

The Sabbath

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[0:00] Genesis chapter 2, where we're going to be here tonight, at least the first three verses, and the subject is the Sabbath.

And then we'll just kind of step on into it. The Bible says, thus the heavens and the earth and all the host of them were finished.

And on the seventh day, God ended his work which he had done, and he rested on the seventh day from all his work which he had done. Then God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it, because in it he rested from all his work which God had created and made.

Now, it seems pretty straightforward, and indeed it is. In Genesis chapter 1, step by step, and we have looked at the progression of creation through day 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, and the seventh day, of course, we know.

The day that God completed, after God completed all of his creation. So it's been pretty straightforward. Now it's the seventh day, and he says a few words about that seventh day, or what is called the Sabbath.

[1:32] That's what Sabbath means. And so what are we to learn about that? There are a lot of questions, even today among Christians, about the, quote, Sabbath, in relation to the Fourth Commandment.

And, you know, a lot of questions. I, myself, have had a number of questions directed to me over the years about, Brother Donald, you know, why don't we worship on the Sabbath? That's one major question.

And, Sabbath being, of course, the seventh day, and that would be Saturday. Why don't we do that? And, but more often the question comes, you know, if, if, like many, we tend to think of now Sunday as the, quote, Sabbath, though it's really not technically.

But the question comes, well, what can we do and what are we not to do on the Sabbath, you know? And does God give us any rules about that and so forth, you know, to keep the Sabbath, keep it holy?

And so for a lot of questions about that, we're not going to answer all those tonight. But I think a lot of the questions can be answered if we understand the significance of the rest, the significance of the Sabbath, which is when God rested, what that means to us today.

[2:57] That goes way beyond a specific day in the week. And so we'll get that as we go along here. But it's helpful, I think, for us to understand that when we move into chapter 2 of Genesis, the focus is now not going to be on the creation of cows or the creation of plants or, you know, the heavens and all these things.

The focus is now going to be specifically on man or mankind. And God created all things for mankind. He created all things for us.

That makes us quite special. And, you know, chapter 1 starts with God, in the beginning God, and then the chapter ends, chapter 1 ends with man.

So we begin with God, in the beginning God, and then it ends with man, so God created man in His own image. And so now the focus is going to be man or mankind, or what we might call, I think accurately call, God's crowning work of creation.

That's unique. And this is quite amazing, isn't it, when we think about it. We're not just maybe a little bit more advanced animal. We're much more than that.

[4:18] We are something very specially created, and we are God's crowning work of creation. And so when we move into chapter 2, again, man is the subject.

And so we are given, in chapter 2, more details about the creation of man. Now, all this happened on the sixth day. What we're going to eventually study, as we look into, you know, what chapter 2

says about the creation of man, all this happened on the sixth day.

This is going back and giving us more information about that creation. Now, there is a progress in the Bible.

I mentioned, and for the last several Wednesdays, I've been talking about the progress of creation. Day 1, day 2, day 3, and so forth. But it is important we understand that there's a progress when it comes to the Bible.

That is the progression of revelation. In one important sense, the Bible is thematic. And this is the amazing thing about Scripture and the unity of Scripture.

[5:29] There's a theme that starts at the very beginning and runs all the way through the entire Bible. And yet that theme, though it runs throughout the entire Scripture, there is a progression.

There's a progression of it. And that theme is God's plan for mankind. We could sum it up that way. And so from cover to cover in this book that I'm holding right here, you have a copy of it there, most of you.

From cover to cover, that's the theme of the Bible. God's plan for mankind. God's plan for mankind. And we could also think of it in another way.

The Bible is not only thematic in its progression, but it is also historic. It is a history book, in a sense, though it's not intended to be that in the strictest sense.

I mean, it's not God's intent to give us every detail in history. And in that sense, it's not a history book. But everywhere it touches history, it is 100% accurate.

[6:34] But it is a history book in the sense that it is redemptive history. And that's how we might define, and I think accurately define, God's plan for mankind.

His plan is redemption, to redeem us. And so that's what we have in this book. And I think that's how we ought to understand the opening chapters of the Bible.

And I'm kind of setting us up here for maybe a wider understanding of these first three verses that pertain to the seventh day, the Sabbath, and the significance of those days to us.

if we understand that the opening chapters are part of a progressive revelation, all of it tied to God's plan for us.

And that plan is to redeem us. And so man is created. He, and we've already studied this, he's been given a place to live, a place to work.

