

The Cycles of Seven II

Seventh-Day Sabbath

Michael Heiss—September 29, 2015

This morning, we're going to carry on where we left off yesterday, but we're going to rehash a bit.

If you will recall, we read in Gen. 1:31 that God saw everything that He had made, that it was *exceedingly good*. I was explaining about the Hebrew meaning *good* and of *exceedingly good*, the superlative.

To give you a further feel of that, before we get into the Sabbath itself, let's go to Psalms 104:30: "You send forth Your Spirit, they are created; and You renew the face of the earth." Actually, this is referring to the recreation. This is referring back to creation week. It is not referring to the original creation way back when. We have no idea when God really created the heavens and the earth. It could be millions, could be billions of years ago. That's not what this is referring to. This is referring to when He *renewed* the face of the earth for man.

Verse 31: "May the glory of the LORD endure forever; the LORD shall rejoice in His works." So, God rejoiced in His work of recreating the Earth.

Genesis 1:31, God says: "...it was *exceedingly good*..." God does rejoice in all He does.

In part one I mentioned the fact that the Sabbath represented the totality of God's reign, His ultimate kingdom. I showed how the Sabbath is the ultimate, and the Holy Days hang on the 'hook' of the Sabbath and explained how you get there.

Somebody pointed out to me that I neglected to mention one Holy Day, that is the Day of Atonement. It's, as Fred would say, a 'Freudian slip.' You have to have the Day of Atonement there because you have to have sin purged. If you don't you don't have sin purged, you can't have the Kingdom of God. All the Holy Days are there. I did not intentionally neglect to mention the Day of Atonement. It was just one of those slips.

We're talking about the numbers three and seven; Genesis 2:2: "And **by** the beginning of the seventh day..." You should know that it does mean *by*. In the *King James* and some other translations, it will say 'on the seventh day,' or 'at the beginning of the seventh day.'

The Hebrew preposition is translated: *in*, *with* or *by*. Clearly the meaning is *by*. How soon before the end of the sixth day, we don't know, but

clearly before the beginning of the seventh day, God finished the work of recreating the earth.

I thought I would read it to you in the Hebrew so you could see what I meant when I said there are three clauses of seven words each. Three times seven or twenty-one. This is God's 'signing off' in His own way, in His own inimitable style, the creation week. In fact, Gen. 1 through Gen. 2:1-3, is a creation hymn. We don't know who wrote that. We really don't. Obviously, Moses put it in here, but that doesn't mean that Moses wrote it. Adam could have written it. Noah could have written part of it. Abel could have written part of it. Who knows? What we have here in the beginning of Gen. 2:2-3 is *seven*:

- and finished God, by the day, the seventh, the work which He had made
- the day He ceased from those works
- (reading the third clause in Hebrew)

Three times seven.

In part one I pointed out that the term 'ha Shabbat,' *the Sabbath*, does not fit in here. It's just not here. Scholars have pointed it out. They will tell you that unless you automatically equate the Sabbath with the seventh day, it's not there. You have to assume it's there. Sabbath simply meant the day of rest.

Anybody remember the name Constantine, the great emperor of Rome who made a form of Christianity in that day one of the official religions of the empire? What did he say at the Council of Nicea and elsewhere? *Everyone shall rest on the venerable day of the sun!* So, Sunday was a sabbath; it was a day of rest. That's all it meant. That's all the Sabbath means, a day of rest.

As I mentioned, it really confused me, because I would read the works of the pilgrims and certain conservative Protestant groups and they talked about keeping the Sabbath. I thought to myself, 'That's crazy. They didn't really keep the seventh-day Sabbath.' No, they didn't! They kept Sunday, but Sunday was the Sabbath to them; it was a day of rest. Notice what God says here. God is driving home the point: No, we're not specifically talking about the Sabbath, we're talking about *His* Sabbath, the seventh day. That is the point. What does He say?

Genesis 2:2: "And by *the beginning of the seventh day*... [the first time He mentions the seventh day] ...God finished His work, which He

had made. And He rested on the **seventh day** from all His work, which He had made. And God **blessed the seventh day and sanctified it because on it He rested from all His work, which God had created and made**” (vs 2-3). There’s that number three again, three times. He’s finalizing it. He’s saying, ‘Look. I am making the seventh day the Sabbath.’

