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A Proper Observance of the Lord's Day is Necessary for the Physical - Mental - Spiritual Health of the Christian

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A PROPER OBSERVANCE OF THE LORD'S DAY IS NECESSARY
FOR THE PHYSICAL - MENTAL - SPIRITUAL
HEALTH OF THE CHRISTIAN

by
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Charles Lee Peters

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Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

THE PROBLEM

The marketplace is not the easiest of worlds. Robert K. Hudnut, a Presbyterian pastor who left his parish ministry for two years, remarks:

I have just had a harrowing experience. I have spent the last two years as a layperson.

This means I have lived with, among other things, the constant fear of losing my job, with a 40 percent salary cut, with no raises to offset inflation, with sixty-to-seventy-hour weeks

You learn something. What I have learned is that it isn't easy to be a layperson. . . .

I not only lost financial security, I also lost some emotional security as well. . . .

Furthermore, you have very little time for church itself. You are working long hours¹

On Friday afternoon and evening the freeways are massed with weekend vacationers retreating from the everyday run of affairs. Again on Sunday afternoon and evening the freeways are massed with the returning traffic.

The leisure revolution has affected and even threatened the church, which has built its program around a stable Sunday congregation. This has prompted some churches to initiate drive-in services where people may come on Sundays in beach clothes, worship, and then drive to their

place of recreation, without ever entering a church building. A few have tried services within the sanctuary at an earlier hour and invited people to attend in their sports attire.

Some churches have provided a mid-week service which is a replication of the Sunday service. In that way members of the congregation who will be absent on Sunday are encouraged to have their worship experience during the work week when they are at home.

This style of living has either totally neglected worship or it represents the worship-hour concept and not the day of worship.

This is the setting in which society finds itself today. There is a great physical, emotional, and spiritual drain on the members of society affecting not only non-Christians but showing its effect upon the Christian community as well.

We are witnessing an explosion of counseling centers being formed which offer help in all areas of life. These include marriage counseling, financial counseling, mental counseling, emotional counseling, and others. The stress of everyday life is taking its toll on every aspect of the human being. Mental institutions are overcrowded, suicide attempts are on the increase, and suicidal tendencies are being seen in the masses.

There are most definitely mental and emotional problems which are being rooted through the very core of our society. More dangerously, they are being rooted throughout

the Christian community of this society. The Christians who should have sight of and an awareness of the concepts of peace, contentment, joy and hope because of their personal experience of these attributes, are not witnessing to these attributes that are available through a personal experience with Jesus Christ. This is true not because of the lack of a relationship with God, but because of the quality of relationship with God. The proper concept of worship would raise the quality of that relationship.

The problem not only rests in the physical and mental aspects of man, but it extends to the spiritual as well. Those Christians who do not give witness to the peace, contentment and joy which comes from a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ apparently are not in full harmony with the God who is the source of that peace, contentment and joy to which all Christians should bear witness.

The problem is thus two-fold: (1) the wear and tear which the stress of everyday living is placing on the physical and mental aspects of man; and (2) the Christian's lack of full enjoyment and blessings which come from experiencing and maintaining a proper relationship with God. A proper observance of the Lord's Day is necessary for the physical, mental and spiritual health of the Christian.

THE JUSTIFICATION FOR THE STUDY

The justification for this study lies within the thesis itself, "A proper observance of the Lord's Day is

necessary for the physical-mental-spiritual health of the Christian." As previously stated, it is not only the non-Christian who experiences physical wear and tear, mental and emotional distress, and spiritual hardships, but it is also the Christian who experiences these negative forces.

It is not the claim of this writer that through the proper observance of the Lord's Day these negative aspects of life for the Christian will be eliminated, but rather that the proper observance of the Lord's Day will be a giant positive step in the right direction toward a complete and healthy Christian.

The problem of the failure to observe the Lord's Day properly has come about because of the neglect of the leaders within Christianity in not taking a proper stand and at the same time in allowing the misinterpretation of the verse that is often quoted by those who desire to use the Lord's Day as they see fit. The verse is Mark 2:27, ". . . the Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath."² There is also a verse that is often forgotten or set aside because it lies within the Old Testament and is viewed as a statement of legalism: Exodus 20:8, "Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy." (NIV) These two scriptures will be the foundation for a case in defense of the necessity of the proper observance of the Lord's Day.

The Lord's Day does have a place and a purpose within the life of a Christian. Within this place and purpose exist two primary concerns: responsibilities and benefits. Today

the Lord's Day is being abused; responsibilities are being ignored and neglected, and thus benefits are not being received. The proper observance of the Lord's Day needs to be revitalized so that the Christians of today can have an effective testimony of the peace, joy and satisfaction that come from a proper relationship with God.

OUTLINE OF PRESENTATION

The investigation is divided into four chapters. Chapter 2 deals with the three major divisions of man and the results of stress from neglecting one of God's commands, i.e., the observance of a day for rest and worship. Chapter 3 deals with the two main texts which are the foundation for this thesis. Conclusions to the study of each text are presented. Chapter 4 deals with the Lord's Day. The discussion includes the historical Sabbath, the transition of worship from Saturday to Sunday for the Christian, and the manner in which it was observed. A study of the terms "holy" and "rest" is also included. The final chapter is the conclusion. It ties all the material presented together under three topics: the necessity of, the function of, and the biblical foundation for the observance of the Lord's Day. The Lord's Day is shown to be necessary, functional and biblical.

NOTES

¹Carnegie Samuel Calian, Today's Pastor in Tomorrow's World (New York: Hawthorn Books, Inc., 1977), pp. 120-121.

²The Bible, New International Version (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Bible Publishers, 1978). Hereafter all scripture references are taken from this version unless otherwise cited and will be noted in the main text. Hereafter abbreviated NIV.

Chapter 2

THE HUMAN MAKEUP

INTRODUCTION

It is the contention of this writer that the proper observance of the Lord's Day can greatly aid mankind in experiencing the variety of rest that he desperately needs. According to Richard C. Cabott, men live by work, play, love and worship. In his book he states, "To live is to talk with the world. Work, play, love and worship are four good ways of keeping up the conversation."¹ Man is a living being. Genesis 2:7 (NIV) states, "And the Lord God formed man from the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and man became a living being" (אֱדָם חַי וְקָיָה). In this second account of creation we are told how God formed man. This classic statement on the constitution of man is basic to the Hebrew view of man's nature.

A proper understanding of the view of man must have its origin based upon the creation of man and upon man's difference from animals. Genesis 1:27 states that God created man in His image. Genesis 2:7 states that God breathed into man the breath of life. These two biblical texts clearly differentiate between man and animal.

Man is a very complex organism. But in spite of this complexity, the nature of man can be broken down into three major divisions: the mental aspect, the physical aspect and the spiritual aspect. Hildreth Cross states:

For the psychologist, who is first of all Christian, maintains the thesis that man has a three-fold nature, body, mind and spirit and in his study of psychology he includes all aspects of the individual.²

Wallace Emerson breaks man down into three major divisions: body, mind and spirit.³ Within these major divisions lie all the ingredients of which man is composed.

MENTAL

According to alphabetical order (so as not to insinuate any order of importance in relation to the order of presentation) the mental aspect is the first major division of man. It involves all thinking processes and the emotions.

Thinking Process

The mental portion or division of man is very complex. When a person thinks of the word "mental," he immediately thinks of the functions of the brain. This brain gives man the capability to store things (events, data, etc.) and includes a memory bank which can recall events and facts. In addition, the brain allows association to take place. The psychologist most noted for association study is Pavlov.⁴ The brain also has powers of retention, the ability to analyze and evaluate, and the ability to make decisions.⁵ An event,

object or word can cause a man to recall something in his past. Because of his brain man can learn and create.

Mental work is necessary for expanding the thinking, remembering, analyzing, and other functions of man's brain. The more the mind is expanded, the more the individual is capable of operating within the realm of the known. Furthermore, the same individual is able to function to a certain degree in the realm of the unknown or in an area of limited knowledge. There are some thought processes that work in all situations and environments. The mind (brain) automatically takes received stimuli or information from the senses and begins the process of association.

The brain goes a step further with rational learning:

Rational learning involves a certain amount of analogous experience from which to draw. There must be areas where insight will be required and where something new is added.⁶

The brain compares previous knowledge with the new input and finds similarities. The process is similar to breaking a code. The learning of one letter of a code, along with the knowledge of how a civilization writes, can lead to the learning of one word, which can lead to the learning of other words. Thus by taking what is known, man is able to enter an area of the unknown and function within that area.

Emotions

The mental portion of man enables him to experience different emotions such as anger, fear, shame, grief, love, hate, etc. According to Tim LaHaye, "Emotions are not

generated spontaneously. Our emotions flow from the thinking pattern of the mind."⁷ The brain also acts as a governor. It attempts to regulate man's desires and needs. So it is that when reference is made to the mental division of man, the reference is both to the emotional and thought processes of man. The mental portion of man directs all the activities of the body and regulates man's emotions. These directly affect man's behavior.

It is important to acknowledge that physical aspects do play a part in a person's emotions. Tiredness and pain are examples of how the body can play a part in man's emotions. The contention remains that it is the brain which governs the emotions.

Results of Stress

It is because of the importance of the mental health of man that there is need for balance and for proper proportion of mental work in relation to mental rest.

While the mind is expanded through mental work, there is also a need for mental rest. This does not mean taking several hours or a day simply to sit back and do absolutely nothing mentally. On the other hand, a person who is constantly caught up in the worries of his occupation or the worries of the economy is not taking a mental rest. Mankind needs time out from the everyday mental pressures to relax the mind so that it can and will continue to work under pressure.

Clyde and Ruth Narramore state:

An overload takes its toll. It imposes stresses and strains which a person was never intended to sustain. The results are parts wear down and the general efficiency of the machine decreases. In time, it may break down all together.⁸

There are results of stress caused by insufficient mental rest from the everyday pressures of life. The results include depression and total mental breakdown. Depression can bring about unnatural behavior in varying degrees, from an apathetic attitude, to withdrawal from any social life, to physical abuse, to suicide. Carlson states:

Fatigue from emotional and spiritual causes is just as real and incapacitating to the person experiencing it as fatigue produced by a severe organic cause.⁹

Narramore says:

Physical stress is easy to control, when tired you can stop. Not so with pressure or emotional strain, it hangs on. If family is neglected because of stress or strain, then guilt arises resulting in additional pressure. What is needed is an escape. Physical activity is a good emotional outlet. Emotional stress can be replaced by the immediate demands of a physical activity.¹⁰

According to Narramore a change of pace is a release.¹¹

LaHaye says, "Depression results in resentment, irritability, anger, self-criticism, sorrow, loneliness, self-rejection, withdrawal, hopelessness."¹² When a total mental breakdown occurs, the mind completely quits functioning as it should. This leaves the person simply a physical body without the capability of any form of rational thinking. In cases not so severe, the individual still cannot function mentally to the

point where he can make a contribution to the life that surrounds him.

Sharmon says that "for a balanced life there must be work and rest."¹³ He goes on to say that "rest cannot be measured by lack of production figures, nor by the mere absence of effort, mental or physical, in not doing anything."¹⁴ This rest or relaxation can come from such things as reading a light novel or spending entertaining time with family or friends. For the Christian, rest can and should come from a personal meeting with God. This is not a physical meeting, but it is a meeting brought about through worship or some particular aspect of worship such as prayer, song, etc.

Depression and mental breakdown call for a prolonged rest and often medication. It is not necessary for Christians to undergo such hardships and struggles when they know the God who can lighten their daily load. They need only to take time to worship Him and to cultivate a hearty relationship with Him.

PHYSICAL

The second major division of man is the physical division. This includes man's body parts and bodily functions, man's senses and man's desires and drives.

The Tangibles

A complete listing of bodily parts at this point would be in order; however, it is sufficient for this work

merely to give the obvious examples. To generalize, man's physical makeup can be divided into two parts: visible and invisible. Man has one head with two eyes, two ears, one nose and one mouth; a torso with two arms and legs; hands, feet, fingers, toes, etc. This is the composition of man that is visible to the eye. There are many more parts which are not outwardly visible. A listing would include the heart, lungs, intestines, blood vessels, etc. In the final analysis, all bodily parts, inside and out, are composed of individual cells. Speaking of the human body, which grows from the fertilization of a single egg cell, Dr. Brand writes:

Billions of blood cells appear, millions of rods and cones--in all, up to one hundred million million cells form from a single fertilized ovum. And finally a baby is born. . . . Already his cells are cooperating. . . . He is many cells, but he is one organism. All of his hundred trillion cells know that.¹⁵

In addition to the physical body parts, the resulting physical functions are also a part of the human makeup. Man has various systems (digestive, respiratory, reproductive, etc.) which are in constant operation. Further, he can perform innumerable acts both automatic and deliberate: smell, touch, see, taste, hear, walk, sit, draw, build, etc. Many bodily functions and operations he rarely contemplates:

The body has to make a constant struggle to maintain equilibrium. There must be steady production of heat and energy, repairs are always needed for failing organs while there is ever present danger from attacks by virulent enemies of various kinds.¹⁶

The Intangibles

Through the physical (tangible) elements, man takes on the physical shape that he possesses. Through his senses he becomes aware of, comes into contact with, and gains knowledge of the physical world around him. Through his movements man builds his physical world. Along with these physical attributes come physical needs, desires and drives such as hunger, thirst, sex, sleep and others. Although these aspects are basically intangible and somewhat elusive, they nevertheless are real and present qualities which contribute to the whole of man's physical nature.

Results of Stress

The need for physical work is as important to man's physical body as mental work is to man's mind. It is through work that the body muscles are stretched and exercised, thus resulting in muscular growth and the strengthening of bone structure, tendons, ligaments, heart, lungs etc. But again there is a need for proper balance, for the physical body needs rest as well as work. Narramore states, "Work itself is not pressure. The pressure part comes when more is demanded than can be produced without undue effort" and he further states that the human body "for trouble-free performance (a) should be properly suited to the task to be accomplished (b) should primarily operate at the level of its greatest efficiency."¹⁷

All work without rest is harmful, just as is all rest without work. Carlson states:

Overwork is probably one of the greatest problem areas for dedicated, sincere Christians today. We too often are characterized by busyness and frantic activity resulting in fatigue and weariness instead of love, joy, compassion, and interest in others without ulterior motives.¹⁸

He also states that "underwork is a cause of boredom. The normal length of sleep for the individual is no longer adequate. The lazy person often becomes more calloused."¹⁹

A person works in order to make a living. There is work at home. There is work within the various organizations one might belong to. If a person is concerned only with producing, there comes a time when his body ceases to be effective. The muscles are tired; they need rest. Also along with the deterioration of physical strength, overwork enhances or increases the aging process. Thus one can easily become physically older than he should be in reference to his age in years.

Hard work is good for the body, but at the same time, good rest is good for the body so that it can continue to function at its best. The rest needed is not simply that which comes from a night's sleep. That is needed; but so is a physical rest in the form of a different type of exercise or a different form of activity needed. The results of stress from insufficient amounts of rest can be serious. There is the danger of a physical breakdown. Also, man's behavior can be greatly affected by not treating his body as

it should be treated. Whenever the behavior is affected, there is an equal effect upon our relationships with others. LaHaye and Carlson both illustrate throughout their books how one's behavior not only affects the individual personally, but that it also has an effect on those whom they have a relationship with, i.e., spouse, boss, co-worker, children, friends, etc.

As a practicing physician in Southern California, Carlson was repeatedly amazed at the number of patients coming to him whose chief complaint was that of fatigue. He defined fatigue as lassitude, lack of energy, weariness, tiredness, loss of a sense of well-being and overall unpleasantness.²⁰ Carlson further stated four roles which fatigue plays:

- (1) fatigue can be a friend. At the end of a good day's work it is normal and a good feeling to be tired and able to sleep soundly. A lack of this kind of fatigue poses a real problem to many individuals with insomnia.
- (2) fatigue can be a trial. Fatigue increases our susceptibility to sin.
- (3) fatigue can be a warning. The purpose of fatigue may be regarded as a self-preservation. It tells us that something is wrong.
- (4) fatigue can be an enemy. Medically, certain physiological changes take place in the tired person. His work output is decreased; dissatisfaction and restlessness become apparent. He becomes unable to deal with complex problems and is upset by trivialities. Irritability, a critical attitude, loss of joy, and lack of spontaneity prevail.²¹

Fatigue and its results can be applied to the mental as well as to the physical division of man.

SPIRITUAL

The third major division of man is his spiritual nature. This aspect is unique to man; it is not included in the nature of other living beings, plant or animal.

Soul

The soul is essentially immaterial and spiritual. Thus it cannot be easily dissected and analyzed. Wesley's description of the soul includes a statement that the soul is separate and distinct from the body, yet still very much a part of man:

But what am I? Unquestionably I am something distinct from my body. It seems evident that my body is not necessarily included therein. For when my body dies, I shall not die: I shall exist as really as I did before. And I cannot but believe, this self-moving, thinking principle, with all its passions and affections, will continue to exist, although the body be mouldered into dust. . . . Indeed at present this body is so intimately connected with the soul, that I seem to consist of both. In my present state of existence, I undoubtedly consist both of soul and body.²²

Wesley also felt that the soul was capable of thinking and of experiencing love, hatred, joy, sorrow, desire, fear, hope, "and a whole train of other inward emotions, which are commonly called passions or affections."²³

Ryrie has summarized the varying aspects of the immaterial part of man, which for the scope of this work have all been included in the word "soul":

1. Soul. Soul stands for the personal life or for the individual. It has emotion (Jer. 31:25) and wars against the lusts of the flesh (1 Peter 2:11). 2. Spirit. Spirit is related to higher aspects of man (Rom. 8:16). All men have a spirit (1 Cor. 2:11). It may also be corrupted (2 Cor. 7:1). Although there is distinction between soul and spirit, they both are facets of the immaterial nature of man. 3. Heart. Heart is the largest concept of all the facets of man's immaterial nature. It is the seat of intellectual, emotional, volitional, and spiritual life of man (Heb. 4:12; Matt. 22:37; Heb. 4:7). 4. Conscience. Conscience is a witness within that has been affected by the Fall but which nevertheless can be a safe guide at times (1 Peter 2:19; Heb. 10:22). 5. Mind. The mind is the facet of man's immaterial nature in which understanding is centered. The mind was affected by the Fall but is able to be renewed in Christ (Rom. 12:2). 6. Flesh. When flesh means the sin nature, then this too is an aspect of man's immaterial nature. It is completely corrupt and cannot be renewed but will be eradicated at death.²⁴

Results of Stress

Since the Fall, mankind has suffered a broken relationship with God. Christ provided the bridge to span the gap; but man individually must accept the salvation offered through Christ. Until that time, the soul of man is in a state of unrest. Even the Christian may suffer from spiritual stress from various causes. Guilt because of sin; the distresses of life such as sickness, temptation, doubts and persecution--these are some of the causes of spiritual stress.

It should be noted that there are two types of stress. One stems from too much involvement in religious activities to the neglect of the personal relationship with God. The

other stems from too little involvement in the good works of righteousness. By remaining close to the world, the Christian forfeits the full rest available in Christ and retains many of the worldly pressures. Both types of stress render man more susceptible to temptation, more susceptible to yielding to temptation, and more susceptible to doubts and consequent despair. A further result of stress is the hindrance of a growing relationship with God.

It is certain that man has need of spiritual rest. Jesus offered rest for the weary in Matthew 11:28-30:

Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light (NIV).

SUMMARY

The human makeup of man can be categorized in three separate divisions: mental, physical, and spiritual. But in reality they must not be regarded as describing separate or separable parts which go to make up what man is. They are interwoven to make a complex, functioning human being. It is plain to see the results of stress from insufficient rest for all aspects of the human being. Man needs a proper balance of work and rest. This rest is not only a time of cessation from work, but a variety of forms of rest as well.

NOTES

¹Richard C. Cabott, What Men Live By: Work-Play-Love-Worship (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1914), p. 1.

²Hildreth Cross, An Introduction to Psychology: An Evangelical Approach (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1952), p. 15.

³Wallace Emerson, Outline of Psychology (Wheaton, IL: Van Kampen Press, Inc., 1953), p. xi.

⁴Ibid., p. 383.

⁵For a more thorough treatment of the various functions of the brain, see The Essentials of Psychology by W. B. Pillsbury (New York: The MacMillan Company, 1920), pp. 141-150.

⁶Emerson, op. cit., p. 389.

⁷Tim LaHaye, How to Win over Depression (Grand Rapids MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1974), pp. 73-74.

⁸Clyde Narramore and Ruth Narramore, How to Handle Pressure (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House Publishing, Co., 1975), p. 45.

⁹Dwight L. Carlson, Run and Not be Weary (Old Tappan, NJ: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1974), p. 44.

¹⁰Narramore, op. cit., pp. 102-103.

