



The Scrolls

Helping **CENTRAL BIBLE CHURCH** Families Belong, Become and Go Beyond

V24 N29

July 17, 2022

TEN WORDS

"4/Give It a Rest"

Exodus 20:8-11; 23:10-13; 31:12-18

THIS WEEK'S CORE COMPETENCY

Worship

I worship God for who he is and what he has done for me.

"Come, let us bow down in worship, let us kneel before the LORD our Maker; for he is our God and we are the people of his pasture, the flock under his care."

Ps 95:6-7



Why do Christians worship on Sunday?

The first Christians were Jewish converts. Jesus was a Jew (Mt 1:1). The Twelve Disciples were Jews (see Ac 2:15-26). The "hundred and twenty" (1:5), the "three thousand" (2:41), and the "four thousand" (4:4) were all Jews. The gospel did not go to the Gentiles until it was preached to Cornelius by Peter (10:34-48). And as Jews, the first converts to Christianity continued to live their everyday lives according to the customs of Moses. In fact, until receiving a vision from the Lord, commanding him to do otherwise, Peter could say, "Surely not, Lord. I have never eaten anything impure or unclean" (10:14).

The conversion of Cornelius followed by the conversion of Gentiles throughout Asia Minor during Paul's first missionary journey raised questions that threatened to divide the Church. Luke writes: "Certain people came down from Judea to Antioch and were teaching the believers: 'Unless you are circumcised, according to the custom taught by Moses, you cannot be saved'" (15:1). In other words, Gentiles must become Jews in order to become Christians—a notion that Paul and Barnabas vehemently rejected. So a council was convened in Jerusalem to address the issue. Luke describes what happened at that council: "Some of the believers who belonged to the party of the Pharisees stood up and said, 'The Gentiles must be circumcised and required to keep the law of Moses'" (v. 5). Put differently, Gentiles must become Jews to become Christians, and then they must live according to the customs of Moses. Peter flatly rejected that notion, saying: "Now then, why do you try to test God by putting on the necks of Gentiles a yoke that neither we nor our ancestors have been able to bear? No! We believe it is through the grace of our lord Jesus that we are saved, just as they are" (vv. 10-11). Then James advised: "It is my judgment, therefore, that we should not make it difficult for the Gentiles who are turning to God. Instead we should write to them, telling them to abstain from food polluted by idols, from sexual immorality, from the meat of strangled animals and from blood. For the law of Moses has been preached in every city from the earliest times and is read in the synagogues on every Sabbath" (vv. 19-21). And the council agreed; Gentiles neither needed to be circumcised to be saved nor to follow the customs of Moses to be sancti-

fied (see vv. 28-29). Gentiles need not keep kosher, observe Sabbath, celebrate Jewish festivals, etc. Later, to Gentile believers, Paul writes: "Therefore do not let anyone judge you by what you eat or drink, or with regard to a religious festival, a New Moon celebration or a Sabbath day. These are a shadow of the things that were to come; the reality, however, is found in Christ" (Col 2:16-17). It's not surprising that the church chose to meet to "break bread" (Ac 20:7), that is, observe the Lord's Supper, and worship (1Co 16:2) on the first day of the week rather than the Sabbath. Note, too, that the fourth commandment is the only one not reiterated for Christians in the New Testament.

Sunday is not the Christian Sabbath. Sunday is the Lord's day. While the seventh day of the week and the first day of the week are both significant, albeit for different reasons, Christians do not treat Saturday as a holy day. Consider the following summary, the title of which is unfortunately misleading, since the church didn't switch Sabbath from Saturday to Sunday. It didn't observe Sabbath; it observed the Lord's day instead:

"No specific names or dates are associated with the church's shift from observing the holy day on Saturday to observing it on Sunday. At first, especially when many Christians were converted Jews, their holy day was Saturday. However, because the Resurrection and the beginning of Creation had both occurred on the first day of the week (Sunday), the church soon observed that day instead. By the end of the first century, Sunday worship was the norm.

