

Lev. 26:1-2 “Reverencing the Sabbath”

For the Children: When people enter a big, old church, they often become very quiet. They feel that it is a special place, and that it is rude to talk loudly or act foolishly. Some people seem to feel that God is more likely to notice them in a church than elsewhere. For us, the church building is just a building. It is not more “holy” than any other building. But the worship of God as a congregation is very special. The fact that the Lord Jesus has made us able to be close to God is very special. We don’t want anything to spoil that time of drawing close to God in worship. **Questions:** What does it mean that someone or something is *holy*? What kind of things can spoil our time of worship? What can we do to get the most of the Lord’s Day?

Introduction:

First Point: Reverencing the Second Commandment

- 1) Avoiding Nothings: Since the text is about reverencing God’s Sabbath & His sanctuary, the emphasis is on the 2nd commandment more than the 1st – though of course false gods should not be worshipped in the Land either. God’s people are to avoid representing Him in any visible way – a few different kinds of image are mentioned to show that the prohibition is total. Such things are not even to be made, let alone worshipped. After all, God’s glory is infinite, whereas creaturely representations by man’s imagination are finite. In fact, the word for idol here means a “nothing.” Visible representations of God cannot help us “relate” better to God, since they are empty lies
- 2) In Spirit and Truth: The only way to draw close to God is through Christ, by means of His Word & Spirit. See Jn. 4:24. The 2nd commandment implies we can only worship God as He has commanded in His Word (HC, Q96). Reverencing God will mean that we reverence this command. The text reminds us to do so by twice repeating, “For I am the Lord.” He alone can say what pleases Him, and He has the right to command us and expect our obedience

Second Point: Reverencing the Sabbath

- 1) Something to Protect: In contrast to pursuing “worship” invented by man, we are to *keep* God’s Sabbath. This means we are to guard or protect it – from anything that seeks to distract us from using the day as the Lord intended, or to profane it (make it common or ordinary).
- 2) Something to Observe: “keeping” the Sabbath also means carefully listening to what the Lord says about it, and carefully acting accordingly. LD 38 summarizes the purpose of the day: maintaining the Gospel ministry & (Christian) education; assembling to hear the Word, worship and bring offerings; concentrating on good works and opposing evil
- 3) Something to Love: This observance will be a chore unless we delight in the Lord & His Sabbath. If we love Christ and are grateful for the gift of salvation, we will love a day that concentrates on Him and His work

Third Point: Reverencing the Sanctuary

- 1) Holy Versus Profane: The sanctuary was a holy area, devoted to worshipping God in the place where he dwelt with His people – where He revealed His presence and enabled His people to draw close to Him and call on His Name. In the OT, this was the Tabernacle/Temple. This points to Christ enabling His church & people to be indwelt by His Spirit and draw near to the throne of grace. The worship of His people today must not be profaned, any more than the OT sanctuary
- 2) Reverence & Fear: The worshipping assembly is to show reverence, awe and godly fear as it draws near to God. We show this reverence by careful preparation for worship; careful follow-up, where we seek to apply God’s Word; by decorum & attentiveness during worship. If we treat the Lord’s Day and its worship lightly, we can expect to see decay in our midst

Conclusion: