

6 Shevat, 5779 **Second Winter Series: Asking For the Old paths** J. M. Terrett

### **Genesis 2:1-3: Upholding G-d's Cosmic Order**

Bo	Enter
Torah:	Exodus 10:1-13:16
Haftarah:	Jeremiah 46:13-28
Brit Chadashah:	Romans 9:14-29

Reading: Aaron p. 169 and Ps. 77. Jewish hero: Eleazar. Carrier: Andrea

**Passage: “Thus the heavens and the earth were completed and all their multitude. And on the seventh day G-d finished the work that He had done, and He rested from all the work that He had done. So, G-d blessed the seventh day and hallowed it, because on it, G-d rested from all the work He had done in creation.”**

Before we get into what this passage is teaching, I would like to give you some teaching about how our Bible was divided up into chapters and verses. I am doing this, because the first three verses of Genesis chapter two, really belong to chapter one, because they are the end of the first creation account. Then I want to teach you why there are two creation accounts, each with a different sequence of events.

The earliest known divisions in the Bible were scrolls where a whole or a part of a book of the Bible was written down, copied and transmitted. In the originals, there were no chapter breaks and the content was not divided into verses. When our people went into captivity in Babylon, the different scrolls or books were divided into portions and the five books of the Torah were combined into a single scroll. No one knows when this happened, but in captivity, our people gathered all the scrolls of the Bible which had survived and the canon of the Old Testament was formed under the supervision of a scholar called Shimon ha Tzadik (Simon the Righteous).

The last books of the Old Testament were added when our people came back from the captivity and the various parts of the Old testament existed as scrolls, with the Torah being the largest and most important of the scrolls. There are two orders for the books of the Old Testament. The Greek Septuagint divides the books into five categories: The Law, the History, the Poetry, the Major Prophets and the Minor Prophets. The Masoretic Hebrew test, divides the books into three categories: the Torah, the Prophets and the Writings. It is the same content, which is just divided two different ways.

At some time during the Middle ages, Gentile scholars further divided the Books of the Bible into chapters and into verses. There are two versions of this division. My French Bible follows one and your English Bibles follow another. That is why, when I quote a verse, sometimes it is not numbered the same way as your Bibles. Again, it is the same content which is just divided differently. Jewish Bibles usually follow the same chapter and verse divisions which my French Bible has.

Now let's deal with the two creation accounts. The first one describes creation as occurring over seven days and ends with the Sabbath as the seventh day. The second one does not divide creation into days and has man created first, before any other forms of life. In this account, the cosmos is described as created, without any further details given as to how it was created.

These are not two different stories, but the same story with two different emphases. The first account describes how the entire creation is under the firm, orderly control of G-d and shows that man is the highest of G-d's creation. It ends with the Sabbath which G-d blessed and called holy as a memorial of His finished creation. The seven days of creation are a testimony to the fact that G-d built time into the fabric of the cosmos.

The second account begins with man and shows how we are different from all other creatures and ends with the mystery of gender, which both unites a man with his wife and separates him from his family of origin. It does not go into the same detail as the first account because it has a different purpose. They are both songs or poems and explain some of the mysteries of creation from two distinct perspectives.

Are the seven days literal or literary? If they are literal, then we have a problem, because the second account reverses some of the order of the first account. If we take them as literary, then they are telling the same story with a different purpose. I believe it did not take any time for G-d to create the cosmos and first account has as one of its purposes to show both that G-d created everything and that everything is under His final control according to the order He established – especially time, which He also created.

The second account describes the wonder of gender, where two equals are united as help mates but belong to two distinct genders. The word "echad" is used to describe how the two shall be become one and it is the same word which describes the tri-unity of G-d as a plural singularity, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. This is a mystery which defies anyone's attempt to fully understand how G-d can be three persons united as the godhead. Gender is also a mystery which defies the ability of anyone to fully understand how mankind is divided between two distinct genders.