Any number of scholars have pointed out that this is simply a declarative narrative, here. It just talks about what God did, but no command for man to keep it. That’s not necessarily so. It depends upon how you understand the Hebrew.

I wrote out a little narrative of my own to give to you to point out some things. We have this:

God desisted from creating on the Sabbath, the seventh day. He hallowed the seventh day, set it apart from profane usage. The Sabbath demands more than stoppage of work. It is specifically marked off as a day consecrated to God and to the life of the spirit. That’s one aspect. The word ‘Sabbath’ does not appear here, nor does Gen. 2 seem to bear a form of a command of a statute or binding, but both ideas are there in the Hebrew.

The verb is God *blessed* the seventh day. That word carries a double idea, that of *blessing* and also of *worshipping*, in particular, the manner of bowing the knees. God is not going to bow His knees to anybody or any of His creation, but man does and man should. It’s there, implicit, in the Hebrew. Although, if you just read it in the English, you’d never get that.

The verb may be taken just like in the English, you have different forms of the language. You have the command form, the imperative and you have the declaratory. We all know that in English. Every other language has the same thing. Hebrew has what means *causative*. Let me read to you the full meaning that this verse conveys from the Hebrew, itself:

And He rested on the seventh day from all His work which He had made and God commanded **man** to bless and worship on the seventh day and ordered him... [man] ...to sanctify it.

The conclusion by many of these scholars is that it appears that from the original text that the words were given in form of command from God to Adam.

You see, it really is there. What if you don’t like the seventh-day Sabbath? You want nothing to do with the seventh-day Sabbath? You just forget it!

You just let it go by. You see, it doesn’t have to be read that way. What was God’s intention? I submit to you that God’s intention was that it is in the form of a command. So, we have the Sabbath. Now, let’s look at those verses again. First of all He says:

Genesis 2:3: “And God **blessed** the seventh day...” In Hebrew we have many different prayers. The opening of many a prayer is: ‘Blessed art Thou, oh Lord our God, King of the universe.’ Then you go on with praying about whatever you’re chanting.

Is there any other day of the week that you find in this Book that you call the Bible where God blessed it that way? *None, only the seventh day!* Remember, not the Sabbath, the seventh day, because at this point, it’s not known as the Sabbath. Then it says that He *sanctified* it. That means that He *hallowed* it. He made it *Holy*. What other day of the week did God ever make Holy other than the Sabbath? *Search the Book!*

In fact, the Catholic Church knows that and it has said so. It has said to many a Protestant, ‘Look, if you’re going to follow the Bible, you might as well keep the seventh-day Sabbath, because that’s the only day made Holy. But we, the Catholic Church, papa, the ‘vicar of Christ,’ changed it. So, when you keep Sunday, you’re following us.’ Protestants have their own mind, their own way of doing things and God will open their minds one day, not yet today.

Genesis 2:3: “And God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it because on it He rested from all His work...” Here we have in vs 2 & 3 the word ‘Shabbat’ that simply means *ceasing*. God ceased and desisted on that day, the seventh day.

Exo. 16—supposedly, this is the first time that the word *Sabbath* as a command was given. This was about the manna, the children of Israel were murmuring—oh, were they murmuring—they like to murmur a lot. They were champions of murmuring.

Exodus 16:16: “This *is* the thing, which the LORD has commanded. ‘Each man gather of it according to his eating, an omer for each one, according to the number of your persons....’”

Verse 17: “And the children of Israel did so, and gathered, some more, and some less. And when they measured with an omer, he that gathered much had nothing over, and he that gathered little lacked nothing....” (vs 17-18).

Verse 19: And Moses said, ‘Let no man leave any of it until the *next* morning.’ But they did not hearken to Moses, and some of them left *part* of it until the *next* morning. And it became rotten...” (vs 19-20).

Verse 21: “And they gathered it morning by morning...”

