

## Biblical Theology by Dr. Chuck Baynard

### Lesson 38 (HCLD 38 )<sup>1</sup>

**Preparation:** Begin and end each study time with prayer. Pay particular attention to the background reading and pray over each passage asking God to reveal Himself to you.

**Background Reading:** Read all the Scripture verses in footnote # 2.

**Question:** Q116: What is required in the fourth commandment?

**Answer:** A116: The fourth commandment requires of all men the sanctifying or keeping holy to God such set times as he hath appointed in his word, expressly one whole day in seven; which was the seventh from the beginning of the world to the resurrection of Christ, and the first day of the week ever since, and so to continue to the end of the world; which is the Christian sabbath,[a] and in the New Testament called The Lord's day.[b]<sup>2</sup>

Few if any debate that the Ten Commandments are still valid for the church today. There are many who along with the Westminster Divines say that Christ fulfilled the ceremonial laws, and that other parts of the Old Testament law were for national Israel alone. The moral law is accepted as binding on the New Testament church.

We could open a huge can of worms here and take the words of Christ where He says Think not that I am come to destroy the law and prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfill. So much for those who want to toss aside that which they say Christ has fulfilled as no longer being binding upon the church. I would submit that our Lord never half way accomplished anything and if He came to fulfill the law and prophets, the same were perfectly and totally fulfilled. Nonetheless we must continue to read and hear our Lord say that not one jot nor title will pass away. Thus while it is a truth that some passages are for national Israel only and we cannot apply them to others in a wholesale manner as written, we must remember the word of Paul to Timothy and note that obedience as if to law is not the only purpose of Scripture (which at the time was the Old Testament alone). Rather, we find it is good for doctrine, reproof, for correction, and for instruction in righteousness.

Now lest you misunderstand where I am coming from and to whence I am headed, I am neither a Theonomist nor Reconstructionist. This is the usual conclusion when one claims the majority of the Old Testament is valid today. Some temper it by disclaiming portions as above, and those who do not as a general rule are under the misconception the church should be about conquering the world and reestablishing God's law in the civil realm as in the day of Moses. I simply say God spoke the Word and that Word is eternal, fulfilled or not it has a valuable place in the teaching and discipline of the church.

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<sup>1</sup> The Heidelberg Catechism, Lord's Day 38

Q103: What does God require in the fourth Commandment?

A103: In the first place, God wills that the ministry of the Gospel and schools be maintained,[1] and that I, especially on the day of rest, diligently attend church [2] to learn the Word of God,[3] to use the holy sacraments,[4] to call publicly upon the Lord,[5] and to give Christian alms.[6] In the second place, that all the days of my life I rest from my evil works, allow the Lord to work in me by His Spirit, and thus begin in this life the everlasting sabbath.[7]

1. Titus. 1:5; I Tim. 3:14-15; 4:13-14; 5:17; I Cor. 9:11, 13-14 2. II Tim. 2:2, 15; Psa. 40:10-11; 68:26; Acts 2:42, 46 3. I Cor. 14:19, 29, 31 4. I Cor. 11:33 5. I Tim. 2:1-2, 8-10; I Cor. 14:16 6. I Cor. 16:2 7. Isa. 66:23; Gal. 6:6; Acts 20:7; Heb. 4:9-10

<sup>2</sup> a. Deut. 5:12, 14, 18; Gen. 2:2-3; I Cor. 16:1-2; Acts 20:7; Matt. 5:17-18; Isa. 56:2, 4, 6-7

b. Rev. 1:10

For example if one says that the tithe is no longer valid because it is of the Old Testament or that it was a law only for the nation of Israel he makes a serious error. He makes no consideration of Lev. 27:34 that says the law of the tithe was given by the same God at the same time the moral law was given. He also disregards that the tithe was in place before Sinai as natural law among God's people, who recognized and gave the tenth. All of the law in this sense then is still binding. Where we read all of the capital punishments for sexual misdeeds in Lev. 19 are valid. Now we are not a theocracy, and the church doesn't have the right to take a life, that duty of protection of the sword being passed to the civil magistrate. Yet, the church has a far more fearsome tool in putting one away from the body of Christ. We see Paul use this in 1 Cor. 5. In effect before God's throne then these are the same thing, for to be outside the body of Christ is to be destroyed.

Christ defined the law, and gave us its original intent in setting before God a holy (clean and set apart) people. If the Holy Spirit has cleansed the heart, then it will reflect in the words and deeds of that person. When the fruit of the Spirit is not evident, that person should be considered with a critical eye and discipline brought to bear on the portion of their conversation that is hindering the Holy Spirit from being manifest in their life. But Christ did not set aside any of the Law and Prophets in the sense they are no longer binding on the church. The duty of our modern theologian then should be to labor to discern and bring to us the ethic of that law and how it still applies to the church, not if it applies. Every single word of God is important and precious to His people. Why do we think that even in the New Testament that God saw the necessity of giving us long lists concerning genealogy? Rather than attempt to use these lists to discern why God spoke thus, we rather find the differences in the lists and enter again the darkness of the veil and speculation as to why the Holy Writ contradicts itself. Obviously the Bible does no such thing and for mere man to even hint that the Word of God contains error or contradiction is the most impertinent act I have ever heard of. While we are commanded to study and know the Word, nowhere are we given permission to question the Book of Life itself. We need to see our own feebleness, laboring under a sin darkened mind and to glorify God for the pure light of the Son revealed to us, not twist and turn that source of all light until enough shadow exists for a worm like us to be comfortable in that light.