¹¹Ibid., p. 123.

¹²LaHaye, op. cit., p. 111.

¹³Sydney Sharmon, Psychiatry, the Ten Commandments and You (New York: Dodd, Mead & Company, 1967), p. 86.

¹⁴Ibid., p. 87.

¹⁵Dr. Paul Brand and Philip Yancey, Fearfully & Wonderfully Made (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1980), p. 26.

¹⁶Arthur I. Brown, Wonderfully Made (Westchester, IL: Good News Publishers, 1978), p. 59.

¹⁷Narramore, op. cit., p. 45.

¹⁸Carlson, op. cit., p. 26.

¹⁹Ibid., p. 32.

²⁰Ibid., p. 15.

²¹Ibid., p. 17.

²²John Wesley, Sermons, Vol. III; Vol. VII of Wesley's Works (3d ed.; Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House Company, 1978), p. 228.

²³Ibid., pp. 226-227.

²⁴The Ryrie Study Bible, King James Version (Chicago, Moody Press, 1978), p. 1839. The final statement of this quotation is a Calvinistic belief not endorsed by this author.

Chapter 3

TWO TEXTS

INTRODUCTION

There are two major portions of Scripture which demonstrate and explain the importance of setting aside a day in which to rest and worship. One is found in each of the major divisions of the Bible: Old and New Testaments.

The Old Testament portrays God's dealing with the nation of Israel. The New Testament portrays God's dealing with all mankind. The common theme throughout both is salvation. It is in salvation that we see God reaching down to man with pure love. Because of God's love for His creation, His plan of salvation is not only concerned with the future eternal salvation of man's soul, but it is also concerned with the present state of man, which includes the mental and physical aspects as well as the spiritual aspect of man.

The two texts are Exodus 20:8, "Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy," and Mark 2:27, "Then He (Jesus) said to them, 'The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath.'" (NIV) From these two texts the importance and necessity of observing properly one day a week for the total health of the Christian will be shown.

EXODUS 20:8

"Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy." There are two major ideas concerning this verse: (1) It is one of the Ten Commandments; (2) A day is to be kept holy.

One of the Ten Commandments

The first major thought concerning this verse is the importance of its location in context. It is the fourth of the Ten Commandments.

As the Ten Commandments are read, a division is readily seen regarding to whom obligations are to be rendered. The first three commandments deal with man's relationship to God. The fifth through the tenth commandments deal with man's relationship with his fellow man. It is the fourth commandment which bridges these two thoughts. The command involves remembering what God has done in the past, and it also involves personal care of oneself and of others.

The fact that it is one of the Ten Commandments alone makes the command one of everlasting importance and relevance. The Ten Commandments are called the Moral Law of God:

This moral law has been from that day to this
 the guide of life to thousands upon thousands,
 the only guide to some, and a very valuable
 and helpful guide to all who have known of it.
 . . . Considering the weakness, the imperfection,
 and moral deviation from moral conduct or sound
 thinking of man, it was to the last degree
 important that an authoritative code should
 be put forth, laying down with unmistakable
 clearness the chief heads of duty, and
 denouncing the chief classes of sins.

.
 Altogether the Decalogue stands on a moral

eminence, elevated above and beyond all other moral systems--Egyptian, Indian, Chinese, or Greek; unequalled for simplicity, for comprehensiveness, for solemnity. Its precepts were, according to the Jewish tradition, pillars of the law and its roots. They constitute for all ages a condensed summary of human duty, which is suited for every form of human society, and which, so long as the world endures, cannot become outdated. The retention of the Decalogue as the best summary of the moral law by Christian communities is justified on these grounds, and itself furnishes emphatic testimony to the excellency of the comprehensive treatise.¹

It is worth noting that the form in which the Commandments are stated is:

the apodictic form (stated in terms of absolutes, "Thou shalt...Thou shalt not..."). The more common mode of expressing law was casuistic (conditional, if you do thus and so, then I will do thus and so).²

J. P. Hyatt contends that it is a mistake to think of the Ten Commandments as being law or a law code: "They do not comprise a law code, for they are not comprehensive enough. They deal with general principles rather than with detailed cases and they specify no punishments."³ But Hyatt's statement that the Ten Commandments are not laws but only principles is not accurate. The Ten Commandments are principles, this is true; but as one views the purposes for laws, it is evident that the Ten Commandments are laws as well as principles.

The laws of the Pentateuch are there to provide guidance, instruction and direction. This the Ten Commandments do and at the same time they provide a foundation upon which to build, which is the function of principles. There

is further support in the fact that the most common designations for Israelite law are commandments, decrees, precepts, and ordinances. Exodus 20:6 labels the Ten Commandments as being God's commandments. So they are a set of laws and/or principles which, as Clements stated:

provide a description of the fundamental aims of conduct, upon which more specific laws can be based. They embrace the maximum area of life, and bring thus under a moral obligation to God.⁴

The Ten Commandments provide a summary of all duties which God requires of man. They furnish a perfect standard of moral conduct. They express abiding principles of right living. They set forth the true relation of man to God and of man to man.

Charles R. Eerdman states that:

followers of Christ are free from obligations of the ceremonial law, but are bound by the moral law, not as a means of salvation, but as a rule of life. They keep the commandments not to win the favor of Christ, but in gratitude for His redeeming grace.⁵

Erdman also interprets Romans 8:3-4 to say that "Christ gave to those who trust and obey Him power to keep the commandments."⁶

G. A. Chadwick states that "liberty is not lawlessness-- it is the reciprocal harmony of law and the will."⁷ Flynn stated:

Some Christians feel that since we are not under law but under grace it is a form of legalism to teach or preach on the Commandments. One pastor advised soft-pedaling them in the presence of children lest little ones think they can earn heaven by keeping them. Another

pastor, floundering in confusion as to the place of the law today, wrote in a Christian periodical, 'Are we Christian preachers supposed to teach the Ten Commandments?'⁸

Flynn then quoted Matthew 5:19:

Anyone who breaks one of the least of these commandments and teaches others to do the same will be called least in the kingdom of heaven, but whoever practices and teaches these commands will be called great in the kingdom of heaven.⁹

Childs stated, "The lack of a specific historical setting (apart from the narrative framework) pictures them as a summary of timeless ethical principles or a set of immutable divine laws."¹⁰

One who breaks these commands sets himself outside the established life of God's people. To transgress is not to commit a misdemeanor but to break the very fiber of which the divine-human relation consists.¹¹

"In at least two instances God chose to reveal Himself directly, by-passing the human agent: When giving the Ten Commandments, and in the incarnation of Christ."¹²

Christ was not restricted to any one particular group of people--He was for all mankind. The Ten Commandments, although given to the Hebrew nation, are for all mankind.

Arthur W. Pink states that they are:

...binding upon all men for the following reasons: (a) never been repealed (God wrote them on stone, not on parchment); (b) we need them, has human nature so improved that man is better than he was 3,000 years ago? (c) Jesus respected them; (d) teaching of the New Testament Epistles (Rom.3).¹³

Leslie Flynn listed five reasons that the Decalogue remains indispensable in the twentieth century:

...because it is a (a) resume of morality--these ten rules cover the entire range of man's duty and forbid every type of wrong doing; (b) restraint on evil--similar to how a police car slows traffic. Remove the police car, traffic resumes excessive speeds; (c) revealer of sin--shows our life to be imperfect, thus cannot get to heaven by observing them, because we cannot observe them totally; (d) regulator of Christian behavior--it is not a standard of conduct. But since the Christian still lives in perpetual touch with his old nature, he needs a constant reminder of his duty. The law acts as a molding influence to a Christian character as a call to sanctification; (e) road map to happiness--just as an appliance is accompanied by a manual to aid in helping the owner run it best, God has given man a direction-book and this manual stresses the Ten Commandments.¹⁴

When viewed correctly, God's law is not restrictive; it portrays life as the glorious thing God intended it to be. It is apparent that the Ten Commandments are still relevant to man today. Thus, the Ten Commandments should be upheld, taught and followed.

Can Christians obey, preach and teach nine of the Ten Commandments while disregarding one? All ten were given by God at the same time, in the same manner. This places a great importance upon each of the ten and not on only nine. Does the presence of the fourth commandment disfigure or negate the Decalogue? The answer must be no, for the other nine commandments are upheld and taught throughout the Bible. This writer contends that the position of the commandment among the fundamental moral and universal duties lends total support to the hypothesis that God commands His people to keep one day a week holy for his (man's) total health (mental-physical-spiritual).

Day to Keep Holy

The second idea concerning Exodus 20:8 is that the day is to be kept holy: "Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy." A full, indepth study of the word "holy" follows in Chapter 4. At this point it is important to note that God not only commands His people to set aside a day each week, but He tells His people how it is to be observed in order to draw the maximum benefit from the observance of such a day.

Exodus 20:11 states that "the Lord blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy" (NIV). According to Ezekiel 20:11-12, God gave them His sabbaths and in Jeremiah 17:24-25, God bids the people to honor the Sabbath day. These prophets set a deeper and more meaningful importance upon the day itself rather than upon the mere ceremonial law. The Sabbath belongs to God; thus it should be treated as anything else that belongs to God and is given to man.

The common or elemental meaning of holy is "separation" or "set apart." The Sabbath should be set apart from the other days. Antonyms would be "profane" or "common" (Lev. 10:10, I Sam. 21:5-6, Ez. 22:26 and 44:23).

Another term that can be used in defining holy is "devoted." Everything devoted to God is holy to Him (Lev. 27:28). Thus two fundamental descriptions of holy that are relevant to the Sabbath can be seen: a day set apart and a day devoted to God.

A final thought regarding a day to be kept holy relates to the word "day." Today among many people--including

Christians--there is a misconception of God's holy day. Many view the observance of Sunday as the hour of worship rather than as the holy day of the Lord. For many, once the hour of worship is over, the remainder of the day is spent either in business/money-making or in seeking pleasure. It has been stated by some that the Gospel and tradition do not specify the actual day of the Lord. This line of thought encourages those who reduce the obligation of the Lord's day to attendance at a church service. At the same time, it fosters a sense of anticipation for the sake of social and recreational priorities even among Christians:

Christians compared Sunday both with the Jewish sabbath and with pagan festivals which involved the whole day. That the whole day was thought of is seen also in two regulations of the early church: (a) no fasting allowed--fasting was to last a full day; (b) custom was to stand for prayer, throughout the day--Tertullian criticises those who "not only on the Lord's day, but on the sabbath kneel for prayer." The word epiteleo, to complete, fulfill, when used of the Christian Sunday, suggests the same. It is a word used by Eusebius of the observance of Sunday by the Ebionites and can rightly be translated "celebrate the day."¹⁵

Conclusions of Study

The Sabbath principle is still applicable to twentieth century man. The Ten Commandments are relevant to this day. No one has authority to take one of God's personally written commands and disregard it for personal convenience. Once this fact is acknowledged and accepted, the Christian community can begin to re-institute the full and proper observance of the Lord's day with biblical authority as well as biblical guidance.

MARK 2:27

"Then he (Jesus) said to them, 'The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath'" (NIV). In this verse lie two major thoughts concerning the Sabbath: (1) It was made for man; (2) It was not discarded by Jesus.

Made for Man

The most striking statement in Mark 2:27 is that the Sabbath was made for man. Various questions arise: For what purpose and/or reasons was the Sabbath made? How is the Sabbath to benefit man, or how is it to affect his life?

The Sabbath was instituted for the benefit of man, that he might refresh, and renew his body, fatigued and worn by six days' labour, with the restful calm of the seventh; and that he might have leisure to apply his mind to the things which concern his everlasting salvation; to consider and meditate upon the Law of God; and rouse himself, by the remembrance of the Divine greatness and goodness, to true repentance, to gratitude, and to love. The force of the argument is this: The sabbath was made on account of man, not man on account of the sabbath. The sabbath, great and important as that institution is, is subordinate to man. It is the inferior institution, man being the higher, for whose sake the sabbath was appointed.¹⁶

"The sabbath was not intended to be a heartless despot that man must serve regardless of the cost to himself; rather it was given to meet man's need for rest."¹⁷ "The root of the sabbath-law was the love of God for mankind, and not for Israel only. The Sabbath was appointed not for God's sake, but for the sake of man."¹⁸

The fundamental principle underlying the institution of the Sabbath is that the Sabbath was made for man and not man for the Sabbath. Therefore, the application of the Sabbath law ought to assure that man's welfare was promoted. But the regulations of the Pharisees made the observance of the Sabbath a burden rather than a blessing; it made man the slave of the Sabbath. Their traditions were so binding that they tended to nullify God's gracious purpose in giving the Sabbath to man. Hiebert describes that purpose thus:

The institution of the Sabbath, requiring a periodic day of rest, has been an inestimate [sic] boon to mankind. It was a gift that afforded man not only physical rest but also refreshment in spirit in raising his thoughts above his daily labors.¹⁹

An analysis of the Greek text shows that according to the words of Jesus the Sabbath was made for man. "Man" is not aner, a male individual, but anthropos, the racial, generic term, mankind. Egeneto, "was made," literally "came into existence." Dia is the preposition meaning "on account of; for the sake of." The principle is that the Sabbath is only a means to an end--that end being the good of mankind. It was made by God to be of service to mankind, to give men rest for the body and fellowship with God. This is how a Christian should regard church regulations and customs such as church attendance, Bible reading, almsgiving, fasting and keeping Sunday. Rules should serve man, not enslave him. For example, it is fine to keep a rule about going to

church regularly. But simply keeping this rule is not the goal. It should be done in order to love and honor God. The goal is to show love and honor toward God. It is easy to forget this. Isaiah 1:14-17 speaks of the sin of attending public worship not in order to honor God.

Key terms or thoughts included in the idea that the Sabbath was made for man are: refresh, renew, leisure, rest and love. These terms encompass two general purposes for observing the Sabbath: rest and worship. The Sabbath was made for man to stop and reflect upon himself and upon his total situation, to stop and rest so as to be able to continue to work at his peak, to stop and pay honor to God, to stop and do good. The Sabbath should be a totally holy day--a day totally separate from the other days of the week.

Not Discarded by Jesus

Jesus endorsed the Sabbath laws in word and deed to the glory of God. But He ignored and rejected those Jewish regulations and traditions which had come to restrict the full expression of those actions or deeds of service which might be rendered in keeping the day holy. Any actions differing from today's traditions must likewise be for the same reason--in order to glorify God more--not through laziness or lack of respect for the church:

Jesus taught that the Fourth Commandment should be kept, and He Himself worshipped in the synagogue on the Sabbath (Mark 6:2). He gave new teaching about it: (what you do is more important than what you avoid doing) (sometimes it is right to ignore one of the

scribes' laws about the Sabbath in order to keep it holy--in order to please God).²⁰

The following verse 28 gives a clue as to how Jesus regarded the Sabbath: "So that the Son of Man is Lord even of the Sabbath" (NIV). The verb used in verse 28 is the present, indicative, third person singular (estin), "he/it is." Jesus is not saying that He was or that He will be Lord of the Sabbath, but that He is the Lord of the Sabbath. This illustrates that Jesus regarded the Sabbath as still relevant and therefore still serving as an aid to mankind.

Conclusions of Study

From the text of Mark 2:27 it is clear that God wanted the Sabbath day to be an aid to serve mankind in maintaining a well-balanced and full life. Further, it is clear that God meant the Sabbath principle to remain with man as a benefit--even as a gift from God who fully understands the makeup of His creation and the needs that man has in order to be healthy in all aspects (mentally-physically-spiritually).

NOTES

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⁵Charles R. Eerdman, The Book of Exodus (New York: Fleming H. Revell Co., 1949), p. 92.

⁶*Ibid.*, p. 93.

⁷G. A. Chadwick, The Expositor's Bible: Exodus (New York: Hodder & Stoughton, Pub.), p. 282.

⁸Leslie B. Flynn, Now a Word from our Creator (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1976), p. 16.

⁹*Ibid.*

¹⁰Brevard S. Childs, The Book of Exodus (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1974), p. 400.

¹¹*Ibid.*, p. 398.

¹²James Coffin, "Finding Love Through Law," Ministry, March, 1979, p. 13.

¹³Arthur W. Pink, Gleanings in Exodus (Chicago: Moody Press, n.d.), p. 158.

¹⁴Flynn, op. cit., p. 17.

¹⁵Roger Beckwith and Wilford Stott, This is the Day (Greenwood, SC: The Attic Press, Inc., 1978), p. 59.

¹⁶H. D. M. Spence, ed., Mark and Luke, Vol. XVI of The Pulpit Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Pub. Co., 1950), p. 89.

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¹⁸Henry Barclay Swete, Commentary on Mark (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publications, 1977), p. 49.

¹⁹Edmond D. Hiebert, Mark: A Portrait of the Servant (Chicago: Moody Press, 1974), p. 79.

²⁰John Hargreaves, A Guide to St. Mark's Gospel (Valley Forge: Judson Press, 1965), p. 54.

Chapter 4

PURPOSE OF THE LORD'S DAY

TRANSITION FROM THE SABBATH TO THE LORD'S DAY

There is a historical sequence of events which shows the progression from the Old Testament observance of the Sabbath to the eventual discontinued observance of the Sabbath. This section will outline that sequence.

Old Testament Observance of the Sabbath

The Sabbath for the Jews in the Old Testament was a day to be set aside, not by their own choosing, but because it was one of God's commandments. According to Roland de Vaux:

Whatever the origin of the Sabbath was, it took on particular meaning which made it an institution peculiar to Israel. Its characteristic feature lies not in the regularity with which it recurs, nor in the cessation of work, nor in the various prohibitions: all this is found, more or less, in other civilizations. Its distinctive trait lies in the fact that it is a day made holy because of its relation to the God of the Covenant; more, it is an element in that Covenant. Other religions had a day which was tabu; in Israel, this became a day consecrated to Yahweh, a tithe on time.¹

According to Brevard S. Childs:

The major thrust of the command falls on the verb "to hallow." The piel form is a factitive use having the connotation "to make holy." This presupposes the cessation of the normal activity of work in order to set aside the Sabbath for something special.²

The Sabbath commandment is found in all the sources of the Mosaic Law, Exodus 20:8-11; Exodus 23:12; Exodus 31:12-17; Exodus 34:21; Exodus 35:1-3; Leviticus 19:3; 23:1-3; 26:2; Deuteronomy 5:12-15.

The Jews regarded the Sabbath in three ways: (1) as a day of rest. (2) as a day of worship, and (3) as a sign. Each aspect merits further attention.

A day of rest. The primary text used to illustrate the day set aside as a day of rest is Deuteronomy 5:13-14:

Six days you shall labor and do all your work, 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 manservant or maidservant, nor your ox, your donkey or any of your animals, nor the alien within your gates, so that your manservant and maidservant may rest, as you do (NIV).

This text shows that God gave a humanitarian reason for the observance of rest on the Sabbath. It provided rest to servants and animals.

Absolute rest from work was enjoined by the Sabbath commandment. The foundation for this rest is found in Genesis 2:2 and Exodus 20:8-11, which state that God made heaven and earth and all that is in them in six days and then rested on the seventh day. The text in Deuteronomy cited

above emphasizes more clearly that the benefit of Sabbath rest was not just for the Israelite and his family, but also for slaves and domestic animals. It is certain that the Sabbath was kept at the end of every week as a day of rest ordained and sanctified by God.

Niels-Erik A. Andreassen quotes Aage Bentzen:

In pre-exilic times the Sabbath developed into a feast day with humanitarian overtones. During the exile it was changed into a day of enforced rest, which in postexilic times was strictly enforced with taboo-like regulations. In the Hellenistic period dispensations were given to place practicable Sabbath observance in agreement with the strict regulations. Finally Christianity returned the Sabbath institution to the prophetic ideals, i.e., a day of good works. This schematization of the development of the institution is of course artificial, and the various stages overlap each other, but this does not minimize the importance of Bentzen's attempt to show the growth of the Sabbath institution and its relationship to the history and religion of Israel.³

In keeping with the observance of rest on the Sabbath, normal work was interrupted (Ex. 20:9-10; Dt. 5:13-14; Ex. 23:12; 34:21), and so were commercial transactions (Amos 8:5); but short journeys were allowed (II Kings 4:23). The Jews looked upon the Sabbath as a pleasant and venerable day (Is. 58:13). Special sacrifices were offered in the Temple, but rigid prohibitions were also introduced. No one was to do business or to travel on the Sabbath day (Is. 58:13); no one was to carry a load on that day or to bring loaded beasts into Jerusalem. Nothing was to be taken out of the house, and no work was to be done (Jer. 17:21-22).

In 432 B.C., Nehemiah made a trip back to Persia. During the time of Nehemiah's absence, religious laxity prevailed.⁴ The people became indifferent toward Sabbath observance and it was viewed in a negligent manner. Not only did the Jews work and sell on the Sabbath, but they also permitted Tyrian residents in Jerusalem to promote business on the Sabbath. Upon his return, Nehemiah warned the nobles of Judah that this was the sin that had precipitated Judah's captivity and the destruction of Jerusalem. In consequence, Nehemiah ordered the gates of the city closed on the Sabbath. He assigned his own servants as guards to stop commercial traffic. As a result, the Sabbath was henceforth observed with great scrupulosity.⁵

A day of worship. It has been noted that the Sabbath was also regarded as a day of worship. "The sabbath is a special religious day, and it is probable that numbers resorted to the Temple on this day (II Kings 4:23; Ezek. 45:17; 46:3; Hos. 2:11)."⁶ They assembled in the afternoon and evenings for brief prayers and according to Graety:

Selections of the Torah were read, the Decalog, the Shema which at the end the congregation joined in the response: "Blessed be the name of the glory of His kingdom forever and ever."⁷

Mosaic worship is described in Exodus 24:3-8. There was a sacrificial offering, the reading of the Book of the Covenant, and prayer with a joint response by the people.

Ezekiel 4:12-15; 22:26; 44ff. tell of instruction being given by priests. The instruction included questions of ritual purity, occasion for religious assemblies and recitation of prayers:

The synagogue worship on the morning of the Sabbath consisted of Scripture readings and prayers; we cannot describe the precise order of worship, since contemporary sources are lacking. The Theodotus Inscription from Jerusalem, which antedates 70 B.C., describes the activities carried on in the synagogue as "reading of the Law and instruction in the commandments".⁸

The New Catholic Encyclopedia presents a development of worship in the Old Testament. Beginning with the patriarchal period, worship was simple in its ritual:

The sacrifices were offered by the chief of the clan or tribe, often in a favorite sanctuary (Gn 22.13; 35.9-15). . . . The establishment of the central sanctuary for the ark at the Temple in Jerusalem marked the next stage of liturgical development. A growing centralization of the cult saw a growth also in the numbers and degrees of the priesthood, the elaboration of the sacrificial ritual, the flowering of liturgical singing and prayers, and the increased use of such adjuncts of worship as holy water, incense, and lights.

After the destruction of the Temple, the Jewish exiles were forced to turn to a different form of community worship consisting of the reading of the sacred books and commentary upon them, prayers, and the singing or recitation of psalms. The rebuilding of the Temple led to a revival of the sacrificial cult. The office of the high priest grew in importance, new feasts were introduced, the Sabbath was even more strictly observed, and a new, more detailed ritual was followed.⁹

Throughout the Old Testament it was understood that the Sabbath was a day without work. When the religio-cultic

observations are considered, there is found in the exilic and postexilic literature regulations for sacrifices to be offered on the Sabbath. As presented in pre-exilic literature such as II Kings 4:23, the Sabbath provided an occasion for gathering at the temple. The Sabbath is also mentioned along with other feasts. This means that the Old Testament traditions from the earliest to the latest freely associate the Sabbath both with abstention from work and with festal activities.

A sign. The third way in which the Sabbath observance was regarded by the Jews in the Old Testament was as a sign. Throughout Israel's history the Sabbath played an important role in her understanding of her covenant relationship with God. The identification of the Sabbath as a sign that Israel remains in the covenant appears only twice:

(1) 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." . . . The Israelites are to observe the Sabbath, celebrating it for the generations to come as a lasting covenant. 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 abstained from work and rested (Exodus 31:13, 16-17 NIV).

(2) Also I gave them my Sabbaths as a sign between us, so they would know that I the Lord made them holy. . . . Keep my Sabbaths holy, that they may be a sign between us. Then you will know that I am the Lord your God (Ezekiel 20:12, 20 NIV).

A sign provides recognition of a certain fact, or guarantees its reliability. Its function is to provide understanding, to give knowledge, to bring about recognition. A sign means to the individual who has received it that he now knows, or at least has been given opportunity to know, that which is implied in the particular sign.

Israel was to keep the Sabbath as a means of remembering that they were slaves in Egypt and it was God who brought them out of bondage (Deut. 5:15).

Graety states various ordinances and practices which characterized the observance of the Sabbath as a sign during the time of Nehemiah (465-425 B.C.):

Work ceased before the sunset of the preceding day. The Sopherim (teachers or wise men) wanted to make the day a day of solemnity and of joy, days in which man was to cast aside worries and anxieties of a work-a-day world.

A cup of wine was taken at the beginning and a cup of wine at the close of the Sabbath. The opening cup was to remind them that the day was holy and sanctified by God Himself (kiddush), and the closing cup, to emphasize the significance of the day in contrast with the work days about to begin (Habdalah).

By these ordinances, the Sabbath received a sacred character and became a day of spiritual joy, so that the rigorous requirements of its observance were forgotten in the very joy of their observance.¹⁰

Andreasen comments:

Israel must keep the Sabbath in order that it may become such a sign (Ezek. 20:20). Though Yahweh is nowhere said to seek understanding regarding Israel's intentions through this sign, it is demonstrably a sign with a double function, for it stands between Yahweh and the people Israel assuring both of the other side's loyalty. It is no wonder then

that it could also serve as a vehicle of the covenant (Ex. 31:16). The expression "between me and you," which describes the function of the sign, is also a covenant formula (Gen. 9:12; 17:2).¹¹

The Sabbath was thus a divine blessing which constantly kept alive the recollection that Yahweh had chosen and sanctified the people of Israel. It was a reminder that God had redeemed Israel from Egyptian bondage and sanctified her as His holy people.

New Testament Christians' Observance of the Sabbath

The observance of the Old Testament Sabbath and the Jewish New Testament Sabbath involved the same three functions; it was regarded (1) as a day of rest, (2) as a day of worship. and (3) as a sign. Ralph P. Martin states:

The first Christian society at Jerusalem began its existence as a group within the framework of the ancestral Jewish faith. . . .

Yet there was one distinguishing feature which marked out these people from other Jewish "sects." This was their adherence to the belief that the Messiah had come, and that His name was Jesus of Nazareth. Hence the title "Nazarene" seems best explained by their devotion to Him as the Messiah who hailed from Nazareth (Acts ii, 22; cf. Matthew ii, 23). Yet, in the early days of the Church's life, there seems to have been no desire to leave the parent religion.¹²

The early New Testament Christians regarded the Sabbath in the same three ways; but although the functions were the same, the observance of these functions was not entirely the same.

A day of rest. A major difference between the New Testament Jews and the early New Testament Christians was the use of

the Sabbath as a day of rest. For the New Testament Jew the day was protected by a strict prohibition of work. All necessary arrangements were to be made on the day of preparation (the day before the Sabbath) so that the day of rest might be free from all work (Mt. 27:62; Luke 15:42; John 23:54). All harvesting, including the plucking of ears, was forbidden (Mark 2:23). Help and healing were not to be brought to a sick person not in danger of death (Luke 13:14; John 7:23; 9:16). The carrying of all kinds of objects was also forbidden (John 5:9-10). One could go only a prescribed journey on the Sabbath--about 3/4 mile (Acts 1:12).

The rules prohibiting work on the Sabbath were overruled only in special cases by urgent obligations. Thus the priests did what was necessary to make the statutory offerings on the Sabbath (Matt. 12:4-5). If a man or beast was in mortal danger, help was permissible (Matt. 12:11; Luke 14:5). The law which required all Israelite boys to be circumcised the eighth day after birth was also to be kept even on the Sabbath (John 7:22). Guests could be invited to the house (Luke 14:1).

For the Christians, the day of rest was not a day of strict restrictions. Jesus in His confrontation with the Pharisees (Mt. 12:1-8; Mk. 2:23-28; Luke 13:10-17; 14:1-6) did not condemn the Pharisees for their wanting to keep the Sabbath as a holy day, as a day of rest and respect. What Jesus did condemn was their attitude toward the desire to

help meet the needs of fellow man. The law made provisions for helping someone if life was threatened (Mt. 12:11; Lk. 14:5). Jesus took this law and expanded it to include any need that could be met. Jesus emphasized works of mercy. In comparison with the previous study of the Sabbath in the Old Testament, it can be seen that at this time Jesus expanded the way in which the Sabbath ought to be observed. It was not only to be a day of rest--for man still needed that for his total welfare--but now also involved acts of mercy. This truly completed the words of Jesus when He stated that "the Sabbath was made for man and not man for the Sabbath" (Mark 2:27 NIV).¹³

The Jew's conviction that it was their duty loyally to observe the sabbath, the covenant gift of God, and so strictly to keep the sabbath commandment by paying no attention to their own needs would, therefore, have seemed to Jesus utterly perverse, for such an attitude had the effect of placing the sabbath above human beings. By instituting the day of rest God had wanted to give human beings a blessing, not hardship.¹⁴

Bacchiocchi also comments on this aspect:

The humanitarian dimension of the Sabbath had largely been forgotten in Christ's day. The claim of rituals had taken the place of the claims of service to human needs. In the statement reported by Matthew, Christ openly attacks this perversion of the Sabbath, saying, "If you had known what this means, I desire mercy and not sacrifice, you would not have condemned the guiltless" (Matt. 12:7). For Christ the disciples are guiltless though they had contravened the Sabbath law of complete rest, because the true meaning of the commandment is mercy and not sacrifice. This mercy desired by God is characterized both in the Old Testament and the New Testament, as noted by R. Bultmann, not by a vague disposition,

but rather by a concrete attitude that finds expression in helpful acts.¹⁵

Bacchiocchi further declares:

This showing of love by acts of kindness represents for Christ the true observance of the Sabbath, since it acknowledges the very redemptive activity of God, which the day commemorates.¹⁶

The Sabbath was made on account of man and not man on account of the Sabbath. This means that the Sabbath came into being after the creation of man, not to make him a slave of rules and regulations but to ensure his physical and spiritual well being. The welfare of man, then, is not restricted but guaranteed by its proper observance.¹⁷

A day of worship. The worship aspect of the Jewish Sabbath in the New Testament included the reading of the Law of Moses and the prophetic writings in the synagogues (Luke 4:16-20).