Verse 23: “And he said to them, ‘This *is that* which the LORD has said, “Tomorrow is the **rest of the Holy Sabbath to the LORD**.... [‘Shabbat’ and it’s called *Holy*] ...Bake what you will bake *today*, and boil what you will boil....”

Verse 24: “And they laid it up until the *next* morning as Moses said. And it did not stink...”

Verse 25: “And Moses said, “Eat it today, for today *is* a **Sabbath to the LORD**....”

Verse 26: ““**Six days you shall gather it, but on the seventh day, the Sabbath**, in it there shall be none.” And it came to pass *that some* of the people went out on the seventh day in order to gather...” (vs 26-27).

The point is, v 28: “And the LORD said to Moses, ‘**How long do you refuse to keep My commandments and My laws?**’”

Remember something. Theoretically, when was the Sabbath first given? *A week ago!* Wait a minute, a week ago and God says, ‘**How long** will you refuse to keep My Sabbaths, My laws?’ Obviously, this was known way before then. Why would God say ‘How long?’ They only heard about it seven days ago.

We know from Gen. 26 that this is the time when God was speaking to Isaac and Isaac didn’t know exactly what to do because there was a famine in the land.

Genesis 26:2_(transcriber’s correction): “And the LORD appeared to him and said, ‘Do not go down into Egypt. Live in the land, which I shall tell you of. Stay in this land, and I will be with you and bless you, for to you and to your seed, I will give all these lands; and I will establish the oath, which I swore to Abraham your father. And I will multiply your seed as the stars of the heavens...’” (vs 2-4). God’s rehearsing what He said to Abraham.

We’ve read this before but it’s good to dwell on it. Why is God going to do all this? Verse 5: “**Because Abraham obeyed My voice and kept My charge, My commandments, My statutes, and My laws.**” I challenge you to look from Gen. 1-25 and find all the statutes, commandments and laws that God gave to Abraham. You won’t find them, but they were there. *They knew them!*

Remember the days of Noah when God said, ‘Noah. Noah. Yoo-hoo! Come here! Listen! I’ve got news for you. I’ve had it with this planet. I’ve had it with these people. I’m going to wipe them out, but I’m going to save you. So, Noah, build the boat.

Make it a big one because we’re going to have lots of animals on board that boat. I want you to bring seven of the clean, seven-by-seven, two-by-two unclean.’

Noah went ahead and did so. He didn’t say, ‘Lord, what do you mean clean and unclean? How do I know?’ *Noah knew!* How did he know? *Obviously, it was known!* Obviously, God gave the knowledge, but it wasn’t necessary. There was no people, as such, that God was dealing with. So, He didn’t codify it.

Abraham kept those statutes. Are we to believe that Noah knew about the law of clean and unclean meats but had no knowledge of the **Sabbath**? No knowledge of the seventh day? *NO! They knew!*

God was getting angry with the children of Israel. In fact, if you go back into Jere. and Eze., what does God say about Israel? In Jeremiah, God says, ‘Oh, this is a stiff-necked people. From the day I brought you out of Egypt, you rebelled against Me.’ But, they knew His laws and that was the point that I want to make here.

Let’s take a look in Exo. 23; this is actually part of the Old Covenant. What we call the Old Covenant comprises primarily of three chapters of the Bible, Exo. 21-23. You find that right after God gave the Ten Commandments He gave these judgments to Moses. In v 24, you can read where a covenant was ratified.

Exodus 23:12: “Six days you shall do your work, and on the **seventh day** you shall rest, so that your ox and your donkey may rest, and the son of your handmaid, and the stranger, may be rejuvenated.” That is interesting because we have different words for rest. The seventh day you shall rest; that is *you shall cease*, but the second ‘rest’ is not that word, it’s a different word.

We’re going to take a look at God’s command of the **Sabbath**; Exodus 20:8: “**Remember the Sabbath Day to keep it Holy.**” God hallowed it. ‘I made it Holy, you be sure that you keep it Holy.’

