

## EXODUS: The Person, Promise, and Power of God

### Exodus 20 – The Ten Words of Our Fearful God, Part 3

**<sup>8</sup>“Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. <sup>9</sup>Six days you shall labor, and do all your work, <sup>10</sup>but the seventh day is a Sabbath to the Lord your God. On it you shall not do any work, you, or your son, or your daughter, your male servant, or your female servant, or your livestock, or the sojourner who is within your gates. <sup>11</sup>For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is in them, and rested on the seventh day. Therefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy.**

1 of 2 commands expressed positively.

Mentioned more often in the Old Testament than any other command (over 100x!)

The longest of all the commands, expressed in three parts:

- 1) What: Remember
- 2) How: Rest
- 3) Why: Creation

Of all the Decalogue, this command is the most \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ of them all.

Before we dive into this text, let's consider the danger of *doctrinal minimalism*.

Perhaps you've heard the phrase often falsely attributed to Augustine, but actually dating from the early 17th century: “In essentials, unity; in non-essentials, liberty; And in all things, charity.”

As Gavin Ortland points out in his book *Finding the Right Hills to Die On*, so far as it goes, this statement has much to commend it. A weakness, however, is that it is working with only two categories: essential and non-essential.

Doctrinal minimalism essentially says this: If it is not essential, then it is not important.

This fourfold ranking of doctrines should help us:

- First-rank doctrines are \_\_\_\_\_ to the gospel itself. (Example: Virgin Birth)
- Second-rank doctrines are \_\_\_\_\_ for the health and practice of the Church, such that they frequently cause Christians as separate at the level of local church, denomination, and/or ministry. (Example: baptism)
- Third-rank doctrines are \_\_\_\_\_ to Christian theology, but not enough to justify separation or division among Christians. (Example: the millennium)
- Fourth-rank doctrines are \_\_\_\_\_ to our gospel witness and ministry collaboration. (“*Adiaphora*” ... Example: difference between seraphim and cherubim)

There is a limit, however, to the usefulness of this fourfold ranking. Not every doctrine fits neatly into one of the three or four categories. There is a *spectrum* of doctrinal importance. And there will even be disagreement as to what level we ascribe to every doctrine.

That being said, I hope we can all agree that our interpretation and application of Exodus chapter 20:8ff is not a first-rank doctrine.

## Sabbath ...

From \_\_\_\_\_

To \_\_\_\_\_

To \_\_\_\_\_

To \_\_\_\_\_

I. The \_\_\_\_\_ of Sabbath predates the \_\_\_\_\_ of Sabbath.

Israel is commanded to *remember* the Sabbath. It is rooted in \_\_\_\_\_.

*God blessed the seventh day and made it holy, because on it God rested from all his work that he had done in creation. (Genesis 2:3)*

God gave the Sabbath to \_\_\_\_\_ for two purposes:

To ordain \_\_\_\_\_ ...

To demand \_\_\_\_\_...

The result is a \_\_\_\_\_ for humanity.

II. The \_\_\_\_\_ of the Sabbath became the \_\_\_\_\_ of the \_\_\_\_\_ covenant (much like rainbow was the sign of the Noahic covenant and circumcision was the sign of the Abrahamic covenant):

The Sabbath served as a sign of God's continuing intention and willingness to bless and spiritually refresh his covenant people when they drew near to him in weekly Sabbath worship.

*It is a sign forever between me and the people of Israel that in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, and on the seventh day he rested and was refreshed."* (Exodus 31:17)

The Sabbath was also a sign to remind Israel of God's gracious commitment to make them holy.

<sup>13</sup> *"You are to speak to the people of Israel and say, 'Above all you shall keep my Sabbaths, for this is a sign between me and you throughout your generations, that you may know that I, the Lord, sanctify you. (Exodus 31:13)*

"... we should note that while the Sabbath is a sign of the Mosaic covenant, it is not only a sign of the Mosaic covenant. Its foundations lie in the creation itself and, as such, touches on all human beings in all times and places of the world. Its "sign" dimension under the Mosaic covenant lends to the Sabbath an added layer of meaning, one that is unique to the people of God under the Mosaic covenant. However, when the Mosaic covenant (and its signs) expire with the dawning of the new covenant, the Sabbath does not altogether expire. Its function as a sign of the Mosaic covenant certainly ceases. But, as a creation ordinance, the Sabbath has continuing significance in the life of humanity. Even so, the "sign" character of the Mosaic Sabbath helps us to appreciate the way in which the entire history of redemption moves toward its goal, the saving work of the last Adam."

