

Loving Christ in All of Life
Week 9 - Slavery & The Sabbath
Deuteronomy 5:12-15

- Sabbath law was central to Israelite society and remains central in Christian life
 - Col. 2:16-17 - significant mixture of moral and ceremonial elements of Sabbath law
- Sabbath is set in direct contrast to Israel's slavery
 - Paganism is totally built on man's efforts - he must work to appease his god and save himself
 - Only alternatives are to work to transcend nature and make man a "god," or to give into the idea that no work we do matters
- Pagan worldview is entirely works based - this is the context Israel was coming from
 - Not only a part of this pagan culture but were personally enslaved (Ex. 1:11-14)
 - God rescues His people from this and establishes a new principle based on an old reality
 - A weekly day of rest was totally foreign and revolutionary in the pagan world
 - Unlike paganism, true religion asserts a God who created all, sustains all, and perfectly saves by His labors
 - Only the person who acknowledges and trusts this can truly rest
 - This is why Israel was to remember their salvation particularly on the Sabbath (Deut. 5:15, c.f. Ex. 14:13-14)
- Rooted in God as the Creator and the principle He set at creation - Gen. 2:1-3
 - God set rest apart from work, gave His image bearer work to do (Gen. 2:15) - implication is that rest would follow faithful work
 - Man's sin caused him to be exiled from God's presence and forfeited his right to God's rest (Gen. 3:22-24)
 - After this there is no mention of a day of rest until the law is given
- After the Old Covenant redemption, God establishes weekly rest as a matter of law
 - This, and the inheritance of Canaan, were types of the rest man was made to enjoy
 - The fulfillment is in Christ's redeeming work and the eternal rest He secures - Heb. 3:16-4:10
 - Only those truly believing enter God's rest, enjoy His Sabbath
 - Man was saved for the purpose of obtaining true rest with God in Christ
- Many elements to the Sabbath make it essential to carefully consider application
 - Principle established at creation, ingrained in man as God's image
 - Consequence of redemption, and only the redeemed can truly rest in God
 - Ceremonial feast day for Old Covenant Israel, has a place in the fulfilled ceremonial law

- Part of the standing moral law, one of the Ten Commandments
- Applied in the civil sphere, even up to capital punishment
- Sabbath law requires work - inherent command that people work
 - God created man to work; both Testaments condemn laziness and sloth - Prov. 21:25, 2 Thess. 3:10
- More concerned with rest than worship
 - Worship is a daily part of life; rest is unique to one day
 - New Covenant fulfillment in Christ gives Christians more grounds to overabound in rest and rejoicing; does not give cause observation the bare minimum required
 - Rest over worship helps us avoid Pharisaism in making the day about pietism and inactivity
- Civil application of the law requires work and protects rest
 - Not requiring specific religious observations - Ex. 31:12-17, Num. 15:32-36
 - Must be kept in mind that the Sabbath is for God's people; a God-honoring state will protect and promote it
- To ignore the Sabbath brings about death - violates the way God made the world
 - Any society that does not acknowledge God will increasingly become a slave state
 - Restlessness brings death to individual man and to the created world