

A Very Special Day in the Week

Text: Gen. 2:1-3

Introduction:

1. Let's consider several introductory points in relation to Genesis chapter 2:
 - Genesis 2 does not present a contradiction to chapter 1 but it provides further details of day 6 with an emphasis on the creation of man. This makes complete sense since man was the pinnacle and crown of God's creative work. Further details are given concerning the manner in which God made the woman out of man. Henry Morris writes, "The second chapter of Genesis describes in greater detail certain of the events of the sixth day of creation, especially of the formation of the first man and woman. It does not in any respect contradict the account of the first chapter, but instead is complementary to it."
 - Genesis 2 refers repeatedly to God as "LORD God" meaning Jehovah Elohim instead of just 'God' (Elohim).
 - Genesis 2 lays down the foundation for marriage and the Christian home.
2. In this message, we will focus on the final day of creation week – the 7th day of God's rest. We will then consider some very important applications based on the principle of this day of rest.
3. Outline for the message will be:
 - The Seventh Day Rest of God.
 - The Sabbath Day Rest of Israel.
 - The Salvation Rest for the Sinner.
 - The Sunday Rest for the Believer.

I. THE SEVENTH DAY REST OF GOD (VS. 1-3)

A. A Day of Completion (Vs. 1-2)

1. "the heavens and the earth...all the host of them" = speaks of the totality of God's creation.
2. 'finished' = God finishes what He starts! The entire creation was completed. Notice the emphasis on this in these three verses – 'finished' (Vs. 1), 'ended' (Vs. 2), 'rested' (Vs. 2,3).
3. 'rested' = does not imply weariness on the part of God. Isaiah 40:28 says, "Hast thou not known? hast thou not heard, *that* the everlasting God, the LORD, the Creator of the ends of the earth, **fainteth not, neither is weary?** *there is* no searching of his understanding." The Hebrew word is 'shabath' meaning "to cease" or "to desist"; hence God desisted from labour on this day. Notice the link between the phrase "**ended** his work which he had made" in verse 2 and the phrase "**rested** from all his work which God created and made" in verse 3.
4. Note: No mention of "evening and morning" on the seventh day perhaps suggesting that God's Sabbath rest would have no end. Sadly, man's sin was to interrupt God's rest and would mean God labouring to deal with our sin.

B. A Day of Consecration (Vs. 3)

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1. "God blessed the seventh day" = Before this point, God has pronounced a blessing upon the creatures He has made (Gen. 1:22) and a blessing upon man (1:28). He now blesses the seventh day. Notice that this is the only day that God specifically blesses which demonstrates that it was important and special to God.
2. "sanctified it" = means to set apart, make holy. Further emphasizes the significance and specialness of this day in the mind and heart of God.
3. Note: At this point, no command is given to man to observe this day. That would come later as we will see under the next point. But the principle of one day in seven set apart from the others for rest and worship is firmly established in creation week.

II. THE SABBATH REST OF ISRAEL (EX. 20:8-11)

The Jewish Sabbath day was established on the basis of the seventh day of creation. There are several facts concerning the Sabbath day we need to keep firmly in mind:

A. The Sabbath was not Revealed until Sinai (Neh. 9:13-14)

1. Neh. 9:13-14 "Thou camest down also upon mount Sinai, and spakest with them from heaven, and gavest them right judgments, and true laws, good statutes and commandments: And **madest known unto them thy holy sabbath**, and commandedst them precepts, statutes, and laws, by the hand of Moses thy servant:"
2. This is important as it refutes the argument of the SDA's that the Sabbath as an official day of worship was in place from creation week. In fact, until Moses we have no record in the Bible of the seventh day being an official day of worship.

B. The Sabbath was a Sign between God and Israel (Ex. 31:12-17)

1. Exodus 31:13, 17 "Speak thou also unto the children of Israel, saying, Verily my sabbaths ye shall keep: for it **is a sign between me and you** throughout your generations; that ye may know that I *am* the LORD that doth sanctify you. **It is a sign between me and the children of Israel** for ever: for *in* six days the LORD made heaven and earth, and on the seventh day he rested, and was refreshed."
2. The Sabbath was a national day of worship for Israel as a nation under the old dispensation. The church is not Israel (1 Cor. 10:32) so it is wrong to argue that the Sabbath day is for the church.

