

The Lord's Day

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Text: Isaiah 43: 18-21 ASV

Remember ye not the former things, neither consider the things of old. Behold, I will do a new thing; now shall it spring forth; shall ye not know it? I will even make a way in the wilderness, and rivers in the desert. The beasts of the field shall honor me, the jackals and the ostriches; because I give waters in the wilderness, and rivers in the desert, to give drink to my people, my chosen, the people which I formed for myself, that they might set forth my praise.

Jehovah promises a new thing will be done. Notice that He says He will do it. The question is, will we know it and recognize it when it happens? It seems unfathomable, yet it is quite possible for Jehovah to do something new and we, His people, completely miss it and stay stuck in the old. We must ask Jehovah to make us sensitive and aware of His new thing so we don't persecute and dismiss the new thing of the Lord.

The Sabbath is our Saturday, the last day of the week. The Sabbath commemorated the rest of Elohim after creation of the world. The Old Testament established two great institutions: the Sabbath and temple. How did observance of the Sabbath come to end and the Lord's Day begin?

The Roman Empire had a weekly and monthly day, called *Sebaste*, which means Emperor's Day, dedicated to Caesar. Pagan worship of the Roman Emperor, celebrating these days, was not an option for Christians. So they determined each week to celebrate the Lord's Day, on the first day of the week, commemorating the rising of Jesus from the dead.

It is a most significant and instructive fact that the resurrection and so many of the appearances were on the first day of the week. Here was

basic instruction by deed rather than by word. By divine providence God might have brought it to pass that the resurrection occurred on the Sabbath. If the holy day set apart in the Old Testament were to be kept sacred in the New then the basic event of the resurrection could have been on this day. There were five appearances on that first Lord's Day, the day Jesus rose from the dead. There are no recorded appearances until the next Lord's Day. The disciples are represented as being assembled, Thomas being with them, the second Lord's Day. There's an air of expectancy. This is significant. This day already stands apart as the day of His resurrection and of His Appearance. They wait His further appearance. The church was established at Pentecost. Again, the first day of the week when the baptism of the Holy Spirit occurred, the first proclamation of the full gospel, and founding of the church. God used Stephen to bring a fuller realization of the passing Old Testament Sabbath. His martyrdom resulted from his proclamation; the Sabbath was now to yield to the glorious first day of the week, the day of Messiah's triumph over man's last enemy, death. It was revealed in the most practical manner, by object lessons of the appearances.

The first reference to the Lord's Day was made by John; your brother and partaker with you in the tribulation and kingdom and patience which are in Jesus. John, was in the isle that is called Patmos, for the word of God and the testimony of Jesus. John was in the Spirit on the Lord's day, and heard a great voice, as of a trumpet saying, What thou see, write in a book and send it to the seven churches: unto Ephesus, and unto Smyrna, and unto Pergamum, and unto Thyatira, and unto Sardis, and unto Philadelphia, and unto Laodicea (Revelation 1: 9-11 ASV). From context, it is quite certain John used the expression the Lord's Day as we use it.

John was a leader of the Christians. Christians were criminals. In the fourteenth year after Nero, 94 A.D. Domitian banished the Apostle

John to the island of Patmos for witnessing to the word of truth. His banishment was preceded by scourging. Banishment to a remote island was a common Roman punishment, usually meted out to political prisoners. Banishment involved loss of civil rights, all property except pittance enough for a bare existence; scanty clothing, insufficient food, and sleep on the bare ground. People banished were not personally ill treated and were not confined to prison on their island, but were free to move within its narrow limits. John was marked by perpetual fetters, did hard labor in the quarries, overseen by the lash of the military overseer. At the death of Domitian, John was liberated, 96 A.D.

Patmos is a barren rocky little island belonging to a group of islands known as the Sporades. It is ten miles long by five miles wide. Forty miles off the coast of Ephesus it is the last haven on the voyage from Rome. A cave in a cliff overlooking the sea is where the Revelation was written.

In the Spirit on the Lord's day, John heard a great voice. John was in eternity with God. When Moses went down from the mount it came to pass on morning the third day, there were thunders and lightnings, and the voice of a trumpet exceeding loud (Exodus 19: 16 ASV). Ezekiel wrote that the Spirit lifted me up, and I heard behind me the voice of a great rushing, saying , Blessed be the glory of Jehovah (Ezekiel 3: 12 ASV). For John the voice was like a trumpet. The commanding and piercing unmistakable clarity of a trumpet call told John to write the vision he sees. A man must first hear and then transmit. A vision and a message are not something to be revealed selfishly for one's own edification; they are something transmitted to men, even if the price is costly. The man may withdraw to see the vision, but he must go forth to tell his vision. John was in Patmos. John was in the Spirit. No matter where a man is, no matter how hard his life, no matter what a man is passing through, he may still be in the Spirit. If he is in the Spirit, even on Patmos, the glory and the message of God will come

to him. There is no situation in life in which the Spirit can not speak to us, and when the Spirit does speak, we know the glory of God, even on Patmos.

Jehovah promised to bring rivers in the desert and roads in the wilderness. He did this for the purpose of giving His people, His chosen, the people which He formed for Himself, the people which He set forth to praise Him, drink. Out of love, the Bridegroom does what would not otherwise be done. For His Bride, there will be rivers flowing in the desert.

Heaven invading Earth! Do you know and recognize this new thing Jehovah promised? Or have you completely missed it and stay stuck in the old?