

Bite Size Bible Study

Sabbath Rest #76

By Pastor Lee

Back when we were the Worldwide Church of God we attempted to keep the Sabbath. From my prospective now, I feel that very few of us really understood why or how to keep the Sabbath Rest. For some the Sabbath was a burden. It kept our children from attending many functions that only occur on Saturday and in some cases prevented us from certain jobs that required work on Saturdays. Many people suffered by keeping the Sabbath. But God said that the Sabbath was to be joy. What happened?

I think that much of the suffering was due to a lack of understanding of what the Sabbath was to provide and why.

*“Observe the day of Shabbat, to set it apart as holy, as Adonai your God ordered you to do. You have six days to labor and do all your work, but the seventh day is a Shabbat for Adonai your God. On it you are not to do any kind of work — **not you, your son or your daughter, not your male or female slave, not your ox, your donkey or any of your other livestock, and not the foreigner staying with you inside the gates to your property — so that your male and female servants can rest just as you do.**”* Deuteronomy 5:12-14 (CJB)

Did you see that? I had never seen it and I don't recall ever hearing it from the pulpit. God says humans, i.e. you, me, those that serve us, the animals, need to rest every seven days. If they don't rest there will be consequences. I used to work with a guy that worked where I did 5 days a week. After work he would go and work piecemeal for several more hours. On the weekend he would do more piecemeal. He never stopped working. I doubt that his family ever saw very much of him.

Can any animal continue working without a rest, before death catches up with it? According to some experienced riders, a horse can run for 24 to 72 hours nonstop before it becomes thoroughly exhausted and dies. A Common Swift can stay in the air for up to 10 months without stopping.

Soils will eventually die if not allowed to rest (fallow). The microorganisms will cease to function and the nutrients needed to grow a crop will not be there. Nutrient exchanges between organic matter, water and soil are essential to soil fertility. When the soil is exploited for crop production and the soil fertility declines, the balance in the agro-ecosystem is destroyed. This is a situation that many mono-crop farm factories are facing today. Soils are a living organism and need the rest as well. In this case the Seventh Year Sabbath.

God even required this of Israel and when it didn't happen He made it happen.

You I will disperse among the nations, and I will draw out the sword in pursuit after you; your land will be a desolation and your cities a wasteland. Then, at last, the land will be paid its Shabbats. As long as it lies desolate and you are in the lands of your enemies, the land will rest and be repaid its Shabbats. Yes, as long as it lies desolate it will have rest, the rest it did not have during your Shabbats, when you lived there. Leviticus 26:33-35 (CJB)

Most of our societies today operate on a 7/24/365 plan. A plan that we are seeing that isn't sustainable. We have thrown out the instructions that God provided, and opted for our own understanding. That didn't work too well for Adam, and it will not work for us. God created everything that we have, and His understanding of how each part works should logically be followed as we care for this planet.

Then God said, “Let us make humankind in our image, in the likeness of ourselves; and let them rule (have dominion) over the fish in the sea, the birds in the air, the animals, and over all the earth, and over every crawling creature that crawls on the earth.” Gen 1:26 (CJB)

We are here to be caretakers of this planet and so far we have made every mistake in the book.

We don't send a rocket into space without following all of the instructions the manufacturer gives us. If we don't follow those instructions we have seen the results in past launches.

Why would we not follow God's instructions in dealing with the creation that we are to take care of? Every thing that we can observe, touch or interact with is His; why not care for it with the instructions that He has given us?

*I have no need for a bull from your farm
or for male goats from your pens;
for all forest creatures are mine already,
as are the animals on a thousand hills;
I know all the birds in the mountains;
whatever moves in the fields is mine.
If I were hungry, I would not tell you;
for the world is mine, and everything in it.*

Psalm 50:9-12 (CJB)

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