

Lord of the Sabbath

Program #39

God's Holy Eighth Day

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After rejoicing BEFORE the LORD for seven days during His Feast of Tabernacles, then what should I do? How about rejoicing one more day WITH the LORD! Sound good? Well, the LORD commanded a holy convocation exactly like that for His people in Lev. 23: 34-36:

Speak to the children of Israel, saying, "The fifteenth day of this seventh month shall be the Feast of Tabernacles for seven days to the LORD. On the first day there shall be a holy convocation. You shall do no customary work on it. For seven days you shall offer an offering made by fire unto the LORD. On the eighth day you shall have a holy convocation, and you shall offer an offering made by fire to the LORD. It is a sacred assembly, and you shall do no customary work on it.

In all honesty, there is not very much given here for what to do on this eighth day? Why is it a holy day unto the LORD? Why was it commanded for Israel to observe it? What meaning does it have for the church of God?

Well, before I try to answer these questions, I have to interrupt this radio program for an important announcement! No, this is NOT a test of the Emergency Broadcast System. The past week I received a recorded telephone message from the network headquarters for the radio station on which you are listening to the broadcast of this Lord of the Sabbath weekly radio series program.

I was concerned that something had gone wrong at the network or at the station or with my program and immediately returned the call. The conversation which ensued almost knocked me off my chair. A network executive informed me that an anonymous listener had called the local radio station and offered to pay the broadcast expense for the program for the entire month! That contributor was referred to the network headquarters and has already paid my monthly bill in full! It was about \$800.00. Praise the Lord!

I don't know who this person is and don't know why they would do such a fine charitable thing. Apparently, they do not want me to know either. There is, of course, scriptural guidance from the Lord of the Sabbath which suggests that such anonymous giving is the kind that God prefers.

I feel confident that God will bless that free-will giver many times over. But, I still want to say thank you as well. So, whomever you are, I pray that you are listening today and will know that from the bottom of my heart that I thank you publicly. I appreciate your love, prayers and financial support. And, I feel sure that the Lord of the Sabbath will bless you for recognizing just who He is and reward your good work in His Kingdom. It

is important for your salvation that you know Him and that He knows you. Amen!

However, I now feel the need to also say thank you for ALL the free-will offerings that listeners have sent to me for the Lord of the Sabbath radio series which began in calendar year 2005. It is a surprise to many to find that one can devote fifty-two programs just to the study of keeping the Sabbaths of the LORD holy, both the weekly Sabbaths and the annual Feast-related Sabbaths. After all, they show us a way to worship the LORD as He commanded and at the precise appointed time which He specified that worship be done before Him. This brings glory to our Father and pleases Him.

I realize that a \$10 or \$20 gift from someone who barely has enough to eat is far greater a sacrifice to the LORD than an \$800 or \$10,000 gift is by a multi-millionaire. I believe that Christ, will fairly judge all such generosity. Praise our Savior, Lord and King!

If the Lord of the Sabbath Program series is viewed as a listener supported program by LawstSheep Ministries, it is tempting to pray that twelve people in each station listening area around the country would each offer to pay for one month of air time. Would that be glorious! Or, perhaps, with thousands of listeners on some stations, it is reasonable to hope that 52 spirit-led listeners will each contribute \$200 for one program each week.

If you have found value in the Lord of the Sabbath program, you can ensure that the teachings from the word of God will continue for yourself, and for others, who have never heard the truth of what Jesus taught and did to foster worship pleasing to our Father. Any gift of any size will be appreciated at LawstSheep Ministries. I have personally thanked each of you who have a love for Jesus, the self-proclaimed Lord of the Sabbath, and wish to follow Him, regardless of the amount you have sent. I am pleased to teach about and spread the wonderful reasons why He said the Sabbath was made for man. I can't do much for you personally, but you can do much to praise the Lord of the Sabbath through the programs.

If you have been listening to the Program, you will realize that LawstSheep Ministries has nothing to sell. We don't even have a web site. We don't have any resource consultants (religious jargon for salesmen) at a phone bank. What I have been blessed to learn from the word of God, I offer freely to you. However, we do have costs for the programs and broadcasts that must be met. And, while I can't personally bless those who help the ministry meet those costs, I do believe the Lord of the Sabbath can and does bless your generosity.

One last point along these lines. Our anonymous giver and supporter was also very creative. By contacting the station and paying my monthly broadcast bill they were able to make sure their generous gift supported this aspect of LawstSheep Ministries AND could do so without identifying themselves to me. Since I have refused to obtain a Tax ID number from the IRS in order to get a checking account, I realize it makes it even more difficult to contribute anonymously since checks have to be made to Kenneth Kitzke for LawstSheep Ministries or the Lord of the Sabbath program. Again, whomever you are, Mr. or Mrs. Anonymous, I humbly thank you for your gracious and creative gift

to keep this Program on the radio.

