

DISCOVERING THE BIBLE & OUR BIBLICAL HERITAGES

Providing factual information about the Bibles, beliefs, movements, institutions, events and people of historical Christianity & Judaism.

2014 • NUMBER 2

The Living Seventh Day

By Jim Myers

The Seventh Day is the high point of the opening creation account of Genesis, but most Bible readers aren't aware of it because of two things. First, when chapter and verse markers were inserted later, they destroyed the original context. Second, most readers do not know what "and He rested" meant to the ancient audience. So, the first thing we must do to understand its importance is to restore the original context. Reconnecting the Seventh Day to first six days allows us to follow the progression of the Creator's acts that led up to the events of the Seventh Day. It should be noted that the ending of the first account was combined with the opening of the next account and placed in in one verse.

- (1) **Introduction** (1:1-2) – Darkness enveloping a deep ocean and the Creator
- (2) **Day One** (1:2-5) – *The Creation of Light*
- (3) **Day Two** (1:6-8) – *The Creation of Heaven*
- (4) **Day Three** (1:9-13) – *The Creation of Earth, Seas & Plant Life*
- (5) **Day Four** (1:14-19) – *The Creation of Heavenly Bodies*
- (6) **Day Five** (1:20-23) – *The Creation Water-Soul & Winged Creatures*
- (7) **Day Six** (1:24-31) – *The Creation of Earth-Soul Animals & Humans*
- (8) **Day Seven** (2:1-4a) – *The Creation of the Living Shabbat*

In Seven Days a lightless lifeless place became the world we know that was teeming with life. Now, let's reconstruct the activities of the Seventh Day:

*Thus the Heaven and the Earth were completed, and all their hosts. In **the Seventh Day** the Creator completed His work and He rested in **the Seventh Day**. The Creator blessed and empowered **the Seventh Day** and set it apart, because in it He rested from all the work of creating that he had done. This is the account of the Heavens and the Earth when they were created.*

What happened on the Seventh Day? According to the words above, the Creator finished His work and rested, but that doesn't sound like a very important event. For most of us, it sounds like a routine we know very well – *we go to work and then we rest*. But, 2,500 years ago, the ancient Jewish readers understood the words translated "work" and "rest" very differently. The word translated "work" is not the

Hebrew word used for "doing labor." It is a word that means "**mission.**" On the Seventh Day the Creator completed His mission.

Now let's turn our attention to the phrase "and He rested." The first thing we must know is the history of the ancient text of Genesis. The first scroll of Genesis was the work of Ezra, a Jewish priest and scribe, who was living as a captive in Babylon. A lot of Bible readers do not realize that the Torah was written in Babylon and brought to Judea. Therefore, the first people to hear its words were the Jewish captives living in Babylon. They would have been familiar with another creation story about a "**god that rested.**" They knew exactly what the phrase in Genesis meant.

Every year an elaborate Babylonian New Year's celebration took place at which the most famous actors performed the creation account of *Enuma Elish* -- ***the story of Marduk, Creator of the Heaven and Earth.*** Marduk created the Heaven and Earth by slicing Tiamat in half – *the upper part of her dead body became the Heaven and the lower half became the Earth.* **Tiamat was one of the two creators of the gods.** Marduk is the one running down her back preparing to kill her.



SOURCE: http://2.bp.blogspot.com/_2TCYQxSUqGQ/THAE1JbnvUI/AAAAAAAAAKBs/BAyovvOgXQ8/s1600/Tiamat.JPG

Marduk then created mankind by mixing clay with the blood and bones of a murdered god that was offered as a sacrifice. He created humans to be the slaves of the gods. After creating humans, Marduk built his temple,¹ which brings us to the clue that will define what the word "rest" means:²

Below the firmament, whose grounding I (Marduk) have made firm, a house I shall build, let it be the abode of my pleasure. Within it I shall establish its holy place, I shall appoint my holy chambers, I shall establish my kingship.³ This place is to be the "stopping place" of the gods.⁴ We (the gods) will make a shrine, whose name will be a by-word, your (Marduk's) chamber that shall be our stopping place, **we shall find rest therein.**⁵



Marduk Ziggurat, or Etemenanki, of ancient Babylon

SOURCE: <http://www.sun-nation.org/merkl-sumeria.html>

Etemenanki is the Sumerian name for the Marduk Ziggurat of ancient Babylon. It means "*The Foundation of Heaven and Earth.*" This was Marduk's House, his temple – *it was the "resting place of the gods."* Another example is found in the ancient Sumerian tablet, The Temple of Kes:

