

Subject: God's Holy Day

Scripture: Genesis 2:1-3

Genesis 1 tells us that God created all things in six consecutive 24-hour days. Genesis 2 tells us about the 7th day of creation week. It was a special day to recognize and honor the work God did on the first six days. It was a day that God rested and a day that He blessed and sanctified (set apart) as holy.

1. WHAT is God's Holy Day?

A. It is a day to signify that God's work of creation was complete

God rested because He was finished, not because He was tired. It was the rest of completion, not the rest of exhaustion. This day came to be called the "Sabbath" which means "rest," not seventh. It just happened to be the seventh day. What makes the Sabbath day important is not its order in the week, but its purpose.

B. It is a day that God blessed and declared to be holy

Clearly this was a special day, and it should be called God's Holy Day. We are reminded of that in the Ten Commandments.

Exodus 20:8-11 ⁸ Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. ⁹ Six days shalt thou labor, and do all thy work: ¹⁰ 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, thy manservant, nor thy maidservant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates: ¹¹ For in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day: wherefore the LORD blessed the Sabbath day, and hallowed it.

Notice that it is called "the Sabbath of the LORD thy God." Notice "the LORD blessed the Sabbath day, and hallowed it." As we see what Scripture says about God's Holy Day we see the sovereignty of God. It is His day. He blessed it and set it apart as holy.

C. It is a day God set apart for us to rest and honor Him

It is a day He made for His glory and for our good. Jesus said the Sabbath was made to be a blessing and not a burden.

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

The Jews had made the Sabbath day into something burdensome. It was a day with many restrictions about what you could do or not do, even how far you could travel. We read in the Bible of "a Sabbath day's journey." God's Holy Day was made for rest and worship.

2. WHO should honor God's Holy Day?

The short answer is all people. Is the Sabbath day only for the Jews or is it for all people? Think again about Christ's statement: "The Sabbath was made for man," not just for Jews.

A. All people are to honor God's Holy Day

God gave His moral law (Ten Commandments) to the Jews, but they are for all men. That should be obvious. Are Jews the only ones who are to worship the one true God (1st command)? Are Jews the only ones who are not to misrepresent God by making him into a graven image (2nd command)? Are Jews the only ones who are to respect God's holy name (3rd command)? Are Jews the only ones to honor their father and mother (5th command)? And on we could go. All of God's commands are for all people at all times.

B. Adults and parents are responsible to honor God's Holy Day

Exodus 20:8-10 ⁸ Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. ⁹ Six days shalt thou labor, and do all thy work: ¹⁰ 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, thy manservant, nor thy maidservant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates.

When God gave this command He gives it specifically to adults and parents because they are responsible for their sons and daughters, servants, and any foreigners that live near them. In this way God would be honored in families and towns. We are to influence others under our authority to honor God's Holy Day.

3. WHY should we honor God's Holy Day?

A. God commands us to honor His Holy Day – That is reason enough.

B. God's Holy Day reminds us of God's creation

Exodus 20:11 For in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day: wherefore the LORD blessed the Sabbath day, and hallowed it.

C. God's Holy Day has always been important – It was important to God before the Ten Commandments were given. God gave a double portion of the manna on the sixth day so they could honor the Sabbath without having to gather manna on His Holy Day.

Exodus 16:22-30 ²² 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. ²³ And he said unto them, This is that which the LORD hath said, To morrow is the rest of the holy Sabbath unto the LORD: bake that which ye will bake to day, and seethe (boil) that ye will seethe (boil); and that which remaineth over lay up for you to be kept until the morning. ²⁴ And they laid it up till the morning, as Moses bade: and it did not stink, neither was there any worm therein. ²⁵ 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. ²⁶ Six days ye shall gather it; but on the seventh day, which is the Sabbath, in it there shall be none. ²⁷ And it came to pass, that there went out some of the people on the seventh day for to gather, and they found none. ²⁸ And the LORD said unto Moses, How long refuse ye to keep my commandments and my laws? ²⁹ 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. ³⁰ So the people rested on the seventh day.

Moses instructed the people before they entered the Promised Land. The Sabbath day would remind them not only of God's work in creation, but God's work in redemption.

Deuteronomy 5:12-15 ¹² *Keep the Sabbath day to sanctify it, as the LORD thy God hath commanded thee. ¹³ Six days thou shalt labor, and do all thy work: ¹⁴ 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. ¹⁵ 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.*

When the Jews returned to their homeland from Babylonian captivity, Nehemiah told them it was important to honor God's Holy Day.

Nehemiah 13:15-18 ¹⁵ *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. ¹⁶ 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. ¹⁷ 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? ¹⁸ 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.*

4. WHEN should we honor God's Holy Day?

The Jews obviously honored the seventh day of the week as a holy day of rest and worship, but Christians began to honor the first day of the week after Christ died and rose again to remember God's finished work of eternal redemption. The Bible tells us about that change.

A. Christ rose from the dead on the first day of the week

Mark 16:9 *Now when Jesus was risen early the first day of the week, he appeared first to Mary Magdalene...*

B. 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.*

C. The first day of the week was called "the Lord's Day"

Revelation 1:10 *I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day...*

The previous verse reveals that John had been exiled to the island of Patmos for his Christian testimony, yet even in that situation, he was aware it was the Lord's Day.

5. HOW should we honor God's Holy Day?

A. Treat it as a sacred day

It is holy to the Lord, and it should be holy to us. We must set it apart as a special day, unlike other days of the week. We should think of it as holy and treat it as holy. We should prepare ourselves for it and plan for it. Preparation for the Lord's Day should begin on Saturday night, not Sunday morning.

B. Do what is pleasing to the Lord

Remember it is the Lord's Day, not our day. An OT passage reminds us of the attitude we should have.

Isaiah 58:13-14 ¹³ *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: ¹⁴ 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.*

C. Focus on worship and rest

The Puritans called the Lord's Day "the market day of the soul." For them it was a day to refrain from doing their own business and to do business with God through corporate worship, Bible reading, prayer, meditation, and rest for the body. I want to close this message with a statement from the 1689 London Baptist Confession of Faith (identical to our Holston Baptist Association Confession of 1786), Chapter 22, "Of Religious Worship and the Sabbath Day.

"The Sabbath is then kept holy unto the Lord, when men, after a due preparing of their hearts, and ordering their common affairs aforehand, do not only observe a holy rest all day, from their own works, words and thoughts, about their worldly employment and recreations, but are also taken up the whole time in the public and private exercises of His worship, and in the duties of necessity and mercy."