Jones says of Jewish background to Christian worship:

At its origin, Christianity was a Jewish religion. Jesus Christ was a Jew, and His first followers were Jews. . . . its roots were still in the Old Testament, and its basic languages were still Hebrew and Aramaic. The teaching of Jesus had, of course, great originality, but whatever in it was traditional it owed to Judaism rather than to any other source. Moreover, in their practice, Jesus and his followers conformed to a large extent to Jewish customs. . . . From the outset, the originality of Christianity is seen in its worship, but so is the traditional, Jewish character of Christianity.¹⁸

The first Christian society at Jerusalem began its existence as a group within the framework of the ancestral Jewish faith. Christianity entered into the inheritance of an already existing pattern of worship, provided by the Temple ritual and synagogue liturgy, even as it built upon

the fundamental Judaic tenets which so impressed the converts to that faith, namely belief in one, righteous God and His call to His people that their lives should be holy and pure:

The first disciples were Jews by birth and upbringing, and it is a priori probable that they would bring into the new community some at least of the religious usages to which they had long been accustomed.¹⁹

The background of early Christian worship must be sought in the two Jewish institutions of the Temple and the synagogue.

Metzger lists the order of a typical synagogue service in New Testament times as consisting probably of four parts:

(a) The service was opened with an invitation to prayer . . . (b) the prayers (c) reading of a lesson from the Mosaic law, which was followed by a lesson from one of the Old Testament prophets, which was followed by an exposition of one or both of the passages, (d) closing with the benediction.²⁰

According to Ralph Martin, there were three main elements: praise, prayer and instruction. I Corinthians 14:26 places at the head of the list of Christian corporate worship at Corinth a psalm of praise. Prayers in Jewish worship fall into two parts. The first group comprise two utterances (the Yotzer which means "He who forms" and takes up the theme of God as Creator of all things; and the Ahabah which means "love" and is concerned both to recall God's love for His people and to pledge their obligation to love Him in return.) The second division of united prayer comes next, with

the way prepared by the reciting of the prayer known as "true and firm." At this point, the minister summons a member of the assembly to lead in the "prayer proper," i.e., the Eighteen Benedictions. Once the prayers are said, the service assumes a form which has given to the synagogue its distinctive characteristic. The Jews themselves called it "the house of instruction," for there is nothing more in keeping with Jewish worship than the emphasis which is placed upon the Scripture-reading and exposition. Instruction was given by two means: first, the Law and the Prophets were read, then there came the homily or address based on the Scriptures read (Luke 4:21).²¹

A sign. Regarding the third aspect of the observance of the Sabbath for the New Testament Christians, it continued to serve as a sign. The setting aside a day for worship and for doing deeds of mercy was a continued sign that God loved His people and that God was the source of their salvation. These early Christians were Jews and they were still God's chosen people. The Sabbath to them remained to be a link into their history. Their forefathers were the ones delivered from Egypt by God. A heritage such as that could not have been erased very easily from their minds nor from their hearts.

New Testament Christians' Observance of the Lord's Day

The third aspect of the transition from the Sabbath to the Lord's Day involves a look at the New Testament Christians'

observance of the Lord's Day. It is during this phase that a whole new concept behind observing a particular day developed. This is the period following the resurrection of Christ. Regarding the transition, Edward Deems states:

When Christ came, He found the Sabbath covered with the barnacles of tradition and man-made regulations, many of which were as absurd as they were burdensome. These He removed with unsparing hand. He claimed that "the Son of man is Lord also of the Sabbath" (Mark 2:28). He observed it carefully as He did all the moral and ceremonial law of the Old Testament Church. Faithfully He attended the services of the temple and the synagogue. The apostles also honored the Sabbath.

Since our Lord's resurrection, the day of the week on which the Sabbath has been observed has been changed by almost all Christians from Saturday to Sunday. In the apostolic age of the Church, both Saturday and Sunday were observed by Christians, out of consideration of the conscience of the Jewish converts; but gradually the observance of Saturday became almost obsolete.²²

Up to this point the Christians were observing the Sabbath with Jesus. With the resurrection of Jesus past, the Jewish Christians at first continued to observe the Sabbath with its law of rest and its meetings in the synagogue for Bible reading and prayer. But more important for them was the new commemorative day--the first day of the week. This was not simply the weekly holiday postponed for one day; it was something quite distinctive with an entirely new meaning and an entirely new character. Therefore, it soon received a new name. Whereas the weekdays continued to be simply enumerated one after the other (second, third day of the week), the new commemorative day received its own particular name.

As early as the close of the first century it was called the "day of the Lord."²³

Through the resurrection of Jesus, Christ became in the word's fullest sense the Lord--the head of His church. His divine power and His real greatness were revealed. The Lord's Day is equivalent to Christ's day. It is "the same meaning as with the Lord's meal, the Lord's supper, that is, the meal instituted by Christ."²⁴

The Sabbath too, may still have been observed here and there, but already in earliest times the primitive Christian service created for itself a specifically Christian setting in which one day was specially marked out as the day for the services. This was the Lord's Day.

The Christian's Lord's Day, despite being separate from the Jewish Sabbath, was observed in the same three ways as was the Sabbath: (1) as a day of rest, (2) as a day of worship, and (3) as a sign.

A day of rest. The very primitive theology of Sunday did not require total rest from work on Sunday. As Bacchiocchi quotes Rordorf as saying, "until well into the second century we do not find the slightest indication in our sources that Christians marked Sunday by any kind of abstention from work."²⁵ The resurrection of Christ, which in time became the dominant reason for Sunday observance, initially was commemorated by a common gathering for worship and not by a whole day of rest.

The rest prescribed in the fourth commandment is expounded by the early Fathers largely in terms of spiritual rest in Christ. There is no evidence that the earliest Christians refrained from all servile work on the Lord's day.²⁶

Concerning Sunday rest, the early Church did not transfer the obligation of the Sabbath law to Sunday. It was generally understood, of course, that all work that would make attendance at divine worship impossible had to be discontinued. Beyond this necessary demand, however, no abstinence from any particular external occupation was required.

On the other hand, the solemn atmosphere of the Lord's day, the joyful participation in long church services (usually twice a day, morning and afternoon), and the practice of spiritual recollection naturally led to a general custom of abstaining more and more from strenuous and protracted occupations on Sunday.²⁷

A day of worship. Even as the aspect of rest differed in its emphasis and enforcement, so also was the worship aspect of the Lord's Day unique. Christian worship was not a precise copy of the synagogue worship. There was a new emphasis and content in accordance with the new revelation which expressed the new spirit. The prophetic books rather than the Law became the chief center of interest. Soon, too--although more than a century passed before the canon was fixed--the Christian Scriptures began to take form. Comprised of letters and memoirs of the Apostles and others, collections of the sayings and acts of Christ, and finally the Apocalypse, these new Scriptures early took precedence over the old. The highest place was given to the Gospels, described by Origen as "the crown of all Scriptures." The Christians continued to use the Psalms in their worship much as they had been used in

the synagogues, but also composed hymns of their own. Their prayers, too, though related in form to those of the synagogue so that it was possible for all to take part, soon underwent a separate development until a new body of devotion appeared, fitted to express the worship of those who had come to know God as revealed in Jesus Christ.

The early Christians added another element to their worship derived directly from Christ: the perpetuation in prayer and sacramental fellowship of the experience of the Upper Room. More than words could do, this holy action brought to mind all that the Lord had done and made them supremely conscious of His living presence with them. The experience was charged with power by the fact of the resurrection. In obedience to the Apostolic injunction, custom soon settled down in its choice of the first day of the week for the celebration of the Lord's Supper with day-break (the hour when He first discovered Himself to them) as the hour of worship. Not Friday, the day of His death, but Sunday, the day of His resurrection, was the Lord's Day. To that day belonged their highest act of worship when they showed forth His death victoriously in the eucharist, while He himself, their risen Lord, was present in their midst.

Maxwell, putting together the references to worship in the New Testament, arrived at the following as being practiced toward the end of the first century:

First, that which grew out of the Synagogue: Scripture lections (I Tim. iv. 13:1; I Thess. v. 27; Col. iv. 16); Psalms and hymns (I Cor. xiv. 26; Eph. v. 19; Col. iii. 16); common prayers (Acts ii. 42; I Tim. ii. 1-2) and people's Amens (I Cor. xiv. 16); a sermon or exposition (I Cor. xiv. 26; Acts xx. 7); a confession of faith, not necessarily the formal recitation of a creed (I Cor. xv. 1-4; I Tim. vi. 12); and perhaps almsgiving (I Cor. xvi. 1-2; II Cor. ix. 10-13; Rom. xv. 26).

Secondly, commonly joined to the above, the Celebration of the Lord's Supper, derived from the experience of the Upper Room (I Cor. x. 16, xi. 23; Matt. xxvi. 26-28; Mark xiv. 22-24; Luke xxii. 19-20). The Prayer of Consecration would include thanksgiving (Luke xxii. 19; I Cor. xi. 23, xiv. 16; I Tim. ii. 1), remembrance of our Lord's death and resurrection (Acts ii. 42; Luke xxii. 19; I Cor. xi. 23, 25, 26), intercession (John xvii), and perhaps the recitation of the Lord's Prayer (Matt. vi. 9-13; Luke xi. 2-4). Probably there were singings in this part of the service, and the Kiss of Peace (Rom. xvi. 16; I Cor. xvi. 20; I Thess. v. 26; I Pet. v. 14). Men and women were separated as in the synagogues; the men were bare-headed and the women veiled (I Cor. xi. 6-7). The attitude of prayer was standing (Phil. i. 27; Eph. vi. 14; I Tim. ii. 8).²⁸

Thus Christian worship, as a distinctive, indigenous activity arose from the fusion, in the crucible of the Christian experience, of the Synagogue and the Upper Room. Thus fused, each completing and quickening the other, they became the norm of Christian worship. Christian worship found other forms of expression, but these belong to the circumference, not to the center. The typical worship of the Synagogue and the sacramental experience of the Upper Room in union dates from New Testament times.

A sign. The Lord's Day was also observed as a sign, as was the Jewish Sabbath. The Lord's Day was not the Jewish Sabbath. The first Christians selected the first day of the week, since Christ on this day had risen from the dead and had appeared to the disciples gathered together for a meal.

The Lord's Day of the first Christians was therefore a celebration of Christ's resurrection. Each Lord's Day was an Easter Festival, since this was not yet confined to one single Sunday in the year:

Easter was, from the very beginning, celebrated every year as the feast of the Redemption. It was the solemn commemoration of the historical fact that Christ through His passion had rid the world of sin and through His resurrection opened a door for us into life everlasting; that He has redeemed us and gathered us under the sign of the Redemption to be a new people of God, to be His Church. . . . It was in the Resurrection that His own transfigured body became the evidence of what that suffering and death had won for us.²⁹

The Lord's Day is a specifically Christian festival day, and the fact that it derives its meaning from Christ's resurrection gives an important hint to the basic Christian meaning of all gatherings of the primitive community for worship.³⁰

The Lord's day was a sign that the earthly work of God was completed in Christ's death and resurrection. Because of this resurrection of Christ, the Lord's Day was also a sign, indicating the hope which existed in the Christians. The hope was in the election of grace in Christ; the hope of an eternal salvation and eternal rest. The observance of the Lord's day was, for the early Christian,

not simply a day of devotion and rest, but one of renewed commitment and consecration to Christ, his Lord.