Now, let us return to this final holy Sabbath day of the LORD'S sacred calendar. There are only a couple other places in Scripture where this holy day is specifically referenced. And, they provide little additional meaning and purpose for this day other than it being a Sabbath for a holy convocation.

To get an understanding of the meaning of this day to Israel, we best start with the teachings of Judaism. The Hebrew name for this holy Sabbath day is Shemini (shem-ee-nee) Atzeret (ats-eh-reth). If you have never heard of this day, welcome to the club!

The word "Atzeret" means a sacred gathering or assembly on an appointed or holy day of the LORD. The root of Atzeret confers the idea of "holding back" or to tarry. Shemini means the eighth one. Hence, after having observed the seven-day Feast of Tabernacles, also called the Feast of Ingathering, the people of God were to hold back one more day and tarry at the place where God had placed His name.

Shemini Atzeret is treated in Judaism as contiguous with, but separate from, the seven-day Feast of Tabernacles. It was not necessary to sleep in a booth on the eight night. But, what did this day represent? Well, the rabbis have some ideas. One is that this day recognized the joy to be found in having kept the law of God, the Torah, to the very end.

In fact, in Judaism today, they add to the celebration of Shemini Atzeret another celebration they call Simchat Torah. Some sects of Judaism celebrate the last day of the Feast of Sukkoth on Tishrei 21, Shemini Atzeret on Tishrei 22 and Simchat Torah on Tishrei 23. The reasoning is related to the idea of the single holy day of Pentecost concluding the seven-day Feast of Unleavened bread which melds into the seven-week Feast of Weeks, or Pentecost, when the Torah was supposedly given to Israel at Mt. Sinai. And, Israel accepted the Ten Commandment covenant made with the LORD with joy.

Now, I see nothing wrong with rejoicing in the Torah, or living joyfully in accordance with the Torah. However, since Tishrei 23 is not an appointed time of the LORD for worship before Him, I do not personally celebrate or observe Simchat Torah as a new or additional holy day of the LORD.

If we reflect upon the agricultural cycle in Israel and how it relates to the Feasts of the LORD, we do see a connection with another emphasis of Judaism on Shemini Atzeret. On this day a special prayer for rain is said. In Israel, winter is the rainy season where the soil of the earth is watered so it can support an abundant harvest of barley and wheat in the spring. Without this early rain, the spring crops will not prosper and a famine in the land of Israel would be likely. The dry season in Israel is the summer and the LORD keeps the land fertile with the dew that forms on the grass over the cooler nights heading into the fall season. This helps ensure a bountiful fruit harvest before winter begins.

Some Bible scholars believe that this early and latter rain is indicative of the word of

God, namely the life of our Lord of the Sabbath who was sent from heaven to quench our thirst for Truth. In other words, it suggests through the holy days that we will experience the first and second coming of Jesus to the earth. Yet, we know that the Jews were blind to His first coming and rejected Him as the Messiah. But, to those who accept Jesus as our Messiah, He has revealed this to the church of God. Our God is indeed an awesome God who cares for the people of God, whether Jew or Gentile.

If you question this interpretation, you might want to consider the words of the prophet found in Hosea 6: 1-6:

Come and let us return to the LORD; for He has torn, but He will heal us; He has stricken, but He will bind us up. After two days, He will revive us; on the third day He will raise us up, that we may live in His sight. Let us know, let us pursue the knowledge of the LORD. His going forth is established as the morning; He will come to us like the rain, like the latter and former rain to the earth.

Without the New or Renewed Covenant in Christ with the church of God, and without the revelation of things to come given by Christ to the Apostle John, a Jew would not be able to understand much about this analogy. How could a Jew possibly understand the distinct plan of salvation for the Jews, the children of Israel, and for the grafted in church of God, who are called the children of God? But, you as Christian keepers of His Sabbaths can see and understand what wonderful things lie ahead both for Israel and for the church of God.

Only through careful Bible study can we see the mysteries of God revealed to the people of God. The idea that a day is like a thousand years in God's sight and perception is found both in Psalm 90: 4 and in 2 Pet. 3: 8. With that knowledge we can better understand the prophecy of Hosea. The Jew, a person still practicing the religion of Judaism, usually also a child of Jacob, has been stricken blind by the LORD for the two days, the two thousand years after they rejected the Messiah. This corresponds to the fifth and sixth days in the seven-thousand year equivalent day history of man on the earth.

