

Walking with Jesus Through Sinai:  
 Seeking Moral Clarity in an Age of Chaos with the 10 Commandments  
 CPC Adult Sunday Studies Fall 2024  
 13 - Fourth Commandment, part 2

### **On the Sabbath, the Lord's Day, and Living as Pilgrims Waiting for the Final Rest**

*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. Last week, we looked at the Sabbath in creation and in some of the difficult texts of the NT.

*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."*

#### **On the Sabbath and the Lord's Day**

##### **1. On the Lord's Day -**

1. John 20.19, 26 - *"On the evening of that day, the first day of the week... Eight days later..."* - some ancient traditions refer to the Lord's Day as a kind of "eighth day of the week" as if it's not only beginning our week, but a taste of the new creation.
2. Acts 20.7 - *"On the first day of the week, when we were gathered together to break bread..."*
3. 1Cor. 16.1-2 - *"Now concerning the collection for the saints: as I directed the churches of Galatia, so you also are to do. On the first day of every week, each of you is to put something aside and store it up, as he may prosper, so that there will be no collecting when I come..."* - assuming that's when they gather for Christian worship
4. Rev. 1.10 - *"I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day..."* - John is given a vision of heavenly worship on the Lord's Day

5. **From the End of the Week to the beginning** - "Our great privilege under the New Covenant is to start each week with the Sabbath. That's a sign—because of Jesus' resurrection on the first day of the week—not only that the new creation is "ready to be revealed in the last time" (1 Pet. 1:5), but also that our Lord Jesus Christ has actually already begun the new creation. **Because** we still look forward to the future consummation, when we will enter God's rest in perfection, we continue to have a weekly Sabbath in the New Testament. **Because** in Jesus Christ we have already entered God's rest in principle, we begin the week with the Sabbath. We already possess *"the promised Holy Spirit, who is a deposit guaranteeing our inheritance"* (Eph. 1:14). The Lord's Day is a weekly sign that salvation is not just a future hope, but a present possession." (Richard Gaffin, "The Lord's Day: A Sign of Hope")

#### **Lord's Day for Worship - Command or Merely Practical?**

- Calvin, Augustine, and others - saw the Sabbath as fulfilled and abolished in Christ, so affirmed worship on the Lord's Day as a practical and wise admonition for the church to promote, but not necessarily a Sabbath command.
- Aquinas, Westminster Confession, and others - Lord's Day on the first day of the week becomes the Christian Sabbath, and so views it as a command equal to the Sabbath.
- With such diversity in the Christian church, we should of course be very charitable where there's genuine disagreement.

#### **What about Hebrews 3:7-4:13?**

*Therefore, as the Holy Spirit says, "Today, if you hear his voice, 8 do not harden your hearts as in the rebellion, on the day of testing in the wilderness, 9 where your fathers put me to the test and saw my works for forty years. 10 Therefore I was provoked with that generation, and said, 'They always go astray in their heart; they have not known my ways.' 11 As I swore in my wrath, 'They shall not enter my rest.'"*

*12 Take care, brothers, lest there be in any of you an evil, unbelieving heart, leading you to fall away from the living God. 13 But exhort one another every day, as long as it is called "today," that none of you may be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin. 14 For we have come to share in Christ, if indeed we hold our original confidence firm to the end. 15 As it is said, "Today, if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts as in the rebellion."*

16 For who were those who heard and yet rebelled? Was it not all those who left Egypt led by Moses? 17 And with whom was he provoked for forty years? Was it not with those who sinned, whose bodies fell in the wilderness? 18 And to whom did he swear that they would not enter his rest, but to those who were disobedient? 19 So we see that they were unable to enter because of unbelief.

