

## EXPOSITION OF GENESIS

### Message #10

### Genesis 2:1-3

As we come to this passage, we come to the time When God's creative work is done. In fact, four times in these three verses this very point is stressed (**2:1, 2, 2, 3**). God, in six days, put His created system into full operation, and then on day seven it is as if God took a special day in which He could enjoy it.

### **GOD BLESSED AND SANCTIFIED A SPECIAL REST DAY, WHICH HONORS HIM FOR ALL OF HIS MAJESTIC CREATIVE WORK.**

There are five main differences between this special seventh day and the other six days:

- 1) There is no creation formula - no "and God said."
- 2) There is no ending day formula - no "there was evening and there was morning."
- 3) This is the only day God blesses and sanctifies (**2:3**). To miss this day is to miss much.
- 4) There is no day like the seventh day - it does not give form to the formless days, or filling to the empty days, like the other six do.
- 5) The number of this day is repeated three times, not just once like on the other days.

This special day speaks of God's cessation of His creative work. It speaks of God's completion of His creative work. It speaks of God's observation of His creative work. It speaks of God's satisfaction of His creative work. It speaks of God's admiration of His creative work. This special day was set aside by God's perfect will to focus on God's perfect work. As Dr. Kent Hughes said - "The seventh day stands apart in solitary grandeur as the crown to the six days of creation" (*Genesis*, p. 42).

### **PERSPECTIVE #1 - The time of the special rest day. 2:1-2**

The time when this day was first established is very clear, after all things had been created (**2:1**), after Creative Day six, on Day seven (**2:2-3**).

The word "hosts" is one that may be applied to things in sacred service, which includes such - things as an army of angels, planets, animals, and humans. As Dr. Delitzsch said it refers to the "totality of beings that fill the heaven and the earth."

### **PERSPECTIVE #2 - The purpose of the special rest day. 2:2**

The purpose of this special day was to commemorate the time when God rested from all of His creative work. The Hebrew Word "Work" refers to Work of an artist, Work that an artist prescribes to himself (*Gesenius*, p. 475).

Now a key word of this section is the word "rest." It occurs in **verse 2** and **verse 3**. This particular Hebrew word is very similar in spelling to the Hebrew number seven, which occurs twice in **verse 2** and once in **verse 3**. This is no coincidence because the number 7 and the meaning of the word "rest" is something that will maintain a close connection throughout the rest of the Bible.

The Hebrew word “rest” is shabbath, from which we get our English word Sabbath. **The primary emphasis of this word actually has more to do with ceasing from work rather than resting from work.** The word means to cease, to desist from work and activity. It is the idea of leaving off work, sitting down and being still (*Gesenius*, p. 804). Certainly once you cease from work you are at rest from work, but the main emphasis of the word is the cessation of work.

The big question which becomes necessary for us to answer is- why did God rest? Was He tired or fatigued? Was He weary to the point of exhaustion? What was the special reason for this?

According to Isaiah 40:28, God does not become weary or tired.

Omnipotence does not need rest.

According to John 5:10, 16, 17, God is always at work even on the Sabbath day.

According to Colossians 1:15-17, God is always governing all things at all times.

**When we consider these things, it becomes very clear that the reason God rested was not because of exhaustion, but because of completion. The reason why God established the Sabbath was to have a day that celebrated and honored His creative work because it was completed.**

It is a day that, as Dr. Allen Ross said, “describes the enjoyment of accomplishment, the celebration of completion” (*Creation & Blessing*, pp. 113-114).

When Moses wrote Exodus 31:17, and said “on the seventh day He ceased from labor and was refreshed,” he was using language to describe God being refreshingly satisfied with His creative work. In six days God designed everything necessary for everything.

### **PERSPECTIVE #3 - The blessing of the special rest day. 2:3**

God blessed the animals (1:22); He blessed the humans (1:28); now He blesses a Day. The word “bless” means that God pronounced a blessing of prosperity on this rest day. In fact, the children of Israel would learn later that if they would keep the Sabbath, God would literally prosper them (Jeremiah 17:21, 22, 24, 27).

The word “sanctify” is one that means that God consecrated this day and set it apart as something holy, pure and sacred. The Piel stem of the verb “sanctify” indicates that God causes one day to be set apart as a day of blessing. To miss this day is to miss a day in which God causes blessings. Moses Would later challenge the children of Israel to keep this day set apart unto God (Exodus 20:8), which became part of the O.T. law.

Now carefully notice why God blesses this day and Why He set it apart - because He had ceased from His work. This day commemorated the completed, excellent, majestic, finished work of God.

### **PERSPECTIVE #4 - The application of the special rest day.**

**(Application #1) - The Divine application.**

This Sabbath day was a day when all members of the Trinity reflected on their glorious creative work of the preceding six days and saw it was very good.

**(Application #2) - The National application.**

The Sabbath observance was first fully revealed to Israel. Although there are some hints that some form of observance may have already been in progress (Genesis 4:3; 8:6-12; 29:27-28; Exodus 20:8), the full disclosure regarding the Sabbath did not come until God gave Israel His law. The Sabbath was one of the commandments given to Israel (Exodus 20:8-11). It was to be carefully observed by Israel (Deuteronomy 5:12). It was to be a sign between God and Israel of her separation to God (Exodus 31:13-17). It was to be a day of complete rest and anyone who worked on the Sabbath was to be put to death (Exodus 35:2-3). This was a day given to Israel so that men might cease from their work and reflect on God. The Sabbath day was made as a rest day for man (Mark 2:27).

**(Application #3) - The Spiritual application.**

The Sabbath speaks of a physical cessation of Work, but it also speaks of a spiritual cessation of work. According to Hebrews 4:3-10, this Sabbath is a great illustration of N.T. soteriological truth. Salvation comes when one ceases from his own work and relies on the Work of Jesus Christ. When one realizes that salvation is not of his own merit, but by relying on the finished work of Jesus Christ, one is saved and that person's soul enters into the rest of God. It was Augustine who said - "our hearts are restless until they find their rest in Thee."

**(Application #4) - The Individual application.**

The dedication of a day which equals one seventh of a Week's time is a Biblical principle that needs to be individually applied in any dispensation. Although the O.T. law with the Sabbath was nailed to the cross of Jesus Christ - Colossians 2:14-17, it is still true that N.T. believers met on the first day of the week to focus their attention on God. One seventh of a Week's time has always been the worship norm. Genesis 2:1-3 occurred many years before the O.T. law.

**When God's people gather together one day a week to sing praises to Him, to study about Him, to offer their gifts and offerings to Him, they honor God and are destined for His blessings regardless of the dispensation.**

**Any who believe that Working is more important than worshipping, or sports are more important than sacred services, or television is more important than theology, or birthdays are more important than the Bible, are those who will miss many blessings of God in this life and lose many rewards in the next life.**

Notice carefully the way Genesis 2:3 does not end. On all other days, We read "there was evening and there was morning a \_\_\_\_ day" (1:5, 8, 13, 19, 23, 31). But on Day 7, there is no such ending. Why? It cannot be because there was no evening or morning, for obviously the sun came up and went down on Day 7, like all other days. Although the full answer is reserved for God alone, we may conclude that this challenge to reflect on God and His work has no beginning or ending. His majestic creative work is forever on display and when God's people continue to take a day to reflect on it, it brings great glory to Him.

On that historic seventh day, God found great joy in His creation. Does He find great joy in us?