

# Jesus and the Sabbath

- Regular synagogue attendance and teaching on the Sabbath (Matt. 12:9; Mark 1:21; 6:2; Luke 4:16; 6:6; 13:10)
- Assumes disciples will continue his practice (Mark 13:9; Luke 12:11)
- Paul and his co-workers follow same pattern (Acts 13:14-15, 44; 16:13; 17:2; 18:4)



“And the women also, which came with him from Galilee, followed after,...



“And they returned, and prepared spices and ointments; and rested the Sabbath day according to the commandments.”

Luke 23:55-56

- Jesus' followers observe Sabbath even at time of his death (Matt. 28:1; Mark 16:1; Luke 23:50-56)
- Assumes disciples will continue to observe Sabbath travel restrictions even in times of crisis (Matt. 24:20)

# Sabbath Disputes in the Gospels

1. Jesus' defense of disciples' plucking grain (Matt. 12:1-8//Mark 2:23-28)
  - a. David breaks Law when his men are in need (1 Sam. 21:1-6)
  - b. Temple priests work on Sabbath
  - c. "I desire mercy, not sacrifice" (Hosea 6:6)
  - d. "Something greater than the Temple is here" (Matt. 12:6)
  - e. "The son of man is Lord of the Sabbath" (Matt. 12:6//Mark 2:28)
  
2. Healing on the Sabbath (Matt. 12:9-13//Mark 3:1-5//Luke 6:6-10; Luke 13:10-17; 14:1-6; John 5:1-18; 7:21-24).
  - a. Only action of Jesus criticized as a breach of Sabbath regulations
  - b. "Which of you having a son or an ox fall into a well will not immediately pull him out on the Sabbath?"
  - c. Acts of mercy and healing demonstrate the purpose of Sabbath (Luke 13:16)
  - d. "The Sabbath was made for humans" (Mark 2:27)

# Dead Sea Scrolls on the Sabbath

(150-200 BC)

“If [an animal] falls into a well or pit, one may not lift it out on the Sabbath....Any living human who falls into a body of water or a cistern shall not be helped out with ladder, rope, or other implement.” (CD 11:13-16)



“Let no one raise up an animal which has fallen into the water on the Sabbath day. But if it is a man who has fallen into the water on the Sabbath, one shall extend his garment to him to pull him out with it, but he shall not bear an implement on the Sabbath.” (4Q265, fragment 7)

# THE RABBIS ON THE SABBATH

- “The children of royalty may anoint their wounds with rose oil [on the Sabbath], since it is their practice to anoint themselves thus on weekdays. Rabbi Shimon said: all Israel are royal children.” (*m. Shabbat* 14:3-4)
- “Moreover, Rabbi Matia ben Harash said: if one has a pain in his throat, they may drop medicine into his mouth on *Shabbat*, because there is a possibility of danger to human life and every potential danger to human life overrides *Shabbat*.” (*m. Yoma* 8:5-6)
- R. Shimon ben Mennasia on Ex. 31:14—*And you shall keep the Sabbath, for it is holy to you*. “Sabbath is handed over to you, but you are not handed over to the Sabbath.” (*Mekhilta* 31:13)
- R. Yonatan ben Yosef : “*Shabbat* is given into your hands but you are not given into its hands.” (*Yoma* 85b)

*“On the seventh day man has no right to tamper with God’s world, to change the state of physical things.”*

The Sabbath is not for the sake of the weekdays; the weekdays are for the sake of Sabbath. It is not an interlude but the climax of living.

Abraham Joshua Heschel

@quotefancy



# “I make known the end from the beginning”

Isaiah 46:10

“On the seventh day God finished his work.” (Genesis 2:2)

“After the six days of creation—what did the universe still lack? *Menuha* [rest].  
Came the Sabbath, came *menuha*, and the universe was complete.”

“What was created therein? Tranquility, serenity, peace and repose.” (*Bereshit Rabbah* 10:9)

“The Lord grant that you may find *menuha*” (Ruth 1:9)

“He leads me beside the waters of *menuha*.” (Psalm 23:2)

“The world to come will be a day that is all *Shabbat*” (*Rosh Hashanah* 31a)