House. . . . inspiring great awe, called with a mighty name by An; house whose fate is grandly determined by the Great Mountain Enlil! House of the Anuna gods possessing great power, which gives wisdom to the people; house, **reposeful dwelling of the great gods!** House, which was planned together with the plans of heaven and earth with the pure divine powers; house which underpins the Land and supports the shrines!⁶

Dr. John Walton explains the ancient meaning of "rest" in the biblical account:

A reader from the ancient world would know immediately what was going on and conclude that this (the biblical account) is **a temple text** and that day seven is the most important of the seven days. . . **Deity rest in a temple, and only in a temple.** This is what temples were built for. We might even say that this is what a temple is – a place for divine rest. . . **When the deity rests in the temple it means that he is taking command; that he is mounting to his throne to assume his rightful place and his proper role.**⁷

The "**House**" was a "**temple of a god,**" part of the plan of the creation of heaven and earth. Now let's read the account of the Seventh Day again.

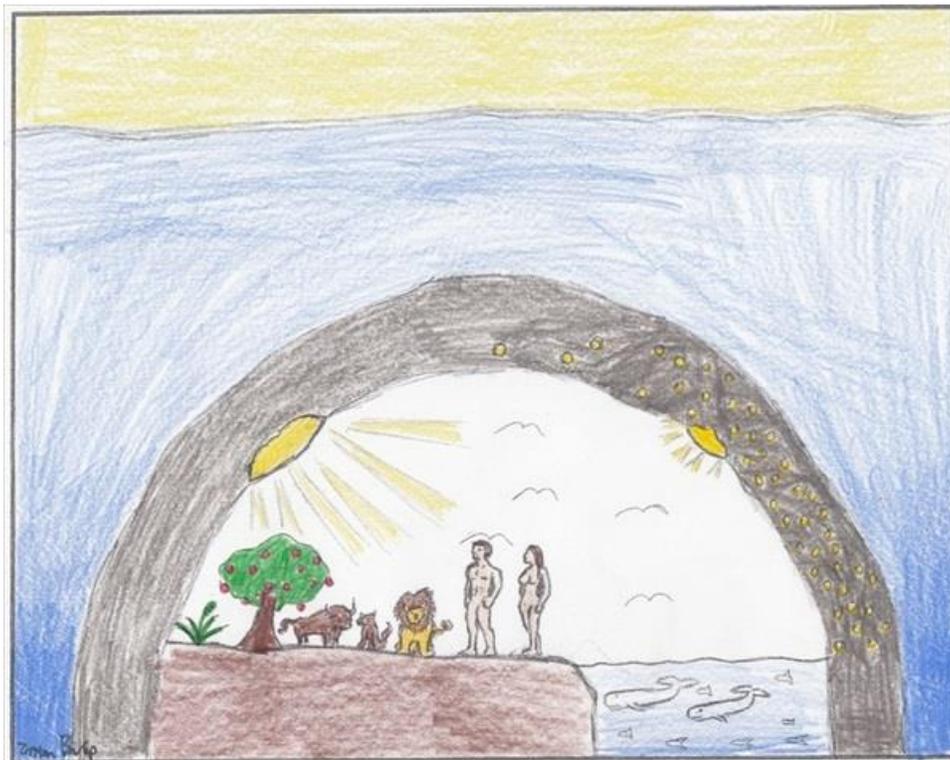
*In the Seventh Day the Creator completed His mission and **He rested in the Seventh Day.** The Creator blessed and empowered the Seventh Day and set it apart, because **in it He rested** from all the work of creating that He had done.*

When the ancient Jewish audience heard *"and He rested,"* they knew that it meant the Creator had completed His Temple, entered it, and mounted His throne to assume His rightful place and proper role as the Creator and King of the Heaven and Earth! *In other words, the revelation of the Seventh Day announced the creation of the Creator's Temple and the beginning of His Kingdom.*

The Creator's Temple was very different from the temples of the Babylonian gods, which were found in multiple places in Babylon. These temples were either buildings or manmade mountains like Marduk's temple. Look at the words in the biblical account again – *"He rested **IN** the Seventh Day."* The Creator rested **"in a period of time."** This is the first revelation of the Seventh Day.