4.1 Therefore, **while the promise of entering his rest still stands**, let us fear lest any of you should seem to have failed to reach it. 2 For good news came to us just as to them, but the message they heard did not benefit them, because they were not united by faith with those who listened. 3 For **we who have believed enter that rest**, as he has said, "As I swore in my wrath, 'They shall not enter my rest,'" although his works were finished from the foundation of the world. 4 For he has somewhere spoken of the seventh day in this way: "And God rested on the seventh day from all his works." 5 And again in this passage he said, "They shall not enter my rest."

6 Since therefore it remains for some to enter it, and those who formerly received the good news failed to enter because of disobedience, 7 again he appoints a certain day, "Today," saying through David so long afterward, in the words already quoted, "Today, if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts."

8 For if Joshua had given them rest, God would not have spoken of another day later on. 9 So then, **there remains a Sabbath rest for the people of God, 10 for whoever has entered God's rest has also rested from his works as God did from his.**

11 Let us therefore **strive to enter that rest**, so that no one may fall by the same sort of disobedience. 12 For the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and of spirit, of joints and of marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart. 13 And no creature is hidden from his sight, but all are naked and exposed to the eyes of him to whom we must give account.

**Richard Gaffin on the Sabbath and Heb. 3.7-4.13** - "In the long passage Hebrews 3:7-4:13, he is intent on giving New Testament Christians a sense of their basic identity: they are sojourners; the church is a pilgrim people. He makes his point, in commenting on Psalm 95:7-11, by comparing the church to Israel in the wilderness. That **analogy has two sides**. On the one hand, just as Israel had been set free from slavery in Egypt, so believers have already been released from the guilt and power of sin. But, on the other hand, just as Israel in Sinai had not yet entered the land of Canaan, so we have not yet attained our salvation in its final fullness. An unthreatened, un-challenged (but not uncertain!) experience of salvation is still

future for the church. This is why there are so many pronounced exhortations to persevere, not only in this passage, but throughout Hebrews....

“The intent of this inspired commentary on the Old Testament should be clear enough. God wants us to view the final rest—the consummation order in store for God’s redeemed children—as one grand, unending sabbath-rest. That suggests that the Sabbath day is an **eschatological sign**. In other words, our **weekly Sabbath-rest is a recurring pointer to that consummation**. Weekly Sabbath keeping is a sign that points to the end of history and to the ultimate fulfillment of all God’s purposes for his creation....

“To see the Sabbath in this light has significant implications not only for our attitude toward the Lord’s Day, but also for how we view ourselves and all of our activities as God’s servants. The weekly Sabbath is not just God’s provision so that we might have time to worship him (although it certainly is that). The rest itself—ceasing as much as possible from those activities that are appropriate on the other six days of the week—has positive meaning. The Lord’s Day is about worship because it is first of all **about the gospel**. It is a sign, a witness both to the church and to the watching world, that “you are not your own” (1 Cor. 6:19). We are depending on God, not on ourselves, to provide for us. It is a sign that we do not trust in ourselves and our own efforts as fallen sons and daughters of Adam. We trust in the perfect righteousness of Christ, the last Adam. We trust in God’s faithfulness to his covenant promises to do for us what we are unable to do for ourselves.

“We obscure the meaning of the Lord’s Day if we detach it from the other six days of the week. The weekly cycle—which structures human existence in virtually every time and place—itself provides a kind of “philosophy of history.” The pattern of six days of activity interrupted by one day of rest is a continuing reminder that human beings are not caught up in a meaningless flow of days, one after the other without end. **History has a beginning and an ending. We are heading toward final judgment and the consummation of all things.** Every time we remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy, it encourages us to “think big.” It reminds us of the truly large picture we are part of as God’s redeemed children. The weekly Sabbath is a God-given sign that our lives are not meaningless and without purpose. Every time we neglect to consecrate the Sabbath day to God, **we actually steal hope from ourselves**. Every time we fail to keep the day holy to God, we actually obscure our witness to the world of hope in Christ. Every Sabbath day is a gracious reminder that our “labor in the Lord is not in vain” (1 Cor. 15:58).” (Gaffin, “The Lord’s Day: A Sign of Hope”)