So much then for classifying the Old Testament into different genre whereby we can casually toss aside certain portions because they are no longer binding on those who know the freedom of Christ, and through Him are released from that law which He has fulfilled. Such is mere human folly, and to be given no countenance by the church. Understand that this does not mean as the church of Christ we do not take into consideration of the whole and where the New Testament annuls the specific use of a law for Israel we are to again assume that bondage. An example of this is the ceremonial laws and sacrifices. An understanding of the book of Hebrews will bring a proper perspective to these passages.

Like the Reformed Principle of Worship we find two schools involved in how the Old Testament applies today. One says if the New Testament doesn't specifically reassert the rule it is void. Thus some make the claim that this particular commandment is no longer valid for it is not mentioned in the New Testament, while all the others are specifically named. They conclude it is missing by the intent of God and isn't valid today. They err in two ways: It is mentioned in the New Testament and in my opinion not as an implication only. In Revelation we find John worshipping God on "the Lord's day." 1 Cor. 16:1-2 says when the church comes together on the first day of the week, not if the church comes together on that day. For those that want to have an early service so they can profane the rest of the Lord's day, consider that in this same passage, though he was leaving on a trip the next day, Paul preached until midnight. Do we want to cavil and say the people attended in shifts, or that Paul preached to an empty gallery?

We will deal at length in the other questions concerning this commandment what is or is not proper on the Lord's day. I would think that from both the general principles used in biblical interpretation as well as the clear word of Scripture we all would agree however that this commandment like the other nine is valid for today! Anything else is to laugh in the face of God and disregard His clear commandment, given in grace to us, that we might have our joy fulfilled in Christ Jesus. What mercy our God has shown to us, to set aside one day for the consideration of His great deeds and proper worship of Him, and for the physical rest of the body, even as it feeds upon the bread of life and is refreshed by the wine of holiness. What love bestowed upon an evil and perverse generation, that God gives one day in seven for rest in His holiness, surely all from the hand of God is good and holy.

We might note here that aside from the Hebrew word used in Genesis one and the creation verses (*dom*) which can only be considered a literal day in my opinion, here we find that very day set aside for holy resting in Christ, as a memorial to that day in creation. This in my opinion adds the weight of Scripture to the six day creationists, and in my mind consigns to pure babble the efforts of the evolutionists as well as those of the body who would create a most horrible monster from this beauty of the Lord, and have days of some indefinite length. Though I am sure some child sitting in the sanctuary has considered Sunday morning such an indeterminate long period of time, I honestly believe that the scholars who labor today to set aside this clear teaching of the Bible have entered the most unholy of errors. May the Holy Spirit enlighten all our minds, lest the majority embrace this error.

In my opinion the Puritans didn't think of this as a day of the week in the normal sense, but rather an *extra day* given by God in grace for the good of His creation. That is all the days given to man are for labor in the calling God has given to him. The Sabbath day is a day created by God for no other purpose than bringing glory to Himself in the reception of the proper worship of His creation. Thus the use of the Sabbath for any other purpose is to steal from God. This is no different than the corruption God places before the nation of Israel through the prophet Malachi for the failure to properly bring the tithes and gifts, and otherwise profaning His worship. Thus the Puritan mind would have considered six days as belonging to man to be about the work given by God for the orderly process of life in this temporal world, while the seventh was an extra day that God in grace permitted them to take part. A day set apart and a day where nothing of this world's labors were permitted to interfere with the worship of God. The ancient Hebrew understood this and though brought to be a burden through the man made traditions of the Pharisees, they had already for example given that deeds of necessity and mercy might take place on the Sabbath (the ox in the ditch).

Much as the Pharisees in that day had actually made the worship of God a burden with their man made rules, so in our day many would apply such an interpretation and establishment of rules concerning worship that we too enter into this most holy of times burdened and with resentment in our hearts. Christ claimed Lordship of the Sabbath also and the reformation returned the freedom to worship God in truth and Spirit intended by God. Let us then understand the Regulative Principle of Worship isn't what some would make it, a burden to the soul, but rather the boundary lines around what is or is not proper worship of God. I see much latitude within the Scriptures and the various sects within the church who all claim a higher holiness because they alone have the correct formula to please God only deceive themselves and return to the bondage of Rome. May our Lord open our eyes to see this commandment as of grace, given for love and concern for the created, that God might truly be glorified in truth and spirit in the rejoicing of His children. God inhabits the praise of His people, and under such load, as some would have us bare, there are no joy, no praise, and only vain and empty human imaginations. That we may worship God only as God has commanded doesn't have to be a binding of the conscience, it becomes joy when properly entered into with this boundary in place because the redeemed see the whole day as part of God's grace.