The second revelation is about the physical location of the Creator's Temple. Most people believe this account is about the creation of "the universe," but that isn't what the story is about. It is about the Creator creating His House – **His Temple**. Let's review the steps it took to create His Temple:

- *It is located beneath the surface of a deep primordial ocean.*
- *It is inside a solid dome-like structure named "Heaven."*
- *The sun, moon and stars are embedded in the inside surface the dome.*
- *Inside the dome is dry ground named "Earth."*
- *Inside the dome is a body of water named "Seas."*
- *Plants, herbs and fruit trees grow from the dry ground.*
- *Water creatures live in the Seas.*
- *Winged creatures fly above the Earth and Seas.*
- *Animals and Mankind live on the dry ground.*



Keep in mind that dome-like structure is located beneath the surface of the deep ocean. The dome-like structure becomes the Creator's Temple every Seventh Day. This temple includes the Heaven and the Earth. No matter where one is located inside it, on the Seventh Day they are in His Temple. *Interestingly, instead of people going to the Temple, on the Seventh Day the Temple comes to the people.* Think about how this revelation affected the lives of the Jewish captives in Babylon. Even though their Temple in Jerusalem no longer existed, they now knew they could enter into the Creator's Temple right where they were. They could never be separated from this Temple. This revelation appears many times in the Hebrew Bible, including the story of Jonah, who became aware of it while he is in the belly of a big fish at the bottom of a sea. They also knew that no matter where they were, they were still in the Creator's Kingdom.

There is another revelation about the Seventh Day that truly separates it from any other time or temple. It is revealed in the Creator's **Third Blessing**:

The Creator blessed the Seventh Day and set it apart.

In Hebrew, the term "set it apart" means to "make holy." "Holy" means something is "set apart for a particular function or purpose." Keep in mind that in the ancient, to bless something is to empower it to do what it had been created to do. The key to understanding the significance of the Third Blessing is the context in which the first two blessings were given.

The First Blessing was given on the Fifth Day after the Creator created the first creatures with souls – *large water creatures, smaller water creatures and winged flying creatures*. He blessed and empowered the water-soul creatures by saying:

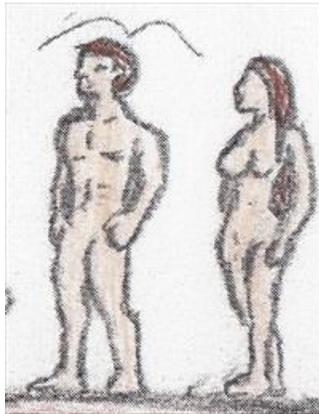
"Be fruitful and multiply. Fill the waters in the seas and the skies above the Earth."



SOURCE: <http://www.chiangmaizoo.peam.biz/TravelGuide/TravelGuide1/BodyTemplate1-TravelGuide1.html>

The Second Blessing was given on the Sixth Day after the second and third types of creatures with souls were created – *animals and humans*. This blessing was given to empower the humans:

"Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth; and subdue her; and have dominion over the fish of the sea and the birds of the sky and over every living thing that moves on the earth. Behold, I have given you every plant yielding seed that is on the surface of all the earth, and every tree which has fruit yielding seed, it shall be food for you; and to every beast of the earth and to every bird of the sky and to everything that moves on the earth which has life, *I have given* every green plant for food. And it was so."



What do the first two blessings have in common?

- (1) *The Creator only blessed and empowered living creatures with souls.*
- (2) *The blessing empowered them to multiply on their own.*
- (3) *The blessing empowered them to fill the environments in which they lived.*

What does this suggest about the Seventh Day?

- (1) *The Seventh Day is a living creature with a soul.*
- (2) *The Seventh Day is empowered to multiply on its own.*
- (3) *The Seventh Day is empowered to fill its environment.*

The Seventh Day isn't just a period of time or the Creator's Temple. It is a living creature, with its own appetites, desires and longings. It is created to fulfill specific purposes. In order to understand what it was created to do we must take another look at the role of the humans who were the object of the Second Blessing. The man and woman were created with the Spirit of the Creator and empowered to represent Him as the co-rulers and caretakers of His House and its hosts. Based on the progression of the creation, it would seem that the Seventh Day was created to be the caretaker of the humans.