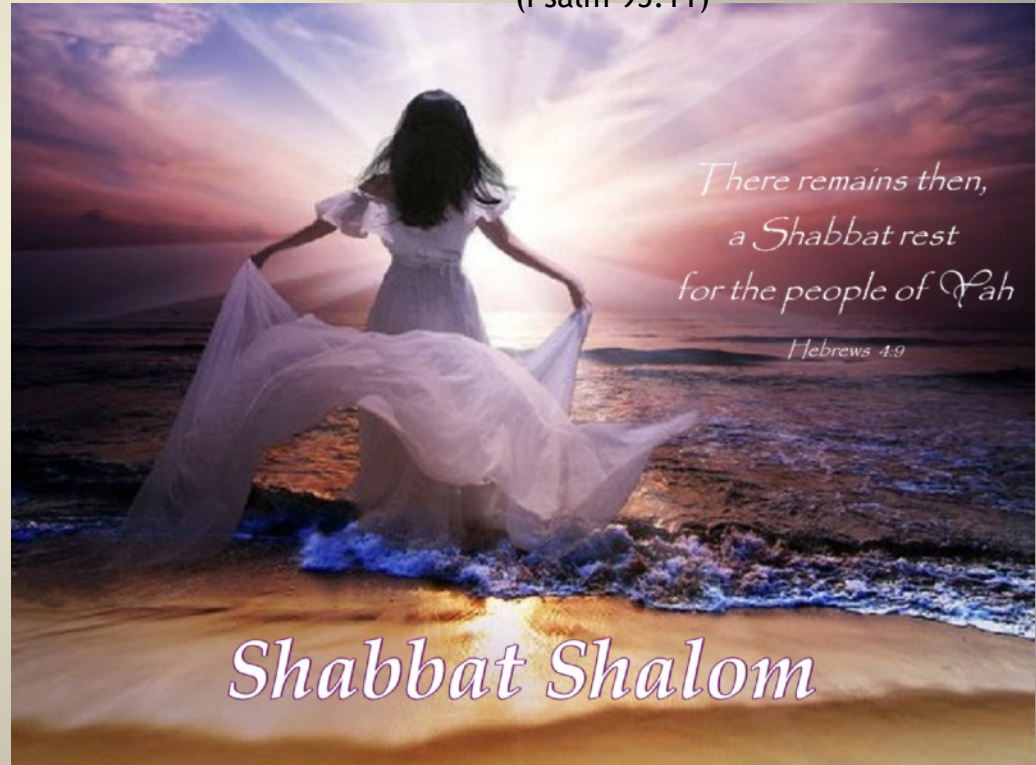
“The Sabbath is not simply a day of rest. It is an anticipation of ‘the end of history,’ the messianic age....We do not strive to do; we are content to be. We are not permitted to manipulate the world; instead, we celebrate it as God’s supreme work of art. We are not allowed to exercise power or dominance over other human beings, nor even domestic animals. Rich and poor inhabit the Sabbath alike....The Sabbath is a full dress rehearsal for an ideal society that has not yet come to pass.” (Rabbi Sacks)

# Hebrews 4: Midrash on Psalm 95

“In my anger I swore, ‘They shall not enter my rest [*menuha*].’”

“You have not yet come to the *menuha*, the inheritance that the Lord your God is giving you.” (Deut. 12:9)

(Psalm 95:11)



# “Call the Sabbath a delight”

(Isaiah 58:13)



Ugandan Jewish community



“A day dedicated to the celebration of things that have value but no price”  
Rabbi Sacks



*Havdalah*: goodbye to *shabbat*





# Holiness in Time



"Judaism teaches us to be attached to holiness in time, to be attached to sacred events, to learn how to consecrate sanctuaries that emerge from the magnificent stream of the year. The Sabbaths are our great cathedrals; and our Holy of Holies is a shrine that neither the Romans nor the Germans were able to burn: a shrine that even apostasy cannot easily obliterate: the Day of Atonement."

Rabbi Joshua Heschel

There is much that philosophy could learn from the Bible. To the philosopher the idea of the good is the most exalted idea. But to the Bible the idea of the good is penultimate; it cannot exist without the holy. The good is the base, the holy is the summit. Things created in six days He considered good, the seventh day He made holy.

-Abraham Joshua Heschel



The Sabbath is a weekly cathedral raised up in my dining room, in my family, in my heart.

Anita Diamant

quote fancy

# The Idolatry of Things



“*Shabbat* is the antidote to the Golden Calf”

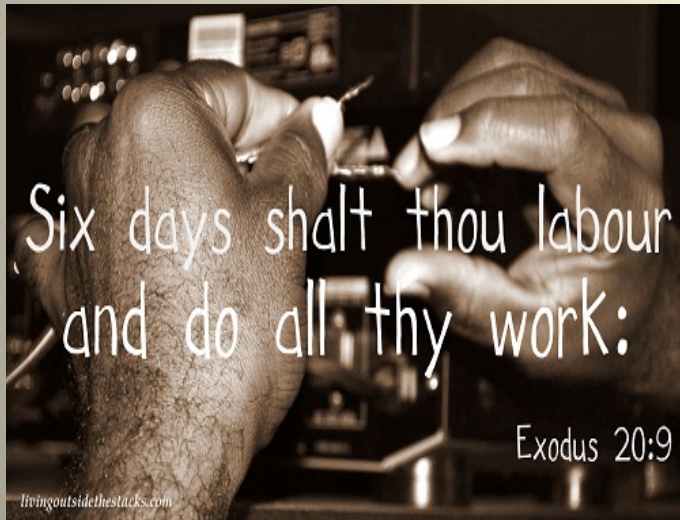
“Through constant creation of dissatisfaction, the consumer society is in fact a highly sophisticated mechanism for the production and distribution of unhappiness. *Shabbat* is our refuge from a consumer culture, the new religion.”