[7:38] You know, we aren't supposed to work. And he's given us a place to rule over. Matter of fact, though, you know, some of the wackos out there think that man has no right to rule over this planet.

This planet's been created for us to rule over, to have dominion over. And then he gave man, in the sense of Adam, who was first created, a mate, a mate to complete him.

And he's given us a unique relationship with God, our Creator. And we're going to look at some of these verses as we go along.

You know, he walks with us, he walks with man in the cool of the day. So that unique relationship, he's created that, given us that. But then, man sins.

And rebels against his Creator. And so, then man becomes minus God. Which is a serious condition. Very serious.

[8:45] And so the rest of the Bible then, from there on out, all the way to the end of it, is written to reveal God's plan to restore that.

What we lost in that. not only to forgive, his plan to forgive, and his plan to restore man to himself. And that's a pretty good way to sum up the very purpose of God's Word.

Now, looking at chapter 2 then, and we see man as he was created to be. But first, we're going to deal with this seventh day.

So Genesis 2.1, again, if you have it there in front of you, in fact, I think I may have put the verse in the New King James Version right there in your notes. Thus the heavens and the earth and all the host of them were what?

Finished. Finished. That's a significant word there in that verse in verse 1. They were finished. Now, why is that significant? Because it seals the reality, the truth, that things are not evolving.

[9:54] They're not evolving. God did not get it all started, get it all going, and then kind of step back, go back up into His throne room and just let things go kind of like you'd wind up a clock and let it go.

God's not doing that and see what happens as things progress. That's not the way it works. Through some kind of mindless evolution creation that might take place and that's not how it works. Creation is a finished thing. Complete. In fact, some translations would have that word there instead of finished, but no matter which way you go with it, the idea is there isn't more to be created. Things are not evolving. Things are not becoming this and then this and then this. It's all done. And by the way, according to verse 1 here in chapter 2, that includes every existing thing. Everything. Notice what this verse says. He is finished. First what? The heavens. Though God didn't begin there.

[11:04] Not giving the order of things, but He's summing it all up. He created all the heavens. That's all the universe. Everything is finished. And then the earth.

This planet we're living on. And just in case we're wondering does that include everything on the earth? Then He closes that off by saying all the host of them.

Now that's kind of a difficult translation. I think the New American Standard, maybe some others say everything in them. And that's the idea. So we've got the heavens.

That's the entire universe. All that's finished by the seventh day. I mean finished. Done. Did it all in six days. The earth, this entire planet, whatever it may have looked like, then I think it looked like something totally different than it looks today because of the flood.

But that's all finished. And then every single thing, everything on this earth is finished. Done. It's complete. And that's what God says in verse 1.

[12:12] Now we get to verse 2. And on the seventh day, because God created it all in six days, you know. God ended his work. He completed his work, which he had done, and he rested on the seventh day from all his work, which he had done.

So there is verse 2. Very concise. He just says it all right there. There's nothing to be added. Very little needs to be explained, really.

Although it seems in our day, some people need this to be explained. But in that one verse, I think we can make several observations that will help us understand, begin to understand, what this Sabbath should mean to us today.

First of all, unlike the previous six days, this is significant. We do not find the words, then God said. We have that in every one of the days, one, two, three, four, five, six, God said, God said, God said, then we get to the seventh day and we don't have God saying anything.

And why is that? Because there's nothing created on the seventh day. Nothing created, God spoke all things into existence, but now everything is finished.

[13:37] All right, now that's important. Keep that, following your mind for a minute. Number two, unlike the previous six days, we do not find the words, the evening and the morning, word, seventh day.

We don't see that. We see that in every other day. Well, not the seventh day, but first day, second day, third day, evening, morning, first day, evening, morning, second day, and so forth.

But here on the seventh day, we don't have that said here. Is that important? I think it is. And why is that important? Because though the seventh day did have an end, I mean, it was a literal 24 hour day.

We're not trying to make a case that it was kind of open-ended somehow. It did have a beginning, it did have an end. Certainly, in the literal sense, it did. The idea here is that by the seventh day, everything is perfect.

This is the idea conveyed here. It's all perfect. It's all done. A perfect, a perfection that God, by the way, wanted to continue forever.

[14:44] Think of it. Things are perfect. A perfect world. Not a world we have today. But on the seventh day, everything was absolutely perfect.

Perfect in every possible way. And so, it was a perfection. We have to, we just understand on the face of it from God's word that that was a perfection God intended to go on forever.