Guy Prentiss Waters; Dane Ortlund; Miles Van Pelt, *The Sabbath as Rest and Hope for the People of God*

<sup>12</sup> "Observe the Sabbath day, to keep it holy, as the Lord your God commanded you. <sup>13</sup> Six days you shall labor and do all your work, <sup>14</sup> but the seventh day is a Sabbath to the Lord your God. On it you shall not do any work, you or your son or your daughter or your male servant or your female servant, or your ox or your donkey or any of your livestock, or the sojourner who is within your gates, that your male servant and your female servant may rest as well as you. <sup>15</sup> You shall remember that you were a slave in the land of Egypt, and the Lord your God brought you out from there with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm. Therefore the Lord your God commanded you to keep the Sabbath day. (Deuteronomy 5:12-14)

III. Christ's saving work, particularly his \_\_\_\_\_, has transformed the meaning of the Sabbath for us today.

Already by the end of the first century, Ignatius wrote that Christians "no longer observe the Sabbath, but direct their lives toward the Lord's day, on which our life is refreshed by Him and by His death."

B. B. Warfield explained it like this: "Christ took the Sabbath into the grave with him and brought the Lord's Day out of the grave with him on the resurrection morn."

Jesus on the Sabbath:

A. He affirms the Sabbath as a divine commandment and clarifies its true meaning.

- 1) Initiated at creation
- 2) Focus is worship
- 3) Allows \_\_\_\_\_ deeds and \_\_\_\_\_ deeds
- 4) Day is a blessing for us

B. He asserts \_\_\_\_\_ over the Sabbath.

- 1) Doesn't \_\_\_\_\_ it
- 2) Tells us how to \_\_\_\_\_ it

C. Emphasizes the message of \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ that the Sabbath points to

IV. The Sabbath points to a \_\_\_\_\_ in eternity.

<sup>4</sup> Therefore, while the promise of entering his rest still stands, let us fear lest any of you should seem to have failed to reach it. <sup>2</sup> For good news came to us just as to them, but the message they heard did not benefit them, because they were not united by faith with those who listened. <sup>3</sup> For we who have believed enter that rest, as he has said,

"As I swore in my wrath,

'They shall not enter my rest,' "

although his works were finished from the foundation of the world. <sup>4</sup> For he has somewhere spoken of the seventh day in this way: "And God rested on the seventh day from all his works." <sup>5</sup> And again in this passage he said,

"They shall not enter my rest."

<sup>6</sup> Since therefore it remains for some to enter it, and those who formerly received the good news failed to enter because of disobedience, <sup>7</sup> again he appoints a certain day, "Today," saying through David so long afterward, in the words already quoted,

"Today, if you hear his voice,  
do not harden your hearts."

<sup>8</sup> For if Joshua had given them rest, God would not have spoken of another day later on. <sup>9</sup> So then, there remains a Sabbath rest for the people of God, <sup>10</sup> for whoever has entered God's rest has also rested from his works as God did from his.

<sup>11</sup> Let us therefore strive to enter that rest ...

We are entirely dependent upon the finished work of Jesus Christ to enter the creation rest of God.

Part of our Sabbath celebration is not only that Christ has delivered us from sin's penalty and dominion but that, in doing so, he has won for us a secure place in the new heavens and new earth.

When we observe a Sabbath, we remember our creation, our redemption, and our future consummation in glory!

### **What do we do with the Sabbath today?**

#### **3 principles:**

1. The comprehensive and meticulous Levitical laws regarding the Sabbath were a \_\_\_\_\_ pointing to the redemption accomplished in Christ. Thus, Mosaic/Levitical/civil law has come to an end upon the resurrection.

New Testament worship is simple and focused on the resurrection and the \_\_\_\_\_.

2. Believers today should steer clear of the air of \_\_\_\_\_ and the error of \_\_\_\_\_ regarding the Sabbath.

3. The Lord's Day offers us the same tremendous \_\_\_\_\_ that the Sabbath day has offered to God's people since creation.

The first day of the week is the Lord's Day. It is a Christian institution for regular observance. It commemorates the resurrection of Christ from the dead and should include exercises of worship and spiritual devotion, both public and private. Activities on the Lord's Day should be commensurate with the Christian's conscience under the Lordship of Jesus Christ.

- Statement from Calvary Elders (from *The Baptist Faith and Message*, 2000)

#### **4 practical steps:**

1. We should set apart a whole day for the worship of God.
2. We should find ways to enjoy Christian fellowship and hospitality on the Lord's Day.
3. We should seek and find spiritual refreshment and nourishment on that day.
4. We should work hard, and then rest on that day.

*"The Bible does not give us a list of preapproved permitted and forbidden works on the Sabbath. Rather, God tells us that if we keep the main thing the main thing then the rest of the day should fall into place. If we set aside the work and entertainments that fill Monday through Saturday, if we prioritize public worship and fellowship with God's people, and if our hearts take sincere pleasure in communing with God, then we are in a good position to make God-honoring and biblical decisions about such details as these."*

- Prentiss, Ortlund, Van Pelt