

## The Weekly Sabbath

The weekly Jewish Sabbath or *Shabbat* is on Saturday. It marks the day of rest taken by God after he created the earth. For Jews the first six days of the week correspond to the first days of creation, and the seventh is the day of divine rest, or the Sabbath. Since the first day of the Jewish week is Sunday, their Sabbath falls on Saturday. And since the Jewish day is observed from sundown to sundown, the weekly Sabbath begins at sundown on Friday and ends at sunset on Saturday.

The Sabbath is regarded as a symbol of the covenant between God and the Jews. In Exodus 31:12-17 the Lord says the Sabbath "... is a sign between me and the children of Israel for ever." Note that the Sabbath is between God and Israel. Mandatory keeping of the Sabbath by Church Age believers is not required.

**Col 2:16** Therefore let no one pass judgment on you in questions of food and drink, or with regard to a festival or a new moon or a Sabbath.  
17 These are a shadow of the things to come, but the substance belongs to Christ.

New Testament Christians may keep the Sabbath if they want, but there is no requirement for the Church to do so. All other nine commandments of the Decalog are mentioned in the NT but there is no nothing about keeping the Sabbath.

If you are going to keep the Sabbath, then you must do so according to the Law. *Shabbat*, which is Hebrew for Sabbath, comes from the Hebrew word for rest. The traditional Sabbath greetings are *Shabbat Shalom* (Hebrew), or *Gut Shabbos* (Yiddish).

Celebrating the Sabbath is a reminder of the Mosaic Covenant and an occasion to rejoice in God's kept promises. Most Jewish people look forward to *Shabbat* all week. They see it as God's gift to his chosen people of a day when they take time out from everyday things to feel special. It's an oasis of calm, a time of stillness in life.

The Sabbath is regarded as the most important holiday or religious day because it is the only one mentioned as an actual commandment. Jews have traditionally lit candles at sundown on Friday and said special prayers over wine and bread during the main Saturday meal. Parents traditionally bless their children, and the faithful are supposed to study the Torah.

## **Sabbath Customs**

In modern Israel, many places, including restaurants, food stores and buses, are closed, although many remain open. There is often a shopping rush before and after the Sabbath.

Orthodox Jews are not allowed to do anything on the Sabbath that can be construed as work. Jewish law, or Halakha, outlines 30 categories of work that cannot be performed on the Holy Day, including driving a car, using a telephone, listening to radio, watching television, lighting fires, turning lights on and off, writing, operating machinery. To satisfy fundamentalists Israel's national airline El Al does not fly on the Sabbath. Even pushing the button of an elevator can be construed as work. Hotels in Israel have special elevators for the Sabbath which stop at every floor so no one does any work by pushing a button. To get around the restriction on "leaving a permanent mark," engineers have developed pens whose ink disappears after a few days.

In order to avoid work and to ensure that the Sabbath is special, all chores like shopping, cleaning, and cooking for the Sabbath must be finished before sunset on Friday.

## **Sabbath Meal**

Sabbath candles are lit at sunset on a Friday. The woman of the house usually performs this ritual, an integral part of Jewish custom and ceremony. The candles mark the beginning of each Sabbath and represent the two commandments Zachor (to remember the Sabbath) and Shamor (to observe the Sabbath). After the candles are lit, Jewish families will drink wine, which is sweet, from a special goblet known as the Kiddush Cup. The drinking of wine on the Sabbath symbolizes joy and celebration.

It is traditional to eat *challah*, a soft rich eggy bread in the shape of a braid. Under Jewish law, every Jew must eat three meals on the Sabbath, and one of the meals must include bread.

It is traditional for parents to bless their children on *Shabbat*. The blessing for daughters asks that they become like the four matriarchs, Sarah, Rebecca, Rachel and Leah, while sons are blessed to grow up like Ephraim and Menasheh, two brothers who lived in harmony. The family will likely have been to synagogue before the Sabbath meal.

