

## Lesson 10: Sabbath Rest

### **Introduction**

If hospitality allows others to worship, a Sabbath allows you to worship.

Hebrew: *shabbat* – lit. “to cease”

A Sabbath was a time to stop working—every seven days, every seven years.

A Sabbath is like a tithe of time.

### **The Permanence of the Sabbath**

*Is the Sabbath commandment still in place?*

The Sabbath originated with creation, not with the Law of Moses:

“God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it, because in it He rested from all His work...” (Gen. 2:3).

Unlike the year and month, ordinances tied to the sun and moon, the *week* appears arbitrary.

Yet, a ten-day work week did not work in France—is this pattern embedded in the nature of things?

The Law of Moses bases the Fourth Commandment on two forms of motivation:

Exodus 20 – the creation week (vv. 8-11)

Deuteronomy 5 – the redemption from Egyptian slavery (vv. 12-15)

The Sabbath appears to be the *sign* of the Mosaic covenant (Ex. 31:12-17):

Those who violated the Sabbath were to be “put to death” and “cut off from among his people” (v. 14).

Jesus did not abide by the cultural customs of the Sabbath:

Principle: “The Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath” (Mk. 2:27).

Conclusion: “So the Son of Man is Lord even of the Sabbath” (Mk. 2:28).

*Did Jesus exercise His authority to change the Sabbath or even abolish the Sabbath?*

Apparently yes—just as He did with the food laws (Mk. 7:19; cf. Acts 10:9-16).

The apostle Paul ranked time-laws among the “elementary principles” of this world (Gal. 4:8-10):

A matter of Christian freedom—part of the “shadow” and not the “substance” of Christ (Col. 2:16-17).

“One person regards one day above another, another regards every day alike.

Each person must be fully convinced in his own mind.

He who observes the day, observes it for the Lord...” (Rom. 14:5-6a).

Presbyterians – like infant baptism and church-state union, where is it abolished in the New Testament?

Exceptions: Acts of Necessity, Acts of Mercy – from statements of Jesus in the gospels

Baptists – like believer baptism and religious liberty, where is it commanded in the New Testament?

Illus. To keep the Sabbath, 17<sup>th</sup>-century Particular Baptists supposed Jesus told of it in the 40 days!

**Conclusion** – *While not commanded, the Sabbath is still a matter of wisdom and worship—a Sabbath principle!*

### **The Meaning of the Sabbath**

Two illustrations will help shed light on the abiding importance of the Sabbath principle:

Illus. Pastor Bacalia – at the end of the day, allow time to rest and reflect on the work accomplished

Rather than dissatisfaction over what was not done or anxiety over what needs to be done,

this satisfaction over what did get done leads to thanksgiving—a victory lap of worship!

God did—He looked at what He had made and said, “It is very good!” Hallelujah!

Illus. *WORLD* magazine interview – the lawyer clerk piled the papers, but the boss assigned more: “I quit!”

Beware of turning the Sabbath into a virtue of self-righteous abstinence and inadvertent oppression of others:

e.g. If I legally “keep” the Sabbath by making my hired hands miss Sunday morning, how is that loving?

Isaiah 58:1ff – the fast that oppresses one’s workers (cf. even the honorable John G. Paton asking for rides)

Amos 8:4ff – the compulsive desire for commerce will eventually tempt you to cheat (cf. 1 Tim. 6:9-10)

The true goal of the Sabbath is worship:

If you “call the sabbath a delight...and honor it,” then “you will take delight in the LORD” (Isa. 58:13-14).

**Question** – *When do you take a Sabbath? When is your sabbatical?*

Beware of cutting corners to “get ahead”—it is “vain” (Ps. 127:1-2) and often done in rivalry (Eccl. 4:4-8).

Beware of missing seasons of rest and worship—if these are not given, they may be taken (e.g. 2 Chr. 36:21).

Illus. Life Action magazine – story of the man in the hospital bed

Time with God is necessary to enjoy Him.

Time to enjoy His gifts is also necessary for enjoying Him.

*Therefore, take time to smell the rose, to enjoy the summer, and (in doing so) to enjoy God. Hallelujah!*