

From Sabbath to Lord's Day.

Acts 20:7
04 June 2017

This is what I **endeavour to unpack** for you today; My sermon today is **titled** after a **very helpful book** that I read these last several weeks and which I believe is the go-to-book for such a doctrine as the Lord's Day...and **so my sermon today is titled**; **From Sabbath to Lord's Day...**

In order to help us follow the path from Sabbath to Lord's Day I have structured this sermon as though I were answering a question;

Here is the question I would like to answer today;

Why did the early church begin meeting on the first day of the week and NOT on the Sabbath?

When we identify areas of God progressively displaying more and more of Himself throughout the bible we will be in a good position to understand our topic the Sabbath

1. What is the meaning of the Sabbath and why was it given?

Meaning

I am going to stick to three **main functions** for the Sabbath

1. **The Sabbath functioned** **as a sign and memorial** **of God's finalised work of creation**; To declare that God is the **sovereign and Lord** over His creation!
2. **The Sabbath functioned** **as a reminder** **of God's liberation of His people from their bondage to Egypt**. The Sabbath was to say..."remember God today in your freedom, when once you were trapped and enslaved by your oppressors."

3. **The Sabbath functioned** to fuel God's people with hope, by pointing to a place and time where they would find restful peace in life!

DEFINITION

So before we head to some passages to show this what is the biblical definition of the Sabbath?

The Sabbath means; **to cease, to rest...** therefore to “**rest from works or labour.**”

FUNCTION #1

So where we do we get the first function of the Sabbath?

1. **The Sabbath functioned** as a sign and memorial of God's finalised work of creation. To declare that God is the **sovereign and Lord over His creation!**

Our example for this day of rest came from the Lord Himself in the creation of the Universe;

Genesis 2:2–3

2 And on the seventh day God finished his work that he had done, and he rested on the seventh day [There's the language of rest – its all throughout the bible...this rest that is offered – this rest that will come] from all his work that he had done.

3 So God blessed the seventh day and made it holy, because on it God rested [again the word rest] from all his work that he had done in creation.

Now, before we move on there is an inherit problem here with reading this literally, which you will understand as soon as I begin asking questions here;

Was God exhausted from all that speaking that He needed rest? Is God a God of that the mere speaking; “Let there be light” exhausts Him?

Of course not, so we **understand God’s rest to be; that He ceased** from the work of creation. God had **finished** His work and **stopped to admire His handiwork**. So, this example **is NOT of becoming completely inactive to recover from exhaustion...**

No, what we have in this **example** is God **ceasing** from work, **finalising his work of creation - and taking a step back absorbing** all that is before God and admiring His work of creation...As God and Lord over what He created!

TO THE LAW

So, when we look at the Law God gave the Israelites we take God’s rest as our understanding, God **stopping** work to admire **His creation** as the foundation on what it means to rest.

Listen to the institution of the Sabbath in the 10 commandments;

Exodus 20:8–10

8 “Remember the Sabbath day, **to keep it holy.**

9 Six days you shall labor, and do all your work,

10 but the seventh day is a Sabbath **to the Lord your God**. On it you **shall not do any work,**

Now the connection to the rest in creation comes in verse 11...

Exodus 20:11

11 **For in six days** the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is in them, **and rested on the seventh day. [there it is the rest language again]** Therefore, **the Lord blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy.**

See the connection to creation? **As God rested, so should man rest...**

The Sabbath rest was **not a complete inactivity**, it was not meant to cease your works, stop your labours – and turn your attention to the Creator God! Worship Him as **God and Lord over His creation!**

FUNCTION #2

1. The Sabbath functioned **was a reminder** of God's liberation of **His people from their bondage to Egypt.**

TO THE TEXT

When God reminds His people again in Deuteronomy of the Law...**Remember Deuteronomy means; “second Law”** it's the retelling of the **Ex, Lev, Num**. God adds something to this weekly Sabbath...Listen to this;

Deuteronomy 5:14

14 **but the seventh day is a Sabbath to the Lord your God.** On it you shall not do any work, you or your son or your daughter or your male servant or your female servant, or your ox or your donkey or any of your livestock, or the sojourner who is within your gates, that your male servant and your female servant **may rest as well as you.**

15 You shall **remember** that you were a slave in the land of Egypt, and the Lord your God brought you **out from there** with a **mighty hand and an outstretched arm.**

[**See**, God wants His people to **remember** they were once slaves – trapped – imprisoned – in bondage – **with no way out** - and God saved them – **God saved them**]...HE continues...

Therefore, the Lord your God commanded you to keep the Sabbath day.

See, we have something extra... **Not only** is the Sabbath suppose to stop our daily routine to **worship the** Creator as God and Lord over His creation...