(Source factsanddetails.com)

## **What is allowed in the Sabbath**

The Bible does not specifically list the labors that are prohibited on the Sabbath, although it alludes to field labor (Exod. 34:21; Num.15:32-36), treading in a winepress and loading animals (Neh. 13:15-18), doing business and carrying (Isa. 58:13; Jer. 17:22; Amos 8:5), traveling (Exod. 16:29-30), and kindling fire (Exod. 35:2-3) as forbidden work. Application of that is left to the rabbis and often spelled out in the Mishna.

Not only must the observant Jew not perform any of the prohibitions from the list of 39 major categories and hundreds of subcategories, but he must not do anything that even **resembles** a prohibited act. Some examples:

- Adding fresh water to a vase of cut flowers (sowing — any activity that causes or furthers plant growth).
- Making a bouquet of flowers (making a sheaf).
- Separating good fruit from spoiled fruit (winnowing, selecting, sifting).
- Cutting hair or nails (shearing sheep-removing outer covering of a human or animal).
- Applying makeup (dyeing).
- Braiding hair (weaving).
- Drawing blood for a blood test (slaughtering).
- Rubbing soap to make lather, applying face cream, polishing shoes, using scouring powder for utensils or other surfaces (scraping-smoothing the surface of any material by grinding, rubbing, or polishing).

- Sharpening a pencil (cutting to shape-altering the size or shape of an item to make it better for human use).
- Painting, drawing, typing (writing, making durable marks on a durable material).
- Tearing through lettering on a package (erasing).
- Opening an umbrella or unfolding a screen (building).
- Smoking a cigarette, using the telephone, turning on an electric light (kindling a fire).
- Switching off an electric light (extinguishing a fire).

Some objects are termed *muktzeh*, meaning to “set aside” or “store away” and cannot even be touched unless one should unintentionally perform one of the forbidden acts. Some things considered *muktzeh* are money and checks; scissors, hammers and saws; pencils and pens; battery-operated toys and flashlights; radios and CDs; telephones and computers. Even the Sabbath candlesticks cannot be touched after they are lit. You can’t plan a trip or even think about one. One shouldn’t even take long strides or rush somewhere, which would resemble your non-sabbath activities.

As mentioned, kindling a fire is not allowed and this would include switching on an electric light. Commonly, food is prepared before the sabbath, and a fire or stove is kept on for heating the food or making coffee or tea, and no, I have no idea why making coffee or tea or warming food is allowed. Some even hire a *sabbath-goy*, a non-Jew to perform some of these forbidden tasks for the Jewish family, and automatic timers have helped eliminate some of that need.

### **What can you do?**

Not much. Some allowances are made for unintentional violations, such as a simple act of moving a chair could leave a mark on the floor, a violation of the sabbath. Keeping the Law (and modern legalism among Christians) is a very complicated matter, and it knows no real bounds. Remember: The Church is not under the Law but is under Grace.

### **Summarizing The Law of Moses**

We have seen that the period we have been calling the Age of the Law when the Mosaic Covenant was in effect exhibited some characteristics

that are very different from what we experience spiritually under Grace in this present Church Age. Among them:

- The Law was given exclusively to the nation Israel.
- The Mosaic Covenant was a contract between God and Israel only.
- The Mosaic Covenant was with the entire nation of Israel, including both believers and unbelievers alike. All of Israel was obliged under the terms of the covenant.
- Israel agreed to the terms of the Mosaic Covenant when Moses laid it out for them after he was given the details by God on Mt. Sinai.
- The Mosaic Covenant was a conditional covenant, meaning both parties, national Israel and God, were obliged under its terms. God promised to bless Israel if they met the terms of the covenant and discipline them if they did not.
- Thus, it was a works-based covenant. Israel earned blessing and deserved discipline.
- The Mosaic Covenant was in three parts:
  - A moral code of behavior captured in the Decalog.
  - A civil code to regulate how Israelites would interact with each other and other nations.
  - A worship code to regulate how the Israelite would interact with God.
- The Mosaic Covenant was never designed to produce righteousness for the purposes of the individual Jew finding salvation through keeping the Law. Keeping the Law saved no one. Salvation was (and remains) by faith alone in the promises of God as revealed to mankind at any given point in history.
- The Mosaic Covenant was designed to reveal the perfect righteousness of God, to make man aware of his sinful nature, clarify what sin was, and demonstrate man's inability to make himself righteous.
- The Covenant was designed to set Israel apart as a nation among the community of nations as one in a special relationship with God.
- The Covenant was a "pedagogue" (schoolmaster) to prepare Israel for their savior. Thus it was designed to be temporary until that savior came.
- The Mosaic Covenant was designed to point to Jesus as Messiah.

