

**Subject: God's Moral Law – The Fourth Commandment**

**Scripture: Exodus 20:1-11**

Before we look at the 4<sup>th</sup> commandment, let's review:

1. God commands us not to have any other God. He is the one and only God.
2. God commands us not to misrepresent Him with any visible image.
3. God commands us not to use His name in an irreverent or unworthy manner

In the fourth commandment God commands us to keep the Sabbath day holy.

Notice how this commandment begins: "Remember..." We need to be reminded about some things that are important. I pray that God will show us how important this commandment is, and why we must keep it. We will look at this command by asking some questions: What? Who? Why? And how?

**1. What is the Sabbath Day?**

The Sabbath is a day that God set apart from all other days to be a day of rest and worship. The word "Sabbath" means "rest." Now when God gave this commandment, He said the Sabbath was the 7<sup>th</sup> day, but what makes the Sabbath important is not its order in the week, but its purpose. It is "the Sabbath of the LORD thy God" (Ex. 20:10).

- The Sabbath day is a day of rest and worship set apart for God's glory and our good

**Mark 2:27** *And he said unto them, The sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath.*

Jesus said that God meant the Sabbath to be a blessing and not a burden. The Jews made the Sabbath day into something burdensome with all their restrictions ("a Sabbath day's journey").

**2. Who should keep the Sabbath Day?**

Some say this command was given only to the Jews, God's chosen people. But that's not true. Did God give all the other Ten Commandments only to the Jews? Are Jews the only ones who are to worship the one true God? Are Jews the only ones who are not to misrepresent God with an image? Are Jews the only ones who are to respect God's name? Are Jews the only ones who are to honor their fathers and mothers? And on we could go. This commandment, like all the other commandments are part of God's moral law for all people.

Who was the Lord directing this commandment to? If you look at verse 10, it is implied that God had in mind adults, and especially parents, to keep this commandment and teach their children, their servants, and all foreigners to obey this commandment. Parents have the responsibility to keep this commandment and lead their families to obey it.

**3. Why should we keep the Sabbath Day?**

- A. The Sabbath Day is holy – God commands us to keep it holy. That is reason enough.
- B. The Sabbath Day is a reminder of God's creation – See Exodus 20:11. This is another reason why we believe in six literal 24-hour days of creation.

**Genesis 2:1-3** <sup>1</sup> Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host of them. <sup>2</sup> And on the seventh day God ended his work which he had made; and he rested on the seventh day from all his work which he had made. <sup>3</sup> And God blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it: because that in it he had rested from all his work which God created and made.

God rested not because He was tired, but because He was finished. It was the rest of completion.

C. God set a pattern for the Sabbath before giving the Law

**Exodus 16:22-30** <sup>22</sup> 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. <sup>23</sup> And he said unto them, This is that which the LORD hath said, Tomorrow 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. <sup>24</sup> And they laid it up till the morning, as Moses bade: and it did not stink, neither was there any worm therein. <sup>25</sup> 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. <sup>26</sup> Six days ye shall gather it; but on the seventh day, which is the sabbath, in it there shall be none. <sup>27</sup> And it came to pass, that there went out some of the people on the seventh day for to gather, and they found none. <sup>28</sup> And the LORD said unto Moses, How long refuse ye to keep my commandments and my laws? <sup>29</sup> 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. <sup>30</sup> So the people rested on the seventh day.

No manna fell on the Sabbath. God gave a double portion of manna on the 6<sup>th</sup> day so they could honor the Sabbath without collecting manna that day.

D. God emphasized the Sabbath after giving the Law

**Exodus 31:12-18** <sup>12</sup> And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, <sup>13</sup> 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. <sup>14</sup> 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. <sup>15</sup> 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. <sup>16</sup> Wherefore the children of Israel shall keep the sabbath, to observe the sabbath throughout their generations, for a perpetual covenant. <sup>17</sup> 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. <sup>18</sup> 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.

E. The Sabbath Day is a reminder of God's redemption

**Deuteronomy 5:12-15** <sup>12</sup> Keep the sabbath day to sanctify it, as the LORD thy God hath commanded thee. <sup>13</sup> Six days thou shalt labor, and do all thy work: <sup>14</sup> 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, nor thy manservant, nor thy maidservant, nor thine ox, nor thine ass, nor any of thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates; that thy manservant and thy maidservant may rest as well as thou. <sup>15</sup> And remember that thou wast a servant in the land of Egypt, and that the LORD thy God brought thee out thence through a mighty hand and by a stretched out arm: therefore the LORD thy God commanded thee to keep the sabbath day.

