

## Enjoying God's Gift of Rest

(Genesis 2:1-3)

The word "Sabbath" isn't found in this paragraph, but Moses is writing about the Sabbath, the seventh day of the week. The phrase "seventh day" is mentioned three times in verses 2–3. "Sabbath" comes from a Hebrew word *shabbat* that means "to cease working, to rest" and is related to the Hebrew word for "seven."<sup>1</sup>

### 1. The **Creation** Rest of Jehovah (Gen. 2:1-3)

God did not take a day off because He was tired, but as an example for us to follow.

Isaiah 40:28 - Have you not known? Have you not heard? The everlasting God, the Lord, The Creator of the ends of the earth, **Neither faints nor is weary**. His understanding is unsearchable.

Donald Barnhouse says, "God rested... but not for long." **Genesis 3** causes God to work towards the plan of redemption through Jesus Christ as seen throughout the Old Testament.

v.3 – God blessed the seventh day. In blessing this day, He intended for this to be a blessing for mankind.

v.3 – God sanctified the seventh day. To "sanctify" means to "set it apart for holy or special purposes". This day would be different than every other day of the week.

"The Hebrew word *qadas* means "to set apart, to make holy" and can be applied to people (Ex. 13:2; 19:14; 28:14), inanimate objects (29:36–37, 44), events such as fasts (Joel 1:14) and wars (Jer. 6:4 where "prepare" [KJV] is *qada*), and even the name of God (Ezek. 36:23). That which God sanctifies must never be treated as something common."<sup>2</sup>

### 2. The **Commanded** Rest for the Jews (Exodus 20:8-11)

From Mount Sinai, God gave Israel the Ten Commandments (Ex. 20:3-20). He connected the Sabbath command to the days of Creation. In Deut. 5:12-15 Moses connects the Sabbath Day with Israel's deliverance from Egyptian bondage. A weekly rest would remind Israel of God's faithfulness in the past and God's promise of future rest.

Much like other religious duties in the Old Testament (see **Leviticus**), keeping the Sabbath would be a sign of the covenant between Israel and Jehovah God. **Exodus 31:13** says, "Surely My Sabbaths you shall keep, for it is a sign between Me and you throughout your generations, that you may know that I am the Lord who sanctifies you." Wiersbe writes, "There's no evidence that God ever required any other nation to observe the Sabbath, because the Jews alone were the chosen people of God."<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Warren W. Wiersbe, *Be Basic*, "Be" Commentary Series (Colorado Springs, CO: Chariot Victor Pub., 1998), 33.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, footnote, 33.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, 36.

### 3. The **Christian Rest in Jesus (Hebrews 4:1-11)**

See **Matthew 11:28-30; Ephesians 2:8-10** – We are not saved by our works, but by His grace.

#### **Do Christians Today Keep the Sabbath?**

Christians are not bound to keep the Jewish Sabbath (which is Saturday) but rather celebrate The Lord's Day (which is Sunday). **Old Testament Sabbath Saturday laws were never intended to be carried out on Sunday.** Here are some reasons we know this:

- The fourth commandment is the only one that is not repeated anywhere in the New Testament.
- There is no record of Jesus or any apostle telling anyone to keep the Saturday Sabbath.
- In all of the New Testament lists of sin, Sabbath-breaking is never mentioned.

<b>SABBATH</b>	<b>LORD'S DAY</b>
Seventh day of the week	First Day of the week
Commemorates creation and the Exodus	Celebrates the resurrection of Christ
A day of rest from all work for Jews	A working day in the Roman empire
Original focus was <i>private rest</i> , in one's homes, for physical and spiritual benefit of individuals and whole households	Focus became <i>public worship</i> for spiritual benefit of entire church – this took place in evenings or early morning outside of work
Clearly based on Old Testament laws	No clear connection of this day to O.T. laws or Sabbath by N.T. or early church
Detailed rules and restrictions based on explicit precepts from the O.T.	No detailed rules and restrictions, just general pattern and principles from N.T.
Christians in N.T. and early church continued to call it the "Sabbath" and only used this word of Jewish seventh day	Christians in N.T. and early church never called this day "Sabbath" (this developed in Middle Ages and especially the 17th century)
Looks forward to Christ as a shadow	Looks back at Christ and finished redeeming work

Colossians 2:16-17 - So **let no one judge you in** food or in drink, or regarding a festival or a new moon or **sabbaths**,<sup>17</sup> which are a shadow of things to come, but the substance is of Christ.

(NASB) - Therefore **no one is to act as your judge in regard to...a Sabbath day** - things which are a mere shadow...

Romans 14:5-6 - <sup>5</sup>One person esteems one day above another; another esteems every day alike. Let each be fully convinced in his own mind. <sup>6</sup>He who observes the day, observes it to the Lord; and he who does not observe the day, to the Lord he does not observe it.

(v. 5 - Message) - Or, say, **one person thinks that some days should be set aside as holy** and another thinks that each day is pretty much like any other. There are good reasons either way. So, each person is free to follow the convictions of conscience.

(v. 6 - The Living Bible) - If you have special days for worshiping the Lord, you are trying to honor him.

Even though the Sabbath was discarded by Christ, there is a "Sabbath Principle" that should be followed, which states that every human needs one day of rest and worship after six days of labor. This day should include:

1. **REST BY REFRAINING FROM WORK** (for the body)
2. **RECHARGE THROUGH QUIETNESS, FAMILY AND FELLOWSHIP** (for the soul – mind, will and emotions)
3. **REFOCUS THROUGH WORSHIP** (for the spirit)

Mark 2:27-28 - And He said to them, "The Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath. Therefore the Son of Man is also Lord of the Sabbath."

(NLT) - Then Jesus said to them, **"The Sabbath was made to meet the needs of people, and not people to meet the requirements of the Sabbath."**