

Title:           **THE PURPOSE OF THE SABBATH**

Text:           Exodus 31:1-18

Subject:       *The Purpose of the Sabbath*

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Tape :       Exodus #103

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Introduction:

How often have you read one of the commandments of the Old Testament and asked yourself, — “Why did God require that service?” — “What is the significance of that law?” — “What does that ceremony teach?” Really, we should ask such questions. Every law, every ceremony, every sacrifice given in the Old Testament Scriptures was designed and commanded by God to teach us something about the Gospel, — to show us our need of a Savior, — to show us Who Christ is, what He would do, how God saves sinners by the obedience, righteousness and blood of His darling Son.

As that is true with regard to all the laws God gave to Israel, it is also true with regard to all the Tabernacle, the furnishings of the Tabernacle, the Priesthood, the Priestly Garments and the ceremonies performed by those priests. But, when we get to Exodus 31, the Lord God mixes one of the commandments given back in chapter 20 with erection, the furnishings and the services of the Tabernacle. He gives specific instructions about sabbath keeping and tells us why He was so insistent upon sabbath observance.

Turn with me to Exodus 31. Here we are taught by the Spirit of God why the sabbath days of the law were established. The title of my message is — **THE PURPOSE OF THE SABBATH**. We will begin in verse 1.

### **WORKMEN PROVIDED**

When God has a work to be done, he never lacks workmen, workmen he has specifically equipped to do the work to which He calls them

(Exodus 31:1-5) “And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, (2) See, I have called by name Bezaleel the son of Uri, the son of Hur, of the tribe of Judah: (3) And I have filled him with the spirit of God, in wisdom, and in understanding, and in knowledge, and in all manner of workmanship, (4) To devise cunning works, to work in gold, and

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in silver, and in brass, (5) And in cutting of stones, to set *them*, and in carving of timber, to work in all manner of workmanship.”

Every appointment of providence and of grace is the appointment of God (Ephesians 4:11, 12. Proverbs 16:33). And everything involved in or connected with the worship of God is also by divine appointment. We do not worship God if we do not worship Him in the manner He prescribes.

- Baptism
- The Supper
- Our Singing
- Reading
- Prayer
- Gospel Preaching
- Simplicity

**“Bezaleel” means “Shadow of God.”** He was chosen of God for the specific work of erecting the Tabernacle and making all its furnishings.

- He was not identified as the man God had chosen until it was time for him to do the work God chose him to do.
- God gave Bezaleel everything he needed to do the work for which he was raised up by God. — He was filled with the Spirit of God. — God gave His servant wisdom, understanding and knowledge in those matters for which he needed wisdom, understanding and knowledge.

**The other man named for the work was** Aholiab (v. 6). “Aholiab” means ““Tent.” Aholiab and Bezaleel were chosen to erect the Tabernacle, a Tent that would be the Shadow of God.

(Exodus 31:6-11) “And I, behold, I have given with him Aholiab, the son of Ahisamach, of the tribe of Dan: and in the hearts of all that are wise hearted I have put wisdom, that they may make all that I have commanded thee; (7) The tabernacle of the congregation, and the ark of the testimony, and the mercy seat that *is* thereupon, and all the furniture of the tabernacle, (8) And the table and his furniture, and the pure candlestick with all his furniture, and the altar of incense, (9) And the altar of burnt offering with all his furniture, and the laver and his foot, (10) And the cloths of service, and the holy garments for Aaron the priest, and the garments of his sons, to minister in the priest’s office, (11) And the anointing oil, and sweet

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incense for the holy *place*: according to all that I have commanded thee shall they do.”

**Robert Hawker** wrote...

“If *Bezaleel* and *Aholiab* be appointed to the curious construction of the tabernacle building, the Holy Ghost will make them fit for the employment. And when Jesus called his poor fishermen of Galilee to be fishers of men, how soon were they qualified for the arduous work.”