"It's important to note that the Sabbath was not simply moved; Christians altered the observance as well as the day. Hallmarks of the early Christian 'Lord's day' celebration, according to Justin Martyr (ca. 100-ca. 165), included readings from Scripture (particularly the Gospels), a sermon, communal prayer, and Communion—very different from Jewish Sabbath observance. By Jewish standards, Christians don't keep the Sabbath at all" (Elesha Coffman, "When Did the Christian Church Switch the Sabbath from Saturday to Sunday?" christianitytoday.com/history/2008/august/when-did-christian-church-switch-sabbath-from-saturday-to.html).

Read Exodus 20:8-11

8 "Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy. 9 Six days you shall labor and do all your work, 10 but the seventh day is a sabbath to the LORD your God. On it you shall not do any work, neither you, nor your son or daughter, nor your male or female servant, nor your animals, nor any foreigner residing in your towns. 11 For in six days the LORD made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that is in them, but he rested on the seventh day. Therefore the LORD blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy.

Read also 23:10-13

10 "For six years you are to sow your fields and harvest the crops, 11 but during the seventh year let the land lie unplowed and unused. Then the poor among your people may get food from it, and the wild animals may eat what is left. Do the same with your vineyard and your olive grove.

12 "Six days do your work, but on the seventh day do not work, so that your ox and your donkey may rest, and so that the slave born in your household and the foreigner living among you may be refreshed.

13 "Be careful to do everything I have said to you. Do not invoke the names of other gods; do not let them be heard on your lips.

And 31:12-18

12 Then the LORD said to Moses, 13 "Say to the Israelites, 'You must observe my Sabbaths. This will be a sign between me and you for the generations to come, so you may know that I am the LORD, who makes you holy.

14 "'Observe the Sabbath, because it is holy to you. Anyone who desecrates it is to be put to death; those who do any work on that day must be cut off from their people. 15 For six days work is to be done, but the seventh day is a day of sabbath rest, holy to the LORD. Whoever does any work on the Sabbath day is to be put to death. 16 The Israelites are to observe the Sabbath, celebrating it for the generations to come as a lasting covenant. 17 It will be a sign between me and the Israelites forever, for in six days the LORD made the heavens and the earth, and on the seventh day he rested and was refreshed.'"

18 When the LORD finished speaking to Moses on Mount Sinai, he gave him the two tablets of the covenant law, the tablets of stone inscribed by the finger of God.

After reading the text, practice your Observation skills by noting the following:

- Circle "remember" in v. 8.
- Circle "Sabbath day" in v. 8.
- Box "by" indicating *means* in v. 8.
- Circle "holy" in v. 8.
- Box "but" indicating *contrast* in v. 10.
- Circle "work" in vv. 9, 10.
- Underline "nor any foreigner" in v. 10.
- Box "for" indicating *reason* in v. 11.
- Box "therefore" indicating *result* in v. 11.

What one word would you use to describe the TONE of this passage? (i.e., stern, joyful, cautious, etc.)

What word or idea stands out to you in this passage?

What is one thing you do not understand in this passage?

Try to summarize the THEME of this passage in one word. If you were going to describe these verses, you might say, "This text is about _____."



DIG DEEPER

Answer the questions to help you apply the passage and prepare for discussion

1. What day of the week is the Sabbath day?
2. Compare “*Remember the Sabbath day*” to “*Remember your anniversary day.*”
3. “*Remember the Sabbath day*” for what *purpose*? Explain.
4. Explain the *contrast* introduced in verse 10.
5. What is meant by “work” in verse 10?
6. Describe the *goal* of the fourth commandment (v. 10b).
7. Jesus said, “The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath” (Mk 2:27). How so?
8. What is it about the Sabbath day that makes it holy?
9. Does obedience to the commandment require people to work six days a week?
10. **Discussion:** Is Sunday the Christian Sabbath? Talk about it.

Commentary On The Text

Exodus 20:8-11 contains the fourth commandment of the Decalogue, “Remember to keep the Sabbath day holy” (cf. EXB, ICB). It’s the longest commandment when both the command and its accompanying explanation are taken together, suggesting perhaps its importance – not that it’s the most important commandment, “but only that it apparently was regarded as so basic and thus requiring sufficient clarification that it could not and would not be misunderstood and therefore misapplied of partially ignored” (Douglas K. Stuart, *Exodus*, vol. 2, NAC, 457). Note that Sabbath observance functioned as the *sign* for the Mosaic covenant (Ex 31:13, 17), and so it provided a weekly reminder of the nation’s unique covenant relationship to the LORD. “As the people keep the Sabbath, stopping their work and devoting themselves to worship, they demonstrate openly that they are keeping the covenant” (Stuart, 457). The fourth commandment has three parts: 1) the command *itself* (v. 8); 2) an *explanation* of what it means to keep the commandment (vv. 9-10); and 3) the *reason* for the commandment (v. 11).

Most English translations render the commandment itself, “Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy,” or put differently, “Remember to keep the Sabbath day holy” (v. 8) – the *purpose* of remembering the Sabbath day is to keep it holy. And in this context, *remembering* the Sabbath day isn’t merely a cognitive exercise, any more than remembering one’s wedding day; remembering means more than simply recalling. It means recalling and then acting accordingly. In this case, it entails setting the Sabbath day (i.e., the seventh day of the week, Saturday) apart from the other six days – recognizing it’s different, hence treating it differently – thereby keeping it holy.

Verses 9-10 describe exactly *how* the Sabbath day is to be treated differently from the other six days. God’s covenant people are to work six days, but on the seventh day no one in the community – not children, not servants, not resident foreigners, not even animals – is to work. Specific reference is made to these groups in order to prevent abuse of the law. One commentator writes: “It is an attempt to plug obvious loopholes: not only is the Israelite not to work on the sabbath, neither is anyone else, or even any animal, that might conceivably be doing his work for him” (John I. Durham, *Word Biblical Commentary*, vol. 3, *Exodus*, 289). The commandment envisions a day of rest for all in the community.

Unfortunately, the commandment doesn’t define the meaning of “work,” leaving *exactly* what it prohibits unspecified. Consequently, the question of how to define “work” has perplexed interpreters and been debated for centuries. Much later in the Mishnah (ca. 200 A.D.), Jewish rabbis enumerated thirty-nine categories of work forbidden on the Sabbath. Not only are thirty-nine specific works forbidden, but also any acts deemed extensions of

those forbidden works. For example, agreeing to buy something is prohibited, because most agreements are confirmed in “writing,” a forbidden work; climbing a tree is prohibited, because it may lead to breaking twigs or tearing leaves, which could be construed as “reaping” (i.e., separating part of a growing plant from its source), also a forbidden work. One can see how in this way, the Rabbis made Sabbath observance a grievous burden. Jesus reacted to this in his day by declaring, “The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath” (Mk 2:27).

While Sabbath provided laborers with a break in their work routines, it wasn’t a do-nothing day. As one commentator says, “People and animals would still need to be fed; lactating animals would still need to be milked; priests would still work within the sanctuary . . . How the Israelites might choose to distribute various sorts of minimal chores, such as feeding animals and preparing food, is not specified. Such necessities would have to take place at any rate, and those who truly tried to keep the covenant law would easily discover the fairest ways to make everyone’s workload minimal on the day of rest and to provide compensatory rest for those who labored on the Sabbath out of necessity” (Stuart, 459). What’s more, life and death emergencies would occur that could not be ignored. Nevertheless, generally speaking, *business as usual* was prohibited on the Sabbath.

According to verse 11, the seventh day is holy, because after creating the heavens and the earth in six days, God rested on the seventh day. That sets the Sabbath day apart, distinguishing it from the other six days of the week. The Israelites were to follow God’s lead in that regard.

Concerning the relevance of the fourth commandment, the issue is not whether setting aside a day for rest each week is a good thing. Surely, it is. Note while some may work longer hours or two jobs, today most people work forty hours a week, spread over four or five days. Few work seven days a week. And rightly understood, the commandment doesn’t require people to work six days a week. Rather, the issue is whether Sabbath observance is *obligatory*. Are Christians *in particular* obligated to observe Sabbath? If so, are they to observe Saturday, the seventh day, or Sunday, the first day? The fact that Sabbath is nowhere mentioned in the Old Testament until Exodus 20, that the fourth commandment is not reiterated in the New Testament, that Sabbath observance was the sign for the covenant of Moses, and that by the time churches were established among the Gentiles, Christians observed the Lord’s day *only* leads to the conclusion that Christians are not obligated to observe Sabbath. The Church didn’t change the Sabbath from Saturday to Sunday. It observed the Lord’s day – not the Sabbath.

Word Studies/Notes

v. 8 *remember*

"To 'remember' the day does not mean simply to recall it from memory but to act appropriately in view of the significance of the day" (Thomas L. Constable, "Notes on Exodus," 2022 ed., 193, planobiblechapel.org/tcon/notes/pdf/exodus.pdf). "It means 'remember,' as always in contexts of covenantal obligation, in the sense of 'observe without lapse' or 'hold as a present and continuing priority'" (John I. Durham, *Word Biblical Commentary*, vol. 3, *Exodus*, 289).

v. 8 *Sabbath day*

"'Sabbath' is the English reflex of a common Hebrew word (*šabbāt*) meaning 'stopping/stoppage/cessation.' The Sabbath is the 'stopping [day]', the day on which one's regular work ceases both for the sake of giving laborers a break from their daily routine and for the sake of providing a focus on God that is periodically (weekly) heightened" (Douglas K. Stuart, *Exodus*, vol. 2, NAC, 458). "The Sabbath (lit. 'Rest') day was the seventh day of the week: Saturday. This day was to be a day of rest for the Israelites, because God ceased from His creation activity on the seventh day (v. 11; Gen. 2:3)" (Constable, 193).

v. 8 *by*

Cf. "Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy" (ESV). "Most English translations render this verse as 'Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy,' or 'Remember the Sabbath day, and keep it holy,' rather than the NIV's 'remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy.' Which is correct, the traditional rendering that suggests that the *purpose* of remembering the Sabbath day is that it must be kept as a holy day—a day belonging to God—or the NIV, which suggests that the *means* of remembering the Sabbath day is by keeping it a holy day? Either translation is technically possible, but the choice made by the NIV translators represents the less likely option and the traditional translation the more likely" (Stuart, 458).

v. 8 *holy*

The seventh day is a *unique* day of the week that interrupts the normal daily routine. "It is to be remembered without exception, set apart from all other days as a day for holy purposes, and kept free of the customary labor of sustenance of the other six days, precisely because it belongs to Yahweh. The six days allotted for the 'business as usual' of life must be made to suffice. On the sabbath day, nobody is to undertake such 'usual work'" (Durham, 289).

vv. 9, 10 *work*

I.e., "This is the occupation or the business of the work week" (*The NET Bible*, 28tn on Ex 20:9). Unfortunately, the commandment doesn't define exactly what it prohibits. However, one commentator suggests: "What this explanation portion of the word/commandment prohibits is not any sort of exertion, or the preparing of food, or the feeding or watering of animals, or anything else necessary to get through the day in an agrarian culture. Rather, it prohibits duplicating on the Sabbath any of the usual labor of the other six days that can possibly be stopped without actually causing someone or something harm. People and animals will still need be fed; lactating animals would still need to be milked; priests would still work within the sanctuary. But to the extent possible, all workers were to receive a day of rest" (Stuart, 459). Judaism has developed thirty-nine categories of ritual work that is forbidden. One category is "Burning." Since an automobile engine works by burning gasoline, driving is prohibited on the Sabbath. Another is "Finishing." Setting a watch, tuning a musical instrument, even cutting or tearing paper is prohibited under this category. "To take a very mundane example, one may not tear toilet paper on the Sabbath. Religious Jews therefore only use pre-cut paper" (see www.ou.org/holidays/the_thirty_nine_categories_of_sabbath_work_prohibited_by_law/ and www.myjewishlearning.com/article/shabbats-work-prohibition/).

