To call Sunday worship at a church, the “Christian Sabbath”, is a subtle form of replacement theology, where Gentile believers take that which was given to **Isra’el** and claim it as their own in replacement of the covenant with **Isra’el**. Thus, because of its great importance, **Sabbath** worship and Sunday worship cannot be compared.

*The first four commandments are more vertical and describe our relationship with **God**, but the last six are more horizontal and describe our relationship with each other.*