

INTRODUCTION

We encounter God's command regarding work and sabbath keeping in the fourth of The Ten Commandments. But God spoke to Israel about the sabbath day before the giving of The Ten Commandments. It was when He provided miraculous food for them: manna in the wilderness.

We look today to that history, to see what God did for Israel in that time, and what He has done for us, both for our life in this world, and our eternal life in the world to come.

TEXT - Exodus 16:1-30

BODY

In providing manna in the wilderness...

- I. God Showed Us that He Provides What We Need
 - A. Usually God provides by blessing our normal work
 1. so that
 - a) our farms produce
 - b) our jobs pay
 - c) our businesses profit
 2. we have read about how
 - a) Isaac planted crops, and his fields produced a hundred times what he had planted (Gen 26:12)
 - b) Jacob cared for livestock, and his animals multiplied exceedingly (Gen 30:43)
 - B. But in the time we are reading about today, God arranged for Israel to be in a situation where they had
 1. no farms
 2. no paying jobs
 3. no barns or pantries or storehouses
 - C. God provided this situation, so that people could see, unmistakably, that God provides what we need
 - D. Many centuries later, our Lord Jesus taught us, when we pray, to ask God for our daily bread
 1. that seems to me to be an allusion to this episode in history, when God did that exact thing for Israel
 2. whether we are so rich that we have enough money in the bank to buy food for the rest of our lives; or whether we are so poor we wake up with no food in the house and no money at all; we are to understand that God provides for us every day, so that is what we pray

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II. God Maintained the Connection Between His Providence and Our Work

- A. Notice that although God miraculously provided that the manna was on the ground around the camp, the people still had work to do, before they could eat it
 - 1. the people still had to go out and gather it in order to have it to eat
 - 2. and they still had to process it and cook it
 - 3. they still had to gather wood for their fires
 - 4. they still had to fetch water in which to boil the manna
- B. There have been other times when God provided food miraculously, and left the people with less work to do before they could eat it
 - 1. God caused the widow who provided for Elijah to have flour and oil as long as the famine lasted
 - a) she and her son had to gather wood for their fire
 - b) she had to bake the bread
 - c) but God caused the flour and oil miraculously to appear right in her containers
 - 2. the Lord Jesus made the few loaves and fishes into enough for a crowd of thousands
 - a) He had to break the food into pieces
 - b) the disciples had to distribute the food, and to gather up the leftovers
 - c) but all the people had to do was sit down, and the miraculous food was brought right to them
- C. In the wilderness, God did not cause the manna to appear in the people's jars; nor did he tell them to sit down and wait for Moses and Aaron to hand it to them
 - 1. He put it on the ground outside the camp, for the people to go out and gather
 - 2. then the people could
 - a) boil it into a kind of porridge or soup; or
 - b) grind it into flour for making bread
- D. So, even with the miraculous provision of the manna, there was still work to do on the six days, and to rest from on the seventh day
- E. Thus, God maintained, in the people's minds, the connection between His providence and our work

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III. God Renewed His Arrangement of Work and Sabbath-Keeping

- A. The arrangement of man working for six days, then resting from work on the seventh day, is from the beginning
 - 1. when God created man, He set him in the garden to work and keep it
 - 2. and God rested from His work after six days, and blessed and sanctified the seventh day
- B. By the time of Moses, it had been above 2,000 years since then; and although the Bible shows that the ancient people retained the seven-day week in their lives, we do not have any clear history of actual sabbath observance in the history Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob
- C. The Israelites were just coming out of a long slavery in Egypt
 - 1. we do not know whether or not
 - a) Egypt itself observed a one-in-seven day of rest
 - b) Israel remembered that ordinance in its traditions passed down through the generations
 - c) Israel was allowed by their Egyptian masters to observe a day of rest
 - 2. we do know from Exodus 1 and 2 that the bondage was very cruel
 - a) hard labor
 - b) rigorous enforcement, even with beating
 - c) infanticide
- D. There is plenty of room to doubt whether the Israelites of that time were in the habit of observing the sabbath day at all
- E. Here God reminds Israel of the original work-and-rest cycle that He had ordained at Creation
- F. NOTE: It is an error to understand this episode as the original institution of the sabbath day.
 - 1. Both Genesis and Exodus were written by Moses, and form a continuing history.
 - 2. Exodus chapter one takes up right where Genesis chapter 50 left off.
 - 3. Moses already has recorded in Genesis the original institution of the sabbath day during the week of creation.
 - 4. What we read here in Exodus 16 is not the original institution of the sabbath day, but its renewal after along period of neglect.

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IV. God Used Work and Sabbath-Keeping to Conduct a Test (v. 4)

- A. If during Israel's long slavery in Egypt, the people did not observe the six days of work and one day of rest, it could possibly be because they were forgetting the sabbath, or because their masters made them work every day; so that would not have been a very clear test
- B. But in the wilderness, away from the Egyptian slavery, with a fresh reminder of the six-and-one weekly cycle that God had ordained at creation, the test would prove very clearly whether or not Israel would obey God's law
- C. The test revealed that people would not trust the word of God and obey Him
 - 1. people tried to keep some until the next day (v. 20)
 - 2. people went out to gather on the seventh day (v. 27)
 - 3. do you see yourself in that? God hands you everything, with a few simple rules, and you won't trust him and obey him?
 - 4. that kind of willful disobedience deserves all the dreadful punishment that God has in store for the devil
 - 5. but God is merciful and longsuffering
- D. The test revealed that God's law is good for us (v. 29-30)
 - 1. God provided by six days of work what the people needed for seven days
 - 2. so, all men everywhere can know, by reading this history, that God can be trusted; His law can be trusted; the arrangements He has made are sure to be good for us
 - 3. specifically, if we determine to abide by what He ordained at creation, and what He commanded in The Ten Commandments, He will provide for us by six days of work what we need for all seven days; so we can both work six days and rest one day in full confidence that we will have what we need

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V. God Showed Us a Type of Jesus Christ Our Savior

- A. If God provided what His people needed for temporal life in this world, by sending them bread from heaven for their bodies, He would be sure to provide what His people need for eternal life in the world to come by sending them bread from heaven for their souls.
- B. As we read in John chapter 6, the people of Israel misinterpreted this type, desiring nothing more from Messiah than that he would miraculously give them bread again.
- C. But our Lord Jesus declared that the miraculous food He provided to the large crowds is not the thing the people should be longing for or be satisfied with; because He, Himself, is the fulfillment of what the bread foreshadowed.
- D. Now, for us, it is not in the eating of physical food provided by God that we have ever-lasting life; instead, it is in believing in Jesus Christ that we have immortality.
- E. But you may take the gathering and eating of the manna in the wilderness as a metaphor by which to understand what faith in Jesus Christ is.
 1. the Israelites could not feed themselves and live by their own devices, because they were in a wilderness; so you, sinner, cannot do anything to save yourself from spiritual death by any works you can perform in this world
 2. the Israelites had only to trust the word of God, and take the manna as their nourishment, and they would live; so you, sinner, have only to trust the word of God, and take Jesus Christ for all your spiritual nourishment, and you will have everlasting life

CONCLUSION

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~~Stephen~~ Jeff - Call to Worship - John 6:32-35

Jeremiah - Scripture Reading - John 6:47-51

Roel - Congregational Prayer

Angie - Prelude: "When I Can Read My Title Clear"

Rita or Journey - Trinity 164 "Angels from the Realms of Glory" - Andrew lead

Bella - Trinity 302 "Lord of the Worlds Above" - Alex lead

Journey - Trinity 192 "Stricken, Smitten, and Afflicted"

the week after that for congregational singing + “Be Thou My Vision”

For Ava to learn:

175 “Man of Sorrows”

705 “Grace Greater Than Our Sin”

596, 362 “Jesus Lives and So Shall I”

Revelation 2:17 "He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To him who overcomes I will give some of the hidden manna to eat. And I will give him a white stone, and on the stone a new name written which no one knows except him who receives it." '

work-sabbath-bread-Jesus Christ-faith-life

Israel in the wilderness had temporal life by work and sabbath keeping as the Lord ordained.

Numbers 15:30-41 'But the person who does anything presumptuously, whether he is native-born or a stranger, that one brings reproach on the LORD, and he shall be cut off from among his people. 31 Because he has despised the word of the LORD, and has broken His commandment, that person shall be completely cut off; his guilt shall be upon him.' " 32 Now while the children of Israel were in the wilderness, they found a man gathering sticks on the Sabbath day. 33 And those who found him gathering sticks brought him to Moses and Aaron, and to all the congregation. 34 They put him under guard, because it had not been explained what should be done to him. 35 Then the LORD said to Moses, "The man must surely be put to death; all the congregation shall stone him with stones outside the camp." 36 So, as the LORD commanded Moses, all the congregation brought him outside the camp and stoned him with stones, and he died. 37 Again the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, 38 "Speak to the children of Israel: Tell them to make tassels on the corners of their garments throughout their generations, and to put a blue thread in the tassels of the corners. 39 And you shall have the tassel, that you may look upon it and remember all the commandments of the LORD and do them, and that you may not follow the harlotry to which your own heart and your own eyes are inclined, 40 and that you may remember and do all My commandments, and be holy for your God. 41 I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, to be your God: I am the LORD your God."