v. 10 *nor any foreigner*

"The commandment specifically prohibits any Sabbath day shifting of laboring away from native Israelites to foreign workers ('nor the alien within your gates') or from free Israelites to hired workers or servants ('nor your manservant or maid servant') or from adults to children ('nor your son or daughter'). Envisioned instead is an egalitarian work stoppage that benefits everyone and leave everyone free and ready for worship and spiritual emphases" (Stuart, 489).



APPLY THE TEXT

CENTRAL MESSAGE OF THE TEXT

Recognizing the significance of the seventh day, the fourth commandment served as the sign for the covenant of Moses and provided rest for God's people until the coming of Christ, after which the Church observes the Lord's day, not the Sabbath day.

CENTRAL MESSAGE FOR YOUR LIFE

(Rewrite the Central Message above to personally apply to your own life)



3 LIVING QUESTIONS

The "Living Questions" are simple questions we may ask of any text in order to apply the Bible to our life. Answer the questions below as personally as you can.

1. What does this passage teach me about God?

2. What does this passage teach me about myself?

3. What does this passage lead me to do?



FAMILY TALK

I love lists. If you were to look at my desk right now, you would find multiple. Life is busy and it helps me to make sure I get all the things done and nothing is forgotten. Putting a line through a task gives me a feeling of accomplishment. I will even write something down just so I can draw a line through it! We are busy people with busy schedules, but as I read through our Exodus passages, I am reminded that all too often I am missing a very important to-do on my list. The fourth commandment tells the Israelites to rest on the Sabbath. They were to work hard for six days and then rest on the seventh day, just as the Creator did. Christians observe the Lord's day rather than the Sabbath. But this time isn't to merely take a break and watch TV all day; it's to spend time with our Savior, a sacred time set apart to worship and be in awe of the One who loves us deeply. I don't want to add observing the Lord's day to my to-do list just so I can cross it off, I want it there so I never again forget to regularly take my eyes off of myself and the world and focus solely on our amazing God. Parents, we are praying for you to do just that.

***Scrolls guest written by Tammy Blair, Children's Ministry Assistant*

What Does The Bible Say?

Read Exodus 20:8-11, 23:10-13, 31:12-18

1. What is the fourth commandment?
2. Was the Sabbath only for God's chosen people?
3. What was to happen every seventh year? Why?

What Do You Think?

What do you think God did on the seventh day after He created the world? Did He play with the animals he created or go swimming? Let everyone in your family give their ideas.

What Do You Do?

Sit down as a family and decide when your Sabbath will be. Then discuss ways that you can worship, serve or honor the Lord with your time.

CORE COMPETENCY: Worship

I celebrate God for who He is and what He has done for me.

MEMORY VERSE: Galatians 5:1

"It is for freedom that Christ has set us free."

KidPIX COUPON

Earn 1 KidPIX Token by completing the CENTRAL Kids Bible Study on this page and another token by memorizing and reciting the memory verse for this week.

Questions: kids@wearecentral.org

- _____ I completed my Bible Study
- _____ I memorized this week's verse
- _____ I brought my Bible to church
- _____ I brought a friend



CHILD'S NAME

GRADE

PARENT SIGNATURE

OUR CORE COMPETENCIES

CENTRAL BELIEFS

Authority of the Bible (2 Timothy 3:16-17)
I believe the Bible is the Word of God and has the right to command my belief and action.

Church (Ephesians 4:15-16)
I believe the church is God's primary way to accomplish His purposes on earth today.

Eternity (John 14:1-4)
I believe there is a heaven and a hell and that Jesus Christ is returning to judge the earth and to establish His eternal kingdom.