Verse 9: “Six days you shall labor and do all your work. But the **seventh day**...” (v 9-10). God is driving home the point: ‘What day is the real Sabbath? *God’s Sabbath?*’ *The seventh day!*

“...**is the Sabbath of the LORD** your God. In it you shall not do any work, you, nor your son, nor your daughter; your manservant, nor your maidservant, nor your livestock, nor the stranger within your gates... [What is the rationale for it?] ...**for in six days the LORD made the heaven and the earth, the sea, and all that is in them, and**

rested the seventh day” (vs 10-11). This seventh day really is *a rest*.

Have you ever heard the name Noah? *His name means rest!* That’s his name: *rest*. In his day, interestingly enough, part of the curse of the land was lifted. It happened in the days of Noah, if you go through the chronology. They’re to rest this day. So, God *blessed it, sanctified it and hallowed it*.

Exodus 23:12: “Six days you shall do your work, and on the seventh day **you shall rest**, so that your ox and your donkey may **rest**...” ‘No ah,’ really means *rest*.

“...and the son of your handmaid, and the stranger, may be rejuvenated” (v 12). This is a very interesting word. It comes from the word ‘nepesh/napesh,’ which means *vitalization*. If you were to go back in Gen. 1, God made the great living creatures and all that—‘nepesh/napesh.’ It simply means *life, bubbling life, life with movement*. When you keep the Sabbath, God says, ‘let those people be revitalized/rejuvenated.’ In fact, we will see in another Scripture, where it says that the Sabbath rejuvenated God. *Now, how do you figure that!*

We’ll take a look at that. In Gen., we talked about the Lord God made man, talking about making Adam. What did He say about that?

Genesis 2:7: “Then the LORD God formed man *of the dust of the ground, and **breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living being.***” A ‘nepesh,’ merely *a breathing, vitalized, moving being with life*. The way it is read is revitalized.

You will see how important the Sabbath is to God in the way He phrases it; Exodus 31:13: “Speak also to the children of Israel, saying, ‘Truly you shall keep My Sabbath ... [Shabbat] ...for it is a sign between Me and you throughout your generations to know that I *am* the LORD Who sanctifies you. You shall keep the Sabbath, therefore, for it *is* Holy to you. Everyone that defiles it shall surely be put to death...’” (vs 13-14).

This doesn’t mean ‘be put to death.’ This is ‘to death, he must die.’ The word *die* or *death* is twice in here. You don’t get that in the English but it’s in the Hebrew. This is a double meaning. It’s a one-two punch, if I can put it that way. God means business here. He’s not kidding.

“...for whoever does *any* work on it, that soul shall be cut off from among his people. Six days may work be done, **but on the seventh day is the Sabbath of rest**...” (vs 14-15). Again, a play on words. This is ‘Shabbat Sabbaton’—twice. In other words, a Sabbath of solemn rest.

In Lev. 23 we have all the Holy Days mentioned. Talking about the Day of Atonement, about not doing any manner of work; Leviticus 23:32: “It *shall be* to you a **Sabbath of rest**...” ‘Shabbat Sabbaton.’ Again, a double meaning. A double one-two punch. He doesn’t say that all that often, but when He does you better believe it, He means it.

Exodus 31:17: “It *is* a sign between Me and the children of Israel forever; for in six days the LORD made the heavens and the earth, **and on the seventh day He rested, (ceased) and was refreshed**”—He was *rejuvenated*. Wait a minute. God is a Spirit. How is a spirit being revitalized, rejuvenated? *He’s using human words to describe how He felt on the Sabbath!* Man is to imitate God.

So, when He ceased working on the sixth day and blessed and hallowed the seventh day, it was as though—implied in the Hebrew—He sat back and was *very satisfied*. He looked at it and WOW! it was like looking at a perfect Earth. It was like seeing the Grand Canyon for the first time. It’s like going into Yosemite Valley and you see El Capitan, North Dome and Half Dome for the first time. It is absolutely magnificent! You know the feeling that sometimes you get when you see something like that. It was like trying to picture God in the same way that He was so satisfied *it was as though He was rejuvenated*. No, not physically. He wasn’t tired. He didn’t say, ‘Oh, I had a tough day at the office:

- Do you know how hard it was rearranging those electrons, protons and neutrons?
- Do you know how hard it was:
 - ✓ to get that atmosphere just right?
 - ✓ to get the droplets of the water?
 - ✓ to show the waters above and the waters below?
 - ✓ to put that moon where it is and the Earth?
 - ✓ to get everything turning around?
- Do you know how hard that was?