“The most important contribution of *Shabbat* to the late capitalist societies of the twenty-first century is that it reintroduce the idea of limits. There are limits to our striving, our labours, our consumption of the earth’s finite resources. Any culture that loses its sense of limits eventually self-destructs.”

# The Idolatry of Work

*Their land is full of silver and gold; there is no end to their treasures. Their land is full of horses; there is no end to their chariots. Their land is full of idols; they bow down to the work of their hands, to what their fingers have made. (Isa. 2:7-8)*



“Now is it possible for someone to do their work in six days? The meaning is, rather, Rest as if all your work has been done. Alternatively, rest from thoughts of work.”

Rabbi Ishmael, 2<sup>nd</sup>. cent.

# Does Paul Condemn Sabbath Observance?

- “Therefore let no one judge you in eating and in drinking or in respect to a feast or a new moon or sabbaths (weeks), which are a shadow of the coming things. But the body of Christ.” (Col 2:16-17)
- “These things seem to be a matter of wisdom, with their self-imposed religious practices and humility and severe control of the body, but they are of no value against sensual indulgence.” (Col. 2:23)
- Is the Sabbath an “empty deceit that comes from human tradition, from the elemental forces of the cosmos” (Col. 2:8)?

# *Shabbat*: Training in Righteousness

“Every Sabbath, return to God His universe, acknowledge the Lord your God, and remind yourself yet again that this universe is borrowed from God. Remember who is its Master, that this borrowed universe belongs to the Lord, and that He, not you, rules everything.”

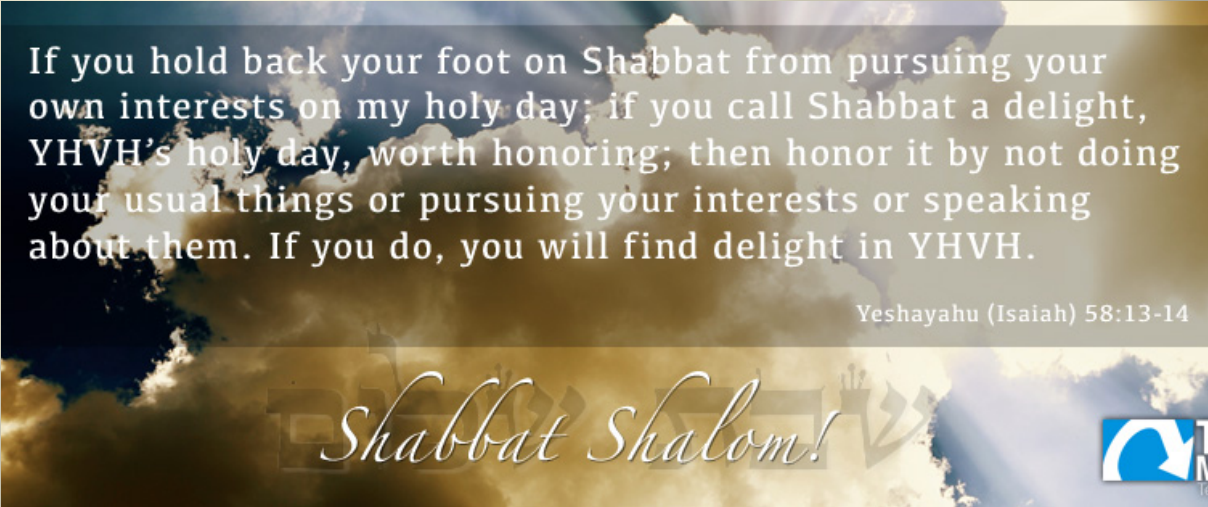
R. Samson Raphael Hirsch (1953)

“Maybe it is middle age, but I can actually feel my body beginning to shut down as I make my way home each Friday afternoon in anticipation of Shabbat. I can push all week long—early mornings and late nights—but, come Friday, I am ready to completely unwind. It isn’t just the bodily rest that I crave: it is the deep spiritual nourishment the Sabbath provides. By separating myself from the frenzy of the world that surrounds me all week long, I can focus on the needs of my soul throughout Shabbat. It is an island away from the secular intrusions on my spiritual world”

R. Kerry Olitzky (2007)

“For me, the spiritual discipline of not spending money and not socializing in ways not related to the Sabbath provides me with benefits that transcend the transient joys of a party or a movie. In consistently observing the Sabbath, you can feel an ‘intuition of eternity,’ as Heschel calls it.”

R. Daniel Judson (2007)



If you hold back your foot on Shabbat from pursuing your own interests on my holy day; if you call Shabbat a delight, YHVH’s holy day, worth honoring; then honor it by not doing your usual things or pursuing your interests or speaking about them. If you do, you will find delight in YHVH.

Yeshayahu (Isaiah) 58:13-14

*Shabbat Shalom!*

