

Come to Understanding

They also that erred in spirit shall come to understanding,
and they that murmured shall learn doctrine. — Isaiah 29:24

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The Great Jubilee: Part 1

As with so many things that we study in the Scriptures, the sabbath means much more than is immediately comprehended. It was blessed and sanctified by Yahweh as the day of rest:

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. -Genesis 2

Yahweh gave to Moses ten clear commandments of the law. One of them said:

8 Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy. -Exodus 20

The sabbath day was created by Yahweh (the LORD) to be kept as a holy memorial. But what were we to remember by keeping the sabbath? Was it that God rested from His work and therefore we were to follow His example and rest from our work?

That was true. However, Yahweh used the sabbath to reveal even more. He used it as a sign. Through it, He continually reminded His people to rest from their works and trust in Him. He reminded them that they could not sanctify themselves by their righteous works. He alone sanctified them:

13 Speak thou also unto the children of Israel, saying, Verily my sabbaths ye shall keep: for it is a sign between me and you throughout your generations; that ye may know that I am the LORD that doth sanctify you. -Exodus 31

The law was given as a shadow. It was a form or pattern of the true, but it was not the true. It showed the good things that God had promised, but it was not the promise:

1 For the law having a shadow of good things to come, and not the very image of the things, can never with those sacrifices which they offered year by year continually make the comers thereunto perfect. -Hebrews 10

Paul wrote that the sabbath, as well as many other things of the law, was a “shadow of things to come:”

16 Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink,

or in respect of an holyday, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath days:

17 Which are a shadow of things to come; but the body is of Christ. -Colossians 2

Yahweh ordained a *sabbath of days*. The weekly sabbath was the seventh day of the week. The day after the sabbath, the eighth day, was the first day of a new week. It was a new beginning.

He also ordained a *sabbath of weeks*. The “feast of weeks” was one of the three great annual feasts (see Deuteronomy 16:16). It was designated to be remembered “seven sabbaths” or “seven weeks” after the “feast of unleavened bread,” which celebrated the Passover:

15 And ye shall count unto you from the morrow after the sabbath, from the day that ye brought the sheaf of the wave offering; seven sabbaths shall be complete:

16 Even unto the morrow after the seventh sabbath shall ye number fifty days; and ye shall offer a new meat offering unto the LORD. -Leviticus 23

Thus, the “feast of weeks” was celebrated seven weeks (49 days) after the Passover, when Israel was set free from their captivity in Egypt. The day following the seven weeks was the fiftieth day. It is translated through the Greek language as the “day of Pentecost.”

Yahweh also designated a *sabbath of years*. This was a sabbath for the land. On the seventh year, the land that God had given to Israel was to rest:

2 Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, When ye come into the land which I give you, then shall the land keep a sabbath unto the LORD.

3 Six years thou shalt sow thy field, and six years thou shalt prune thy vineyard, and gather in the fruit thereof;

4 But in the seventh year shall be a sabbath of rest unto the land, a sabbath for the LORD: thou shalt neither sow thy field, nor prune thy vineyard. -Leviticus 25

Yahweh also ordained a *sabbath of the sabbaths of years*. After seven sabbaths of years (49 years) freedom was proclaimed throughout the land! The fiftieth year was called the jubilee. It was the year of liberty.

So they read in the book in the law of God distinctly, and gave the sense,
and caused them to understand the reading. — Nehemiah 8:8

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All debts were forgiven and slaves were set free in the jubilee on the day of atonement:

- 8 And thou shalt number seven sabbaths of years unto thee, seven times seven years; and the space of the seven sabbaths of years shall be unto thee forty and nine years.
- 9 Then shalt thou cause the trumpet of the jubile to sound on the tenth *day* of the seventh month, in the day of atonement shall ye make the trumpet sound throughout all your land.
- 10 And ye shall hallow the fiftieth year, and proclaim liberty throughout *all* the land unto all the inhabitants thereof: it shall be a jubile unto you; and ye shall return every man unto his possession, and ye shall return every man unto his family. -Leviticus 25

Understanding that the law is a “shadow of good things to come,” what is Yahweh showing us through the pattern of the sabbaths of years?

The people of Judah, including Jerusalem, where the temple of Yahweh had been built, angered Yahweh by worshipping the “queen of heaven” and other false gods:

- 17 Seest thou not what they do in the cities of Judah and in the streets of Jerusalem?
- 18 The children gather wood, and the fathers kindle the fire, and the women knead *their* dough, to make cakes to the queen of heaven, and to pour out drink offerings unto other gods, that they may provoke me to anger. -Jeremiah 7

For this cause, Yahweh sent Babylon, which destroyed Jerusalem and the temple, while holding the people of Judah captive. The people and the land were taken captive for one sabbath of years for each of the ten commandments. Ten sabbaths of years was seventy years. Realizing from the Scriptures that the seventy years of captivity neared an end, Daniel, a captive in Babylon, prayed a repentant prayer for the sins of both himself and his people. As he prayed before Yahweh, the angel Gabriel was sent to give him “skill and understanding:”

- 20 And whiles I *was* speaking, and praying, and confessing my sin and the sin of my people Israel, and

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presenting my supplication before the LORD my God for the holy mountain of my God;

- 21 Yea, whiles I *was* speaking in prayer, even the man Gabriel, whom I had seen in the vision at the beginning, being caused to fly swiftly, touched me about the time of the evening oblation.
- 22 And he informed *me*, and talked with me, and said, O Daniel, I am now come forth to give thee skill and understanding.
- 23 At the beginning of thy supplications the commandment came forth, and I am come to shew *thee*; for thou *art* greatly beloved: therefore understand the matter, and consider the vision. -Daniel 9

Gabriel revealed that, although the captivity in Babylon was about to end, Yahweh had not forgiven them for their transgression against His commandments. Another seventy weeks (seventy sabbaths) would be required before the debt of their sin would be forgiven:

- 24 Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people and upon thy holy city, to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up the vision and prophecy, and to anoint the most Holy. -Daniel 9

Looking at the jubilee as the pattern for the time required for debts to be forgiven, we might expect Yahweh to also forgive the debts of Judah in forty nine years (seven sabbaths of years). However, they had transgressed against His ten commandments. Because of their transgression, He required ten times seven sabbaths of years (10 times 7 times 7 years = 490 years) before He would forgive their debt of sin. In this Great Jubilee, Yahweh would forgive sins, establish everlasting righteousness, seal the vision and prophecy, and anoint the “most Holy.”

Even though Gabriel revealed that the promise of this Great Jubilee would be fulfilled in 490 years, we still cannot understand the vision unless we know when to start counting the years. Therefore, he explained it clearly:

- 25 Know therefore and understand, *that* from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem unto the Messiah the Prince *shall be* seven weeks, and threescore and two weeks: the street shall be built again, and the wall, even in troublous times. -Daniel 9

The counting of years toward the Great Jubilee would begin from the time that the commandment goes forth to “restore and to build Jerusalem.” There would be sixty nine weeks (seventy sabbaths less one sabbath) of years unto the Messiah the Prince. Therefore, Gabriel explained that the Messiah (which is translated through the Greek language as the Christ) would be revealed seven years before the 490 years, or in 483 years .

(To be continued toward further understanding.)