Man, I’m beat!’ *No, no, no!* That wasn’t it. He was satisfied with His work. Just like you do a work.

Can you imagine Van Gogh painting and he steps back and he looks at his painting and you know he’s satisfied. Or a great sculptor who finally finishes his work and he sits back and he looks at that piece and he says, ‘Man, that is good.’ That’s how God was. We are to be revitalized in the same way that God is. We are to put ourselves in God’s shoes in that regard. We are to look upon the Sabbath in that way.

That is what I want to emphasize here, on the Sabbath. We're not going to go with all the ins and outs in other places about keeping the Sabbath, etc. This was a concept of the Sabbath. *A cycle of the seventh day of the seven-day cycle.* A day sanctified. A day hallowed for relaxation and worship of God. *That is the end of the cycle of the Sabbath for our purposes today.*

We will go to another seven-day cycle. I can do that in just a few minutes. In Exo. 21, we have the beginning of the judgments and notice what we have:

Exodus 21:2: "If you buy a Hebrew servant, he shall serve six years. And in the seventh he shall go out free for nothing. If he came in by himself, he shall go out by himself. If he was married, then his wife shall go out with him" (v 2-3).

He's to serve six years because he had troubles or got into economic difficulties, I don't know. Too much credit card debt, maybe? I don't know but it's tough and he couldn't make ends meet. He says, 'I need a break. I can't survive. So, he sells himself. God says, 'Okay, if your brother does that, six years, but in the seventh year, he goes out free.'

We'll see where God says in Deut., and in Lev. God says, 'Send him forth with of your own abundance.' You are not to just send him off empty handed. Notice something interesting here:

Verse 4: "If his master has given him a wife, and she has borne him sons or daughters, the wife and her children shall be her master's, and he shall go out by himself."

If he comes as a single man and the master servants and he marries one of them, he didn't pay for it, the master gave him the girl to be a wife and then in the seventh year he wants to go out free, the master says, 'No, the wife and kids they're mine. I gave them to you.' That's kind of harsh in a way. God is saying, 'Hold on now. You went in by yourself. You go out by yourself. You took your master's woman, one of his slaves, one of his servants and you had children by them. He fed you. He clothed you. You want to go out that's okay. You got yourself into that mess. You should not have done that, but you did. Okay, you did. I made provision for it, but what you got from your master, you leave with him.' That's a harsh lesson but a tough one. But notice:

Verse 5: "And if the servant shall plainly say, "I love my master, my wife, and my sons. I do not want to go out free," his master shall bring him to the judges. He shall also bring him to the door or to the doorpost. And his master shall bore his ear through with an awl, and he shall serve him forever"

(vs 5-6). That's just the way the system was set up in ancient Israel.

We're going to cover more of that in part three, what God also said about different aspects of it. That gets us into this cycle that he is not to be made a servant for more than six years. In terms of freedom and liberty, there are three types of freedom:

1. political freedom
2. individual freedom
3. national freedom

Many a person on this planet, down through history, has not chosen individual freedom. It's fascinating!

There is a series of lectures on history and freedom. National freedom, yes, but individual freedom, many a person wants security. Down through the ages they have chosen to be ruled over by tyrants, by dictators and by kings, because they don't have the burden of caring for themselves.

- the king will provide the food
- he will provide the land
- he will provide safety
- he will provide a job

Sort of like socialism! They'll provide everything. I don't have to do anything.

Scriptural References:

- 1) Psalm 104:30-31
- 2) Genesis 1:31
- 3) Genesis 2:2-3
- 4) Exodus 16:16-21, 23-28
- 5) Genesis 26:2-5
- 6) Exodus 23:12
- 7) Exodus 20:8-11
- 8) Exodus 23:12
- 9) Genesis 2:7
- 10) Exodus 31:13-15
- 11) Leviticus 23:32
- 12) Exodus 31:17
- 13) Exodus 21:2-6

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