

Lesson 6 Genesis 2:1-3

Genesis for Families

Genesis 2:1 Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host of them. 2 And on the seventh day God ended his work which he had made; and he rested on the seventh day from all his work which he had made. 3 And God blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it: because that in it he had rested from all his work which God created and made.

The first sentence sets the stage for the understanding of the rest of Genesis chapter two. “Were finished” means what it says. God had finished His complete work of creation. It appears in places that Genesis two doesn’t agree with Genesis one. This is because Genesis two is not in a time sequence (chronological order). In Genesis one we read God created man, male and female and it seems the creation was at the same time like all the rest of the creatures God created. (*Gen. 1:27 So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them.*)

When we get to the explanation of Genesis one as presented by God in further revelation of His work we see man was created and some time elapsed (still within one day) before God creates woman. This is not another version of creation and it does not contradict Genesis one. It does not change the time frame for all of creation from six days of creation and the seventh day of rest sanctified and set apart for Himself by God.

The Bible will in no place contradict itself. One of the proofs of the Bible being God’s own word is the remarkable harmony from the beginning in the Old Testament to the final book of the New Testament. So many men writing apart from each other over a couple of millennia could never achieve such harmony. When we find places that appear to imply Scripture is contradicting Scripture we need to back away from the questioned text and find its context within the whole of the Bible. The most basic character of God is truth. Christ said in John seventeen that God is truth and God’s word is truth. God cannot contradict Himself in any place within the Bible and remain truth. Truth, which is only of God, is eternal and cannot change. When we move the context to the whole Bible we will most often find where we, not God, are in error and be able to understand the supposed contradictions. Next is in our understanding we create such a contradiction we simply need to look at the text and decide where we made the error. God’s word doesn’t have errors and to try and put it down as the different viewpoint of different writers is not the answer because ultimately all Scripture was given through holy men inspired by God and this is the same as if God had personally written each word Himself. That the Bible is inerrant (without errors) is the position of the Reformed churches from their founding. This is usually worded, “We believe in the plenary verbal inspiration of the Bible.” By the word plenary we mean the whole Bible and by verbal we mean God inspires the very words chosen to transmit God’s words to us in the Bible.

This is not a small issue and by not holding to this basic truth good men with the best of intentions have entered into error and misinterpreted God’s word. It is also

important because we hold that the Bible is the only rule for man to have faith and to live by. This is stated in the words “the Bible is our only guide of faith and practice.” This means by faith what we believe and by practice what we do in life.

2 And on the seventh day God ended his work which he had made; and he rested on the seventh day from all his work which he had made. 3 And God blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it: because that in it he had rested from all his work which God created and made.

These verses lay the foundation for the Sabbath day. Later when God gives to us the whole law at Sinai and particularly the Ten Commandments this is expanded with both commands and promises. *8 Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy. 9 Six days shalt thou labour, and do all thy work: 10 But the seventh day is the sabbath of the LORD thy God: in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy manservant, nor thy maidservant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates: 11 For in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day: wherefore the LORD blessed the sabbath day, and hallowed it.* Some do not see the promise here but they fail to see the blessing of being able to lay aside one day in seven from their usual vocation and by force of law be able to engage in worship and rest. God will declare other days as Sabbaths as He reveals Himself to us. These were days of rejoicing and feasts to the first hearers of God’s word. Some will argue the Sabbath does not apply today. They are simply wrong. God’s word is eternal and this is not a law given to Israel as a nation alone, but was put in place at the time of creation and directed toward all mankind. Divine words do not change or pass away. The Sabbath will not be fulfilled until it is celebrated in the new heaven and earth with Christ. It will not disappear then because the day was reserve by God for God and the end of the created world will not affect this. Christ did not do away with the Sabbath, He declared He was Lord of that day too. This is a claim to deity since this day belongs to God but it is also a liberty in Christ to do that which is of necessity such as attending to the sick and injured.

Application:

We live in a world that does not have any absolute rules and everything is judged by the current circumstances. The world then is tossed around like a small cork in an angry sea. Our scholars seek new inventions and play at changing the genetics of what God has created as if they can create something new. This should be a great comfort to us then when we know in our hearts this is God’s word and that it cannot, will not ever change. We have a rule book and know what we are to do in every circumstance because God’s word is the rule not the situation we find ourselves in. We have an anchor that allows us to face the hard times in life with calmness the rest of world only dreams about. Creation has ended and as Solomon observed there is nothing new under the sun.

Our only duty in life is to glorify God. Our catechism asks how do we glorify God? The answer is that we glorify God by loving and obeying Him. By loving and obeying God we fulfill all of the requirements of the first table of the law (first four of the

Ten Commandments). That means we are blessed by tasting on earth in our present bodies just a tiny bit of what it will be like in heaven when we enter fully into the rest of our Lord Jesus Christ. Set the Sabbath apart to God (keep it holy) as God commands and enjoy God in the process now not just in the world to come. Yet, Christ gives to us liberty to do those things that are necessary. But we must not use this liberty in Christ to sin by claiming any and every thing is of a necessity. The old excuse that it is the only day I have to do this is a lie from the devil that would steal your holy rest in Christ.

Questions:

- How do we know the Bible is God's word when we harmonize Genesis one and two?
- The Bible being the very word of God means what to the believer?
- Why is the Sabbath still applicable to the church?
- To whom is the commandment concerning the Sabbath given as viewed from Genesis two?
- What may I not do on the Sabbath? (This answer is not clear in Genesis, see the Exodus passage included above.)