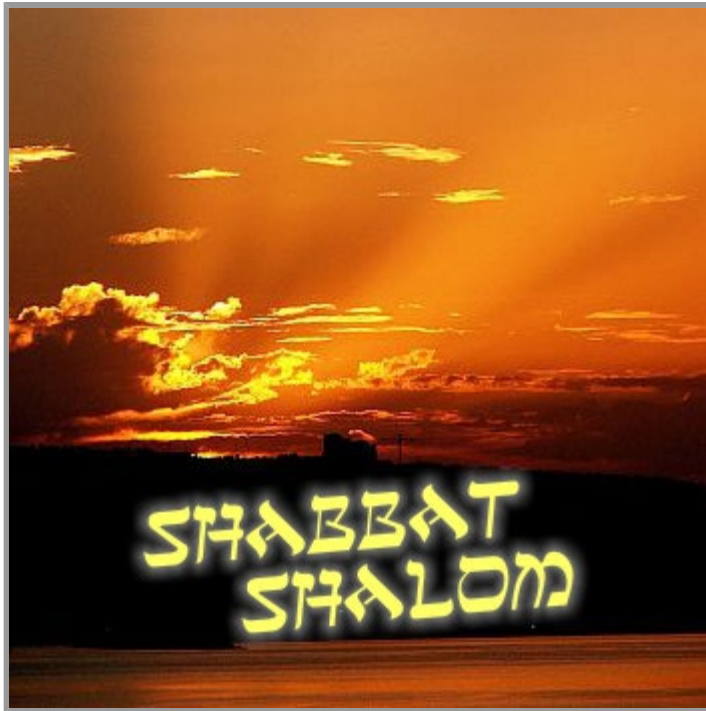


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Shabbat sunset over Haifa, Israel

Keeping the Sabbath

by haRold Smith

a citizen of the Commonwealth (Ephesians 2:19)

*"You shall not take the name of YaHoVeH your Elohim in vain, **for YaHoVeH will not hold him guiltless** who takes His name in vain." Exodus 20:7*

*"Remember the Day, **the Shabbat**, to set it apart for YaHoVeH." Exodus 20:8*

*"And Yeshua came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up. And **as was His custom** He went to the synagogue on Shabbat..." Luke 4:16*

One of the basic tenets of faith is listed in the **third of the Ten Words** (commonly called the "commandments" - **click on highlighted words to view content**) which says to not take YaHoVeH's Name "in vain". While most consider that an injunction against swearing, the Hebrew word translated as the English "vain" is **shav'** actually means "emptiness, **vanity**, falsehood" and is used again in **Deuteronomy 5:20** to be translated as the

English "false". To say that the name of YaHoVeH is "The LORD" is to make a false statement - and that is the definitive injunction of YaHoVeH. What is extremely ironic is what YaHoVeH declared to **Jeremiah** - once we understand that the word "**Baal**" means "Lord." Therefore, to call Him "LORD" instead of "YaHoVeH" is to worship Him falsely - in vain.

*"You do not have, because you do not ask. You ask and yet fail to receive, **because you ask with wrong purpose and selfish motives** ." (James 4:2-3)*

The dictionary defines vanity as something that is used or done for selfish purposes. YaHoVeH is trying to say that when we attempt to force our will and desires into the realm of the spiritual, the atmosphere of faith He needs to operate in becomes nullified; hence, we can not be "pleasing" to Him because we have not sought after Him and His will first. It is possible to appropriate His Word and utilize it for our own selfish purposes - but when we do, we are taking His Name in vain. Most who do this are not of the understanding that self-imposition or **self-determination** is also at the heart of witchcraft. To keep us from having 'vain imaginings' we must cast down those imaginations and every high thing, every thought, that exalts itself against the true knowledge of YaHoVeH, which is **denying self** and bring those thoughts into captivity unto the obedience of Yeshua - in conformity to the Life He exemplified for us to live. To deny one's self means to disregard, to lose sight of and forget himself and his own interests. (**2Corinthians 10:5**) By praying vainly, we can actually find ourselves praying in opposition to His Plans and Purposes - at which point we will not be held guiltless, meaning that we place ourselves in a position to become subject to a spirit of **Deception**.

