

TEACHING GOAL

To study the meaning of the Sabbath Day and the significance of the word remember in connection with the Sabbath.

DOCTRINAL STANDARDS

- Q. Which is the fourth commandment?
- A. The fourth commandment is; "Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days you shall labor and do all your work, but the seventh day *is* the Sabbath of the LORD your God. *In it* you shall do no work: you, nor your son, nor your daughter, nor your male servant, nor your female servant, nor your cattle, nor your stranger who *is* within your gates. For *in* six days the LORD made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that *is* in them, and rested the seventh day. Therefore the LORD blessed the Sabbath day and hallowed it.

S.C. 57, L.C. 115, W.C. of F. XIX, Savoy 19, Young 86

SCRIPTURAL BASIS

Study Passage: Exodus 31:12-18

Support Passages: Exodus 20:8-11; Deuteronomy 5:12-15; Hebrews 4:1-10; Ezekiel 20:10-13; Genesis 2:1-3; Isaiah 58:13-14; Jeremiah 17:19-27; Matthew 12:1-14

BIBLE STORY

Matthew 12:1-14; Jesus and His disciples pick grain to eat on the Sabbath.

MEMORY ASSIGNMENT

Mark 2:27-28

27 And He said to them, "The Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath. 28 "Therefore the Son of Man is also Lord of the Sabbath."

APPLICATION

We must preserve the knowledge of the True and Living God among mankind. For the universe to be created it must have a designer who is not part of His creation, out of and independent from the world. This designer must be all powerful and infinite in His knowledge and goodness if we are to account for the wonders of creation. Therefore, so long as people believe in creation they must believe in God. To this end we must lay great stress on the right observance of the Sabbath.

SUMMARY

The word sabbath (shavath - Hebrew) means cease, desist or rest and the Hebrew word for "seven" bears the same root (shavah). Therefore the Sabbath Day is correctly understood as one day out of seven which is set aside for ceasing, desisting or resting from activities which are common to the other six days.

The design of the fourth commandment is (1) to commemorate the work of creation. We are to remember the Sabbath-day and to keep it holy because God created the earth, the seas and the heavens and all that is in them in six days and rested on the seventh. (2) The commemoration of the Sabbath-day preserves the knowledge of the True and Living God in society. Belief in creation requires belief in the God who is infinite, eternal and unchangeable in all of His attributes. (3) The force of the commandment is to turn the thoughts of mankind to spiritual things. We are all too easily enmeshed in worldly thoughts and occupations but one seventh of the time, at the least, we are to devote entirely to God and to our spiritual refreshment. (4) This commandment provides for time for people to be instructed in the worship of God. (5) It prohibits our common labor to the end that we find rest for our bodies and refreshment for our souls. (6) As such the day is a type of the rest spoken of in Hebrews 4:1-10. And (7) the Sabbath-day is a sign of the perpetual covenant between God and His people for, as we read in Exodus 31:13 "Speak also to the children of Israel, saying: 'Surely My Sabbaths you shall keep, for it *is* a sign between Me and you throughout your generations, that *you* may know that I *am* the LORD who sanctifies you. 17 'It *is* a sign between Me and the children of Israel forever; for *in* six days the LORD made the heavens and the earth, and on the seventh day He rested and was refreshed."

We are to remember the Sabbath Day. This implies that the Sabbath Day as a special day, set aside for a special purpose, was known to God's people before the giving of the Ten Commandments to Moses. Moses himself was to remember the Sabbath. In fact, the observance of the Sabbath Day began with creation itself and is a perpetual obligation. In Genesis 2:2-3 we read, "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. {3} Then God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it, because in it He rested from all His work which God had created and made."

"That the law of the Sabbath was not first given on Mount Sinai, may also be inferred from the fact that it was referred to as a known and familiar institution, before the law was promulgated. Thus in the 16th chapter of Exodus the people were directed to gather on the sixth day of the week manna sufficient for the seventh, as on that day none would be provided. - There was therefore a Sabbath before the Mosaic law was given. - 'Remember the Sabbath day to keep

it holy,' naturally implies that the Sabbath was not a new institution."¹ Therefore, argues Hodge, the Sabbath day is not to be construed as a ceremonial law applicable only to the Old Testament theocracy of Israel. Rather it is a perpetual creation ordinance.

The Lord Jesus Himself kept the Sabbath Day.² If the Lord of the Sabbath did so how much more should we who are His disciples? True, His detractors charged Him with breaking the Sabbath but from Jesus' reply we learn that it is proper to do acts of necessity and compassion. Taking the ox from the ditch, healing the sick and eating do not constitute a breaking of the Sabbath. To the contrary, Jesus said, "it is lawful to do good on the Sabbath." We shall consider more of this in future lessons but here we draw the conclusion that Jesus recognized the abiding value and purpose of the Sabbath Day and gave us a sublime example of keeping it holy.

¹ Charles Hodge, Systematic Theology, Wm. B. Erdmans Publishing Co., Grand Rapids, Michigan, Vol III, p328.

² Matthew 12:1-14, Mark 2:23-28