

A TREE, A RIVER AND THE SABBATH - DOES IT MATTER WHICH DAY?

The final test is soon to come upon this world and we need to make sure that we are living in accordance with a 'thus saith the LORD', not thus saith man. In Jeremiah 17:9, we are told that "*the heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked.*" So if we put our trust in man or our own selves, then we will be deceived, which is why it is so important to live by the express Word of God and not deviate from it.



Psalm 118:8 ...'It is better to trust in the Lord than to put confidence in man.'

Did you know that the tree of knowledge of good and evil, the river Jordan and the Sabbath day all have something in common? Many professed Christians in this world say that it matters not which day you keep as the Sabbath, or that the Sabbath day has been changed. But the tree of knowledge of good and evil and the river Jordan teach us an important lesson regarding this.

In the beginning when God created the earth and man and placed man in the garden of Eden, God told Adam and Even not to eat of **one specific tree** - the tree of knowledge of good and evil. Now ask yourself a question. Could Adam and Eve have just picked their own tree from which they couldn't eat? Would they ever have presumed to suggest that it doesn't matter which tree they don't eat from, as long as it was just one of them? Surely God doesn't mind *which* tree, as long as it is one of them right? God forbid! What presumption! No, God chose one specific tree.

Just think about that. Did it matter WHICH tree? Yes, because our Creator chose a specific tree!

Now did the fruit on the tree of knowledge of good and evil have some sort of special substance that caused Adam and Eve to know good and evil? No. The tree of knowledge was simply a beautiful tree with beautiful fruit. **It was going against Jehovah's specific command and not trusting that the LORD meant exactly what He said** that caused the separation from God and man's knowledge of sin. When Eve stretched forth her hand to take of that fruit from the forbidden tree, did she think that just maybe God didn't really mean what He said? Maybe God won't mind? Oh! The danger of presumption and doubting the express commands of God! Look at the mess of this world due to this act of presumption and doubt over Jehovah's express commands.

Just as the tree was a test of obedience in the beginning, the Sabbath is going to be a test of obedience in the end times. Remember, Adam and Eve could not just choose their own tree to not eat from. They had to obey the express command of Jehovah.

So what about the river Jordan? In 2 Kings we find a story about Naaman and the prophet Elisha. Naaman came down with leprosy and went to see Elisha to be healed by God's prophet. And what did Elisha tell Naaman to do?

*2 Kings 5:10,14 ... 'And Elisha sent a messenger unto him, saying, Go and wash in **Jordan** seven times, and thy flesh shall come again to thee, and thou shalt be clean ... Then went he down, and dipped himself **seven times in Jordan**, according to the saying of the man of God: and his flesh came again like unto the flesh of a little child, and he was clean.'*

Now if you read the entire account, you will see that Naaman was not happy about washing in the river Jordan. Instead he inquired about going to wash in the rivers of Damascus (vs.12), saying "may I not wash in them and be clean?" Now I ask you, what if Naaman had gone and washed himself seven times in one of the rivers of Damascus instead of the Jordan? I mean, what does it matter WHICH river? Surely the rivers of Damascus were cleaner, and deeper, and more convenient for Naaman. But, would Naaman have been healed of his leprosy by dipping himself seven times in the Abana or Pharpar rivers in Damascus? **Is there anyone who would like to say he would have been healed by going to any other river than the Jordan?**

Let me ask again - Is there anyone who would DARE to say that Naaman would have been healed by choosing a different river to that which God had specifically commanded through Elisha?

What was the test? Will Naaman simply accept God's Word by faith, doing as Jehovah commanded through Elisha and be healed, even though it may be an 'inconvenience'? Or will he choose HIS OWN way? I will say what hopefully everyone would agree with, and that is Naaman would NOT have been healed of his leprosy if he chose a different river to that which God had specifically commanded. And why is that? **Because healing NEVER comes from disobeying God's specific commands. There is no cleansing in disobedience to God's specific Word.**

Deuteronomy 12:32 ... 'What thing soever I command you, observe to do it: thou shalt not add thereto, nor diminish from it.'