Another of YaHoVeH's Words that has come to be practiced vainly is the Sabbath. The English word "Sabbath" is derived from the Hebrew word **Shabbat** and is first found in **Genesis 2:2-3** meaning, "to cease or stop, **to rest**". Established by YaHoVeH Himself, the very definition of **Shabbat** IS the seventh day - the Day of Rest. As mentioned in earlier articles, to keep something **holy** (Hebrew *kodesh*) merely means to keep it separate from the world - not some mystical cartwheel. YaHoVeH simply wants us to rest in and be with Him as He rested and by so doing, honoring Him with our obedience to His directive to keep His Day set apart to Him - not to change it. In researching the scriptures concerning the Sabbath, I found it as one of the Ten Words of **Exodus 20:1-17**. As I was reading through the ten, the Father tenderly whispered in my ear and said, "*haRold, you don't have a problem with the other nine - what is wrong with this one?*" **Duh!!** I have to tell you that as I continued my research, it came as quite an eye-opener to realize that Yeshua, being Hebrew, kept the Sabbath (**Matthew 13:54, Mark 6:2, Luke**

4:16) - as did the Hebrew *Sha'ul* (the apostle Paul, [Acts 17:2](#), [Acts 18:4](#)). Words mean things, but in separating ourselves from the Hebrew perspective these words were written from, we lose much of what the words actually mean. The description of the Last Supper was actually a *Sabbath Seder*, not held on Easter's Good Friday but during the Hebrew feast of *Pesach* (Passover - see [No Other God](#) for detail). [Scripture](#) tells us that while *Pesach* is not a Sabbath but a "convocation" (in Hebrew it is called a *mikra*), it is still to be observed in the same manner as a *Shabbat* in that no ordinary work is to be performed. In [John 13:4-12](#), the vessel Yeshua poured the water from and the basin used to catch the run-off described in the washing of the feet of the disciples was a two-handled cup and basin used to ceremonially wash the hands between the blessing over the wine and the blessing over the bread before the *Shabbat* meal was served. The purpose of this ritual washing (called *u'rchatz*) is not for physical cleanliness, but for spiritual purification. The cloth Yeshua was girded with to dry their feet was the towel passed around with the cup and basin to dry the hands. All of these elements are still passed around the *Shabbat* table today. A large chasm has emerged between what scripture says about the manner in which to keep *Shabbat* and all the ritualistic practices that have become associated with it because some Rabbi or doctrine of man decrees it to be so. Viewed from a Hebraic understanding, however, scripture reveals itself in remarkable ways that we in the West have simply lost to contemporary [religious tradition](#).



U'rchatz - washing of hands

When I began this journey, the Father told me to not be afraid to question anything and everything - that if I approached Truth without an agenda, either of mine or of others, Truth will emerge to stand on its own merit. I find that He still prods me in the same way. For instance, like most, I had believed what I had been taught about there being a [NEW covenant](#) and that everything that had come before had been replaced, including *Shabbat* - that any day will do. I was as many Christians are today, considering the Sabbath of the Original Writings to be "[under the law](#)" and, more out of ignorance than anything else, just figured that was for people of a legalistic mindset. After all, He knows my heart, right? Then, I began asking the Father to reveal Himself to me in Truth - and my whole life changed (see [Arrows of Famine](#) for how that happened). Imagine my surprise when in researching scripture, I discovered [Genesis 2:2-3](#) which clearly shows the Sabbath did not originate with what most consider to be "[the Law](#)". Delving deeper into scripture, I found the Father to have *never* rescinded, altered or changed the Sabbath. In fact, it was not even given to the Hebrews for the first time at Mount Sinai. The Sabbath is different from the other nine. It is the *only* one of the Ten Words of the Father ("commandments" is a misnomer, see [Exodus 20:1](#)) that says to "[remember](#)" to keep because it had first been sanctified by the Father at creation for *all of mankind* and was first observed by YaHoVeH Himself ([Genesis 2:2-3](#)). Like the Rainbow ([Genesis 9:16](#)), *Shabbat* is the divinely ordained SIGN or SIGNATURE of the everlasting covenant He has made with *all of mankind* as a means to enter into His Rest - His Presence ([Exodus 31:13](#), [Ezekiel 20:20](#)). The reason you don't find Yeshua ever teaching principally about the Sabbath is that in His day among His people *everybody kept it* - even as it still kept among His Family around the world today. Since it was an acknowledged part of everyone's life, it was not something that was necessary to teach about. When the Pharisees approached Yeshua over disputes about His approach to keeping *Shabbat*, He answered them about the hypocritical *manner* of the way in which they were handling it - *BUT HE NEVER REFUTED KEEPING SHABBAT, NOT ONCE*. Even when speaking of the tribulation to come, He said to pray their flight be not on the Sabbath ([Matthew 24:20](#)). Why would He do that except He understood the sanctity of the Sabbath - and that it would still be observed? There is *NO* place found in scripture where the Sabbath is ever rescinded. *In fact*, what scripture does say is that YaHoVeH's Sabbath day will be observed in the new creation on the new earth in the new heavens by the redeemed host of *every* nation ([Isaiah 66:22-23](#)).