## **What's Next?**

We have covered much of Jewish tradition and how they functioned under the Mosaic Covenant or Law. All of what we have seen is ultimately leading to final fulfillment in what Israel calls the Kingdom, and what Church Age believers call the Millennium.

To get there we must deal with the Tribulation, which is God's return to dealing with Israel, as we shall see. I do not intend to get into a detailed study of the Tribulation but only touch on some important points to characterize it. In order to deal with the Tribulation and ultimately the Kingdom, I need to establish who it is about and more importantly, who it is NOT about. This, we have ...

## **The Case For the Pre-Trib Rapture**

Based on a study done by Dwight Pentecost of Dallas Seminary in his book *Things To Come*.

### **Introduction:**

The "Rapture of the Church," also called the "Resurrection of the Church" and sometimes the "Translation of the Church," is an event whereby the Church, that is all true born again Church Age believers (alive and dead) verses nominal Christians are removed from Earth. The dead in Christ rise first and then those who are alive go up to meet Christ in the clouds (1 Thess 4:13-18). This event is associated with the Tribulation or End of Time events. There are four schools of thought concerning the question of when the Rapture takes place.

- 1) Pre-Trib – Before the Tribulation begins
- 2) Mid-Trib (sometimes called "Pre Wrath") – Sometime near the middle of the Tribulation
- 3) Post-Trib – At the end and just before Christ's Return (Second Advent)
- 4) Multiple Raptures – There are several Rapture events during the Tribulation.

The correct answer is number 1 and the removal of the true Church takes place before the Tribulation begins. This is the position I will defend here.

## **The Tribulation:**

Most Christian denominations subscribe to a Tribulation period in some form. Many believe there is no such thing as the Rapture and the Tribulation is historical, having concluded with events associated with the fall of Jerusalem (AD 70) and early church persecution. This position must “spiritualize” the events associated with the Tribulation, because most events described in Revelation cannot be found in history. They must then be seen as allegorical and not literal. They also take the position that the Book of the Revelation, which speaks in detail of these events, must be assigned a date of writing before AD 70, while all evidence points to a much later date, usually about AD 90-93. If the Tribulation is over, then we are currently in what is called the Kingdom Age (also called the Millennium). The Catholic Church and some Protestant denominations subscribe to this theory.

Most evangelical Protestant denominations see the events of the Tribulation as both literal and yet future, mainly because they tend to believe the Bible should be taken literally unless there is clear contextual evidence to suggest otherwise.

While there are differences of opinion, the Tribulation is generally seen to be characterized thus:

- Antichrist attempts to set up a one-world government.
- The Jews will be singled out for destruction.
- It is a time of judgment when God judges the unbelieving world.
- The false religious systems of the world are finally revealed for what they truly are, Satanic inspired.
- It finally proves that the only way of life is one in a personal relationship with Christ and that we NEED Him.
- It lasts for seven years.
- It is a time where God’s wrath is poured out on the unbelieving world. Some view the first half as “relatively normal” while the second half is the “wrathful” part, but scriptural evidence suggests the whole period is “wrathful”.
- There is a major event at the midpoint where antichrist sets up a statue to himself in the new Temple in Jerusalem and demands worship.

- It ends with the triumphant return of Christ.
- This is followed by the earthly reign of the Lord of Lord and King of Kings that lasts 1000 years and is referred to as the Millennium by Christians and the Kingdom by Jews. The Jews see this as more eternal than limited to 1000 years, and it is, in that the earthly 1000 years are extended into eternity.

I would add several other points because of my Pre-Trib Rapture position

- 1) The *true* Church will be removed and not go through this period. True Church = born again Church Age believers – those who have put their faith in Christ as the sole means of salvation and are NOT depending on any personal works to make salvation possible or to secure it. FAITH ALONE IN CHRIST ALONE!
- 2) The nominal church (“Christian” in name only) WILL go through the Tribulation and even play a major role aligned with Antichrist.
- 3) The true Church will be in Heaven during this period and experiencing its own judgment called the Bema Judgment.
- 4) The true Church will return with Christ at the Second Advent.

