

Walking with Jesus Through Sinai:
 Seeking Moral Clarity in an Age of Chaos with the 10 Commandments
 CPC Adult Sunday Studies Fall 2024
 12 - Fourth Commandment

On the Biblical Foundations of the Sabbath

Review - from treating and worshipping God as God - in his person, work, and name - we move now to imitating God in the Sabbath and receiving His rest as a gift.

Exodus 20:8-11 - "Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days you shall labor, and do all your work, but the seventh day is a Sabbath to the LORD your God. On it you shall not do any work, you, or your son, or your daughter, your male servant, or your female servant, or your livestock, or the sojourner who is within your gates. For in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is in them, and rested on the seventh day. Therefore the LORD blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy."

Some Basics

- **"Remember"** is a much bigger word in the Bible than we normally use it. It's not the casual, "remember your multiplication tables" or "remember this recipe." It has more the effect of "keep this in your mind, make it a continual memorial, let it be a constant reminder." Similarly to Israel being the people who "remember the Exodus", it becomes their identity as those who remember the Exodus because if they forget they cease to be Israel.
- **"Holy"** means "set apart" or "consecrated" for a special use. It should be different - it's the opposite of common, regular, or ordinary.
- **"Blessed"** means "made it especially good" or even "happy." We should look forward to it!

On Creation and the Sabbath

1. **Why Create?** - "It pleased God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, for the **manifestation of the glory of his eternal power, wisdom, and goodness**, in the beginning, to create, or make of nothing, the world, and all things therein

whether visible or invisible, in the space of six days; and all very good.”
(WCF 4.1). Let’s never forget the *purpose* of the creation in the first place!

1. “Each day of creation **dismisses an additional cluster of deities**. On the first day, the gods of light and darkness are dismissed. On the second day, the gods of sky and sea. On the third day, earth gods and gods of vegetation. On the fourth day, sun, moon, and star gods. The fifth and sixth days take away any associations with divinity from the animal kingdom. And finally human existence, too, is emptied of any intrinsic human divinity – while at the same time all human beings, from the greatest to the least, and not just pharaohs, kings, and heroes, are granted a divine likeness.” - B. Waltke, *An Old Testament Theology*

2. God’s Work - What and Why?

1. Creation is depicted as a personal and good God who works with no opposition
2. Everything is very planned out and according to God’s design, all performed with ease, emphasizing His might and total control
3. The verb “Created” is unique to God – the verb is not used of humans, which would be “made.” Hence, creation “out of nothing.”
4. Progress from “Kingdom/Form” to “King/Fill”

Day 1 - Light	Day 4 - Lights
Day 2 - Sky/Seas	Day 5 - Birds/Fish
Day 3 - Dry Land, Veg.	Day 6 - Animals, Humans
5. "Therefore if we are to read Gen. 1 right - it is a covenant theology concerning the kingdom of God - that under God there is appointed many 'servant-kings' who are then to **rule on God's behalf and for his glory!**" - Preston Graham
 1. There are kings, and then there is the King of Kings
 2. These "Day-Frames" provide a structure and order to creation, but their exact length (i.e. 24 hrs or more) is left ambiguous, and thus Scripture does not bind us either way to a strict, literal 24hr. 6-day creation.

3. God’s Rest - What and Why?

1. “*Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host of them. And on the seventh day God finished his work that he had done, and he rested on the seventh day from all his work that he had done. So God blessed the seventh day*

and made it holy, because on it God rested from all his work that he had done in creation.” - Gen. 2.1-3

2. Was He tired?? No!

3. **Unique day:**

1. Only day God blessed – done so because His ‘rest’ marks His completion
2. Has no evening to end it, symbolizing no death – thus we get a foretaste of the resurrection, of the world to come – Rev. 22.5! (Isa. 60.19).

4. **"Resting"** in this literary context also means He is **seated on His throne** after His work is complete, like a King, and now He reigns.

1. Compare Eph. 1.20ff - *“that he worked in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly places, far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and above every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the one to come...”*
2. In the Ten commandments we see the command to imitate God in His rest; and Deut 5.12-15 writes that the Sabbath is a reminder of Israel’s release from slavery – thus, God’s creation has a liberating aspect, God’s controlling sovereignty frees us as He brings order out of chaos, as opposed to other myths where the god(s)’ control is oppressive or punitive.

On the Sabbath in the New Testament - Does Jesus cancel the Sabbath?

1. **Matt. 12.1-8**

1. Let’s be careful to let this text determine what it does and does not say, instead of hoping it answers questions *we bring* to it. It’s not meant to settle all Sabbath disputes!
2. **Main point** - Jesus is the Lord of the Sabbath, which is a HUGE claim, since the Lord of Lords of the Old Testament, the Almighty Creator, is the Lord of the Sabbath.
 1. On Sabbath observance, Jesus doesn’t say it doesn’t matter. He points out that there were occasions you could lawfully break it, and if they could, how much more could He! This is an example of what our confession will call “works of necessity and mercy.”

2. The purpose of the Sabbath was mercy (and healing, in the other examples when he heals on the Sabbath), which Jesus is upholding.

2. *John 5.15-18*

1. Jesus is breaking the Sabbath according to the rabbinical tradition, not the Scripture itself.
2. The Jews rightly discern his major claim, that he's "making himself equal with God" - and not only by calling God "Father" but also by claiming that He works on the Sabbath. Theologians knew that on the Sabbath, God still had to "work" in order to maintain all life in the universe. The "rest" at creation pointed to his kingship, not that God didn't do anything every 7th day.
3. "It is finished" (John 19.30) - Jesus is no longer "working" in a significant way, just as we believe that Jesus ascended and is not "seated", waiting for his enemies (i.e. us!) to submit to him.

3. *Colossians 2.13-23*

1. Again, be careful in understanding what this does and does not say. Verses 13-15 exalt the victory of Christ, so Paul can "therefore" don't let any regulations persuade you that Christ has not made you alive.
2. The Sabbath is listed as a "shadow" pointing to Christ. As a shadow, it sets us up for Christ, just as the Law does. But just as we come back to the moral law in a new way in Christ, this passage doesn't explicitly say you shouldn't observe the Sabbath. It should not be used to **disqualify your justification**, but it can certainly be a sign of your sanctification, just as the Law is more broadly.
3. In Christ, we have the freedom to not "*submit to regulations...according to human precepts and teachings? 23 These have indeed an appearance of wisdom in promoting self-made religion and asceticism and severity to the body, but they are of no value in stopping the indulgence of the flesh*" (Col. 2.20, 23). Paul seems to have in mind additional regulations that were merged with Sabbath observance that were fleshly and not sanctifying.

Next Week - on the Lord's Day and the Sabbath, and how we are to observe it.