Once I began to traverse this arena, however, I found that there to be a huge difference between what the scripture says about how and when to keep the Sabbath and all the religious practices that have become associated with it. Again, to keep something holy merely means to keep it separate, set apart from the rest of the world. The Hebrew word for "[work](#)" (from [Exodus 20:9-10](#) "*you shall do no work on the Sabbath*") comes from the Hebrew [melakah](#) and is pretty plain in its meaning - *occupation, work, business; the work of an artisan for public consumption*. In other words, you don't do on the Sabbath what you would normally do on the other six days to make a living. This is *all* the words say to do. *Everything else* associated with *Shabbat* has come from someone's ritual of tradition. Christian theologians are quick to point to [Matthew 12:1-14](#) as proof that Yeshua broke the Sabbath. However, in so doing, they use the same standards the Pharisees were using - filtering the words written through the prism of religious traditions that *added* meanings to those words. The Pharisaical tradition (still in practice in the man-made religion of Judaism today) *extended* the meaning of the word "[melakah](#)" to include no physical activity whatsoever. But, according to the words recorded in Exodus 20, Yeshua did not break the

Sabbath - He did no commercial work on the Sabbath nor did He engage in any commercial activity that would require anyone else to break the Sabbath. There are no restrictions given in the original words that prohibit eating. His disciples in the corn field were merely eating - they were not gathering to sell or to store up. What was violated was the religious tradition of the Pharisees (known as the Oral Law) that had been added onto the original meaning of scripture. This is what He chastened the Pharisaical leaders over - "*Is it lawful on the Sabbath days to do good, or to do evil - to save life or to destroy it?*" He was rebuking them for the hypocrisy of the manner in which they handled the Sabbath by adding traditions that are contrary to the Nature and Essence of the Father. He never told them to NOT keep the Sabbath - just to keep it properly. In claiming to be Lord of the Sabbath, did Rabbi



Yeshua is Lord of Shabbat

Yeshua do away with the Sabbath command and thereby, the entire Torah? That is what Christianity would have us to believe - but the function of a Rabbi is to illuminate the reality and beauty of YaHoVeH's ways by teaching the proper interpretation and application of the Torah. Yeshua's argument is from lesser to greater (a common rabbinic teaching mechanism): from violating rabbinic tradition to observing YaHoVeH's instruction rightly - substantiated by comparing David's actions to His own. Yeshua does not defend His actions by saying He trumps the Torah so He can violate it. Rather, He uses the common Rabbinic understanding that certain laws were more important than others and that YaHoVeH's law was certainly more important than theirs; i.e., *if David can violate the priestly law and be innocent, I can violate your ordinances and be innocent*. Whenever accused of breaking *Shabbat*, Yeshua

emphatically rejected and refuted such charge by appealing to the Original Writings: "*Have you not read...*" (**Matthew 12:3-5**). In claiming to be Lord of the Sabbath, Yeshua proclaims His Rabbinic authority to properly interpret the commands of YaHoVeH and rightly interprets the meaning of *Shabbat* - healing and health.