FUNCTION #3

1. **The third function of the Sabbath was to fuel God's people with hope, by pointing to a place and time where they would find restful peace in life!**

We see throughout the scriptures, the people of God **rest one day...but only to work the following days.** And when they were given this Law they were also **continuing** to walk in the **wilderness**, roaming these barren lands without a home of their own.

waiting for God to direct and guide them into a land of their own. A land they would call home - where they would live forever at rest from all their enemies and be at rest from all of life's worries.

- it was part of God's promise to His people... He would say; "I will bring you to a land **flowing with milk and honey...**and it will be there **I will dwell with you.**

This is what the promise sounds like...God tells His people they will come to His rest...keep your ears pricked to 'rest' language.

Deuteronomy 12:5

5 ... you shall seek the place that the Lord your God will choose out of all your tribes to put his name and make his habitation there. There you shall go,

So the people are to go to a land where God will put His name upon it and make His habitation there...In other words go to this land I am giving you...because I will live there...

What will happen there?

Deuteronomy 12:6–8

6 and there you shall bring your burnt offerings and your sacrifices, your tithes and the contribution that you present, your vow offerings, your freewill offerings, and the firstborn of your herd and of your flock.

7 And **there you shall eat before the Lord your God**, and **you shall rejoice**, you and your households, in all that you undertake, in which **the Lord your God has blessed you**.

- **Can you picture this future land**...It will be a place where the people of God will be able to be in **full worship with all their offerings**, and;

it will be a place where the people of God will have a **festal gathering**, where God's people will **eat BEFORE THE LORD**...

- **Can you picture this future land**...tucking into a drumstick with the Lord next to you offering more of **His miraculously produced wine**...
- **Can you picture this future land** where **you shall rejoice, you and your household**... in all that you undertake, for the Lord your God will have blessed everything you have?

So there will be joy in everything God's people do because all things will have God's blessing upon it.

8 "**You shall not do according** to all that we are doing here today, **everyone doing whatever is right in his own eyes**,

So, in other words when God's people **enter this land**, it's not a place where everyone will do **what they think is right**...**For the Lord is the sovereign of this land**...It will be the Lord who decides how they are to behave...

But listen to verse 9...

Deuteronomy 12:9

9 for you have **not as yet come to the rest and to the inheritance** that the Lord your God is giving you.

Not as yet come to rest, **God's people here** are still roaming the wilderness, they haven't inherited this land...**but it sounds soooo good**...

- God is **enticing them onwards** with a promise of a future land or rest and prosperity!...**But you haven't reach this place yet**...you haven't reached **this land of rest yet**...but keep going thinking about what lies ahead.

He continues to say this is their inheritance...

Deuteronomy 12:10–11

10 But when you go over the Jordan and live in the land that the Lord your God is giving you **to inherit**, and when he gives you **rest** **[there is that language again from creation – rest]** from all your enemies around, so that you **live in safety**,

11 then to the place that the Lord your God will choose, **to make his name dwell there**,

NOW WHAT?

So now that we have this foundation, how come we no longer worship on the Sabbath...? The question that arises isn't the Sabbath an eternal command? Forever binding?

Well, the answer is yes, and no. This is where we apply the progressive understanding of God's revelation. Is the Sabbath keeping suppose to be forever, without change...**We answer emphatically no!**

Nor were many other commands that were given with the qualification of permanency.

The Aaronic priesthood, along with the sacrificial system in the temple was a statute declared for all time...But now it has become obsolete because well there is not temple...

However, it will continue into eternity because the priesthood, along with the sacrificial system and the temple has been fulfilled in Jesus Christ.

God has progressively revealed **these shadows** **by shining the light on Jesus as** the **Final Priest**, The once for all **sacrifice** and the very **Temple of God**.

Jesus has fulfilled all the festivals...

- Jesus is the Yom Kippur, the final atonement,
- Jesus is the Passover Lamb...and
- Jesus is the first fruits of God Harvest!

See all things that were revealed to us in the OT have been fulfilled in greater depth by the Son of God...

Jesus has come to give all this once revealed full meaning;

1 Corinthians 15:20–23

20 ... Christ has been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep.

Jesus in His resurrection as the first human to be raised from the dead by the work of the Holy Spirit...**is the fruit...** **the first fruit** of God's **supernatural work in redemption...**

Can you see, the OT is all worked and fulfilled in Jesus Christ...
Two verses later Paul say;

23 But each in his own order: Christ the firstfruits, **then at his coming those who belong to Christ.**

So Jesus is the firstfruits of God's spiritual harvest in this world and in the return of Jesus...**those who belong to Christ will follow the first resurrected One, into their own resurrection IN Christ!**

This is how James says it you may be familiar with the first verse;

James 1:17–18

17 Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow due to change.

18 Of his own will he brought us forth by the word of truth, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of his creatures.

