

9-1-04
BIBLE LABOR DAYS - THE BIBLICAL CONCEPT OF THE DAY OF REST!
God's Divine Labor Day Celebrations

Genesis 2:1 Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host of them.

Genesis 2:2 And on the seventh day God ended his work which he had made; and he rested on the seventh day from all his work which he had made.

Genesis 2:3 And God blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it: because that in it he had rested from all his work which God created and made.

Monday is what we call Labor Day for most people. We think of Labor Day as the unofficial ending of summer. It usually marks the beginning of the school year.

The History of Labor Day goes back to the late 1800's when companies would take advantage of workers requiring people to work for meager wages 7 days a week. Out of all that turmoil was born this Holiday we call Labor Day. Labor Day is a national day of rest for laborers in our nation.

As our minds are focused on this holiday most of us have off work tomorrow and we will enjoy a time of relaxation and fellowship with friends and family.

Because of the holiday I thought I would share a message about what the Bible has to say about God's day of rest. You see, God established proper days of rest for His people long before the invention of Labor Day.

**WHAT THE BIBLE SAYS ABOUT A DAY OF REST:
GOD'S LABOR DAY HOLIDAYS.**

I. THE BIBLE SAYS THAT GOD ESTABLISHED THE SABBATH DAY OF REST.

1. THE WEEKLY LABOR DAY SET BY GOD.

This was the first day set aside as a period of rest, a day off from work. A weekly holiday, so to speak.

Genesis 2:1 Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host of them.

Genesis 2:2 And on the seventh day God ended his work which he had made; and he rested on the seventh day from all his work which he had made.

Genesis 2:3 And God blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it: because that in it he had rested from all his work which God created and made.

The pattern of a day off from labor was established by God for man's benefit. It was established thousands of years before Labor Day. If our nation would have just followed the Biblical pattern it would have saved a lot of strife and turmoil back then. God established laws in His Word concerning labor, and rest, and servitude that were equitable and kind. This was way before the invention of labor unions.

Exodus 23:12 Six days thou shalt do thy work, and on the seventh day thou shalt rest: that thine ox and thine ass may rest, and the son of thy handmaid, and the stranger, **may be refreshed.**

God knew mankind needed a day set aside to rest and He set apart a day to be a blessing. This originates all the way back to creation.

God sanctified that day and made it a blessing and holy day to be set apart for this purpose.

Anything that man does that is good originates from God our creator. From the beginning of time itself God set a pattern for man to follow. A pattern where men should set aside a day and make that day a blessing. This concept was embedded in the very act of creation. A day of rest from the normal pattern of toil and labor.

DID GOD NEED TO REST?

Isaiah 40:28 Hast thou not known? hast thou not heard, that the everlasting God, the LORD, the Creator of the ends of the earth, fainteth not, neither is weary? there is no searching of his understanding.

Isaiah 40:29 He giveth power to the faint; and to them that have no might he increaseth strength.

The Bible says in Mark 2:27, "The Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath: "

God could have made the world in ten days with no rest?

God could have made the world in a year?

God could have made all things in one day?

He choose to make the world in 6 days and set apart one day for rest.

If God were not the creator than why is it that the whole civilized world has a 7 day week?

Our week of seven days has no astronomical basis. It does not divide exactly into a month or a year or any other time measurement. Yet it works amazingly well.

The ancient Romans tried an eight-day week. French revolutionaries tried to get rid of the seven-day week, as did the Russian revolutionaries. The government of Sri Lanka also tried to abolish the seven-day week in the 1960s. All of these failed and went back to a 7 day week!

The languages are not universal yet the seven day week is!

The reason is that God set the pattern.

The Bible had a set time of rest, God's divine labor days.

Every seventh day was called a Sabbath.

What is interesting is that even though we set aside Sunday as a day of worship, still in our minds most of us think of Monday as the first day of the work week. We also refer to Saturday and Sunday as the week end.

This concept of a having two days off comes from the fact that we honor both the Jewish Sabbath and the Christian day of worship on resurrection day.

Why is the pattern of taking off time from work important?

A. IT IS GOOD FOR OUR PHYSICAL WELL BEING TO TAKE OFF FROM WORK ONE DAY:

Mark 2:27 And he said unto them, The Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath:

It was for man's benefit and well being. That we may be refreshed physically!

Exodus 23:12 Six days thou shalt do thy work, and on the seventh day thou shalt rest: that thine ox and thine ass may rest, and the son of thy handmaid, and the stranger, may be refreshed.

B. IT IS GOOD FOR OUR SPIRITUAL WELL BEING.

The ministers of God work for God on the Sabbath and are guiltless.

Matthew 12:5 Or have ye not read in the law, how that on the sabbath days the priests in the temple profane the sabbath, and are blameless?

