

**MAY 24, 2026**

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# **Christian Rhythms of Life**

**Devotional Reading: Ecclesiastes 2:20–25**

**Study Text: Mark 2:18–28**

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# LESSON INTRODUCTION

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- A). Our Study begins with accounts depicting conflicts between Jesus' actions and Jewish religious tradition.**
- B). Jesus challenged people to rethink old customs and consider the new things God was doing. \***
- C). The Pharisees consistently meet Jesus' message with pushback and interrogation.**

# BACKGROUND & CONTEXT

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**In the Old Testament, God required only one formalized day of fasting (abstaining from food) for all of Israel. He called it the Day of Atonement (Leviticus 16:29–31; 23:26–32).**

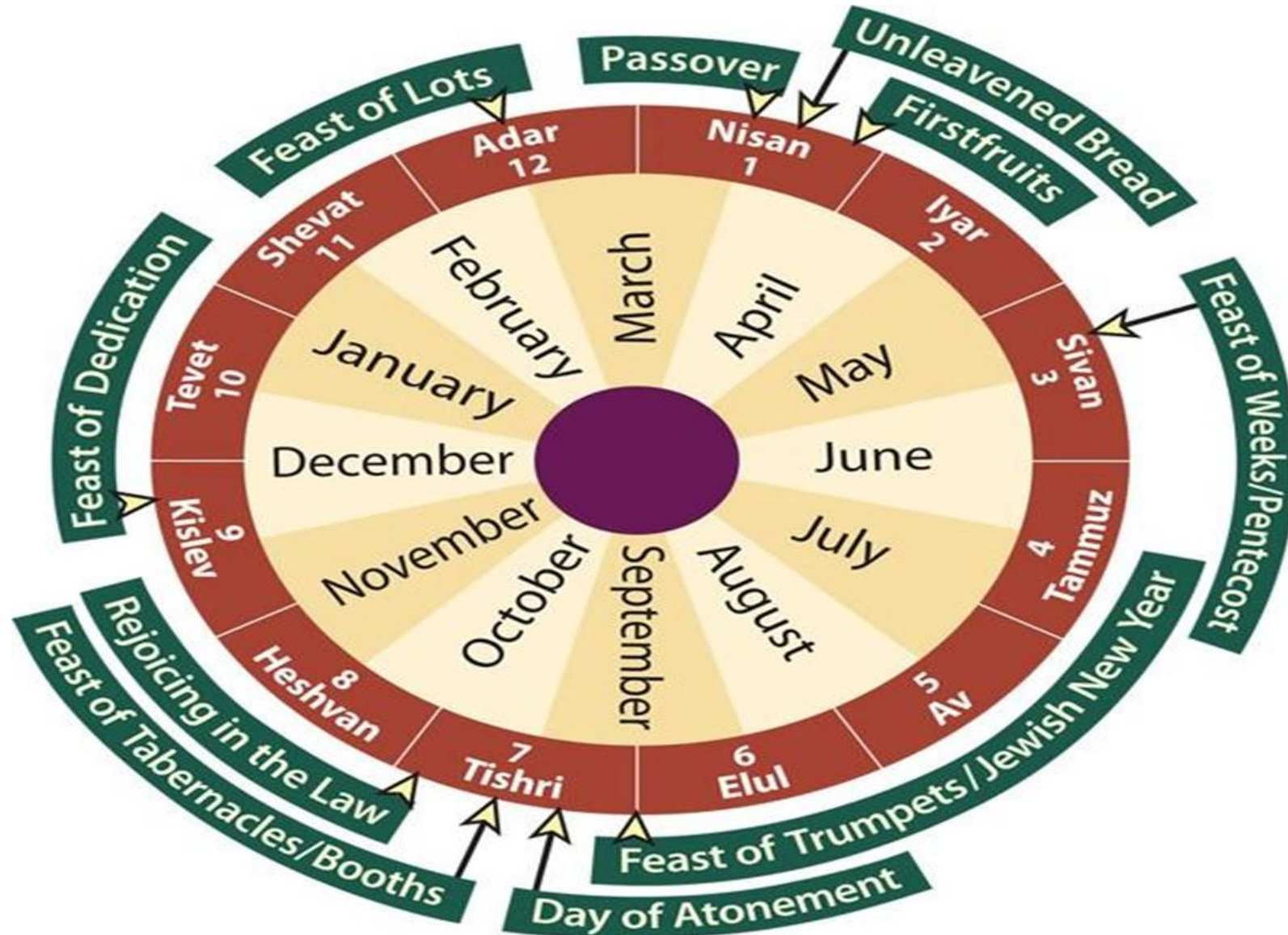
**Israel was to observe the Day of Atonement on the tenth day of the seventh month.**

# BACKGROUND & CONTEXT

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**Sabbath observance began after Israel escaped from slavery under Pharaoh in Egypt. The Law of Moses formalized the Sabbath as a commemoration of God's rest after creation (Exodus 20:8–11;) God required his people to balance labor and toil with rest to reflect on his sovereignty.**

The Jewish calendar is luni-solar, based on lunar months of 29 days alternating with 30 days.