The Christian saw in the first day of the week a new beginning. Just as on the first day in the creation there had been a beginning, so now there was a new beginning, brought about by Christ's resurrection-- firstfruits of the world; first fruits of the resurrection (II Cor. 5:17; Eph. 2:10; 2:5-6, 4:24; Col. 3:10; Gal. 6:15).³¹

The atmosphere was that of realized eschatology. The early Christians felt that they were in an era of fulfillment. With the resurrection and the giving of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost, the new era, the New Covenant, had begun.³²

The background, then, in which the observance of Sunday began was an eschatological one, instinct [sic] with joy and hope, in which the corporate observance was the outstanding characteristic. The sense of oneness in Christ's body and of the importance of each individual member (I Cor. 12:15-25) would mean that for any to be absent from the gathering, would be considered a tragedy, the absence of one limb from the body.³³

Discontinuance of Sabbath Observance by Christians

As the Gospel spread, along with the conversion of Gentiles came a controversy. Must pagans become Jews in order to be perfected Christians? Paul said no to this question (Acts 15). The dispute was finally settled in Jerusalem. A delegation from Antioch (Paul and Barnabas) made their defenses. The result was that circumcision was not required but there were four rules of conformity: to abstain from the defilement of idolatry, from sexual

promiscuity, from eating the flesh of strangled animals, and from blood. This was the initial separation of Christianity from Judaism. (These four requirements dealt with the practices most repulsive to the Jewish believers.) The main objective of liberty for the Gentiles had been attained so that they were no longer under bondage to the law and to its ceremonies (Acts 15:7-11).³⁴

It was not until the time of Hadrian (117-138) that there began with the Epistle of Barnabas the development of a Christian theology of separation from contempt for the Jews. The adoption of a negative attitude toward the Jews can be explained by several circumstances existing particularly at the time of Hadrian. First, the relationship between Rome and the Jews was extremely tense. The Jews were subjected to repressive and punitive measures. Secondly, a conflict existed between the Church and the Synagogue. Christians were not only barred from the Synagogues, but often denounced to the authorities, and when possible, directly persecuted by the Jews. Thirdly, a certain degree of imperial protection was granted to the Christians. Possibly Rome recognized that Christians had no nationalistic aspirations and posed no political threat. Fourthly, the influence of Judeo-Christians was felt within the Church. By insisting on the literal observance of certain Mosaic regulations, dissociation and resentment were encouraged.

Such circumstances invited Christians to develop a new identity, not only characterized by a negative attitude

toward Jews, but also by the replacement of characteristic Jewish religious customs with Christian customs. These would serve to make the Roman authorities aware that the Christians were free from all ties with the religion of Israel. Under Hadrian Jerusalem became increasingly Gentile; his action insured the separation of Christianity from Judaism.³⁵

The abandonment of the Sabbath and adoption of Sunday as a new day of worship occurred first in Rome as part of the process of differentiation from Judaism. The introduction of the Sunday worship in place of Jewish Sabbath-keeping could well represent a measure taken by the leaders of the Church of Rome to evidence their severance from Judaism and thereby also avoid the payment of a discriminatory tax.³⁶

The role that the Church of Rome played in causing the abandonment of the Sabbath and the adoption of Sunday has been underestimated. If one recognizes that in deliberate distinction from Judaism the first Christians selected the first day of the week, then Rome emerges as the most logical place for the origin of Sunday worship.³⁷ It is there that both the circumstances and the authority necessary to accomplish such a liturgical change are found. These conditions did not exist in the East where Jewish influence survived longer. The change in the day of worship seems to have been encouraged on the one hand by the social, military, political and literary anti-Judaic imperial policies which made it necessary for Christians to sever their ties with the Jews;

and on the other hand, by the very conflict existing between the Jews and Christians.³⁸ Such circumstances invited Christians to develop a new identity. The adoption of a new day of worship appears to have been motivated by the necessity to evidence a clear dissociation from the Jews.³⁹

DAY TO BE KEPT HOLY

Christians should not observe the Lord's Day purely out of traditionalism; there should be an observance of the Lord's Day because it has special significance in the life of the Christian. This significance is best described by presenting the term "holy" with its definition and how it is used in Scripture.

Holy Defined

Exodus 20:8 states, "Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy" (NIV). The root word for the term "holy" is the Hebrew word kadaš (קִדַּשׁ), and can be defined as:

to be pure, . . . ascribed to all those things which in any way pertain to God, or his worship; free from defilement of vice, idolatry, and other impure and profane things . . . ; to be hallowed; to be consecrated; . . . separation or cutting off, applied to the separation of a person or thing to divine use, and so eventually to the state of the object or person so reserved.⁴⁰

The New Testament words translated from this Hebrew word are hagios (ἅγιος), the adjective which means:

reverend, . . . set apart for God, to be as it were, exclusively his; prepared for God with solemn rite, pure; clean; in a moral sense, pure, sinless, upright.⁴¹

and hagiadzo (ἁγιαζω), the verb which means:

to make holy (ἁγιοῦ), render or declare sacred, consecrate. . . . to hallow; to separate from things profane and dedicate to God, to consecrate . . . ; to purify.⁴²

In the Old Testament, holiness is designated of places, things, seasons, and official persons by virtue of their connection with the worship of God. The first application of the term is to the seventh-day Sabbath which God declared and made holy (Gen. 2:3). It is likewise applied to the place of worship or sanctuary and also to things within the sanctuary used in the worship of God. Similarly, it is used in connection with Levites, priests, and other persons officially connected with the worship of God. In these instances holiness signifies a relation that involved separation from common use and dedication to God.

The Sabbath is holy to God (Ex. 16:23), and in Exodus 20:8, God commanded man to keep the Sabbath holy. The Sabbath was a day of sacred assembly (Lev. 23:3). God told Moses to have sacred garments made for his brother Aaron (Ex. 28:2). The altar of God was made holy and anything touching it was made holy (Ex. 29:37). The tabernacle was a holy place where God dwelled and people found atonement (Lev. 6:30). God commanded holiness in Leviticus 20:7 and called himself holy in Leviticus 20:26. An excellent example of a holy people being separate from others is presented in Exodus 19:5-6.

The Old Testament applies the word "holy" to human beings in virtue of their consecration to religious purposes. For example, priests were consecrated by special ceremonies. Even the whole nation of Israel as a people separated from the nations and consecrated to God was called holy. In this sense, it was the highest expression of the covenant relationship. And it is clear that it was their relationship to God that constituted Israel a holy people.

Alongside the progressive revelation of God, the conception of holiness advanced from the outward to the inward; from ceremonial to reality, and took on a strong ethical significance. It is this imparting of the divine holiness which takes place in the soul of man in regeneration and becomes the spring and foundation of holy character. Mankind is called to be partakers of God's holiness (Heb. 12:10).

In His life and character, Christ is the supreme example of the divine holiness. In Him it consisted of more than mere sinlessness: it was His entire consecration to the will and purpose of God, and to this end Jesus sanctified himself (John 17:19). The holiness of Christ is both the standard of the Christian character and its guarantee: "Both the one who makes men holy and those who are made holy are of the same family" (Hebrews 2:11, NIV). In the New Testament the apostolic designation for Christians is "saints," and though its primary significance was relationship, it was also descriptive of character--especially of Christlike character. The New Testament everywhere emphasizes the ethical nature of

holiness in contrast to all uncleanness. It is represented as the supreme goal of Christian living.

Paul makes reference to being devoted to God (I Cor. 7:34). There is also reference to a holy kiss, which is to be given to fellow believers as they meet (I Cor. 16:20). Ephesians 1:4 says that Christians are to be holy for they are God's elect and were from the beginning. Fellow believers are given the adjective of being holy brothers (Heb. 3:1). A reference to a place being called holy or set apart is Matthew 23:13, ". . . my house will be called a house of prayer" (NIV).

Conclusions

One term that can readily be seen which transcends the divisions of Old and New Testaments is "consecration." Its meaning is:

to set apart, dedicate, or sanctify a person or thing to some sacred purpose related to the service and worship of God, and so, often, to give the person or object itself a character of holiness.⁴³

It is important that a difference between the Old Testament and New Testament usages of the term "holy" be presented. In the Old Testament God imparted holiness to persons, things, events and time. He imparted this holiness in relation to himself. That which was in direct relation to Him or used to worship Him was holy. God alone can impart holiness, for He is the source of holiness.

In the New Testament God did not impart holiness as He did in the Old Testament. There is only one account of God setting apart anyone for His purpose--that person was Jesus (John 10:36). Mankind is called or commanded to be holy (I Peter 1:15-16), but this holiness is only received through acceptance of God's Son Jesus Christ. In the New Testament a person is holy in relation to Christ. Romans 6:11 says, "count yourselves dead to sin but alive to God in Christ Jesus" (NIV); and in verse 19, Paul states:

I put this in human terms because you are weak in your natural selves. Just as you used to offer the parts of your body in slavery to impurity and to ever-increasing wickedness, so now offer them in slavery to righteousness leading to holiness (NIV).

The acceptance of Jesus Christ as one's Savior is the key to holiness in the New Testament. Because God did not specify what or who should be holy as He did in the Old Testament, man ascribed holiness (he did not, indeed could not, impart holiness) to that person or thing which was consecrated or set apart for the service and worship of God. Man labelled his fellow Christian as being a holy brother (Heb. 3:1) because he was in right relationship with God through Christ. Christians have termed the cross as being holy, the sacraments as being holy, and the Lord's Day as holy. These are called holy because of their relation to Christ. They are to be set aside, to be made separate from the ordinary or common because they have a special meaning--they represent all that Christ has done for mankind. It is because of the special

meaning of Christ's appearance to His disciples on the first day of the week (Christ's victory over death and the proof that man's hope is not in vain) that the Lord's day is a day to be kept holy by Christians.

DAY OF REST

Not only is the Lord's day a day to be kept holy; it is also a day of rest. Jesus said, "the Sabbath was made for man and not man for the Sabbath" (Mark 2:27, NIV). Despite the discontinued observance of the Jewish Sabbath by second century Christians, the concept of rest was carried over from the Sabbath observance to the Lord's Day observance.