But it was a perfection that was destroyed in chapter 3, and we'll get to that, though you already know what happens in chapter 3. The perfection was destroyed when Adam and Eve sinned.

And we'll get back to that in a little bit. But then number three, and we're going to put all this together here in a minute. Unlike the previous six days, the seventh day is the only day that is blessed and set apart by God.

That's just obvious from the text. As you look at the seventh day in comparison to the other six days, you don't have anything about God saying anything because everything's done, everything's created.

[15:55] You don't have anything said about a beginning and an end because in a very significant sense, God's desire was for that perfection to continue on, to not have an end.

And then, you do not have God saying about any of the other days what he said about the seventh day in that he blessed it and set it apart for himself.

And that leads us to verse 3. Then God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it or declared it holy. because in it he rested from all his work which God had created and made. So the seventh day is uniquely blessed and set apart.

And why is that? The reason is given in the text because in it he rested from all his work which God had created and made. Now, when you put all this together, you understand that the seventh day then, in a spiritual sense, and it's meant to be taken in the spiritual sense.

[17:06] The seventh day represents a condition, or maybe we could use the word reality, that is to be continuous, to be perpetual.

Remember, no evening, no morning, seventh day. So it's not merely a 24-hour day, the significance of the seventh day, not merely a 24-hour day, that we might set aside and say, well, Walmart ought to be closed, and we ought not have to work, and things like that.

It's not merely that 24-hour period. It represents a rest, a rest that is to be eternal. Because it's open-ended, it's perpetual.

Now, follow me, it's not complicated, it's only complicated because I'm a terrible communicator sometimes. It's to be ongoing. Now, see, it certainly was for God an ongoing and perpetual thing, this rest, this day of rest, because He did it all in six days.

He didn't have anything more to create. So this day of rest or this conditional reality of, quote, rest, and I want to keep mentioning that word rest because that's the key word in this passage.

[18:19] That rest goes on because He was finished with everything. So what does that mean to us? Well, something very profound.

Again, the key to understanding the significance of the seventh day is the association, it's association with the word rest. That word rest is key.

God rested on the seventh day. Why? Because He was tired? No. Just in the basic sense, He rested because He was done.

He was done. But the seventh day then is holy. God makes it holy, declares it holy because of God's rest. The Sabbath day, which means seven, is holy because of God's rest.

No, no. Stay with me here. And so in one sense, God did create something for us on the seventh day.

[19:27] Do you know what it is? You cheated. It's right there in your notes. He created a rest for us. He said, well, I sure need it.

We're not talking about a physical rest. Now, that's part of it, but that's all we get from it. All we understand that we're missing the greater part of it.

Mark tells us in Mark 2:27, the Sabbath was made for who? For man. It was made for us. Not man for the Sabbath, for the rest.

So to understand what that means to us, we need to follow that word rest throughout the Bible, and we're not going to do that necessarily tonight, but I'll mention a couple of verses. as it goes from the Old Testament on into the New, because the significance of this, quote, rest, this day of rest, or rest, is to be understood as that concept or that word moves on into the New Testament.

Exodus 33:14, and I think I put that passage in your notes, he said, my presence will go with you and I will give you rest. Who's he speaking to?

[20:42] If you remember Exodus 33 in that area there, he's talking about Israel and the promised land. Their rest. And so the rest is the promised land, but even that was just a shadow of something more real, something even better.

Colossians, by the way, and I didn't put that verse in there, Colossians, let's see, where is it?

Colossians chapter 2, verse 16, says, So let no one judge you in food or in drink or regarding a festival or new moon or Sabbath, which are a shadow, a shadow of things to come.

The substance is Christ. The substance is Christ. So even though in the Old Testament we have, and this is just one reference to it here, there are a number of other references, the rest is

associated with the promised land.

God's going to give them their rest. But that's just a shadow. The Sabbath that the Israelites were commanded to keep, they did keep, but it was something pointing to a greater thing.

It's just a shadow. And the promised land being a rest is just a shadow, and to understand what the shadow is, we go to Hebrews chapter 4. chapter 4. And I'll just read several verses here.

[22 : 12] Therefore, since a promise remains of entering his rest, now just stopping right there, do you think he's talking about the promised land there? no.

Let us fear, lest any of you seem to have come short of it. For indeed the gospel was preached to us as well as to them, but the word which they heard did not profit them. now he is referring to those who did not see the promised land because of disobedience.