"There remains therefore a REST to the people of Elohim." Hebrews 4:9

The Greek word translated as "rest" in this verse is **sabbatismos** and means: 1) *keeping Sabbath*. Strong's concordance has a tendency to overwrite or add to the meaning of the original words in attempt to weasel word-fit the topsy-turvy **replacement theology** of the New Testament into the Torah it attempts to negate and replace. But, when the original words are read from their original context, the actual meaning of those words are brought into sharp clarity. Christians are fond of quoting the words of **Psalms 37:4** which say to "*delight in the Lord and He will give you the desires of your heart*" without properly understanding the context of **Isaiah 58:13-14** that specifically tells us how we delight in YaHoVeH - by keeping *Shabbat* according to the Nature and Essence of YaHoVeH (the phrase, **ruach hakodesh** - reading right to left is Hebrew for *the holiness of spirit*). In fact, the entire chapter of **Isaiah 58** speaks of the rest we are to be seeking for in the Presence of YaHoVeH - which is to get beyond ourselves and into Him. He is not looking for a set of rules and regulations to abide by, He is looking for an attitude of heart that begins with Him and not us - to obey His Voice **AND** keep His Words which includes keeping His *Shabbat* the way He interprets it. When does *Shabbat* begin? It was on the seventh day that YaHoVeH rested from His work - not associated to any celestial cycle or solar calendar. The days of the week in the *Tanakh* (OT) are not labeled - that is purely a Greek invention. There is only *yom echad* (day one), *yom shenee* (day two), etc. Saturday is considered the seventh day while Sunday is recognized as the first day of the week, even given that distinction on the Gregorian calendar universally used today. **Genesis 1:5** says "*there was evening and morning - the first day*". Since, from the scriptural Hebraic perspective a day begins at sundown, the Sabbath begins at the start of the seventh day at sundown (what modern calendars mention as Friday evening) and lasts until the first three stars in the night sky are spotted on Saturday evening. It would surprise most Christians to learn that Abraham, the "father of the faith", kept the Sabbath - 430 years before the Ten Words were given at Sinai (**Genesis 26:5, Galatians 3:17**). To keep something holy means to set it apart, to keep it distinctive from the rest of the world.

"Also the foreigners who join themselves to YaHoVeH, to minister to Him, and to love His Name, to be His servants, everyone who keeps from profaning the Sabbath and holds fast My Covenant" Isaiah 56:6

In 1517 Martin Luther initiated the Protestant Reformation when he wrote the 95 theses in reaction to a sermon by Johann Tetzel claiming that the purchase of a letter of indulgence from those in the hierarchy of the Roman Catholic Church covered the forgiveness of sins yet to be committed by that individual. Luther nailed those 95 protests to the door of the Catholic Church, formally splitting away and forming the Protestant Movement. While he made those 95 changes to his own constitution of reform - **HE INCORPORATED ALL THE REST OF THE**

TRADITIONS OF THE ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH into his movement, including Sunday worship. That is why today, Catholic Protestantism is merely another branch in the tree of Christianity which is firmly planted in the roots of Catholicism - not scripture. Should you and I keep *Shabbat*? The answer given by the Christian church for the last 1700 years is "No." But, examine these words from Isaiah closely. YaHoVeH speaks through His prophet Isaiah, exhorting and blessing those not born Hebrew but who have joined themselves to Him and honor His Sabbath. Those with Christian backgrounds like to pride themselves on most of these actions - a desire to serve Him, love Him and be His servants. But then we read "*who keeps from profaning the Sabbath*" - can it be that all those Christians who ignore the Sabbath are actually profaning it by changing their worship to an hour on Sunday? It certainly seems that Isaiah's declaration of YaHoVeH's words considers the replacement of the Sabbath by Sunday worship to be a form of profaning Sabbath. The question we must ask, if we are followers of YaHoVeH and desire to be His servants, is really very simple: why do we worship on Sunday rather than on the day that is the only day of worship ever mentioned in the whole of Scripture? May I suggest that worshiping on Sunday just because it has always been done so is not a sufficient reason, especially if YaHoVeH thinks otherwise. **Worship** is defined by individual behavior - what we give ourselves to, what we serve defines who we worship (**Deuteronomy 11:16, Luke 4:8**). A servant waits on the voice of the Master. The most excellent form of worship we can offer the Father is not found in a crowd, through music or by ritual observances. The most excellent form of worship is to position ourselves before His Presence with a humble spirit and a contrite heart and to wait - to wait upon hearing His Voice as validated in scripture and, thus, entering into His Rest (**Isaiah 57:15, Matthew 11:29, Jeremiah 7:22-23**). Do we enter into His rest the other days as well? Of course - it is in His Presence we find that rest (**Exodus 33:14**). The rest Yeshua asks us to enter into is the same rest He entered into by keeping *Shabbat* (**Matthew 11:29**). Simply put, to keep this day special to YaHoVeH is to honor Him. Christianity has adopted an "either / or" mentality because of the comment made in **Acts 20:7** that says the early believers met on Sunday, the first day of the week - but that was after keeping *Shabbat* on the seventh day. **Acts 2:46-47** encourages the faithful to meet together every day. But, neither of these verses says anything about excluding or replacing *Shabbat*.