# Today's Goal's

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- 1. Summarize the significance of the Sabbath for a first-century audience and life today.**
- 2. Explain the diversity of Christian practices for fasting and Sabbath-keeping in focus the ministry of Jesus.**
- 3. Sustain or improve our balance of fasting and feasting, working and resting to provide our best of service unto The Lord. \***

# Study Outline

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## I. Question of Fasting (Mark 2:18–22)

A. Differing Practices (v. 18)

B. Fasting and Presence (vv. 19–20)

C. New and Old (vv. 21–22)

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## II. Question of Sabbath (Mark 2:23–28)

A. Accusation (vv. 23–24)

B. Accommodation (vv. 25–26)

C. Account (vv. 27–28)

# The Sociological Function of Rituals

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**First-Century:** In ancient Judaism, fasting and Sabbath observance served an identical socioreligious function.

Here in the United States, Juneteenth, Thanksgiving and the 4th of July function as unifying cultural rituals.

**Question:** How can fasting and observing the Sabbath improve our spiritual and physical lives today?

## ✚ MARK 2:18 NIV

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**18, Now John's disciples and the Pharisees were fasting. Some people came and asked Jesus, "How is it that John's disciples and the disciples of the Pharisees are fasting, but yours are not?"**

✝ MARK 2:19-20 NIV 

**19, Jesus answered, “How can the guests of the bridegroom fast while he is with them? They cannot, so long as they have him with them.**

**20, But the time will come when the bridegroom will be taken from them, and on that day they will fast.**

✝ MARK 2:21 NIV 

**21, “No one sews a patch of unshrunk cloth on an old garment. Otherwise, the new piece will pull away from the old, making the tear worse.**

✝ MARK 2:22 NIV 

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**22 And no one pours new wine into old wineskins. Otherwise, the wine will burst the skins, and both the wine and the wineskins will be ruined. No, they pour new wine into new wineskins.”**

## KEY POINTS TO REMEMBER

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- 1. Fasting and the Sabbath originated as sacred gifts from God, designed to enrich our covenant with Him.**
- 2. God required his people to balance labor and toil with rest to reflect on his sovereignty.**
- 3. Obedience indicated reliance on God's provision over one's status, effort and achievements.\***

## ✚ MARK 2:34 -24 NIV

### Jesus Is Lord of the Sabbath

**<sup>23</sup> One Sabbath Jesus was going through the grainfields, and as his disciples walked along, they began to pick some heads of grain.**

**<sup>24</sup> The Pharisees said to him, “Look, why are they doing what is unlawful on the Sabbath?”**

## ✚ MARK 2:25-26 NIV

**<sup>25</sup> He answered, “Have you never read what David did when he and his companions were hungry and in need?  
<sup>26</sup> In the days of Abiathar the high priest, he entered the house of God and ate the consecrated bread, which is lawful only for priests to eat. And he also gave some to his companions.**

✚ MARK 2:27-28 NIV 

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**27 Then he said to them, “The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath.**

**28 So the Son of Man is Lord even of the Sabbath.”**

# QUESTIONS?

**What is more important, upholding the letter of a law or the spirit of a law?**

**IN WHAT SITUATION WOULD YOU DISREGARD OR DISOBEY A RULE FOR SOMETHING YOU DEEM MORE IMPORTANT THAN THAT RULE?**

# SOMETHOING TO THINK ABOUT

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- 1. Fasting: Historically, represented penitence, mourning, and wholehearted spiritual devotion.**
- 2. The Sabbath was created for man/woman that we may reflect on God and serve him faithfully.**
- 3. The sacrifice of Fasting and Intentional rest & reflection helps us draw closer to GOD.**

# CLOSING PRAYER

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**Heavenly Father, may we depend on you in every act of devotion and every rhythm of life. Whether we are feasting in joy or fasting in sadness, working or resting, may we keep our eyes fixed on you, our Lord and king. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.**



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