## **Why is the Pre-Trib Position the Correct Biblical Position?**

### **Daniel’s Seventieth Week**

A key passage concerning these future events is found in the Old Testament, Daniel Chapter 9:20-27, the Seventy Weeks Prophecy. In this prophecy, Daniel is given a vision about “his people” (verse 24) and that would be the Jews in Babylonian Exile. In the vision Daniel is given a series of times and events that will be associated with those times.

“His people” have seventy weeks remaining to:

- Put an end to rebellion
- Bring sin to completion
- Atonement for iniquity
- Bring in perpetual righteousness
- Seal up the prophetic vision
- Anoint a most holy place



In the Hebrew, "Seventy weeks" can be weeks of days or weeks of years – groups of seven years. The latter is the only interpretation that makes any sense of the prophecy. If "seventy sevens" is interpreted as seventy groups of seven years (490 years) the prophecy amazingly lines up with actual events.

Note that in verses 25-27 the seventy weeks are broken down into three specific periods of time: seven weeks (49 years), sixty-two weeks (434 years), and one week (7 years). Daniel says from the decree to rebuild Jerusalem (the Babylonians destroyed it) will be seven weeks and sixty-two weeks until Messiah comes. (Some Bibles will translate that, "the anointed one" but the Hebrew word *mashiyach* used here means "messiah.") Why did Daniel break that up into two specific periods of time?

There were three decrees to rebuild Jerusalem, but only one resulted in work beginning and being completed, that of Artaxerxes in 445BC. Exactly 49 years later the Temple was completed and dedicated, and Jerusalem was considered rebuilt. Sixty-two weeks (434 years) later Jesus rode into Jerusalem on a donkey to fulfill the second part of the prophecy!

Daniel says that after the sixty-two weeks the Messiah will be cut off and the "prince of the people that shall come will destroy the city and the temple." Jesus was of course crucified the following week. Forty years later in AD 70 the Romans under Titus destroyed Jerusalem and the temple, leaving "not one stone upon another" just as Jesus predicted.

Daniel says there is another "week." Where is that week? Jerusalem was destroyed some forty years after the death of Messiah. We have a literal seven weeks, a literal sixty-two weeks, but NOT a literal one week from the death of Messiah to the destruction of Jerusalem? That event does not satisfy even the basic details of the prophecy, therefore the historical interpretation of the Catholic Church and some Protestant denominations must be wrong.

We believe a new age or dispensation we call the Church Age started at Pentecost right after the death of Christ, and it interrupted the Age of Israel. This happened because Israel rejected the King and thus the promised Kingdom, and God is calling out a people of His own from among the

Gentiles. Of course, there are also Jewish believers during this period, but the Church is distinctly Gentile, while the previous age is distinctly Jewish.

One point we can take away is Daniel's prophecy is it is all ABOUT Israel and NOT the Church. The Church is never mentioned in the OT, and Paul calls it a "mystery" in his writings. The Church Age is mentioned only in the very last part of Jesus' ministry, when he refers to this "mystery" (Romans 11:25; 16:25; 1 Corinthians 13:1-3; Ephesians 3:1-9; plus others). The word translated "mystery" is *mysterion* in the Greek and means "something hidden or secret." It is the same word used for secret rites and rituals of Greek fraternal organizations of the day. The *mysterion* was not known to any but the initiates who were told all the secrets upon initiation. Apply this to us. The Jews were kept in the dark about this as Ephesians 3:1-9 suggests, but we in the Church are like the initiates of the Greek fraternity, and the secrets or "mysteries" are revealed to us. Daniel was not shown the Church Age in his vision. He saw only the seventy weeks and not the inserted Church Age. He saw the mountain tops and not the valley that is the Church Age between.

All of verse 27 is about that last seventieth week, and most of the Book of Revelation is concerning it. So, on the Day of Pentecost after the Cross, the Age of Israel was interrupted, and the Church Age began. God still owes Israel seven years.

