

# Sabbath Rest for the People of God

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- I. Why should we care about the Sabbath rest?
  - a. The Sabbath rest was made *for* man. (Mark 2:23-28)
    - i. In this particular context, Jesus, when confronted by the Pharisees about the observance of the Sabbath, is explaining to them the purpose of the Sabbath.
    - ii. In His statement, the point he makes is that the Sabbath was never intended to interfere with basic human needs, such as hunger.
    - iii. He makes the statement, “The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath”
    - iv. We can glean from His entire argument and this statement in particular that the entire purpose of the Sabbath was to accommodate the needs of man.
    - v. He also furthers his argument by affirming His deity and claiming He is the Lord of the Sabbath. This is important later on!
  - b. Hebrews 3:7-4:11; This passage is the Hebrew writer’s commentary on Psalm 95:7-11
  - c. 4:9-11 we’re told in this passage that there remains a Sabbath rest for the people of God and we are to *strive* to enter that rest.
    - i. This rest is promised to us as people of God.
    - ii. With the passage we read in Mark 2 in mind, we can deduce that this Sabbath rest was made *for* us. It was made to tailor to our needs.
    - iii. This promise requires something of us. We are to *strive* to reach this promised rest.
  - d. Rest is something that every human being inherently desires. It’s something we look forward to, something we enjoy. When we rest we are free from toil and strife. We’re free from pain and sorrow. We’re free from worry and stress. God offers us an ultimate Sabbath rest, but this Sabbath rest, though it was made for man’s benefit, is not about honoring man; it’s about God and honoring Him because of his grace to man. In order to better understand what this Sabbath rest means to us, we should look at the history of the Sabbath rest and what it meant to the Israelites and Jews who lived under the old covenant.
- II. Gen. 2:1-3
  - a. This is where the theme of Sabbath rest is introduced.
    - i. After God was finished with creation, he rested.
    - ii. This was on the seventh day. This day was blessed and made holy by God because on it He rested from all his work that he had done in creation (v. 3)
  - b. Exodus 20:8-11

- i. The Lord requires that the nation of Israel remember the Sabbath day. The day that the Lord rested from creation. The day that he blessed and made holy.
- ii. This day was to be a reminder to the Israelites of God's work in creation. It wasn't simply about resting but honoring and glorifying God for his awesome power that was specifically displayed in the creation of the universe.
  - 1. We can still see God's awesome power in His creation today, and we should honor and glorify Him for it and not take it for granted
  - 2. Romans 1:20 – "For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes, His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen, being understood through what has been made..."

### III. Deuteronomy 5:12-15

- a. Here the Ten Commandments are repeated; spoken to the people of Israel, but the reason given for celebrating the Sabbath is slightly different.
  - i. The focus is still on God's might. But the illustration given to display God's might has changed.
  - ii. V. 15 – Yahweh brought the Israelites out of the land of Egypt, with a MIGHTY hand and an outstretched arm.
  - iii. The Israelites were to remember, honor and glorify God for mightily delivering them from slavery on the Sabbath, in addition to remembering his awesome power in the creation of the universe.
  - iv. As slaves, the Israelites had no off days. So having a weekly day of rest would be a powerful reminder to the Israelites of what the Lord had done for them.

### IV. Luke 13:10-17

- a. This woman, a "daughter of Abraham," has been disabled by the bondage of Satan for 18 years.
- b. Jesus heals her and she's made straight and immediately glorifies God.
- c. The ruler of the synagogue speaks out against Jesus healing this woman because it is the Sabbath day; Jesus rebukes the people there saying that there was not a more appropriate day for her to be healed!
  - i. She was released from her bondage by the mighty hand of God
  - ii. She responds by glorifying God.
  - iii. This is exactly what the Sabbath is all about! Praising and glorifying the God who created the universe and the God who has the power to release us from the bondage we are in, whether it be Egyptian bondage or the bondage of sin!
  - iv. Yes, the Sabbath is about rest, but it's about so much more than that! This is what the Sabbath meant to the Israelites/Jews.

### V. Why don't we observe the Sabbath ritually today?

- a. The Sabbath observance was required only by the nation of Israel and was a sign between God and the sons of Israel throughout THEIR generations. (Exodus 31:16-17)
  - b. Jesus' death was the culmination and fulfillment of the Old Law. Jesus was the goal of the Old Law, and his death brought the law to an end, establishing a new covenant. (Ephesians 2:13-16, Hebrews 8-10)
  - c. The Sabbath was a shadow of what was to come. The Sabbath was a shadow of Christ, the substance. Colossians 2:9-17
  - d. The Old Law has been fulfilled in Christ and a new covenant has been established. Not a covenant of works, but a covenant of grace through faith. A covenant that doesn't require circumcision, but an obedience of faith to the gospel of Christ through baptism.
- VI. Christ is the ultimate fulfillment of the Sabbath; the substance of which the Sabbath was a shadow. In Him, we will find rest.
- a. Jesus Christ is God in the flesh. He's been there from the beginning, and all things were made through Him (John 1:3) He is our creator and the Lord of the Sabbath (Mark 2)
  - b. Jesus releases us from our bondage, just as he released the daughter of Abraham from her bondage on the Sabbath day.
    - i. Romans 6:15-23
    - ii. Christ sets us free from the bondage and slavery of sin through our heart's obedience of faith.
  - c. Christ offers rest to us all
    - i. Matthew 11:28-30
    - ii. The rest Christ offers us is the rest of our souls.
      - 1. We are told his yoke is easy and his burden is light.
      - 2. The Greek word for "easy" is chrestos which literally means "good for its purpose".
      - 3. This goes back to what we talked about at the beginning. The rest offered to us by God is tailored to our needs! It's good for its purpose! Christ's yoke is *easy*!
      - 4. What Christ offers us meets our every need. In choosing to follow Him, we gain...
        - a. A sense of self-worth, purpose, responsibility
          - i. We know that we were created in God's image (Gen. 1:26-27)
          - ii. We know that we were made for good works which God prepared beforehand! (Ephesians 2:10)
        - b. Freedom from the guilt of sin
          - i. Through faith in Jesus Christ we all become sons of God, being baptized into Christ and clothing ourselves with Him (Galatians 3:26-27)

- ii. “Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ” (Romans 5:1)
  - c. Acceptance from God
    - i. Hebrews 10:19 tells us we can have *confidence* in approaching Him by the blood of Jesus
  - d. Hope of an eternal home of rest in Heaven
    - i. Romans 5:2 - “Through him we have also obtained access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and we rejoice in hope of the glory of God.”
    - ii. Revelation 21:4 “He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away.”
5. Christianity truly supplies us with a life tailored to our every need, and a hope of an unimaginable rest.

- VII. What should you do in response to this invitation offered by Jesus? How do you become a Christian and obtain this hope of rest?
- a. You’ve heard the gospel. Jesus was killed and buried, but overcame death and rose from the grave three days later.
  - b. You just have to have faith. Believe in the gospel. Believe and confess he is the son of God. (Romans 10:9-10)
  - c. Repent of your sin (Acts 2:38, Luke 13:3)
  - d. By God’s grace, be baptized into Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and rise to walk in newness of life (Acts 2:38, Romans 6:1-11)
  - e. But it doesn’t end here. The Christians in Hebrews 4 were urged to continue striving to enter the promised rest, and reminded that the word of God will expose us to the God to whom we must give an account.
  - f. If you need to obey the gospel and begin your walk with God, or if you’ve already obeyed the gospel but have stopped striving for our promised rest, and need to repent and turn to God, we invite you to have a seat in the front.