The Bible is full of commands for the priests to offer up offerings on the Sabbath days, and when they do so, and they go about doing the work of making sacrifices, they are not condemned or guilty of violating the Sabbath.

More important than the health benefits of taking a day of rest, is that God wants us to have a day of worship. Jesus said, how is it that the priests go about doing all this work on the sabbath day and are guiltless.

The busiest day of the week for me is Sunday! The purpose of taking off from work is that you have time to come to God's house and honor Him.

If you're working every day of the week, when will you have time to honor God and come to His house and worship Him?

God established a day of rest, to make it convenient for people to worship Him.

Every Holiday ought to be a **Holy Day**.

Throughout the Scripture, taking days off from work to honor God is exhibited in the Jewish calendar.

2. NOTE THE PATTERN OF (7) FOR GOD'S LABOR DAY CELEBRATIONS:

A. Feast Tabernacles took place the seventh month of the Jewish calendar.

The great holiday in the Jewish calendar was the feast of tabernacles. It took place the seventh month starting the 15th day. $7 \text{ month } 7 \times 2 = 14$ and the day after that is the 15th. This was the Jewish Labor Day Celebration.

B. Sabbath Year.

Every seventh year was the sabbath year. The land was supposed to rest a whole year.

Leviticus 26:15 And if ye shall despise my statutes, or if your soul abhor my judgments, so that ye will not do all my commandments, but that ye break my covenant:

Leviticus 26:16 I also will do this unto you; I will even appoint over you terror, consumption, and the burning ague, that shall consume the eyes, and cause sorrow of heart: and ye shall sow your seed in vain, for your enemies shall eat it.

Leviticus 26:30 And I will destroy your high places, and cut down your images, and cast your carcasses upon the carcasses of your idols, and my soul shall abhor you.

Leviticus 26:31 And I will make your cities waste, and bring your sanctuaries unto desolation, and I will not smell the savour of your sweet odours.

Leviticus 26:34 Then shall the land enjoy her sabbaths, as long as it lieth desolate, and ye be in your enemies' land; even then shall the land rest, and enjoy her sabbaths.

Leviticus 26:35 As long as it lieth desolate it shall rest; because it did not rest in your sabbaths, when ye dwelt upon it.

II Chronicles 36:20 And them that had escaped from the sword carried he away to Babylon; where they were servants to him and his sons until the reign of the kingdom of Persia:

II Chronicles 36:21 To fulfil the word of the LORD by the mouth of Jeremiah, until the land had enjoyed her sabbaths: for as long as she lay desolate she kept sabbath, to fulfil threescore and ten years.

C. The Year of Jubilee was a special Sabbath year for the Jews.

After the completion of $7 \times 7 = (49)$ years. Every 50th year there was to be a year of Jubilee. A reset button and year of liberty and rejoicing and forgiving debts. This was a reset button for the economy of the nation.

Our God is a God of patterns, and we should live in such a manner that we reflect these patterns.

So it is our God who needs no rest rested the seventh day to set an example, to establish a pattern for His children.

Our God has no need of rest. He rested for our benefit to establish a precedent. Not because He needed to rest. Jesus worked on the Sabbath to minister to the needs of others. The Jews criticized Him for healing on the Sabbath. How stupid that was. How nit picky!

Matthew 12:8 For the Son of man is Lord even of the sabbath day.

We need to know why we follow the Biblical pattern of sanctifying a day of rest and worship.

If the priests worked on the Sabbath day, and were guiltless, it is because the principle of setting aside a day of worshiping the Lord is more important than setting aside a day to rest physically. The priests did a lot of physical work on the sabbath and were guiltless because they were facilitating the work of the ministry so people could worship the Lord on their day off!

Because we have abandoned the Lord and his house of worship, we are rearing up a biblical illiterate generation. In our schools we try to tell kids they are just a biological product of chance

and evolution with no responsibility to a creator and God of order, then we wonder why they do bizarre things?

Who is to say they are right or wrong.. It is your opinion against theirs and what makes your opinion so much more important than mine or theirs.

Each generation has their own ideas of dress and standards and morality and sexuality.

Yet the Bible reveals a God who has a plan and we are blessed if we submit to that plan. God has His own set of Holidays and the pattern for these is prophetic, reasonable and organized.

Note the sabbath day was to be a blessing not a cursing.

Who looks at Labor Day as a cursing?

Only the devil himself takes what God has given as a blessing and makes men think it is a curse. Imagine trading the tree of life for the tree of knowledge of good and evil. Imagine choosing death rather than life. Only the devil could deceive men to that degree.

Genesis 3:22 And the LORD God said, Behold, the man is become as one of us, to know good and evil: and now, lest he put forth his hand, and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live for ever:

Genesis 3:23 Therefore the LORD God sent him forth from the garden of Eden, to till the ground from whence he was taken.