The Holy Spirit (Romans 8:9)
I believe the Holy Spirit convicts, calls, converts and changes me as a child of God.

Humanity (John 3:16)
I believe all people are loved by God and need Jesus Christ as their Savior.

Identity in Christ (John 1:12)
I believe I am significant because of my position as a child of God.

Jesus Christ (Hebrews 1:1-4)
I believe Jesus Christ is the Son of God who became man, died for sinners and rose from the dead.

Life Purpose (Acts 20:24)
I believe I am a steward of God's resources and have been redeemed to participate in His Kingdom purposes for His glory.

Personal God (Psalm 121:1-2)
I believe God is involved in and cares about my daily life.

Salvation by Grace (Ephesians 2:8-9)
I believe a person comes into a right relationship with God by His grace, through faith in Jesus Christ.



CENTRAL VIRTUES

Love (1 John 4:10-12)
I sacrificially and unconditionally love and forgive others.

Joy (John 15:11)
I have inner contentment and purpose in spite of my circumstances.

Peace (Philippians 4:6-7)
I am free from anxiety because things are right between God, myself and others.

Patience (Proverbs 14:29)
I take a long time to overheat and endure patiently under the unavoidable pressures of life.

Kindness/Goodness (1 Thessalonians 5:15)
I choose to do the right things in my relationships with others

Faithfulness (Proverbs 3:3-4)
I have established a good name with God and with others based on my long-term loyalty to those relationships.

Gentleness (Philippians 4:5)
I am thoughtful, considerate and calm in dealing with others.

Self-Control (Titus 2:11-13)
I have the power, through Christ, to control myself.

Grace (Colossians 3:13)
I demonstrate forgiveness, mercy and generosity to others, even when they have offended me.

Hope (1 Peter 1:3-5)
I have a growing anticipation of God's promises and my secure eternity with Him.

Humility (Philippians 2:3-4)
I choose to esteem others above myself.



CENTRAL PRACTICES

Bible Study (Hebrews 4:12)
I study the Bible to know God, the truth, and to find direction for my daily life.

Biblical Community (Acts 2:44-47)
I fellowship with other Christians to accomplish God's purposes in my life, others' lives, and in the world.

Compassion (Psalm 82:3-4)
I seek to serve the last, the least and the lost in my community.

Disciple-Making (2 Timothy 2:2)
I multiply godly beliefs, virtues and practices in others to encourage their spiritual growth in Christ.

Evangelism (Acts 1:8)
I share Jesus with others through personal proclamation and demonstration of the gospel.

Generosity (2 Corinthians 9:6-11)
I gladly give my resources to fulfill God's purposes.

Prayer (Psalm 66:16-20)
I pray to God to know Him, to lay my request before Him and to find direction for my daily life.

Single-Mindedness (Matthew 6:33)
I focus on God and His priorities for my life.

Spiritual Gifts (Romans 12:4-6)
I know and use my spiritual gifts to accomplish God's purposes.

Worship (Psalm 95:1-7)
I worship God for who He is and what He has done for me.

Tom Bulick (M.A. in Educational Leadership, Eastern Michigan University, Th.M. in Old Testament, and Ph.D. in Bible Exposition, Dallas Theological Seminary). For more than forty years, Tom has served as pastor, faculty member, and administrator. Tom was Vice President for Student Life and Associate Professor of Religious Studies at Trinity Western University (Vancouver, B.C.) from 1986 to 1998 and Spiritual Formation Pastor at Central Bible Church (Arlington, TX) from 1998 to 2022. He and his wife Ruth have one son, Zach.

Stephanie Thomas (B.B.A University of Texas at Arlington). Stephanie is married to James and they have four children: Elijah, Levi, Ella and Simon. Stephanie has attended Central Bible Church for more than 20 years, has been on staff since 2014, and now serves as Children's Minister.

The Scrolls Bible Study is a spiritual growth resource of Central Bible Church, Fort Worth, Texas.

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