

## **Foundation of the sermon**

### ***Purpose***

Give a theological background for Sabbath worship

### ***Principle Idea:***

Genesis 2 is the keystone to the doctrine of the Sabbath it shows that God created it as a time to reflect and be refreshed on the creation. It is for our benefit

### ***Type of Outline***

Topical - based on Genesis 2:1-3 and Mark 2:27-28

## **I. Introduction**

I have been participating in Sabbath worship and practicing Sabbatarianism for some 37 years now. I have discussed the topic with theologians who were radical in their views on Sabbath keeping and I have discussed it with those who are just as rabid against the Sabbath. I have discussed it with family and friends, and with those who are not so friendly.

If I had to make the decision I made 37 years ago again now I would have to conclude once again that the Sabbath is the day God designated as the day of rest.

I want to make clear however that most groups that profess to be seventh day Sabbath observers should be classified as "non-Christian cults" because their doctrine concerning the Godhead and the person of Christ are so distorted they can not be classified as Christian.

I also want to make it clear that I nor any other Seventh Day Baptist I know would teach that the mark of the beast is the observance of the first day of the week. I believe that first day theologians and worshippers are wrong, but that does mean I believe that they are any less Christians than me.

Those who are members of this congregation know that in the five years I have been pastor of this church I have not before this day preached a sermon on the topic of the Sabbath Day. A few weeks ago I was asked by a newer member to preach a sermon on this

topic. I have decided to do so. I normally preach expository, preaching through different books of the Bible so I feel more comfortable with that style of preaching. Also I figure that most who attend here have already been convinced of the correctness of the doctrine of the Sabbath. So today will be a first for me and you at this church. I will preach this week on the basis for the Sabbath doctrine. Next week I will look at some of the passages used by its detractors to try and disprove the Sabbath doctrine.

Then we will move on to another series based on a book of Scripture.

Now I plan on cheating just a little, however, this week's sermon will be closer to expositional style than purely topical. Our focus this week will be on Genesis 2:1-3. We will also look at the link between this passage and the Exodus 20 command and a passage in Mark 2.

## **II. Body**

### A. The basis for the Sabbath teaching. (Gen 2:1-3)

1 Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host of them.

2 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.

3 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.

4 These are the generations of the heavens and of the earth when they were created, in the day that the LORD God made the earth and the heavens,

1. It is a celebration of the achievement of a goal. (1,2)

Two times in this passage the Hebrew verb כָּלָה is used in verses 1 and 2. The first time it shows up is in verse 1 and is translated "finished." The second time is translated "ended" in verse 2.

The idea of the Hebrew is that you have encircled or enclosed completely something that you have done. Sort of like the English phrase when you say "I have closed the loop." As used in these verses it designates the completion of a goal.

Both of these verses use an intensive form of the verb. It isn't the the work of creating, or making the earth was "finished" or "ended" the idea expressed in the intensive stems of piel and pual is that the creation was completely finished, or really finished, or absolutely finished. It isn't that the work work was done, it is that there is no doubt that it was completed.

Not only the heavens and the earth, but also "the hosts" of them was completed. The whole army of heaven and earth were completed. Every living creature that lived and/or breathed, whether they be spirit or flesh that had been created or made was a complete being.

Now this is an accomplishment it is the completion of a goal. God had begun a project and had met the goals of that project and was able to call every aspect of His creation "good." It therefore was the basis for celebration of that event. God demonstrated and celebrated that completion of His goal by "resting."

The Septuagint is the Greek translation of the Hebrew text done by Jewish leaders before Christ was born. In this Greek text the words translated "finished" and "ended" in these two passages come from the Greek word συντελέω. This word has the prefix "syn" and is the word from which we get the prefix "tele" in English as in the words telescope or television. "teleo" means to complete, finish, or carry out an action. The term is used in a sense to bring into focus the "end" of something.

God brought into focus the whole of creation during this event by completing the action of creation.

There is not one aspect of "burden" or "ritual" or religious obligation found in this event. It is a recognition of this accomplishment.

## 2. The completion of creation demonstrated by resting (vs 2)

This verse discusses the form the celebration of the completion of this goal took. It first looks at the fact that the work was completely completed then it notes that God took action as a result. The action was to cease "from all his work which he had made." Now God stopped creating, this very act was a cessation of the labor related to creating. And by doing so God created the Sabbath.

Now before we go to far let's take a couple of steps back. First God did not use the noun Sabbath in this passage. He did however use the verb from which the noun Sabbath was derived.

