

GOD'S INDESTRUCTIBLE SIGN!

Symbols are powerful. In ancient Egypt, when Queen Hatshepsut died in 1470 B.C., her stepson Tuthmos III had her name chiseled off the temple wall. He wanted this symbol of his hated stepmother destroyed. A few years ago the Taliban regime in Afghanistan destroyed some giant Buddhist statues, symbols in their minds of paganism. They hoped by so doing to destroy the Buddhist religion which they symbolized.

Some people believe that the reason terrorists attacked the World Trade Center in New York City was because they wanted to destroy these symbols of American financial power. If you think about it, if something like the World Trade Center could be destroyed, what symbols are immune to destruction? Just about anything you can think of that stands as a symbol can be destroyed. Suppose, though, there was a symbol that was indestructible? Is there such a symbol?

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made holy wasn't a
mountain, or a shrine.
It was time!*

KEY POINTS

The answer is yes! We find this symbol in the earliest pages of the Bible. We find it given before sin came to the earth. This was a symbol so indestructible that it exists even today. We find this symbol in the Creation story. "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth." (Genesis 1:1)

The chapter then describes step by step the creation of this world. And when He was done, the Bible says: "And on the seventh day God ended his work which he had made." What day did God end his work? "And he rested on the seventh day from all his work which he had made. 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 2:2,3)

The word "sanctified" is another way of making something "holy." So, according to the Bible, the first thing that God made holy wasn't a mountain, or a shrine. It was time! God made the seventh day holy.

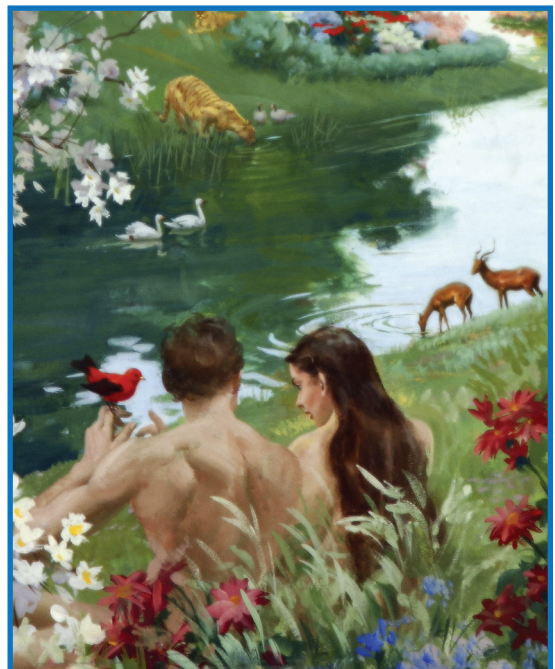
Why did He do this? Notice the answer: "Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days shalt thou labor, and do all thy work; but the seventh day is the Sabbath of the LORD thy God: in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy manservant, nor thy maidservant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates: 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." (Exodus 20:8-11)

God made the Seventh-day special. It was the indestructible symbol of the fact He created the world. You can no more stop the coming of the seventh day than you can stop the sun from rising in the morning sky. When we work six days and rest on the seventh, we are honoring the God of creation.



God's symbol of creation is indestructible.

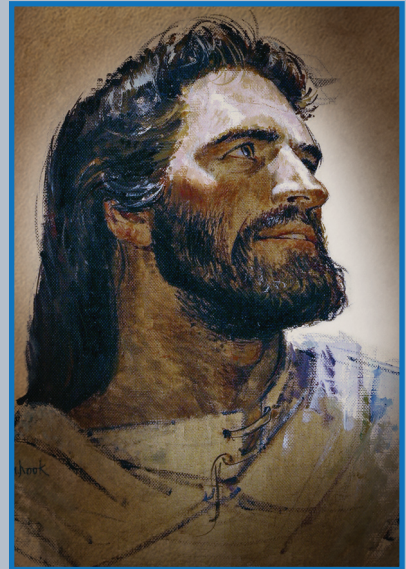
God sanctified the seventh day of Creation.



God tells us to rest on the seventh day. It's His gift of rest and relaxation. It is a refuge in time. The Sabbath allows us to unwind, to put away our routine activities and spend special time with God and with our families. It's His weekly invitation to come and spend special time with Him.

Some ask, wasn't the Sabbath just for the Jewish people? The Bible makes it clear that the Sabbath was for all mankind.

- The Sabbath was made holy before there was a Jewish nation (Gen. 2:1)
- The Sabbath was kept holy before the Commandments were given at Mt. Sinai. (Exodus 16:22-30)
- The Sabbath is written into the Ten Commandments, which are still standards of conduct for all God's faithful people. (Ex. 20:8-11)
- The Sabbath was a symbol of Creation for all His creation – not just the Jewish nation. Jesus made this point clearly when He said: "The Sabbath was made for man." (Mark 2:27)
- Jesus is our perfect example in life. It was His custom to keep holy the Sabbath day. (Luke 4:16)
- Jesus expected His followers, after His death, to keep the Sabbath holy. (Matthew 24:20)
- There are 84 references in the New Testament of the early church keeping the Sabbath. See Acts. 13:34 and Acts 13:42-44.
- John the Revelator refers to a vision he had on the Sabbath, the "Lord's day." (Rev. 1:10) Jesus tells us which is the Lord's day. "For the Son of Man is Lord even of the Sabbath." (Matthew 12:8; Mark 2:28 and Luke 6:5).
- We will keep the Sabbath when we live with Jesus in heaven. (Isa. 66:22-23)



Jesus taught "The Sabbath was made for man."

What about the text that says: "And upon the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul preached unto them, ready to depart on the morrow; and continued his speech until midnight." (Acts 20:7) Doesn't this refer to a Sunday service? It appears this was a Saturday night meeting. For the Jewish writer Luke, Sabbath sundown would have marked the beginning of the first day of the week. Also, the fact that it was the first day of the week would have given the author of Acts a great opportunity to talk about any change. But he says nothing. (In our next presentation we will explore how the change from Sabbath to Sunday took place).

The weekly cycle has not changed since Creation. The Sabbath is still the seventh day of the week, what we call Saturday. How do we know Saturday is the Sabbath? It's pretty simple. It's the day before Easter! (Luke 23:54-56, 24:1-3).

TAKE-HOME MESSAGE

Even if what we've learned from the Bible is right, and the 7th day Sabbath is the correct day, does it really matter? Does God really care whether we worship on that day or another? In the Garden of Eden, God gave Adam and Eve all the trees to eat from - except one. That was what they were commanded to do. Why would God care? Because God said He cared. He is God – our Creator. Our response of obedience is always based on our love for Jesus. "If you love, keep my commandments." John 14:15.

BETWEEN YOU AND GOD

We face the same decision that Adam and Eve faced in the garden. Will we worship and obey the God of the Universe or will we follow man-made traditions? God's people are described this way: "Here is the patience of the saints: here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus." (Revelation 14:12) Won't you choose, out of your love for Jesus, to keep His commandments? Won't you consider today, to start keeping holy God's true Sabbath day?