### **The Analogy to a Middle Eastern Wedding**

We looked at this in detail recently, thus just some high points here. The mechanics of a middle-eastern wedding are very different from ours today. The process was in three parts,

1. Betrothal - The wedding was arranged by the parents, dowery agreed and paid, and a contract was signed. The couple was considered legally married at this point and only a writ of divorce based on adultery could dissolve the marriage. The groom then departs to his father's house to prepare a place for his bride, exactly what Jesus said in John 14.
2. The Second part is the Bridegroom comes for his bride at some future date, months or even as much as a year after the betrothal, the bridegroom comes and "steals" away his bride and takes her to his father's house where he has probably added an addition for his

new bride. He announces his presence with a “shout” and a “trumpet blast” just like 1 Thessalonians 4:16.

3. The marriage is consummated and the couple present themselves to the guests for the wedding feast. The period in the wedding chamber is 7 days.

The Church is said to be the Bride of Christ. The betrothal is analogous to the Church Age believer accepting Christ as his/her personal savior. The believer becomes ***contractually bound*** to the bridegroom.

The groom stealing away his bride and taking her to his father’s house is analogous to the Rapture of the Church. Jesus said he would go away and prepare a place and come again to receive us (John 14:1-4).

The bride and groom enter the bridal chamber for seven days and consummate the marriage before joining the wedding supper. This is the Tribulation period on earth and the Bema evaluation for believers in Heaven.

The wedding supper is analogous to the Kingdom Age or Millennium when Jesus will reign as King of Kings and Lord of Lords after He has revealed His bride at the Second Advent. All this would suggest the bride is removed and taken to a place of safety (the Father’s house) but is revealed at the Second Advent, which will end the Tribulation and begin the Kingdom.

### **Other Arguments:**

1. The Second Advent is described as having many signs to watch for, but the Rapture is seen as imminent and *no signs are given as warnings*. It will come suddenly. Therefore the doctrine of the imminence of the Rapture forbids the Church in any part of the Seventieth Week.
2. The “Restrainer” is removed during the Tribulation (2 Thes 2:15-16) – There is some level of restraint on Satan and evil, but we are told that will be removed allowing evil to have its way unrestrained. Some say the “restrainer” is government, law, or the visible church, but all three will be present during the Tribulation. The “Restrainer” must be the active ministry of the Holy Spirit in believers who are the Temple

of the Holy Spirit during this age and who will be removed at the beginning of the Trib.

3. The necessity of an interval between the rapture and the Second Advent – The word *apantésis* (to meet) used in 1 Thes 4:17 requires an immediate return, but the Greek word does not require such an interpretation, and events after the translation make the insertion of an interval between the two events necessary: 1) the judgment seat of Christ where Church Age believers will be evaluated and 2) the marriage of the Lamb.
4. Passages such as 2 Cor 5:9; 1 Cor 3:11-16, and Rev 4:4; 19:8, 14 show the Church has been examined and received her rewards before the Second Advent. Some period of time is needed for this.
5. Rev 19:7-9 indicates the consummation of the union between Christ and the Church precedes the Second Advent.
6. Distinction between the Rapture and the Second Advent
  - a. The Rapture entails the removal of all believers, while the Second Advent entails the revealing of the Son
  - b. The Rapture sees the Saints caught up in the air, the Second Advent sees Christ return with them in glory.
  - c. In the Rapture the Groom comes to claim His bride, in the Second Advent He returns with His Bride.
  - d. The Rapture is the removal of the Church and the Second Advent is the setting up of the Kingdom.
  - e. The Rapture is a message of comfort, while the Second Advent is one of judgment.
  - f. The Rapture is a mystery while the Second Advent is revealed in detail in both Testaments.
  - g. The Rapture is related to the Church, while the Second Advent is related to Israel. The Tribulation is a continuation of the Age of Israel as stated in Daniel 9 — Daniel's Seventieth Week.
  - h. The Rapture is for believers only, while the Second Advent is for all mankind.
  - i. The expectation of the Church at the Rapture is to be taken into the Lord's presence, while the expectation of Israel at the Second Advent is to be taken into the Kingdom.