Remember the Sabbath and keep it holy, for this day is the Lord's!

## **Suggested Sermon Outline**

### **The Sabbath Day**

#### ***What does God require in the Fourth Commandment?***

First, that the ministry of the gospel and Christian education be maintained, and that I diligently attend church, especially on the Lord's Day, to hear the Word of God, to participate in the holy sacraments, to call publicly on the Lord, and to give Christian service to those in need. Second, that I cease from my evil works all the days of my life, allow the Lord to work in me through His Spirit, and thus began in this life the eternal Sabbath.

#### **I. Sabbath Keeping Begins with Education**

**A. Paul's instruction to Timothy for organizing the Apostolic church emphasizes organizing education.** And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also. (2 TIMOTHY 2:2)

**B. Synagogue practice focused so much on education at all levels that the Jews commonly called their assemblies SCHOOLS.** And that *from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith* which is in Christ Jesus. (2 Timothy 3:15 AV)

**C. The organizational practice of the Apostolic church concentrated on Bible instructions and application.** Till I come, *give attendance to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine.* Neglect not the gift that is in thee, which was *given thee by prophecy, with the laying on of the hands of the presbytery. Meditate upon these things;* give thyself wholly to them; that thy profiting may appear to all. *Take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine; continue in them: for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee.* (1 TIMOTHY 4:13-16)

## II. Rest and Assembly Form

### The Second Feature of Sabbath

**A. Distractions which keep God's people from gathering to worship Him are prohibited.** Six days shall work be done: but *the seventh day is the sabbath of rest, an holy convocation;* ye shall do no work *therein: it is the sabbath of the LORD in all your dwellings.* (LEVITICUS 23:3)

**B. The Apostolic Church set the pattern of public communal worship which we continue to observe to this day.** And *they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship,* and in breaking of bread, and in prayers. And fear came upon every soul: and many wonders and signs were done by the apostles. And *all that believed were together;* and had all things common; And sold their possessions and goods, and parted them to all *men,* as every man had need. And *they, continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart,* (ACTS 2:42-46)

## III. Sabbath Assemblies

### Focus on the Bible

**A. Public worship brings the Word of God to bear on life so that people come to know and rely on God.** So then *faith cometh by hearing,* and *hearing by the word of God.* (ROMANS 10:17)

**B. Beautiful forms, ceremonies, liturgies, and exotic languages must never crowd out Bible teaching.** Yet in the church *I had rather speak five words with my understanding, that by my voice I might teach others also, than ten thousand words in an unknown tongue.* (1 CORINTHIANS 14:19)

**C. The Bible regulates public sacraments in a Sabbath context.** And when he had given thanks, he brake *it,* and said, **Take, eat:** this is my body, which is broken for you: **this do in remembrance of me.** (1 CORINTHIANS 11:24)

**D. The Bible directs church finances as it calls for the weekly gathering of the tithes .** *Upon the first day of the week let every one of you lay by him in store,* as *God hath prospered him,* that there be no gatherings when I come. (1 CORINTHIANS 16:2)

## IV. Ultimately Sabbath Sets the Heart on Heaven

**A. Jesus rose from the grave on the Sabbath to go ahead and prepare a permanent Sabbath home for His people.** *In my Father's house are many mansions:* if *it were not so,* I would have told you. *I go to prepare a place for you.* (JOHN 14:2)

**B. As believers gather in local assemblies we remember the world wide plan for the gospel to prevail everywhere.** *And it shall come to pass, that from one new moon to another, and from one sabbath to another, shall all flesh come to worship before me,* saith the LORD. (ISAIAH 66:23)

**C. Keep your heart on the great eternal Sabbath of Jesus in the world to come.** *Let us therefore fear, lest, a promise being left us of entering into his rest, any of you should seem to come short of it.* For unto us was the gospel preached, as well as unto them: but *the word preached did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in them that heard it.* For *we which have believed do enter into rest,* as he said,

As I have sworn in my wrath, if they shall enter into my rest: although the works were finished from the foundation of the world. **For he spake in a certain place of the seventh day on this wise, And God did rest the seventh day from all his works.** And in this *place* again, If they shall enter into my rest. Seeing therefore **it remaineth that some must enter therein, and they to whom it was first preached entered not in because of unbelief:** Again, **he limiteth a certain day,** saying in David, To day, after so long a time; as it is said, **To day if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts.** **For if Jesus had given them rest, then would he not afterward have spoken of another day. There remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God.** For **he that is entered into his rest, he also hath ceased from his own works, as God did from his.** **Let us labour therefore to enter into that rest, lest any man fall after the same example of unbelief.** (HEBREWS 4:1-11)