## F. God often reminded His people about the Sabbath

When the Jews returned from captivity, Nehemiah told them it was important to keep the Sabbath day holy.

**Nehemiah 13:15-22** <sup>15</sup> *In those days saw I in Judah some treading wine presses on the sabbath, and bringing in sheaves, and lading asses; as also wine, grapes, and figs, and all manner of burdens, which they brought into Jerusalem on the sabbath day: and I testified against them in the day wherein they sold victuals. <sup>16</sup> There dwelt men of Tyre also therein, which brought fish, and all manner of ware, and sold on the sabbath unto the children of Judah, and in Jerusalem. <sup>17</sup> Then I contended with the nobles of Judah, and said unto them, What evil thing is this that ye do, and profane the sabbath day? <sup>18</sup> Did not your fathers thus, and did not our God bring all this evil upon us, and upon this city? yet ye bring more wrath upon Israel by profaning the sabbath. <sup>19</sup> And it came to pass, that when the gates of Jerusalem began to be dark before the sabbath, I commanded that the gates should be shut, and charged that they should not be opened till after the sabbath: and some of my servants set I at the gates, that there should no burden be brought in on the sabbath day. <sup>20</sup> So the merchants and sellers of all kind of ware lodged without Jerusalem once or twice. <sup>21</sup> Then I testified against them, and said unto them, Why lodge ye about the wall? if ye do so again, I will lay hands on you. From that time forth came they no more on the sabbath. <sup>22</sup> And I commanded the Levites that they should cleanse themselves, and that they should come and keep the gates, to sanctify the sabbath day. Remember me, O my God, concerning this also, and spare me according to the greatness of thy mercy.*

## G. The Sabbath Day is honored by Christians on the first day of the week

This is our day of rest and worship, and it is sometimes referred to as the Christian Sabbath. As we read the New Testament we find the transition from the seventh day to the first day:

### 1) Jesus rose on the first day of the week

**Luke 24:1** *Now upon the first day of the week, very early in the morning, they came unto the sepulchre, bringing the spices which they had prepared, and certain others with them.*

### 2) Believers met for worship on the first day of the week

**Acts 20:7** *And upon the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul preached unto them, ready to depart on the morrow; and continued his speech until midnight.*

**1 Corinthians 16:1-2** <sup>1</sup> *Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I have given order to the churches of Galatia, even so do ye. <sup>2</sup> Upon the first day of the week let every one of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him, that there be no gatherings when I come.*

### 3) The first day of the week became known as “the Lord’s Day”

**Revelation 1:10** *I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day, and heard behind me a great voice, as of a trumpet.*

The previous verse tells us that John had been exiled to the island of Patmos because of His stand for Christ. Yet even in that situation he was aware it was the Lord’s Day and so he worshiped the Lord.

#### **4. How should we keep the Sabbath Day?**

- A. Set the Lord's Day apart from all others – God gives us six days to do our work, but the Lord's Day is holy (set apart) from all other days. It should be different. Some people object to treating the Sabbath Day any different from other days of the week. They may quote a verse like *Psalms 118:24 This is the day which the LORD hath made; we will rejoice and be glad in it.* Every day is a God-given day, but God gives us six days to do what we need to do and the seventh day as a special day of rest and worship, unlike all the others. We should set the Lord's Day apart in our thinking, our attitude, and in our planning. Preparation for the Lord's Day begins on Saturday night.
- B. Do what is pleasing to the Lord – Remember it's the Lord's Day and not ours. An Old Testament passage tells us what pleases God.

***Isaiah 58:13-14**<sup>13</sup> If thou turn away thy foot from the sabbath, from doing thy pleasure on my holy day; and call the sabbath a delight, the holy of the LORD, honorable; and shalt honor him, not doing thine own ways, nor finding thine own pleasure, nor speaking thine own words:<sup>14</sup> Then shalt thou delight thyself in the LORD; and I will cause thee to ride upon the high places of the earth, and feed thee with the heritage of Jacob thy father: for the mouth of the LORD hath spoken it.*

The Puritans called the Lord's Day, "the market day of the soul." That means it is a day to do business with God.

The Lord's Day is a day of rest and worship. The Bible says we need physical rest, spiritual rest in Christ (Mt. 11:28), and eternal rest in heaven (Rev. 14:13).