If the Lord God so meticulously qualified these two men for the adorning the Tabernacle, which was but a shadow of good things to come, you can be sure that He will not call and send forth men into the work of the Gospel ministry, He will not set in His Church preachers and pastors who lack what is needed for the work to which He has called them. “*the edifying of the body of Christ*” (Ephesians 4:11-13; Jeremiah 3:15).

- The Spirit of God
- Knowledge and Understanding
- Apt to Teach and Gifted to Preach

Let my God send me where He will and for whatever purpose He will, if He will but be with me, I shall soon demonstrate how His strength is made perfect in human weakness. — “*Our sufficiency is of God!*”

**Surely Bezaleel and Aholiab are names that point us above mere men to the Lord Jesus Himself.** Was He not, when He came to dwell upon this earth, the Revealer of God in a Tent of humanity? As such, He was and is the only qualified Workman for the true Tabernacle, which the Lord pitched and not man, the Tabernacle of which He is the Author and Finisher. He is the Foundation Stone of the spiritual building. He has reared up an everlasting tabernacle of redemption in His blood and righteousness, and finished the work the Father gave Him to do.

Oh, blessed Savior, finish the work in my soul also, and make me as a fit stone for Your Temple above!

Read on...Exodus 31:12

**SABBATH SIGN**

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(Exodus 31:12-17) “And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, (13) Speak thou also unto the children of Israel, saying, Verily my sabbaths ye shall keep: for it *is* a sign between me and you throughout your generations; that ye may know that I *am* the LORD that doth sanctify you. (14) Ye shall keep the sabbath therefore; for it *is* holy unto you: every one that defileth it shall surely be put to death: for whosoever doeth *any* work therein, that soul shall be cut off from among his people. (15) Six days may work be done; but in the seventh *is* the sabbath of rest, holy to the LORD: whosoever doeth *any* work in the sabbath day, he shall surely be put to death. (16) Wherefore the children of Israel shall keep the sabbath, to observe the sabbath throughout their generations, *for* a perpetual covenant. (17) It *is* a sign between me and the children of Israel for ever: for *in* six days the LORD made heaven and earth, and on the seventh day he rested, and was refreshed.”

Though they were building the Tabernacle, the children of Israel are here reminded that they still must observe the sabbath. They would not be excused, even to build the tabernacle. If they broke the sabbath, even to do God’s work, even to build God’s Tabernacle, they were to be put to death! The Lord gives a specific reason for this. He says, “*it is a sign between me and you throughout your generations; that ye may know that I am the LORD that doth sanctify you*” (v. 13).

(Exodus 31:16-17) “Wherefore the children of Israel shall keep the sabbath, to observe the sabbath throughout their generations, *for* a perpetual covenant. (17) It *is* a sign between me and the children of Israel for ever: for *in* six days the LORD made heaven and earth, and on the seventh day he rested, and was refreshed.”

God gave the law of the sabbath to stand as a perpetual sign between Him and His people that it is His work alone to sanctify and save His people. His name is **Jehovah-m’kaddesh**. — “*The Lord that doth sanctify you!*” What a great name for our God! Our sanctification is God’s work. It is a threefold work of grace. *We are sanctified...*

- By God the Father in Election (Jude 1).
- By God the Son in Redemption (Hebrews 10:10-14).
- God the Spirit in Regeneration (2 Corinthians 5:17; 2 Peter 1:4).

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It is the Triune God who makes us clean, washes us, hallows us, makes sinners holy, sanctifies us unto Himself as His peculiar people.

### **LAW GIVEN**

Then, after declaring that the whole work of making us holy is His work, the Lord God gave Moses the two tables of stone containing His law in the commandments.

(Exodus 31:18) “And he gave unto Moses, when he had made an end of communing with him upon mount Sinai, two tables of testimony, tables of stone, written with the finger of God.”

The Lord had promised to give these tables back in Exodus 24:12.