Genesis 3:24 So he drove out the man; and he placed at the east of the garden of Eden Cherubims, and a flaming sword which turned every way, to keep the way of the tree of life.

So only the devil could confuse men's minds to imagine that the Biblical sabbath was a burden and a curse and not a real blessing.

So it is today with the Christian Sabbath which we designate as Sunday.

Why would our nation choose to abandon the concept of a day of rest and worship? We have abandoned the blessing and are receiving a curse instead.

The Lord is our stay and our rest. In Him we should put our trust. He is the Lord of the Sabbath.

II. THE BIBLE TALKS ABOUT ENTERING INTO OUR LORD'S REST AS A DEEPER FULFILLMENT OF THIS PATTERN OF SABBATH RESTS.

Hebrews 3:17 But with whom was he grieved forty years? was it not with them that had sinned, whose carcasses fell in the wilderness?

Hebrews 3:18 And to whom sware he that they should not enter into his rest, but to them that believed not?

Hebrews 3:19 So we see that they could not enter in because of unbelief.

Hebrews 4:1 Let us therefore fear, lest, a promise being left us of entering into his rest, any of you should seem to come short of it.

Hebrews 4:2 For unto us was the gospel preached, as well as unto them: but the word preached did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in them that heard it.

Hebrews 4:3 For we which have believed do enter into rest, as he said, As I have sworn in my wrath, if they shall enter into my rest: although the works were finished from the foundation of the world.

Hebrews 4:4 For he spake in a certain place of the seventh day on this wise, And God did rest the seventh day from all his works.

What is it to enter into God's rest?

The day of rest. God used this term to describe the promised Land.

Hebrews 3:17 But with whom was he grieved forty years? was it not with them that had sinned, whose carcases fell in the wilderness?

Hebrews 3:18 And to whom sware he that they should not enter into his rest, but to them that believed not?

1. Just as God worked for 6 days and rested the 7th, so too the Kingdom and promised land was described as God's rest.

Entering the Land of Canaan was a pre-cursor to the eternal kingdom that is promised in Christ.

It was a legitimate offer given to man to establish that Kingdom but they failed.

How did they fail In the wilderness? They failed to enter into that rest and land because of their unbelief.

2. Why Did God Choose to Call Entering Canaan As Entering into his rest?

What is Rest? The Definitions of Rest:

The dictionary gives the following definitions of rest:

- 1 **freedom from activity** (work or strain or responsibility);
- 6 **a state of inaction**; "a body will continue in a state of rest until acted upon"
- 7 **a pause for relaxation**; "people actually accomplish more when they take time for short rests"
- 8 **be at rest, free from worry**

There is a spiritual application to the concept of rest and what God promises His people.

God's kingdom was called His rest.

A. To cease from action.

Application Spiritually:

The word rest means to cease from labor or exertion. Applying that to God's rest, it means no more self-effort – no more trying to please God by your fleshly works. Rest involves cessation from legalistic activity; we rest in free grace.

B. Rest means to be free from worry:

Some people are never at peace because they're always bothered about something. To rest means to be free from whatever disturbs you, or causes you to worry. It means in this sense to be quiet, still, peaceful, and free from guilt. To enter God's rest means to be at peace with God – to possess the perfect peace that God gives. It means to be free from guilt, because our sin is forgiven.

Why do we have a Labor Day holiday? Is it not to get away from the worries of work and the toil of our every day work week? Free ourselves up to do things we enjoy.

C. *Rest means to be settled.*

God's rest is the kind of rest where a man is established in Christ, and does not run from philosophy to philosophy. He is no longer blown about by every wind of doctrine, but is rooted and grounded in the truth of Christ.

The Children of Israel failed to enter the promised land because they were unsettled and unbelieving of the promises of God.

The Children of Israel became discontent with the promises of God. They wanted a nation like all the other nations.

David and Solomon followed the world in the pattern of their family and marriages which lead to internal corruption.

D. *Rest means to be secure.*

To enter God's rest is to be secure, having absolute trust and confidence in God's care for you.

The Nation Israel became insecure, they wanted a King to protect them.

So every time we look to something or someone else for security we give up our freedom and security.

Security, rest, and peace come from God and God alone.

E. *Rest means to have something to lean on.*

To enter God's rest means that you can lean on Him. You can rely on God for support, trusting Him to supply all your needs.

There are two final definitions of rest not found in a dictionary.

III. *THE BIBLE TEACHES THAT WE ARE LOOKING FORWARD TO ANOTHER SABBATH REST.*

Hebrews 4:5 And in this place again, If they shall enter into my rest.

Hebrews 4:6 Seeing therefore it remaineth that some must enter therein, and they to whom it was first preached entered not in because of unbelief:

Hebrews 4:7 Again, he limiteth a certain day, saying in David, To day, after so long a time; as it is said, To day if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts.