How will the Seventh Day accomplish its mission? As we saw above, **the "resting place of a god" was where a god's wisdom was given to the people**. Every

Seventh Day the Creator's Wisdom will be given to mankind. It will refresh the Spirit of the Creator in every person that hears it. As the numbers of people with His wisdom multiply and fill the Earth, His wisdom will also spread. Who will teach His wisdom? The first teachers will be the fathers and mothers who teach it to their children. Every home becomes part of the Creator's Temple every Seventh Day.

*Every seventh day serves as a memorial to the ideas of the creation of the world by the word of the Creator.*⁸

Over 2,500 years later, because generation after generation has known the Seventh Day, we have received His wisdom. The Creator's Wisdom and the Seventh Day have played a major role in preserving and protecting the lives of the Jewish people.

The importance of the Seventh Day to Moses is clearly seen in one of the most famous sections of the Hebrew Bible – **the Ten Commandments**. Sadly to say, this is another example of the insertion of verse markers destroying the context. When this is added to layers of traditions and institutional theologies, a great deal of confusion has arisen about exactly what the actual ten commandments are. In my article – **Four Different Versions of the Ten Commandments** – you can see the versions created by Rabbinic Judaism, Catholicism and Protestantism – as well as our version. By the way, our research indicates that none of these versions was the one written on the stone tablets (see [The Original Ten Commandments](#)).

Now let's examine the **Forth Commandment** from our version of the Ten Commandments (Exodus 29:7-12):

You shall not take the name of YAHWEH your God in vain, for YAHWEH will not hold him guiltless that takes His name in vain. Remember the Shabbat Day, to keep it set apart. Six days you shall labor and do all your work. But the Seventh Day is the Shabbat of YAHWEH your God. In it you shall not do any work, you, nor your son, nor your daughter, nor your manservant, nor your maidservant, nor your cattle, nor your stranger that is within your gates. For in six days YAHWEH made Heaven and Earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the Seventh Day, wherefore YAHWEH blessed the Shabbat Day, and hallowed it. Honor your father and your mother, that your days may be long upon the land which YAHWEH your God gives you.

What does it mean to "take the name of YAHWEH your God in vain"? The context provides the answer:

Taking the Lord's name in vain is to not remember the Seventh Day by setting it apart from the other six days.

Working on the Seventh Day or requiring your children, slaves, animals, strangers or anyone else on your property to work is to take the Lord's name in vain. In addition, to taking the Lord's name in vain, it is also dishonoring your mother and father and the failure to acknowledge the Creator's Kingship and Kingdom.

The importance of the Seventh Day is found in the writings of **Isaiah the Prophet**. The section in which it is found, is also the section Jesus used as the foundation of his message (Isaiah 55-62). Read the following from Isaiah 56:1-3a, 6-8:

Thus says YAHWEH, Guard Justice and do TZeDAQAH (righteousness), for My salvation is near to come, and My TZeDAQAH to be uncovered. Blessed is a man that does this, and a son of man who will seize it:

*He who guards **the Shabbat** from profaning it.
He who guards his hand from doing evil.*

*And let not the foreigner who joined himself to YAHWEH, speak, saying, "YAHWEH will surely divide me from His people. . . And the sons of the stranger, that join themselves to YAHWEH, to serve Him, and to love the name of YAHWEH, to be His servants, every one that keeps **the Shabbat** from polluting it, and takes hold of My covenant; even them will I bring to My holy mountain, and make them joyful in My House of prayer. Their burnt offerings and their sacrifices shall be accepted upon My altar; for My House shall be called an House of Prayer for all people.*

Pay close attention to Isaiah's words below (Isaiah 58:13-14):

*If you restrain your foot because of **the Shabbat**, from doing your pleasure on My holy day, and you call the Shabbat a delight, the holy day of YAHWEH honorable, and you honor it by not going your own ways, or not seeking your own pleasure, or turn away you own words. Then, you shall delight yourself together with YAHWEH, and I will cause you to ride on the high places of the land, and I will give you to eat the heritage of Jacob your father, for the mouth of YAHWEH has spoken.*

The Shabbat was something that all of Jesus's original followers knew because they were Jews and lived in a Jewish nation where it was a regular part of life. After the crucifixion, a new sect arose headed by a man from Tarsus name Saul, aka Paul. Paul's sect did something Jesus did not do – *it allowed Gentiles to become members of the Jesus Movement*. This created a major conflict with some of the Jewish followers of Jesus who demanded that the Gentiles convert. A council consisting of the apostles and elders was called in Jerusalem to resolve the matter. Jacob (James) the brother of Jesus was head of the council and he announced its ruling:

*"It is my judgment, therefore, that we should not make it difficult for the Gentiles who are turning to God. Instead we should write to them, telling them to abstain from food polluted by idols, from sexual immorality, from the meat of strangled animals and from blood. **For the Law of Moses has been preached in every city from the earliest times and is read in the synagogues on every Shabbat.**"⁹*

The council prohibited Gentiles from doing things that were involved in the worship of idols and pagan rituals:

- *abstain from food polluted by idols*
- *abstain from sexual immorality*
- *abstain from the meat of strangled animals*
- *abstain from eating blood*

The council also required the new Gentile converts to do this:

- *remember and keep the Shabbat*

Most readers of Acts fail to understand the council's requirement. The key to understanding it is the Greek word γαρ (**GAR**) which is translated "**for**." It indicates that what follows it is a continuation and further explanation of what preceded it. In other words:

Tell the Gentiles to abstain from doing the things idol worshippers do for now, because they will be keeping the Shabbat, attending synagogues, and learning the Torah (Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers & Deuteronomy).

After the Temple was destroyed by the Romans, Jerusalem was no longer the home of the Jesus Movement, Paul's sect became much more powerful as the new Gentile converts were became members throughout the Roman Empire, Assyria, Mesopotamia, Syria, Arabia, Egypt and other nations. The new Gentile Christians brought ideas and beliefs from their cultures and incorporated them to create new Christian beliefs. No longer were Gentile converts required to keep the Shabbat or attend synagogues. They did not know the Living Seventh Day, in whose image they had been created or that they were created to be the caretakers of the Creator's House. Maybe it's time to rediscover the Living Seventh Day and learn the Wisdom of the Creator – *that's what Jesus would want his followers to do!*

BHC

**If you like what you read above –
How about helping fund our work by making a donation!
Contribute online at -- <http://biblicalheritage.org/BHC/donate.htm>
Or mail it to the address at the bottom of this page.
*Thank You!***

¹ <http://www.zodiacbistro.com/articles/mesopotamian%20myths.htm>

² Enuma Elish (<http://www.enotes.com/myths-legends/enuma-elish>)

³ Enuma Elish 5.121-24

⁴ Enuma Elish 5.138

⁵ Enuma Elish 6.51-52

⁶ <http://www.etcsf.orinst.ox.ac.uk>

⁷ *The Lost World of Genesis One: Ancient Cosmology and the Origin Debate* by Dr. John Walton; pp. 71 & 75.

⁸ *A Commentary on the Book of Genesis: Part One* © 1989 Magnes Press Hebrew University, Jerusalem, Israel; p. 64

February Memorials

In Loving Memory

**PHYLLIS
WYRE**

d. February 8, 1998

*May you dwell under His
wings in complete
SHALOM forever!*

In Loving Memory

**ALBERTA
HARLESS
MYERS**

b. August 18, 1887
d. February 5, 1979

*May you dwell under His
wings in complete
SHALOM forever!*

In Loving Memory

**GLORY ANN
HODGES
ROSS**

b. January 25, 1978
d. February 19, 2008

*May you dwell under His
wings in complete
SHALOM forever!*

In Their Remembrance

*May their memories inspire us to seek
those qualities of mind and heart which
they shared when we walked life's
journey together.*

*May we help to bring closer to
fulfillment their highest ideals and
noblest strivings.*

*May their memories deepen our loyalty
to those things which we valued and
shared --
faith, love, peace and devotion and our
biblical heritage.*

*As long as we live, they too will live; for
they are now a part of us, as we
remember them.*

(Inspired from prayers found in Yitzhor
Reflections - The New Mahzor - The
Prayer Book Press)

Remembering those who came before us is a very important part of the Biblical Heritage Center's mission. It is our privilege to honor them by the BHC Memorial Garden and Memorials. Please visit our website the next time you are on the Internet. If you would like to add your loved one to this section, send their information to us. There is no charge, but donations are accepted. Remember those who have meant so much to you in the BHC Memorial Garden.

In Loving Memory

**MARIA
ESTELLA
RUIZ**

February 22, 1996

*May you dwell under His
wings in complete
SHALOM forever!*

In Loving Memory

**JAMES
HENRY
MYERS**

b. September 6, 1881
d. February 13, 1953

*May you dwell under His
wings in complete
SHALOM forever!*



SHALOM

*Totality, Wholeness &
Peace.*