(Exodus 24:12) “And the LORD said unto Moses, Come up to me into the mount, and be there: and I will give thee tables of stone, and a law, and commandments which I have written; that thou mayest teach them.”

These commandments were written in stone “*with the finger of God,*” and none but God Himself can write His law on the stony heart of man (2 Corinthians 3:3; Hebrews 8:10).

(2 Corinthians 3:3) “*Forasmuch as ye are manifestly declared to be the epistle of Christ ministered by us, written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God; not in tables of stone, but in fleshly tables of the heart.*”

(Hebrews 8:10) “For this *is* the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith the Lord; I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts: and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people.”

When God writes His law on the hearts of chosen sinners, then they rest in Christ and are refreshed, as they keep that blessed Sabbath of Faith.

### **BLESSED SABBATH REST**

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Let me talk to you for just a little bit about that blessed Sabbath rest that is ours in Christ (Matthew 11:28-30).

(Matthew 11:28-30) “Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. (29) Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. (30) For my yoke *is* easy, and my burden is light.”

**Here is Christ’s word to lost, ruined, guilty sinners.** — “Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.”

- “Come unto ME.”
- “Come unto me, ALL YE.”
- “Come unto me, all ye that LABOR.”
- “Come unto me, all ye that labor and are HEAVY LADEN.”
- “Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will GIVE.”
- “Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give YOU REST.”

There is no salvation to be had, but by coming to Christ. There can never be any true, peaceful, satisfying rest for your soul, except you come to Christ, trusting Him alone as your Lord and Savior. Trusting His blood as your only atonement and His obedience as your only righteousness. Only Christ can give you rest.

**Here is the Master’s word to us all, both to the unbeliever and the believer.** — “Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and you shall find rest unto your souls.”

In all circumstances of life, we find rest unto our souls only as we voluntarily submit to the rule and dominion of the Son of God as our Lord and King. The only way to find rest is to willingly slip your neck under His yoke. When you do, and only when you do, you will find that His yoke really is easy and His burden really is light. I bid you now, everyone of you — **Take the Master’s yoke upon you, and find rest unto your souls.**

- His Yoke of Grace (Luke 14:25-33).
- His Yoke Doctrine (Jeremiah 6:16).

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(Jeremiah 6:16) “Thus saith the LORD, Stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths, where *is* the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls.”

- His Yoke of Providence (Psalm 31:1, 5, 7, 15).

(Psalms 31:1) In thee, O LORD, do I put my trust; let me never be ashamed: deliver me in thy righteousness.....5 Into thine hand I commit my spirit: thou hast redeemed me, O LORD God of truth.....7 I will be glad and rejoice in thy mercy: for thou hast considered my trouble; thou hast known my soul in adversities.....15 My times *are* in thy hand.

*“Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.”*

Read the Word of God and you will discover that Sabbath keeping was required in the Old Testament law to portray the blessed rest of faith in Christ.

**The ordinance of sabbath observance was established by God in the wilderness at the same time that Manna was given from Heaven** (Exodus. 16:22-30).

- The manna portrayed God’s provision of life in Christ, the Bread of Life.
- The sabbath portrayed God’s provision of rest in Christ.

(Exodus 16:22-30) And it came to pass, *that* on the sixth day they gathered twice as much bread, two omers for one *man*: and all the rulers of the congregation came and told Moses. (23) And he said unto them, This *is that* which the LORD hath said, **To morrow is the rest of the holy sabbath unto the LORD**: bake *that* which ye will bake *to day*, and seethe that ye will seethe; and that which remaineth over lay up for you to be kept until the morning. (24) And they laid it up till the morning, as Moses bade: and it did not stink, neither was there any worm therein. (25) And Moses said, Eat that to day; for to day *is* a sabbath unto the LORD: to day ye shall not find it in the field. (26) Six days ye shall gather it; but on the seventh

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day, *which is* the sabbath, in it there shall be none. (27) And it came to pass, *that* there went out *some* of the people on the seventh day for to gather, and they found none. (28) And the LORD said unto Moses, How long refuse ye to keep my commandments and my laws? (29) See, for that the LORD hath given you the sabbath, therefore he giveth you on the sixth day the bread of two days; abide ye every man in his place, let no man go out of his place on the seventh day. (30) **So the people rested on the seventh day.**

The children of Israel were commanded not to do any work on the sabbath. They were not even allowed to pick up manna on the seventh day of the week! Then, in Exodus 20:8-11, we read God's law commandment, forbidding any man to work on Saturday, or even to have anyone under his authority to work for him.

