

From the West Meadow
By Pastor Wes Higgins

In Genesis, we see God setting the seventh day of the week aside, sanctifying and making it holy. God has given His people some very explicit instructions concerning His Sabbath. I would like to focus on a portion of Exodus 31:13-17, NKJV. “Speak also to the children of Israel, saying: ‘Surely My Sabbaths you shall keep, for it is a sign between Me and you throughout your generations, that you may know that I am the lord who sanctifies you.’”

Several things can be understood from this command. God is speaking to His people, the twelve tribes of Israel, not just to the Jews who consisted of one tribe. God's people today include not only the scattered tribes of Israel, but to “all who call upon Him”, Romans 10:12, NKJV. Next, we notice that God calls the Sabbaths His. They belong to Him, He created them (as well as His holy festivals listed in Leviticus 23). God set them apart and sanctified them (making them holy). In the New Testament, Jesus tells us “the Sabbath was made for mankind”. “The Son of Man is also Lord of the Sabbath”, Luke 6:5, NKJV, the Lordship having been given to Him by the Father, see John 14:10.

Another thing we notice in Exodus 31 is that the Sabbath is a commanded sign revealing who God is – He is the God of the Sabbath – calling them “My Sabbaths”. Jesus as Lord of the Sabbath is seen throughout the Gospels observing the weekly Sabbath as well as God's festivals. Paul, in his letter to the Colossians tells them, and by extension God's people today, that God's Sabbaths and festivals (among the other things listed) are prophetic whose reality are found in Christ - “So let no one judge you in food or in drink. Or regarding a festival or a new moon or sabbaths, which are a shadow of things to come, but the substance is of Christ”, Colossians 3:16-17. NKJV. Paul is telling the gentile Colossian church that their observing these festivals proclaim and reveal the salvational acts of Jesus Christ. He also told the gentile church at Corinth to keep the feast, referring to the Feast of Unleavened Bread. See 1 Corinthians 5:7-8; Leviticus 23:4-6.

Getting back to Exodus 31, we see that God's Sabbaths are a sign between God and His people. And to ignore them, profane them, is to “be cut off from among His people”. This suggests being cut off from God as well. In Exodus 31:13-14, God's Sabbaths are a perpetual covenant for all generations of God's people. How far does perpetual go? “I am the Lord, I do not change”, Malachi 3:6, NKJV. Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, today, and forever. See Hebrews 13:8. A perpetual covenant will never go away.

“If you call – the Sabbath a delight, the holy day of the Lord honorable, and shall honor Him”, Isaiah 58:13-14, NKJV, then your presence in the Lord shall be a delight.