Now let's get back to our passage. At some time during the Middle Ages, chapters and verses were added to the Bible and gentile scholarship decided to de-emphasize the importance of the Sabbath by chopping it off from the first chapter and making it as kind of footnote before the second account begins. It is part of the first account and should really be numbered as 1:32, 1:33, and 1:34. Again, all of our Bibles have the same content, which is just arranged differently. Even Jewish translations have the first chapter end on the sixth day and place the seventh day as the beginning of chapter two, even though it does not belong to the second creation account.

G-d built time into the framework of creation and He blessed the Sabbath and made it holy as a reminder of the finished work of creation. The other six days of creation were called good and the sixth day was called very good, but none of them were blessed or made holy. The Sabbath is the only holy day which was blessed.

This gives the Sabbath a unique place in the creation account. As the seventh day, it is blessed as a time when G-d rested and it is given to us as a day when we are to rest, both in the finished work of creation and in the finished work of Calvary. In Hebrews, Yeshua is called our Sabbath and the coming kingdom in the New Creation is called our eternal Sabbath rest.

It is the only day which the Torah sanctions and mandates as a day of rest and the days upon which the biblical festivals fall, these special days are also called sabbaths. There is never a shift away from the Sabbath in the New Testament and the only mention of anything associated with Sunday, was that gentile believers met on Saturday evening, which is called the beginning of the first day of the week in a Jewish understanding.

They did not have the right to rest on the Sabbath and the closest they could come to Sabbath observance was to worship on Saturday evening. Early believers then adopted the Sabbath because they thought of themselves as a supernatural extension of Judaism where Sabbath observance was enshrined in the Ten Commandments.

After our people rebelled against Rome the second time, Jews had to pay a fine to worship on the Sabbath and were no longer allowed to dwell in the Holy Land or enter Jerusalem. History records that a community of Messianic Jews moved into a part of Jerusalem which is still called the city of David and they dwelt there for hundreds of years without being expelled like other Jews. They acknowledged Yeshua and remained Jews.

Gentile believers did not want to suffer the same fate alongside their Jewish brethren and no longer considered themselves as an extension of Judaism. They claimed that the Gentile church replaced Judaism as the people of G-d and they moved the day of worship from the seventh day Sabbath, which the Torah mandates, and adopted the Roman day of rest, which was the first day of the week. They even called it the Christian Sabbath and even though they kept the Jewish Old Testament as part of their Bible, they severed all and any other links with Judaism. They even required that Messianic Jewish believers follow suit and abandon all and any links that they had with Judaism.

About 300 hundred Messianic synagogues scattered throughout the Middle East, refused to abandon Judaism and were called Jewish heretics by the Gentile church which would have nothing more to do with them. They existed as a separate group until the seventh century, when the Sassanid Persians invaded the Eastern Roman Empire and drove the Romans back to the very gates of their capital, Constantinople.

Jews throughout the region rose up with the Sassanids, called them liberators and joined them in their fight against the Byzantines (eastern Romans). The Sassanids lost the battle before the gates of Constantinople and were driven out of the eastern Roman Empire. The returning Romans destroyed every Jew community in the Middle east, along with the Messianic synagogues. The last trace of the Jewish segment of the early church ceased to exist and the church's last link with Judaism was lost and the church began to suppress Judaism and persecute Jews along with the Roman authorities.

Please note that abandoning the Sabbath as G-d's mandated holy day of rest, is nowhere taught or required by the Scriptures and the first day of the week is nowhere given any special weekly significance. The year when our Messiah died on the cross, He arose after three days, which just happened to be on the first day of the week. His resurrection should be observed on the day which falls after three days, from whenever Passover falls and that could be on any day of the week.

Sunday was given no calendar significance as a holy day and the closest thing I have heard that makes any sense of this strange custom, was taught by one of my instructors at Bible school. He said because the L-rd rose on a Sunday, we should worship on Sunday and walk in resurrection power for the rest of the week. I want to walk in resurrection power every day of the week, but that power is only found by walking with the L-rd according to His Word and Sunday has nothing to do with it.

The Sabbath was mandated as the divine sanctioned day of rest and is the only Day of the L-rd which the Scriptures recognize. The seventh day Sabbath is the only day He blessed and made holy. The first mention of the Sabbath is part of the first creation story, where it is established as a memorial to G-d's finished creation and given as a day of rest.