#### a. The Sabbath

A few years ago the Dallas Cowboys were playing a football game with the San Francisco 49ers. An event took place that has become famous in football lore. Now almost every football fan has heard of "the catch." Wikipedia says this about "the catch": "The Catch refers to the winning touchdown reception by [Dwight Clark](#) off a [Joe Montana](#) pass in the January 10, 1982, [NFC Championship Game](#) between the [Dallas Cowboys](#) and the [San Francisco 49ers](#). The Catch is widely regarded as one of the most memorable events in [NFL](#) history." The act of receiving a pass is described by the verb "to catch." This event became so famous that because of it the term "the catch" a noun was derived. Not just any reception became "the catch" only one famous one in history has been given that title.

This event in Scripture is so unique, was so purposeful, and deliberate, and famous that because of it we get the name, and therefore the noun "the Sabbath."

The word Sabbath is used as a verb in this passage meaning "to cease" God "sabbathed", "ceased" from His labor related to creation. As a result "the Sabbath" came into being. It wasn't just any stoppage of labor it was "the stoppage of labor." Every week "the Sabbath" commemorates and celebrates the events described in this verse.

#### b. Cessation from labor related to creation.

I recently heard an argument against the Sabbath based on John 5:15-17 which says:

"15) The man departed, and told the Jews that it was Jesus, which had made him whole. 16 And therefore did the Jews persecute Jesus, and sought to slay him, because he had done these things on the sabbath day. 17 But Jesus answered them, My Father worketh hitherto, and I work."

This passage has to do with a Sabbath controversy. Christ had healed a man on the Sabbath day. The Jewish leaders were upset because Christ had done this on the Sabbath. Christ's response was that I work and my Father continues to work throughout history until this moment.

The problem was their understanding of "work" and what God ceased from. That is also the problem that the man who argued that God never "rested" "ceased" on the Sabbath as a reason for being against the Sabbath. God never commanded anyone from doing good things on the Sabbath. God stopped His work of "creation" and His work of "making" things. He never stopped doing "good" works.

In Psalm 121:4 we are told that God does not slumber or sleep. He did not need to "rest" but He chose to rest as a celebration of the completion of creation. The significance of this is beyond the understanding of some people. They misinterpret the nature of "rest." In Exodus 31:17 we are told that this event of resting caused God to be "refreshed." and the fact that this rest caused Him to be "refreshed." The idea in Exodus is that by this rest God refreshed Himself. He benefited by this "rest."

To "rest" on the Sabbath in the way God "rested" from His works we must refresh ourselves. The Sabbath was never designed as a "burden." The command has more to do with the type of labor and not the labor itself. In Numbers 15:32 and following where the man is condemned for "gathering sticks" on the Sabbath and later when Israel is corrected in Nehemiah 10:31 for buying and selling on the Sabbath. The issues are not minor "fire building" or "getting food" on the Sabbath, the issue is doing their day-to-day labor on the Sabbath. The cessation is from doing their day-to-day

business on the Sabbath not cessation from everything. This type of rest causes a person to "refresh" him or herself.

The Sabbath is to be a reflection on the work of creation -- the work that God has done. We are to enter into the rest of the Sabbath "as God did from His" according to Hebrews 4:10. This period of reflection on God's work provides us with "refreshing" from within ourselves. God didn't just quit working but He "works" by doing good works - so should we this type of "work" and cessation from work causes "refreshing."

### 3. The seventh day

#### a. Not the "eighth" day or any other

Some would claim that the resurrection of Christ happened on the "eighth day" -- Sunday. This is based on a spurious text called the Epistle of Barnabas -- clearly not written by Barnabas himself, and is not included in the text of inspired Scripture. It is written after the destruction of the temple and seems to have been written before 135 A.D.

The Sabbath is the Seventh day -- which reflects on God as creator -- no other day does this. No other day is commanded for "worship" nor "reflection" nor for "rest." Next week we will look at two of these passages because some use them as a justification for Sunday worship.

#### b. Scripture and Scripture alone as our rule of faith and practice.

We must reject the arguments from outside of Scripture - we are Baptists our faith and our practice is based solely on Scripture. Scripture does not command rest on any other day of the week. None of the eight passages in the New Testament that speak of the "first day of the week" commands that we exchange the seventh day of the week for the first as our day of rest. Nor do any of them suggest that any other day should be sanctified and set aside.

c. The seventh day alone represents the "rest" and "reflection" of the Sabbath.

4. God blessed and sanctified the seventh day.

While resting on the seventh day, God blessed the day. The Hebrew for this word "blessed" means: 1) to bow the knee; 2) to worship and bless (Davidson Analytical Lexicon). The basic idea of this word is "speaking good of or to a person". ... Accordingly it means that: "God has spoken well of the Sabbath, and good to them who conscientiously observe it." (Clark Vol. 1. p. 41).