## **The Twenty-Four Elders**

In Revelation 4:4 we are given a vision of twenty-four elders seated on thrones, clothed in white, crowned with golden crowns, and in heaven and the presence of God. Some argue these are angels, but that cannot be, as this description cannot be applied to angels. Seated on thrones and wearing white represents righteousness and royal dignity. The crowns (*stefanos*) are crowns of reward like the laurel crowns given athletes and not crowns of rulership. The number 24 is symbolic of the priesthood; the Levites had 24 orders, and only the Church is said to be a Royal Priesthood (1 Pet 2:5, 9). These twenty-four represent the Raptured and evaluated and rewarded Church in Heaven before the Tribulation begins in the following chapters.

## **The Thessalonians**

The church at Thessalonica suffered extreme persecution very early and was concerned the Tribulation had begun and they had missed the Rapture. Paul's letters assures them this is normal and they have not missed it.

## **Guidance Absent in Epistles**

If the Church was to go through the Tribulation the epistles would have given some kind of guidance on how they were to deal with it. None is given.

## **The message of the two witnesses**

Two witnesses will appear during the Tribulation and their message seems to be related to Israel as is their clothing, character, and assumed identity.

## **The destiny of the Church**

The destiny is said to be heavenly with all her promises as heavenly, while Israel is said to be earthly (Mat 25:24).

## **The Church at Laodicia**

Chapters 2 and 3 of Revelation are the letters to the seven churches. Most expositors see these churches as symbolic of periods in church history with Laodicia as the final form of the church. The seventh church at Laodicia is pictured as lukewarm. If it is the true church, how could it go through the

Tribulation and remain only lukewarm? The true church terminates with the Church at Philadelphia.

### **The remnant at the Second Advent**

Passages tell us there will be a remnant of believers in physical bodies present on earth at the Second Advent who enter the Kingdom. If all believers were raptured at the Second Advent how can there be any believers remaining?

### **The chronology of the Book of The Revelation**

Chapters 1-3 represent the development of the Church in this present age. Chapters 4-11 cover the events of the Seventieth Week and conclude with the return of Christ in 11:13-18. Chapters 12-19 survey the Seventieth Week once again, this time revealing the actors on the stage. This makes a mid-trib Rapture impossible and leaves room only for a pre-trib Rapture.

### **The object of the Satanic attack during the Tribulation**

The only organized church mentioned as being in the Tribulation is the apostate Jezebel system (Rev 2:22) and the harlot system (Rev 17 and 18). There is no mention of the true church as separate from this apostate system. Then if present, it must be part of the apostate system and subject to the same judgments. But believing witnesses are said to have kept themselves from defilement. Since the true church is not mentioned, it must be concluded these are believers who come to Christ after the beginning of the Tribulation, they are separate from the apostate church, and the true Church is not present.

### **The Church is not appointed to wrath**

Revelation 3:10 "I will keep you from the hour of temptation..." The Greek does not say "during" or "through" the hour of temptation but rather "from the hour of temptation". This is determined by the use of the Greek *ek* which means out from.

1 Thessalonians 5:9 says "God has not appointed us to wrath..." The passage compares light to darkness and a comparison to Joel 2:2; Zeph 1:14-18; and Amos 5:18 will identify darkness as the Seventieth Week.

1 Thessalonians 1:9-10 also indicates the Church is not appointed to wrath but the revealing of the Son of Man.

### **Conclusion:**

The evidence is strong for the Tribulation being a time of God returning to dealing with Israel as indicated by Daniel's Seventy Weeks vision. Israel and the Church are two different entities in God's plan, and He has two different economies for dealing with the two. Israel is not the Church, and the Church is not Israel. Yes, there are Gentile believers during the Age of Israel and Jewish believers during the Church Age. When Israel rejected the King, she rejected the promised Kingdom. Both John the Baptist and Jesus said the "Kingdom is at hand". With that rejection, God interrupted the Age of Israel and set out to call out a people of His own from among the Gentiles, who did receive Him. Once that group is complete, and we don't know when, God will come for His bride and take her to His Father's house for the wedding. Christ and His bride will be revealed at the Second Advent.