Let me give you one more example. In 1 Samuel 15, we have the account of king Saul being commanded by God through the prophet Samuel to go and destroy the Amalekites. Saul was given a **specific command** to destroy everything of the Amalekites. But what did Saul and his men do? They destroyed the Amalekites, but kept king Agag alive and brought sheep and oxen as a 'sacrifice to the LORD.' Saul thought that he was doing a good thing. But look at Samuel's response from God:

*1 Samuel 15:19-23 ... 'Wherefore then didst thou **not obey the voice of the Lord**, but didst fly upon the spoil, and didst evil in the sight of the Lord? ... Hath the Lord as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, **as in obeying the voice of the Lord**? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams. For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft,*

*and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry. **Because thou hast rejected the word of the Lord, he hath also rejected thee from being king.***

This is so important to understand friends. Saul and his men thought they were doing a good thing by keeping the spoil of the Amalekites to offer as a sacrifice to Jehovah. But God did not ask them to do this. And this is the whole point! God did NOT tell Saul to keep the king or cattle. God asked them to destroy everything. Do you see this? God gave Saul a **specific command**. And because Saul did not obey God's specific Word, but instead chose to do it his own way, God rejected Saul as king! I hope you are getting this vital point.

What did God ask Adam and Eve to do? To not eat from one specific tree. What did God tell Naaman to do? To wash himself in one specific river. What did God tell king Saul to do? To carry out His express instruction and not deviate from it. What has God told us to do? To keep one specific day in the week as a holy Sabbath rest.

I pray you can see the importance and relevance of this with regards to the Sabbath day. God has designated **the seventh day** as His holy Sabbath, which evidence shows is our Saturday today. So we have a choice to make. We can either obey Jehovah's specific command to keep His specific 7th day Sabbath, just like Adam and Eve had to not eat from that specific tree and Naaman had to wash in that specific river. Or we can take matters into our own hands and choose our own day, or no day at all. But then the words which were spoken to king Saul will come to us ... *"Wherefore then didst thou **not obey the voice of the Lord** ... and didst evil in the sight of the Lord? ... Because thou hast rejected the word of the Lord, he hath also rejected thee."*

And what is the specific command and specific day that Jehovah has given us?

*Genesis 2:2-3 ... 'And on **the seventh day** God ended his work which he had made; and he rested on **the seventh day** from all his work which he had made. And **God blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it:** because that in it he had rested from all his work which God created and made.'*

*Exodus 20:8-11 ... '**Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy.** Six days shalt thou labour, and do all thy work: But **the seventh day is the sabbath of the Lord thy God:** in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy manservant, nor thy maidservant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates: For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested **the seventh day: wherefore the Lord blessed the sabbath day, and hallowed it.**'*

Remember those words ... *"the seventh day is **the sabbath of the Lord thy God.**"* It is NOT the 'sabbath of the Jews.'

The final mark of the beast test is coming friends, and it is all to do with worship and obedience. The three angels message of Revelation 14 contains the final warning to the world, telling us to *"fear God and give glory to Him and worship Him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters."* (Rev.14:7). And the 7th day sabbath is a 'sign' between God and His people, that they fear God, not man. The three angels message also tell us that God's end time people are those who are upholding His commandments by faith.

*Revelation 14:12 ...'Here is the patience of the saints: here are they that **keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus.**'*

Those who, **by faith**, obey Jehovah's specific commands, including the 4th commandment, will receive the seal of God. But those who follow man in disobeying God's specific commands by keeping the 1st day (Sunday), choosing their own way (their own tree or river), will receive the mark of the beast. God has blessed us with the 7th day Sabbath for spiritual and physical healing. The 7th day (our Saturday) is a blessed and sanctified day (Genesis 2:3). There is a blessing attached to the very specific day. But if we choose another day, there will be no blessing in it. So will you **BY FAITH** accept God's specific Word concerning the Sabbath? Or will you, like Naaman, before his servant showed him the truth, try and find your **OWN WAY**, by choosing **YOUR OWN** day for healing? Remember, healing will **NEVER** come through disobedience.