(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.

**Now, listen carefully** - Those who would impose upon us the carnal ordinance of sabbath keeping, those who would bring us back under the yoke of bondage to the law, compelling us to keep the sabbath day, compel us to do what they themselves cannot do.

I know many who preach sabbath keeping as a rule of life, many who would impose upon God's saints strict rules and regulations for sabbath day observance. But all their teaching and preaching in that regard is sheer hypocrisy. Not one of them observes the sabbath day, Their teaching regarding the sabbath are just "*a fair show in the flesh*" (Galatians 6:12-13). **Their pretended reverence for the law of God, when closely examined, reveals a total disregard for God's law.** They sift through the commandments, pick out what they like, and simply ignore the rest. Let me show you what I mean. **Here are four things required in God's law for the observance of the sabbath day.** If the sabbath day is observed, it must be observed in such a way as to include all four of these things.



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1. **The sabbath day must be observed on Saturday, the seventh day of the week** (Exodus 20:10). Sunday is not the sabbath day. It never has been. Sunday is the Lord's Day, the day of Christ's resurrection; but nowhere in the Bible are we commanded, or even permitted, to observe the sabbath on Sunday.
2. **No work can be done on the sabbath - NONE!** (Exodus 20:10)
3. **Any genuine observance of the sabbath day necessitates a return to the ceremonial law of the Old Testament,** because the sabbath day cannot be observed without the offering of a double sin-offering, a double meal offering, and a double drink-offering; and those offerings must be made in the temple at Jerusalem (Numbers 28:9-10).
4. **Those who insist upon keeping the sabbath must also demand the execution of all sabbath breakers** (Exodus 31:15).

**We do not and cannot observe a legal, literal sabbath day because CHRIST IS OUR SABBATH, AND WE REST IN HIM!** In the New Testament epistles (Romans - Revelation), the sabbath is only mentioned in two places. It is mentioned in the four gospels and in the Book of Acts many times in connection with the Jews and Jewish worship. But in those Epistles which prescribe all ordinances of divine worship in this gospel age, it is mentioned in just two places.

(Colossians 2:16-17) Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holyday, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath *days*: (17) Which are a shadow of things to come; but the body *is* of Christ.

Here the Apostle Paul, writing by divine inspiration, forbids the observance of a legal sabbath day on the basis that in Christ every believer is completely, totally, entirely, and forever freed from the law (Romans 7:4; 10:4).

(Hebrews 4:3-9) For we which have believed do enter into rest, as he said, As I have sworn in my wrath, if they shall enter into my rest: although the works were finished from the foundation of the world. (4) For he spake in a certain place of the seventh *day* on this wise, And God did rest the seventh day from all his works.....(9) There remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God.

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The word “*rest*” in these verses is the word normally translated “*sabbath*.” Here we are told that all who believe on the Lord Jesus Christ keep the sabbath spiritually, truly keep the sabbath by faith in him. How do we keep the sabbath by faith? Just like our God kept the first sabbath — **COMING TO CHRIST, BELIEVING ON THE SON OF GOD, WE CEASE FROM OUR WORKS AND REST AND ARE REFRESHED!** Now, I bid you come to Christ and keep the sabbath of faith!

(Matthew 11:28-30) “Come unto me, all *ye* that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. (29) Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. (30) For my yoke *is* easy, and my burden is light.”

AMEN.