C. The Sabbath is therefore not binding upon the N.T. Believer (Col. 2:14-17)

1. Col. 2:14-17 "Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross; (15) *And* having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a shew of them openly, triumphing over them in it. (16) Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holyday, or of the new moon, or of **the sabbath days**: (17) Which are a shadow of things to come; but the body *is* of Christ."
2. The SDA's make a grave error when they use the sabbath day as a matter of judgment over other Christians. The idea that Sunday

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observance will be the mark of the beast as taught by Ellen G. White is unfounded and unscriptural and constitutes a grave violation of the command not to judge over the sabbath day.

III. THE SALVATION REST OF THE SINNER (HEB. 4:9-10)

The seventh day is a type of salvation. As God rested on the seventh day from His work of creation, the believer today rests in the completed work of Christ. Heb 4:9-10 "There remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God. For he that is entered into his rest, he also hath **ceased from his own works, as God *did* from his.**"

A. The Saviour's Completion of Redemption (John 19:30)

1. The rest in Eden was the rest of God's completed work. God had done all – man had done nothing. The rest into which the New Testament believer is invited is the repose of a soul on a God who has done all; who undertakes to do all.
2. Hebrews 1:3 "Who being the brightness of *his* glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself **purged our sins, sat down** on the right hand of the Majesty on high;" Christ seated is a picture of rest. The work of redemption was completed.
3. John 19:30 "When Jesus therefore had received the vinegar, he said, **It is finished:** and he bowed his head, and gave up the ghost." You cannot DO anything for your salvation when it has all been DONE.

B. The Sinner's Invitation to Rest (Matt. 11:28)

1. Into this rest of God, the sinner is invited to shelter under the blood of Christ, to rest upon the completed work of Christ. Heb 4:9-10 "There remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God. For he that is entered into his rest, he also hath **ceased from his own works, as God *did* from his.**"
2. John 6:28-29 "Then said they unto him, What shall we do, that we might work the works of God? Jesus answered and said unto them, **This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent.**" In order to enter into God's rest, a person must accept God's work and must cease from his own work.
3. Acts 16:31 "And they said, **Believe on** the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house."
4. The Word of God is unequivocal that man's works play NO part in salvation from sin. See Eph. 2:8-9 & Titus 3:5. **Salvation is received, not earned!**
5. Challenge: Have you entered into salvation rest? Has there ever been a time in your life when you have ceased from your own works and come to rest in God's finished work of salvation?

IV. THE SUNDAY REST OF THE BELIEVER (HEB. 10:25)

The New Testament Lord's Day is not the Sabbath and should not be confused as such. It is a new day of worship. C.H. Mackintosh notes that "the seventh day stands connected with earth and earthly rest; the first day of the week introduces us to heaven and heavenly rest. The seventh day appertained to Israel and to earth. The first day of the week appertains to

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the church and to heaven. Further, Israel was commanded to observe the sabbath day; the church is privilege to enjoy the first day of the week.” Wiersbe wisely observes, “The seventh day of the week, the Jewish Sabbath, symbolizes the old creation and the covenant of law: first you work, then you rest. The first day of the week, the Lord’s Day, symbolizes the new creation and the covenant of grace: first you believe in Christ and find rest, and then you work (Eph. 2:8-9).

A. The Argument for Sunday Worship

There is much evidence in the Bible and elsewhere that the early Christians met and worshiped on the first day rather than on the sabbath:

