

INTRODUCTION

If you ever have read the passages in the Old Testament that record God dealing very severely with sabbath breaking, you may have wondered what to make of that regarding sabbath keeping today; how that affects our understanding of the fourth commandment, of our observance of The Lord's Day.

When we as Christians seek to obey the fourth commandment, we do NOT think that means obedience to the Old Covenant penalties, rules, and precedents.

TEXT

Exodus 35:1-3

BODY

I. Old Covenant Penalties and Rules and Precedents

- A. Penalty - Exodus 35:2 Work shall be done for six days, but the seventh day shall be a holy day for you, a Sabbath of rest to the LORD. Whoever does any work on it shall be put to death.
- B. Rule - Exodus 35:3 You shall kindle no fire throughout your dwellings on the Sabbath day."
- C. Precedent - Numbers 15:30-36
- D. Here are a penalty and a rule and a precedent that applied only to Israel in the Old Testament or Old Covenant
 1. note the features of moral laws, applying to everyone
 - a) given at creation
 - (1) either verbally
 - (2) or written in our hearts
 - b) spoken in The Ten Commandments
 2. these penalties, rules, and precedents lack those features
 3. these are mere ceremonial law, given for Israel during the days of the Old Testament, until Messiah would come
 4. 1689.19.3 ...God was pleased to give to the people of Israel ceremonial laws...all which ceremonial laws being appointed only to the time of reformation, are, by Jesus Christ the true Messiah and only law-giver...abrogated and taken away.

- E. Even though these things are in the Bible, they are not essential features of sabbath keeping
1. these things not mentioned in the original institution - Genesis 2:2-3 And on the seventh day God ended His work which He had done, and He rested on the seventh day from all His work which He had done. 3 Then God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it, because in it He rested from all His work which God had created and made.
 2. these things not mentioned in The Ten Commandments - Exodus 20:8-11 Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy. 9 Six days shalt thou labour, and do all thy work: 10 But the seventh day is the sabbath of the LORD thy God: in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy manservant, nor thy maidservant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates: 11 For in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day: wherefore the LORD blessed the sabbath day, and hallowed it.
 3. what things are mentioned in those two as essential
 - a) resting from our usual work one day in seven
 - b) considering the day holy to the Lord
 - c) understanding the day to be blessed by the Lord

- II. Wrong Conclusions from the Old Covenant Rules and Penalties About Sabbath Keeping
- A. That since the Old Covenant rules and penalties were so strict and severe, we should be that strict and severe in our sabbath keeping
 - B. That since we do not have such rules and penalties in the New Covenant, we must not have sabbath keeping
 1. that does not follow

III. Right Conclusions from the Old Covenant Rules and Penalties

- A. Since in the Old Testament the Fourth Commandment was enforced with such strict rules and severe penalties, we should pay careful attention to the commandment, to understand it and obey it
 - 1. God through Moses commanded that no one was to touch the ark of the covenant; God struck down Uzzah when he touched it; we should not conclude that we should do the same; but that severity should turn our minds to the third commandment, to understand it and obey it
 - 2. God through Moses enacted an ordinance condemning a stubborn, rebellious son to death; we should not conclude that we should do the same; but that severity should turn our minds to the fifth commandment, to understand it and obey it
- B. Man ought to take careful notice of what the Bible says about work and ceasing from work, in order to understand the gospel and believe in Jesus Christ
 - 1. if there is an ordinance from creation, and a commandment among The Ten Commandments, commanding when we are to work and when to rest; and if that was enforced in Israel by severe rules and penalties; then we should take care not to misunderstand the matter of work and rest in the gospel of Jesus Christ
 - 2. WRONG: I must work to gain salvation from God through Jesus Christ; RIGHT: I must rest in Jesus Christ to gain salvation from God through Jesus Christ
 - 3. WRONG: When I have been saved by Jesus Christ, I then can rest from works; RIGHT: When I have been saved by Jesus Christ, I then live a life of doing good works

CONCLUSION

When we as Christians seek to obey the fourth commandment, we do NOT think that means obedience to the Old Covenant penalties, rules, and precedents.

-those were ceremonial laws only for Israel in the Old Covenant

-these are not essential features of sabbath keeping as originally instituted, or as stated in The Ten Commandments

We DO think that such Old Testament measures indicate to us that we should take the fourth commandment seriously.

We DO think that such Old Testament measures point us to the very important aspect of the gospel that commands us not to try to work for our salvation, but instead to rest in Jesus Christ our Savior.

Alex - Call to Worship and Opening Prayer - Ephesians 1:3-6

Stephen - Scripture Reading - Ephesians 1:7-21

Dillon - Congregational Prayer

Benediction - Ephesians 1:22-23

Rita - Prelude

Angie - sheet "Be Thou My Vision" - Andrew lead

Angie - sheet "When I Can Read My Title Clear" - Andrew lead

Haven - Trinity 403 "Not What My Hands Have Done"

