

Elder Vernon Johnson

Numbers

Seven

The Sabbath Day

The seventh day Sabbath was an institution of God. First God gave an example in creation: Gen. 2:1 "Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host of them. 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. 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." God had finished the work of natural creation, then he rested from the work that he had created. Sabbath has a dual meaning. It means "seven" and signifies completion and it means "rest." This is exactly what God had done – he completed the work of creation and then he rested.

God initially marked off time as six days work and then one day rest. This pattern of a week has been followed among almost all nations of people since then. I am unaware of any nation on earth today that does not observe a seven day week.

Later, God established the Sabbath as an ordinance with the children of Israel in the wilderness: Ex. 16:23 "And he said unto them, This is that which the LORD hath said, To morrow is the rest of the holy sabbath unto the LORD: bake that which ye will bake to day, and seethe that ye will seethe; and that which remaineth over lay up for you to be kept until the morning. 24 And they laid it up till the morning, as Moses bade: and it did not stink, neither was there any worm therein. 25 And Moses said, Eat that to day; for to day is a sabbath unto the LORD: to day ye shall not find it in the field. 26 Six days ye shall gather it; but on the seventh day, which is the sabbath, in it there shall be none."

Next, God made the Sabbath a commandment to the children of Israel when he gave them the ten commandments: Ex. 20:8 "Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy.

9 Six days shalt thou labour, and do all thy work: 10 But the seventh day is the sabbath of the LORD thy God: in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy manservant, nor thy maidservant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates: 11 For in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea, and

all that in them is, and rested the seventh day: wherefore the LORD blessed the sabbath day, and hallowed it."

In addition to the seventh day Sabbath, God gave the children of Israel other Sabbaths such as the first and last days of unleavened bread, the first and last days of the feast of tabernacles and the Day of Atonement on the tenth day of the seventh month. Similarly, the land was to rest every seventh year and the people were not to plant their crops or till their land in the seventh year. The Sabbath was always associated with something that was complete and in which the people were to rest.

All of the Sabbaths established in the Old Testament point us to a Sabbath of rest in the New Testament. We read in Heb. 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. 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. 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.

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. 5 And in this place again, If they shall enter into my rest. 6 Seeing therefore it remaineth that some must enter therein, and they to whom it was first preached entered not in because of unbelief: 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. 8 For if Jesus had given them rest, then would he not afterward have spoken of another day. 9 There remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God. 10 For he that is entered into his rest, he also hath ceased from his own works, as God did from his. 11 Let us labour therefore to enter into that rest, lest any man fall after the same example of unbelief."

We are to labor in our understanding of the scriptures that Christ finished the work of redeeming his people as the true gospel declares unto us and we are to rest in that finished work. Rest in the finished work of Christ is the great Sabbath that we have today. To attempt to add our works or efforts to that finished work is to violate the Sabbath that God has given us.