Hebrews 4:8 For if Jesus had given them rest, then would he not afterward have spoken of another day.

Hebrews 4:9 There remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God.

Hebrews 4:10 For he that is entered into his rest, he also hath ceased from his own works, as God did from his.

Hebrews 4:11 Let us labour therefore to enter into that rest, lest any man fall after the same example of unbelief.

Just like God commanded that there be a day of rest on the 7th day.

Then there was the 7th year, Sabbath year.

Then there was the year of Jubilee, the 7x7, 50th year of release.

So there is going to be the Millennial Sabbath. Many believe that millennial kingdom to be the final thousand years of God's creation. We are near to that time.

All the toil of all the years of sin and labor.

All these years of men trying to do it their way.

ALL OF LIFE HAS BEEN A STRUGGLE LOOKING FORWARD TO GOD'S PROMISE OF REST.

From Adam and Eve in the garden.

To the Days of Noah and the flood.

From the days of Abraham and his run in with Sodom and Lot .

From the days of Moses to Joshua struggling with the birth of that rebellious nation in the Wilderness.

From the time of Judges where the nation failed to drive out the worldly Canaanites.

To the time of the Kings where we see the failure of Saul.

The stumbling of David. The Polygamy and corruption of Solomon.

The Idolatry of the Kings culminating in Manasseh's sin and bloodshed of the innocent in the streets of Jerusalem. The Sawing of Isaiah in half in the streets of Jerusalem.

The dispersion of the nation and then regathering under Ezra and Nehemiah.

Until the coming of Christ in perilous times under the Roman occupation of the land.

Then in the Middle of it all the Messiah Comes. He offered a better covenant, a better Kingdom, a better rest.

Matthew 11:28 Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.

Matthew 11:29 Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls.

Matthew 11:30 For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.

Then the nation rejects Jesus' yoke and the gentiles receive Him.

Now after nearly 2000 years we see the church is rejecting our Lord's yoke. We are seeing the great apostasy. The great falling away.

Though we claim to be serving Him and we call ourselves Christians, a different Jesus is being proclaimed in our churches today. Not the Christ of the Bible.

Just like Adam and Eve wanting the new and forbidden fruit.
Just like in the days of Noah men wanting strange marriages.
Just like at the tower of Babel men wanting a strange one world religion.
Just like the children of Israel wanting to be like the world.

SO TOO, the church is not satisfied with the simplicity of Christ.
The Simplicity of worshipping Him and Him alone.

So when he says take my yoke upon me and learn of me.
For I am meek and lowly of heart and ye shall find rest unto your souls.

THE CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST IS BREAKING OFF THAT YOKE.

The Bible speaks of rest in the millennial kingdom.

In the millennium Kingdom God will bring to Earth all the things that every generation longed for.

A Perfect Environment.
A Perfect Government.
A Perfect Economy.
A Perfect Health Care.

No War.
Longevity of life.

Yet at the end of this Millennial rest Men are not satisfied. Sin will once again rear up it's ugly head and mankind will make one final attempt to rebel against the Lord. The Lord will destroy those rebels with the sword of His mouth and then the end will come.

VI. Finally there will be the rest for eternity in Heaven.

That's what God is promising and that's what He calls rest. Many people fail to believe in God's promises, and thus do not enter into rest because of their unbelief.

Instead when God wraps all things like a scroll, those who reject our Lord will not enter into His eternal rest.

Those who failed to believe God, those who rejected his Sabbaths.
Those who rejected him and refused to believe Him will never enter His rest.

Revelation 21:1 And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea.

Revelation 21:2 And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.

Revelation 21:3 And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God.

Revelation 21:4 And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away.

Revelation 21:5 And he that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new. And he said unto me, Write: for these words are true and faithful.

Revelation 21:6 And he said unto me, It is done. I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end. I will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely.

Revelation 21:7 He that overcometh shall inherit all things; and I will be his God, and he shall be my son.

Revelation 21:8 But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death.

Will you enter that rest?

Two major things keep men out of that Kingdom.

FEAR, fear of losing their life in this world, fear of obeying the commands of Christ, fear of doing it His way.

Unbelief. Just as the 10 spies who entered Canaan during the days of Moses and they failed to believe God's promise of victory, so too there are many who fail to believe God today and they fail to enter into the promise of God's rest.

Afraid to associate with Christ.

Afraid to live for Christ.

Afraid to be counted for Christ.

Hebrews 4:11 Let us labour therefore to enter into that rest, lest any man fall after the same example of unbelief.

I pray no one hearing this message will fall short of that eternal rest. Will you trust Him? Will you believe in Him?

Matthew 11:28 Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.