Since the time of Abraham, YaHoVeH has invited anyone into His Family who would keep His Words and has a heart for those not ethnically born Hebrew. But most come with a mistaken understanding about what it means to be in His household. It is we who have been grafted into the House of Israel, the Family of YaHoVeH - not the other way around. When a foreigner comes to faith in the Hebrew Elohim of Israel by observance of the Ten Words of the Father, he is considered a member of that family with all the privileges accorded the natural born. It has always been the case that he is to be treated no differently from those naturally born into the family (**Leviticus 19:34**). However, what he is not given is the privilege to re-write the Words of the Father concerning that family. A "son of YaHoVeH", therefore, is anyone who receives YaHoVeH by obedience to His Words (**John 1:12**). Maybe it's time to start acting like we belong in YaHoVeH's Family by keeping the fourth of His Words. Eleven times the *Tanakh* warns against profaning the Sabbath. The prohibition is applied to everyone in the community - regardless of ethnic origin.

Ignoring the Sabbath always brings grief and chastisement. Do you think there are exceptions to His Word? If there are exceptions, they are not found recorded anywhere in scripture - nor is it found in scripture where Yeshua rescinded the Sabbath. For that matter, as much as it has been attributed to Him, it is not found where Paul did either. When Paul was saying to not esteem one day above another in the letter to the Romans he DID NOT say, "*do not keep the Sabbath*" - but was addressing an issue of judging one another based upon varying interpretations of already decided fundamental principles between sects of Judaism (see **Romans 14 & the Sabbath** for an in-depth examination). To follow out the consistency of the logic of the one who says, "*I treat all the days the same as the Sabbath*" would be the same as saying that if six other women were treated in the same manner as the one wife who is to be honored and exalted above all others - it would not be considered adultery. The way we honor the Father is to keep the one day He declared to be set apart for Him - separate. This is what it means to do **the Father's Will** - and not our own.

Once we realize that all the books of the Book were written by Hebrews, from a Hebrew mindset, out of a Hebrew culture and approach them with an intellectual honesty (the definition of "**simplicity**" found in **2Corinthians 11:3**), - they take on a completely different texture. To read Paul with the understanding that he was a Hebrew, a Rabbi of considerable significance and that he said in **Acts 24:14** that he kept all of the ways of his fathers, the patriarchs of Israel, elevates the rest of his words to a different light - something our "Christian" teachers have failed to pass



on to us. And if this is not enough to convince you that worshipping on Sunday instead of *Shabbat* is not scriptural, read it *In Their Own Words* - more evidence the Sabbath change was man-made.

Keeping the Sabbath, a discussion

"Do not think that I have come to abolish Torah or the Prophets; *I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them.*" Matthew 5:17-20



the Sabbath Series

Part One: Keeping the Sabbath

Part Two: the Tradition of Men

Part Three: In Their Own Words

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???Questions???

Please feel free to email me at harold@hethathasaneer.com. While not claiming to have all the answers, it would be an honor to partake with you of what Spirit is uncovering.

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