While gentile scholars and Bible translators did not dare change the Scriptures, they moved the seventh day away from the first creation story and made it an unimportant footnote. It is an integral part of Genesis chapter one and is the conclusion which G-d gave to the first creation story. In a sense it is as much a part of the cosmic order which is described in the first story, as any of the other six days which are mentioned. It is the seventh day of creation where the Creator rested and it is still the day when followers of the Creator should rest and be spiritually renewed.

What happens to gentile believers who worship on Sunday? Some Seventh day Adventists teach that they are excluded from the Kingdom of heaven, but the Bible does not teach this. In the third chapter of First Corinthians, judgment day for believers is described as a cleansing fire where all the carnal works of believers are consumed. They are described as hay, wood and stubble and refer to any deviations from the clear teachings of the Scriptures.

It is likely that all of us will suffer some loss, but those who have replaced the fourth commandment with Sunday will definitely suffer loss because of this carnal departure from the Holy day which the L-rd mandated as a holy day of rest, right from the beginning of Creation. The Sabbath is the L-rd's Day and always has been and always will be. When we worship on the Sabbath we are acknowledging and upholding G-d's cosmic order and we share in its blessing and in its holiness.

No other day of the week is given this special status and you need to know that when a group of Gentile believers in the early church, refused to abandon sabbath worship, they were condemned as heretics and were called those who kept the fourth of the ten commandments. They were suppressed and driven out of the church.

Another group always calculated the resurrection from the fourteenth of Nisan (Passover) and refused to acknowledge Easter Sunday as the day when this blessed event should be celebrated. They were called the Quartodecimans, which means those who calculate from the fourteenth.

They were also condemned as the Gentile church became more firmly entrenched into supersessionism (replacement theology) and considered that the Gentile church replaced Israel and all things Jewish were redundant and no longer applied to believers. They went as far as to forbid Jewish believers from practicing anything Jewish because they were saved out of Judaism in order to enter Christianity.

This is not something which the Bible teaches and while it does not make Sabbath keeping a salvation issue, the L-rd said that the ones who break the least of these commandments and teach others to do the same, will be called the least in the kingdom of Heaven (Matt. 5:17-20). Yeshua refused to divide the commandments up into those which were more important and those which were less important, because they have always been a package deal. None of them should be broken.

The Jerusalem council did not oblige Gentiles to convert to Judaism in order to function as believers, as long as they avoided the two besetting sins of Israel: idolatry and fornication. The question of keeping the Ten Commandments was not the focus of the discussion and if Gentile believers own the Ten Commandments as part of the cornerstone of their faith, then why single out the fourth and say that it no longer applies, while the rest of them do? Which other ones should we abolish?

I am not hostile to gentile believers who worship on Sunday, but the consistent testimony of the Scriptures, beginning with our passage in Genesis, is that the seventh day Sabbath remains the day of the L-rd and is the day which G-d set aside for us to rest and worship on. Our faith should not be buffet where we can pick and choose what we believe or how we observe our faith. The Scriptures are a package deal, without allowing us to take things away from them or add anything to them. The Sabbath is part of this package.

Supersessionism is not taught in the Scriptures, whereas the seventh day Sabbath is taught in the Scriptures. Our passage says that the seventh day was mandated as a day of rest which the L-rd blessed and made holy. It is the conclusion of the first account of Creation and it is not a form of legalism which the L-rd needs to deliver us from. It was enshrined in the Law, whereas Sunday was enshrined in the traditions of the church as part of the attempt to break away from all things Jewish. It is part of the theological anti-Semitism which the gentile church suffers from, even if there is no longer much hostility towards Jewish people or Israel.

Sabbath keeping acknowledges G-d's finished creation and is used as a symbol in the New Testament of the eternal heavenly rest which is reserved for us, once the Kingdom of G-d bursts forth in the new creation. Sunday is not the Christian Sabbath. There is only one Sabbath in the Bible and that is the seventh day. How well are you willing to keep G-d's Cosmic order? Shabbat Shalom and Shavua Tov.