The blessing given is a worship experience shared by God and His creation. It is done out of the love by the creator Himself.

God did not bless the idea of Sabbath but specifically blessed the seventh day as the Sabbath.

The blessing of the Sabbath shows God's love for the things He created. It shows the honor God gave it as a day of rest and reflection. The blessing is a worshipful recognition of the work of our creator and of His rest on the first seventh day. The blessing of the Sabbath can be achieved in no other day than the one He recognized and rested on, the seventh day. This blessing can only be entered into by those who faithfully observe it as Clark said.

Calvin comments on the term sanctified and the Hebrew view of the word. He says that sanctify "... is to separate from common number. God therefore sanctifies the seventh day, when he renders it illustrious, that by special law it may be distinguished from the rest." The word could be translated "hallowed it", "sanctified it", or "made it holy".

The verbal form used Piel which has both has a causative and a declarative sense. So as can be seen from Calvin the Sabbath day is separated by God from the rest of the days and made special. Further the Hebrew expresses the idea that God not only said that the day was holy but that He caused it to be holy. Keil and Delitzch say it this way ; "... sanctifying was not merely holy, but "communication the attribute of holy." (Keil and Delitzch p. 68)

One writer named Heschel says "Things created in six days He considered good, the seventh day He made Holy." (as quoted by Saunders p. 21)

The process of making the day holy was by filling it with His presence. This presence of God caused the day to be different from the other six days of that first week. It set it apart. It made it unique. It gives it distinction and honor among the days of the week. It made it holy.

## 5. Source of all discussion about the Sabbath.

This passage is the source of the Sabbath -- all other discussions in Scripture except perhaps the command as related in Deut. chapter 5 use this passage as their authority concerning the Sabbath, and may be seen as a reflection on the events of Genesis 2

### B. Mark 2:27-28

One Sabbath day while walking through the corn (grain) fields the disciples of Christ plucked heads off of grain. They then ate these grains. This led to a dispute between Christ and the Pharisees. The Pharisees claimed that His disciples had broken the law by plucking and eating the grain on the Sabbath.

Christ seems to ignore the issue as to whether or not His disciples had broken the law. He responds to a broader issue. The issue is whether the law could be set aside in some circumstances due to need. He uses as an illustration of His point the story of David and his eating of the show bread.

Christ then moves on to show that the Sabbath law was not an end unto itself. The Sabbath was not the reason that man was created. The Sabbath however was created for man and not only that but that He himself was the Lord of the Sabbath.

Some would suggest that Christ and His disciples "broke" the commandment by "picking" corn on the Sabbath. Again there is a lack of understanding about what is "work" on the Sabbath. Those who suggest this are wrong in their assertion. Hebrews 4:15 clearly shows that Christ was without "sin" in all points.

This argument regulation violated by the disciples from the Halakah relate to: 1) reaping; 2) winnowing; and 3) preparing a meal. The



action by the disciples of plucking off the heads of grain, rubbing them in their hands to separate the husk from the grains, the picking up of the grains, and eating of the grains would violate the Rabbinic laws according to Bacchiocchi. This was a perception problem on the part of the Pharisees and other, not a violation of God's law.

The significance in this passage has to do with the usage of the word "man" in Mark 2:27. This passage uses the term that is universal in nature. In other words it applies to all man. The Sabbath in Genesis 2 was made not just for the Jewish man but for all men.

There is no indication that Christ violated the law here. There is no confirmation that the disciples broke the law, only that the Pharisees perceived that they had broken the law. Christ in His response appeals to the superiority of man in general and Himself in particular to the Sabbath command. He indicates that the original purpose of the Sabbath as revealed in Genesis 2 was that the Sabbath was made as a blessing for man. Man was not at this time nor was he at the beginning a puppet in the hands of a superior called the Sabbath. He also points out that He Himself was greater than and master of the Sabbath.

The Sabbath was a benefit to man -- man was not made to serve the Sabbath but the Sabbath was made for the benefit, the refreshing, and a time of reflection on man.

### **III. Conclusion**

The Sabbath was made for a blessing, the world in its misinterpretation of Scripture has made it a burden. It was sanctified, made holy, and blessed. No other day of the week has this special designation.

The misinterpretation by the Jewish leaders of Christ's day did not change its inherent nature as a blessing. It was made for the benefit of man. To give him time to separate himself from the daily pursuit of life -- to reflect on the marvelous work God Himself had done.

The arguments by man to limit the day to a "Jewish" command. Or to make it a burden, or to have it replaced by some other day through non-Scriptural reason have failed to change it, and its significance.

Next week we will look at some of the passages in the New Testament that some have used to say that God has done away with the Sabbath.

Title: The Sabbath Was Made For Our Benefit