The Jews, the physical houses of Judah and Israel, will be gathered together in the land of Israel on the third day. This is the seventh day in man's history, corresponding to the soon coming thousand year reign of Christ in the Kingdom of God on the earth. It is the rest day for the people of God, the Sabbath rest for the remnant of Israel and for all Gentiles who receive Jesus as their Savior and Lord. This re-gathering of scattered Israel to the promised land, an ingathering of the final harvest of human souls to heaven to be with God Himself, is happening right before our very eyes. It is connected to the Feast of Ingathering, better known as the Feast of Tabernacles.

Are your ears open to hear the wonderful word of God? Are your eyes able to see God's plan of salvation for His people in the Sabbaths and feasts that God gave to Israel to keep forever? Are you able to read the Book of Revelation and be blessed and assured of the future for the children of Israel and the children of God through Christ, our Lord of this

Sabbath rest? Do you recognize Jesus as our High Priest of God and the King of the Kingdom of God yet to come to this earth?

I realize that a very small fraction of disciples of Christ have been able to take the time to understand the Feasts of the LORD, or to celebrate them each year, to grow in the grace and knowledge of the Lord of the Sabbath. I understand that life is filled with work and pleasure six days each week. But, I also understand how by keeping the Sabbaths holy, one has a reservoir of time each year to delve into the truth revealed in Scripture.

For example, there are 52 weekly Sabbaths in a year. There are seven annual holy Sabbath days. Add to this the other five days during the pilgrim Feast of Unleavened Bread and the six days during the Feast of Tabernacles and I have 70 days a year to study my Bible. I can take eight hours each of those days for private study in addition to perhaps four hours of fellowship and worship. That would be 560 hours of study during a year.

So, if you wonder where I find the time to delve into the Sabbaths of the LORD this way, you now have some idea. And, I have been doing this for over 15 years! If you were to study the Bible an hour and a half EVERY DAY of the year, you would still not match me in time spent in the word of God.

I am not boasting in my goodness or dedication to God. The fact is that without keeping the Sabbaths that the LORD made for me, I would be too busy with the work and pleasures of life to do this. Can you relate to this problem of wanting to spend more time with God and His word but you seem to be too busy? Then, perhaps you should consider becoming a Sabbath keeper like Jesus was.

God knows my human weakness and makes me strong through Him and His ways. I also realize that by celebrating men's holidays like Christmas instead of the Feasts of the LORD, one's additional knowledge of the future plan of salvation for mankind is moot. All we can learn from Christmas is that a Savior has been born. And, of course, the Jews do not even believe that!

I wish I had the time in this program to go in depth into all the ramifications of understanding what the Eighth Day of the LORD'S holy days signifies or portends, especially for the bride of Christ. But, please allow me to at least touch upon a couple of major and highly controversial aspects of prophecy before I close today.

First, I want to show you a very important but easily missed link between the Eighth Day and Jesus. We find it in the Gospel of John. In Chapter 7, you will read about Jesus going from Galilee to Jerusalem to keep the Feast of Tabernacles. He has to go to the feast separately and secretly from His disciples. He knew that the leaders of the Jews were already seeking to have Him killed for doing a good work of healing on the Sabbath.

What Jesus did at His last Feast of Tabernacles is recorded in John 7: 14:

Now about the middle of the feast Jesus went up into the temple and taught. And the Jews marveled, saying, "How does this Man know letters, having never studied?"

Notice that during the seven-day Feast of Tabernacles Jesus taught in the temple of God. What did He teach? According to verse 16, Jesus taught the doctrine of God, the One who sent Him to the House of Israel and Judah. And the Jews marveled at His understanding.

What Jesus was doing was what was to be done during the Feast of Tabernacles by Ezra the scribe of God. We find this stated plainly in Nehemiah 8: 18:

Also, day by day, from the first day until the last day, he read from the Book of the Law of God. And they kept the feast seven days; and on the eighth day, there was a sacred assembly, according to the prescribed manner.

Are you getting the message? Do you understand why the Sabbaths were made for man? It gives them time to read, and specifically at that appointed time, to have read the Book of the Law of God. It is what Jesus did when He kept the Feast of Tabernacles. Should we follow His example? Is He the Shepherd of our souls?

Now, notice something else recorded in John 7: 37:

On the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood up and cried out, saying, "If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink. He who believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water."

As it goes on to say, this would happen to His believers when they received the Holy Spirit of God which would not be given until Jesus was glorified and taken up into heaven to return to the Father.

