

# The Flag and the Sabbath

written by Tim Jennings, M.D. | April 21, 2022



I gave them my Sabbaths as a sign between us, so they would know that I the LORD made them holy (Ezekiel 20:12 NIV84).

A sign is a mark, which is an object that conveys meaning, something that symbolizes a message. The Sabbath is a sign, mark, object from God to humanity that He has given for a purpose—to convey a message to us. And in this way, the Sabbath is like a flag. Let's consider object lesson similarities between a national flag and the Sabbath.

A nation's flag is made for its citizens; the citizens are not made for the flag, just like "the Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath" (Mark 2:27 NIV84). A flag is created to inspire the people with patriotic love and loyalty to their country. The Sabbath was created to inspire humans with love and loyalty to God. A flag reminds people of the history, values, and principles of a nation. When people see the old Soviet flag, they are reminded of different values than those conveyed by the British, Canadian, or American flag. The Sabbath is given to remind us of God's government, methods, and principles—the kingdom of truth, love, and liberty.

When people are taken captive in war and they see their national flag, it inspires them with the hope

that their countrymen will come and rescue them. We are captives in a world of sin, and the Sabbath is to remind us that God sent Jesus to deliver us from sin, to make us holy, to rescue us.

Waving a flag from the heart is different than doing so out of obligation. Living in North Korea and flying the national flag because one fears the punishment of the state is not the same as waving one's national flag because one loves their country. Likewise, observing the Bible Sabbath because it is a rule that an authoritarian god will punish you for breaking is not the same as loving the Creator and cherishing the Sabbath as a sign of the kingdom you love. This is why Isaiah says only those who delight in the Sabbath are true Sabbath keepers (Isaiah 58:13), because love cannot be commanded. A true patriot is one who loves their country, while a true Christian is one who loves the kingdom of God.

When people love and respect a country, they respect and treat as honorable the flag of that country; but when people despise a country, they trample upon and burn that nation's flag. So too, when people love God and His kingdom, they honor His Sabbath—but when they don't love God's kingdom, they trample His Sabbath.

When we want to identify with a kingdom, we wave their flag, regardless of the place where one lives. Wave a British flag in America and one shows support for Britain. Likewise, if we want to show support for God's kingdom, we honor the flag of His kingdom, the Sabbath, that He gave us as a sign.

But if we fly the flag of a nation, we would also need to adhere to and practice the laws of that nation to represent it correctly. Likewise, if we embrace the Sabbath of the Lord, then we need to honor it as God would have us honor it—as a mark of His kingdom of love, that His laws are design laws that cannot be imposed and are not enforced through external punishments. We, as God has done, present the truth in love and leave others free in how we live our lives all week long, for this is what the Sabbath reminds us of.

To embrace the Sabbath day as a rule that requires punishment for not observing it, one becomes like those who crucified the Lord of the Sabbath and wanted Him off the cross in order to keep the Sabbath. Such persons are like enemies of a nation who infiltrate and fly the national flag while they work against the kingdom they pretend to support.

Yes, the Sabbath is a sign that God makes us holy; it is an evidence of His Creatorship and His methods of governing, that at the end of six days of creating, God rested—He did not use power to force His intelligent creatures to obey, but He left them free to think and decide for themselves. Those who want to fly the flag of the Lord do so by embracing and practicing the same methods of God, truth, love, and liberty, all of which are symbolized by the Sabbath.