TO THE SABBATH

You see, the Sabbath has always been a shadow of something greater!! And that something greater, is a someone, The Holy One of Israel – Jesus cast His shadow as we saw the Sabbath.

TO JESUS

So what are the three elements that the Sabbath foreshadowed?

Well the first one is;

POINT #1

Even though God rested from His initial creation, once His creation was warped and broken by the fall to sin, God would begin a new work of restoration and recreation...

God began His re-creation of a people and a future world

What God begun He finished IN the Son By His Spirit...

This is why Jesus came to this world...

Jesus came to do the final work of God!

Jesus just healed a cripple man by the pools of Bethesda

John 5:15–17

15 The man [that's the crippled man] went away and told the Jews that it was Jesus who had healed him.

16 And this was why the Jews were persecuting Jesus, because he was doing these things on the Sabbath.

17 But Jesus answered them, “My Father is working until now, and I am working.”

See, **God was working still**. God may have stopped from His work in creation in Gen 2...but now we hear of **God working**...there was a work that God was in the process of doing, and God works IN and THROUGH Jesus.

That's what Jesus says in John 4:34;

John 4:34

34 Jesus said to them, "My food is to do the will of him who sent me and **to accomplish his work.**

John 5:36

36 But the testimony that I have is greater than that of John. For the works that the Father has given me to accomplish, **the very works that I am doing**, bear witness about me that **the Father has sent me.**

Jesus has come to accomplish the works of God...but what is God working IN Jesus Christ...we see it in;

2 Corinthians 5:17–19

17 ... if anyone is in Christ, **he is a new creation.** The old has passed away; behold, the new has come.

18 All this is from God, who through Christ reconciled us to himself and gave us the ministry of reconciliation;

19 that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting to us the message of reconciliation.

God's work IN Christ is to re-create **new people in Christ from old people without Christ**...and restore and reconcile them back to Himself...

What was warped and broken in the garden of Eden God is now being recreated and restored **IN Christ Jesus...that is the work of God...but is that work over is it finished? that God can rest and admire His work of reconciliation?**

Well, the answer is found from the lips of Jesus on the cross...do you remember Jesus' last words in His crucifixion?

John 19:30

30 When Jesus had received the sour wine, he said, **"It is finished,"** and he bowed his head and gave up his spirit.

POINT #2

The recreation through Resurrection....

It was on the Sunday...that Jesus was brought to life as **the first fruits of the new creation**....

It is the first day of the week that the work of **salvation AND recreation** was accomplished...

It is this final work that we celebrate and rejoice in.

The work of God in Christ to liberate and save HIS people!... was accomplished, finished on the cross... And **the work of God IN Christ** as the firstfruits **and recreate His creations** of those who would follow was complete at the resurrection...

And from the works of God IN Christ by His Spirit comes a promise...

POINT #3

The final work of God IN Christ brought for us a hope of eternal rest;

John 5:24

24 Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me **has eternal life**. **He does not come into judgment**, but has passed from death to life.

John 14:1–3

1 “Let not your hearts be troubled. Believe in God; **believe also in me**.

2 In my Father’s house are many rooms. If it were not so, would I have told you that **I go to prepare a place for you?**

3 And if I go and prepare a place for you, **I will come again and will take you to myself, that where I am you may be also**.

This is the promise of God...That all who believe God IN Christ Jesus is given eternal life. A life that is without pain, without suffering, without sin and without judgment!

Revelation 21:1–4

1 Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more.

2 And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.

3 And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, “**Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them**, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them as their God.

4 He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away.”

This is future eternal rest that God promises to all those who believe in Jesus Christ and the God that sent Him. There is an offer of eternal rest for all who would believe that God has **reconciled** and **recreated** all things IN Christ Jesus...

This is the offer of God’s final works...The offer of the fulfilled Sabbath in Christ Jesus.

Matthew 11:28–29

28 Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and **I will give you rest.**

29 Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls.

CONCLUSION

I hope you can see **all the remarkable connections in the bible...**

- **The Sabbath in the OT** may have been a reminder of God in His final work of creation – **but it also pointed forwards to God’s final work of recreation IN Christ Jesus**
- **The Sabbath in the OT** may have been a reminder of God’s work in saving a people from slavery and bondage to the nation of Egypt - **but it also pointed forwards to a future salvation of a people from sin, death and Satan IN Christ Jesus**

- **The Sabbath in the OT** may have been a reminder of God's work to bring a people to a promised land in Canaan – **But it also pointed to future promise of eternal life without judgment in the presence of God IN Christ Jesus.**

So the Lord's day does not replace the Sabbath...there is no longer any need for Sabbath observance **for it has been fulfilled in Christ Jesus** on the day Christ was resurrected to new life.

Amen.