During the seventh day of mankind, during the millennium of the King, the future event pictured in the Feast of Tabernacles, Jesus will again teach the people of the world the Law of God. At this time, celebrating the Feast of Tabernacles will no longer be a type of rehearsal for what is promised to come, it will be the real event! Praise the LORD!

The reading, teaching and understanding of the Law of God, the Torah, will cover the earth in that day. All nations and peoples will go to the house of the God of Jacob to learn God's ways as foretold in Isaiah 2: 1-4 and Micah 4: 1-5. The understanding of the Law of God will be at the highest level ever as our High Priest will personally teach all the people on the earth, not for a few years like He taught His disciples at His first coming, but for a thousand years at His second coming! Halleluyah! What we can only see darkly now from His first coming will be made bright and clear so all our questions will be answered about the will of God for mankind at His Second coming.

Now, this is the link to the Eighth Day. In Chapter 8, Verse 1 of John, after the last day of the Feast of Tabernacles when Jesus stood up and cried out in the Temple of God, let us read what Jesus and the people did the next day:

And everyone went to his own house. But Jesus went to the Mount of Olives. Now early in the morning He came again into the temple, and all the people came to Him; and He sat down and taught them.

This is the Eighth Day, the commanded holy convocation. Notice that the local people had gone to their own house, no longer staying in the temporary booth. But, Jesus went to sleep on the Mount of Olives for He had no home in Jerusalem.

Notice too the teaching He specifically did on the Eighth Day. The Pharisees had brought before Him the woman caught in the act of adultery. Rather than see her stoned, Jesus told her to go and sin no more and she would not be condemned. It is when He wrote something in the dirt that caused all her accusers to leave.

Also, He revealed to them that He was going away to a place they could not come. He was talking about heaven, His Father's house. It was not only that they could not go because they were sinners. No man could follow Him to heaven at that time. He certainly did not tell the accused adulteress that if she would stop sinning that she could follow Him up to heaven. As we discussed in previous programs, no one, not one man or disciple, has yet followed Jesus into heaven. They can't until they are resurrected with an immortal, incorruptible spirit body like Jesus had. Flesh and blood can not inherit the kingdom of God. See this clearly stated in 1 Cor. 15: 50.

Now, what is special about this Eighth Day? How is it connected to the rejoicing at the Feast of Tabernacles? Well, the key is to understand that the age of created mortal man on the earth is limited to the 7,000 years or seven days as God perceives it. On the next day, the eighth day, it is a new age and a different MORE GLORIOUS age.

In scripture we find many examples of God's plan to make all things new. This will drive non-believer scientists crazy. You see, they cannot conceive of the present heavens or earth going out of existence, becoming as nothing, at God's spoken word any more than they can conceive that He spoke and it was all created from nothing. So, you will have scientists trying to calculate when the sun will go dark having burned up its source of energy. It is obviously so far out in time, that even if true, it is simply meaningless to us today to contemplate.

But, God has given us who read His word and His prophecy through the prophets of old, and even through His only begotten Son and His Apostles great understanding. Let's try to get our mind around what the Eighth Day suggests will happen in the future. As we read in Is. 65: 17-25, it will be a different and glorious existence:

For behold, I create new heavens and a new earth; and the former shall not be remembered or come to mind. Be glad and rejoice forever in what I create; for

behold, I create Jerusalem as a rejoicing, and her people a joy. I will rejoice in Jerusalem, and joy in My people; the voice of weeping shall no longer be heard in her, nor the voice of crying.

Now, you will have a blast reading the various commentaries of the meaning of this prophecy. Some suggest that this is referring to the promised millennial Kingdom of God on the earth. Others suggest it is referring to a new eternal city of Jerusalem, not the one that has existed on the earth even to this very day.

Well, which is it? When we combine the understandings about the Feasts of the LORD and His commanded holy day Sabbaths with the revelation of the Lord of the Sabbath given to the Apostle John, I think we can see what God has in mind.

In our next program, I will try to summarize what the word of God reveals about the future of the earth and the heavens and what the Father and Son and the rest of the family of God will be doing in the future. You don't want to miss that. It will give you a perspective on prophecy that you have probably not heard taught in the church of God before.

This is Brother Kenny praying that God will continue to be gracious to you and shine His face and light upon you that you may understand the mysteries of God and His plan for you and for all mankind. When you do, you will learn a new and glorious meaning for the word "rejoice." For the good news is that you will no longer rejoice before Him from afar where only His name has been placed, but you will rejoice WITH Him face to face. Halleluyah to the Lamb of God, the Lord of the Sabbath!