1. On the first day Jesus rose from the dead (Mk. 16:9). Every Sunday should be thrilling to us as we commemorate the fact that Jesus Christ is alive!
2. On the first day Jesus first appeared to his disciples (Mk. 16:9).
3. On the first day Jesus met with the disciples at different places (Mk. 16:9-11; Mt. 28:8-10; Lk. 24:34; Mk. 16:12-13; Jn. 20:19-23).
4. On the first day Jesus blessed the disciples (Jn. 20:19).
5. On the first day Jesus commissioned the disciples to preach the gospel (Jn. 20:21; with Mk. 16:9-15).
6. On the first day Jesus ascended to Heaven, was seated at the right hand of the Father, and was made Head of all (Jn. 20:17; Eph. 1:20).
7. On the first day the gospel of the risen Christ was first preached (Lk. 24:34).
8. On the first day Jesus explained the Scriptures to the disciples (Lk. 24:27, 45).
9. On the first day the Holy Spirit descended (Acts 2:1). Pentecost was on the 50th day after the sabbath following the wave offering (Le. 23:15-16). Thus, Pentecost was always on a Sunday.
10. The Christians met to worship on the first day (John 20:19, 26; Acts 20:6-7; 1 Cor. 16:2).
 - a. John 20:19, 26 “Then the same day at evening, being **the first day of the week**, when the doors were shut where the disciples were assembled for fear of the Jews, came Jesus and stood in the midst, and saith unto them, Peace *be* unto you. And **after eight days** again his disciples were within, and Thomas with them: *then* came Jesus, the doors being shut, and stood in the midst, and said, Peace *be* unto you.”
 - b. Acts 20:6-7 “And we sailed away from Philippi after the days of unleavened bread, and came unto them to Troas in five days; where we abode seven days. 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. 1 Cor. 16:2 “Upon **the first day of the week** let every one of you lay by him in store, as *God* hath prospered him, that there be no gatherings when I come.”
 - d. Note: From just these two references we get a window into the sort of activities the early church was engaged in on a Sunday.

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Add some of the instructions from the N.T. Epistles and we have a pretty good idea what should be our focus for the Lord's Day:

- i. The Breaking of Bread (observance of the Lord's Supper). See also Acts 2:42.
- ii. The Preaching of the Word (includes preaching at night and even till late!) See also Acts 2:42 – The Apostle's doctrine.
- iii. The Giving of Offerings.
- iv. The Singing of Psalms, Hymns and Spiritual Songs (Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16).
- v. The Offering of Prayers (Acts 2:42; Eph. 5:20).

B. The Applications for Sunday Worship

I am not for making Sunday a day of legalistic bondage like the Pharisees did with the Sabbath of old. I am also not for trying to make Sunday a Christian Sabbath. However, I am for taking the principle of the seventh day and the spirit of the 4th commandment and applying it to the Lord's Day. What is the spirit of the Sabbath commandment? It is a complete day set aside from the usual activities of the week for worship and the things of God. We are all for keeping Sunday special!

1. Prioritize the Lord's Day
 - a. Don't forsake it (Heb. 10:25). Make it your number 1 priority! If you are missing multiple services every month, you are on a downward trajectory in your spiritual life. Can't you give one full day to the Lord? The early church met daily! (Acts 2:46; 5:42).
 - b. Treasure it – Christ walks amongst the candlesticks (Rev. 1:13, 2:1). When the church gathers, Christ is there (Matt. 18:20)! Christ purchased the church with his own blood (Acts 20:28). The church is the house of God (1 Tim. 3:15). It is the Habitation of God through the Spirit (Eph. 2:22).
2. Prepare for the Lord's Day
 - a. **Prepare Domestically.** The evening before the Sabbath for the Jews was a time of preparation for the Sabbath (Mark 15:42). It is a good idea to start preparations for the Lord's Day the night before if you can. Try and prepare ahead for things like food and clothing for the next day.
 - b. **Prepare Physically.** Try and get a good rest the night before! Be careful about turning Saturday night into party night and then dragging into church the next morning so exhausted you can barely stay awake for the preaching. Watch out for the slack Christian who does not know the discipline of regular Sunday church attendance who will think nothing of keeping you up on a Saturday night. While they sleep in Sunday morning and forsake the assembly, you have to get up and go to church! The body is the temple of the Holy Spirit so put some care into cleaning up so you can come to the house of God clean and well groomed.
 - c. **Prepare Spiritually.** Be in prayer in the lead up to the Lord's Day and during. Prepare your heart by asking God to work in your life through the preaching of the Word. Prepare your heart and mind by pre-reading the passage of Scripture the Pastor is going to preach from (if you know). Prepare your emotions with

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genuine enthusiasm for the Lord's Day. To be in church is not boring...it is exciting! Come with a spirit of anticipation to see what God will do.

3. Participate on the Lord's Day
 - a. Participate in Singing.
 - b. Participate in Preaching. Be engaged and listen. Take notes!
 - c. Participate in Fellowship. Be others focused. Pray that God will use you to be a blessing to others at church.

Conclusion:

1. Have you entered into the rest of salvation? What are you resting in for your salvation?
2. Do you value the Lord's Day as a Christian? Do you need to adjust your priorities and give the Lord first place on a Sunday?