Not being mixed with faith in those who heard it, for we who have believed do enter that rest, as he has said, so I swore in my wrath they shall not enter my rest, although the works were finished from the foundation of the world.

For he has spoken in a certain place of the seventh day in this way, and God rested on the seventh day from all his works, and that's Genesis chapter 2. And again in this place, they shall not enter my rest, since therefore it remains that some must enter in, and those to whom it was first preached did not enter because of disobedience.

Again he designates a certain day, saying in David, today, after such a long time as it has been said, today, if you will hear his voice, do not pardon your hearts.

[23 : 31] For if Joshua had given them rest in the promised land, then he would not afterward have spoken of another day. Now we know that the rest of which he spoke concerning the promised land is something more than that promised land in the sense of geography.

Or otherwise, he would not have spoken of another day. there remains therefore a rest for the people of God. For he who has entered his rest has himself also ceased from his works as God did from his.

What are we talking about there? We're talking about our salvation. Because salvation does not come by works. it's a free gift.

And we when we come to Christ, put our faith in Christ, we cease from our works. And we trust in his works. And so in that sense, the analogy, God rested and we rest, the rest then is Christ.

It's Christ. for let us therefore be diligent to enter that rest, lest anyone fall according to the same example of disobedience. Now there's a whole lot in that passage and we don't have time to look into.

[24 : 58] But the important thing to remember here is not then the number seven. The important thing to remember here is the word rest. God sanctified the seventh day because that was the day God ceased creating.

Because everything's done, everything's perfect. Man, his habitat, his relationship with Christ. And then this was meant to be eternal. That is, there was to be no end to this perfection and that's why there is no evening and morning on the seventh day.

But sin wrecked the perfect rest. In Adam we lost it. But in Christ, we can have it back. We can have it back, this rest.

Matthew 11, 28, Jesus said, come to me, all you who are weary and burdened and I will give you rest. All of you take up my yoke and learn from me because I am gentle and humble in spirit and you will find rest for yourselves.

You see, when it comes to the Sabbath, for us it's not a day, is it? the Sabbath is Jesus. It's Jesus.

[26 : 13] Remember, the Sabbath, we're to remember it because we are commanded to, aren't we? You know, to remember the Sabbath and keep it holy.

Do we remember the Sabbath and keep it holy? You bet we do. You say, but we don't worship on Saturday. it? How is it we keep this fourth commandment?

We keep it every day because we rest in Jesus. He's our Sabbath. And so, every day is the Sabbath.

Now, I'm not talking about the Lord's Day. That's a different thing. That's Sunday. That's the first day. That's not the Sabbath. Sabbath means seventh. But we rest in Christ every day because Jesus, Christians have entered the Lord's rest.

So, the one created, that Sabbath created for us on the seventh day, that rest created for us on the seventh day of creation, is created for us, this rest.

[27:24] The one that was to be eternal, sin short-circuited it, it's the one that rests that was lost through sin, and it's the one that was restored through faith in Jesus Christ.

Did you know that about the Sabbath? Now, the Jews celebrate the rest on the Sabbath day, don't they? And they do that.

God commanded them to do that, even though His rest is something much bigger than just a day. For the Christian, the rest is not attached to any single day.

In the New Testament, the Old Testament Sabbath day was replaced by the first day of the week. We know that, don't we? And it's the day of Christ's resurrection.

From that day forward, the church has set aside Sunday, not as the Sabbath, because Jesus is our Sabbath. He's our rest.

[28:31] And we remember that rest every day of the week. And we worship on Sunday, that's a special day because of the resurrection. And so then, what is it that God commands us to do on the Sabbath?

Or on, let me back up, has God commanded us about what we're to do and not to do on the first day of week, on the Lord's day? You say, Brother Don, is it all right if I go out and play golf on Sunday?

Is it all right if I go to Walmart on Sunday and shop? Is it all right if I do this? Give me a list. I'm not going to give you a list. The Bible doesn't give one, and so I can't give you one.

The Lord's day is a day to worship Him. And you'll have to look to your own heart as you, in relationship with Christ and under the leadership of the Holy Spirit, to guide you on what you should do or should not do on that Sunday.

Don't confuse Sunday with the Sabbath. It's not the Sabbath. I know we call it that. It's not the Sabbath. The Sabbath is connected to rest.

[30:02] And for the Christian, that rest is eternal. And we live in that rest and remember that rest and honor that rest every day, every day of the week, every day of our lives.

Because Jesus is our Sabbath. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Thank you.