Rest Defined

There are two main terms in the Old Testament for the term "rest." The meanings of these two words and their variant spellings are as follows:

נָח To rest, . . . to be at rest, of men and beasts, of God, of the earth; . . . especially to rest from labour, from vexation and calamities, . . . to give rest to, as God gave rest and quiet possession to his people in Canaan.⁴⁴

שָׁבַט To rest from labour; Sabbatical rest.⁴⁵

The term "rest" has various forms in the New Testament including these: ἀναπαύω, καταπαύω, σαββατισμός. The various meanings encompassed by these words include the following:

Make to cease, cause to rest; rest; relief; stand, . . . be quiet; . . . place of rest; . . . Sabbath observance.⁴⁶

Intermission, cessation, of . . . business labor; Rest, recreation; blessed tranquility of soul; denotes a temporary rest, a respite; To cause or permit one to cease from any movement or labor in order to recover and collect his strength; to give rest, refresh; to give oneself rest, take rest; sweet repose one enjoys after toil; . . . to refresh.⁴⁷

To cause to cease; . . . to refresh someone; . . . rest from labour; . . . cessation, interruption; . . .⁴⁸

In the Old Testament rest is used in both a theological and a non-theological sense. In the non-theological sense there are meanings such as rest, settle down, remain (Gen. 8:4); repose (Isa. 23:12), and rest, cease or desist (Ex. 20:10). The Lord rested from activity (Gen. 2:2). The Sabbath was to be a day of rest (Ex. 31:15). The land of promise was to have rest every seventh year (Lev. 25:4). The Temple was the Lord's resting-place among His people (Ps. 82:8, 14).

Usually the rest was purely physical (e.g., Gen. 8:4, ". . . the ark came to rest on the mountains of Ararat." NIV). Even when men rested or were given rest by God, it was a physical rest rather than a spiritual rest, such as the rest to be received in the Promised Land (Ex. 33:14, "My presence will go with you, and I will give you rest." NIV). Physical rest also included freedom from war (Josh. 23:1). The rest which Naomi desired for her widowed daughters-in-law was the security and comfort of a good marriage (Ruth 1:9; 3:1). The rest of the Sabbath was freedom from ordinary work; it was enjoyed, not only by the pious Israelite, but also by his

servants, aliens living in his land, and by his livestock (Ex. 20:10). Its purpose was refreshment (Ex. 23:12).

In the theological sense there is the connection with the idea of the people of God being given rest from their many enemies. In the religious realm the use was extended to include the idea of God's Spirit resting on men and things (Num. 11:25; Isa. 11:2), the resting of God's hand (Isa. 25:10), and the rest in the grave (Job 3:17). There is also the rest which God will provide in the promised land. The Sabbath rest was a gift to Israel for their own welfare and for the purpose of remembrance of God's saving action in bringing them out of Egypt. It was also to be observed as a sign of the covenant which existed between God and Israel.

In the New Testament there are three main uses of rest: the eschatological sense, the non-theological sense and the theological sense. In the book of Revelation the meaning is extended to signify rest from hardship and affliction in the eschatological consummation (Rev. 6:11; 14:13). The four living creatures praise God without rest (Rev. 4:8), while in contrast those who worship the beast have no rest from torment (Rev. 14:11). Paul speaks of a future relief (rest) when Jesus comes again (II Thes. 1:7).

In the non-theological sense there is the reference in Luke 8:24 to where Jesus calmed the storm and all was at rest. In Matthew 26:45, the disciples were sleeping; receiving physical rest. Jesus took his disciples and sought physical rest (Mark 6:31). I Corinthians 16:18; Philemon 7,

20; and II Corinthians 7:13 speak of calming someone who has become disturbed; to refresh by giving comfort. This type of rest may come about through Christian love, fellowship or action, or by relaying news of such. The church knew a short period of peace (rest) without persecution or hardships (Acts 9:31). Paul speaks of being without peace (rest) of mind in II Corinthians 2:13. Paul and his companions were tired for they received no rest (II Cor. 7:5). Luke 23:56 says that Mary and the others after seeing Jesus in the tomb went home and prepared for the Sabbath day and rested on it according to the commandment.

In both the theological and nontheological sense, the concept of rest finds its ultimate and deepest development in Matthew 11:28-30. Everyone whose life is marked by a lack of peace and security is called to become a disciple of Jesus. It is in Jesus that true rest is found, which is peace, contentment and security in God. The thought is not that those who come to Christ will have no more work, but that Christ will give them a rest and refreshment of soul that they may be fit for work, should God have any for them to do.⁴⁹

The tired who come to Christ are refreshed; they accept his service and teaching, and in performing it find further rest.

Conclusions

The study of rest in the Old Testament reveals an emphasis on the physical sense of rest. A beginning spiritual

emphasis is revealed in the prophets' comments on rest. In the Old Testament it is God who establishes their rest by commanding that the Sabbath observance be strictly kept, by giving them victory over their enemies and by establishing a time to rest.

God was the organizer and the source of Israel's rest, and it was only fitting that Israel's rest depended upon her faith and trust in God. Those who were unfaithful and disobedient lost the rest which God had for them.

A prominent thought that surfaces is that the Sabbath rest was a gift of God. He gave it to Israel to aid them physically, mentally and spiritually. It was a day of no work and a day to worship God.

The study of rest in the New Testament begins with a view that physical rest in the Jewish tradition was the emphasis in the Gospels. The Sabbath was strictly upheld even for a time after Jesus' death (Luke 23:56). No work was to be done; the preparation day was still observed. It is in the Gospels, though, that a partial break with the traditional view of Sabbath observance concerning work appears. In Mark 2:23-28, Jesus' disciples did an unthinkable thing in the eyes of the Pharisees. According to the Pharisees' laws and interpretation, the disciples did work on the Sabbath, which was against the commandment of God. The Pharisees asked Jesus about His disciples' actions and He replied with a story from the Old Testament which was the source of the commandment. Jesus then responded, "The Sabbath was made

for man and not man for the Sabbath. So the Son of Man is Lord even of the Sabbath" (Mark 2:27-28, NIV). Jesus interpreted the law the way it was originally meant to be used. The Sabbath was not intended to be a burden that man must serve regardless of the cost to himself; rather, it was given to meet man's need for rest. When Jesus stated that He was Lord of the Sabbath, He was not asserting His freedom to violate the Sabbath law, but rather He was declaring His qualification to interpret that law. A new approach was put into play by Jesus, revealed in Matthew 12:7, "I desire mercy, not sacrifice" (NIV). Deeds of mercy became a part of Jesus' Sabbath observance.

Following the death of Jesus and the resurrection of Christ, rest for the Christians began to take on a new emphasis--that of spiritual rest. It was the rest from the guilt of sin, from the burden and weight of sin itself, peace of heart and mind, and the hope of a future and final rest with their savior Jesus Christ.

In summary, the Old Testament emphasis of rest was upon God as the source of rest. For the Post-resurrection disciples and converts, the emphasis shifted to faith in Christ as the source of rest. With Jesus as their leader and example, it can be assumed that the Christians' observance of the Sabbath and later the Lord's Day was filled with worship and with deeds of mercy and not a total cessation of work. Jesus presumably would abhor a day spent in total inactivity. The rest implied is a change in the daily routine. A day was to

be set aside and to be made holy, not by worship alone, but also by deeds of mercy.⁵⁰

NOTES

¹Roland de Vaux, Ancient Israel, II (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1965), p. 480.

²Brevard S. Childs, The Book of Exodus (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1974), p. 415.

³Niels-Erik A. Andreasen, The Old Testament Sabbath (Missoula, MT: University of Montana, 1972), p. 13.

⁴Samuel J. Schultz, The Old Testament Speaks (New York: Harper & Row, 1970), p. 276.

⁵H. Graety, Popular History of the Jews, I (New York: Hebrew Publishing Company, 1919), p. 270.

⁶H. H. Rowley, Worship in Ancient Israel: Its Forms and Meaning (London: S.P.C.K., 1967), p. 90.

⁷Graety, op. cit., p. 291.

⁸Helmer Ringgren, Israelite Religion (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1966), p. 328.

⁹J. L. Ronan, "Worship (In the Bible)," New Catholic Encyclopedia (1967), XIV, 1034-35.

¹⁰Graety, op. cit., p. 289.

¹¹Andreasen, op. cit., p. 211.

¹²Ralph P. Martin, Worship in the Early Church (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1974), p. 18.

¹³Josef A. Jungmann, The Early Liturgy (South Bend, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1962), pp. 20ff.

¹⁴Willy Rordorf, Sunday (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1968), p. 63.

¹⁵Samuele Bacchiocchi, From Sabbath to Sunday (Rome: The Pontifical Gregorian University Press, 1977), p. 54.

¹⁶Ibid., p. 55.

¹⁷Ibid., p. 56.

- ¹⁸Cheslyn Jones, Geoffrey Wainwright, and Edward Yarnold, The Study of Liturgy (New York: Oxford University Press, 1978), p. 39.
- ¹⁹T. W. Manson, Christian Worship: Studies in its History and Meaning (Oxford: S.P.C.K, 1936), p. 35.
- ²⁰Bruce M. Metzger, The New Testament: Its Background, Growth and Content (New York: Abingdon Press, 1965), pp. 58-59.
- ²¹Martin, op. cit., pp. 25-26.
- ²²Edward M. Deems, Holy Days and Holidays (New York: Funk & Wagnalls Company, 1902), p. 209.
- ²³Jungmann, op. cit., p. 20.
- ²⁴Ibid., p. 21.
- ²⁵Bacchiocchi, op. cit., p. 316.
- ²⁶Paul K. Jewett, The Lord's Day (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1971), p. 151.
- ²⁷Francis X. Weiser, Handbook of Christian Feasts and Customs (New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, Inc., 1958), pp. 8-9.
- ²⁸William D. Maxwell, An Outline of Christian Worship (New York: Oxford University Press, 1955), pp. 4-5.
- ²⁹Jungmann, op. cit., p. 72.
- ³⁰Oscar Cullman, Early Christian Worship (Chicago: Henry Regnery Company, 1953), pp. 11-12.
- ³¹Roger T. Beckwith and Wilford Scott, This is the Day (Greenwood, SC: The Attic Press, Inc., 1978), p. 104.
- ³²Ibid., p. 85.
- ³³Ibid., p. 88.
- ³⁴Tenney, op. cit., p. 250.
- ³⁵Ibid., p. 350.
- ³⁶Bacchiocchi, op. cit., p. 173; see also Tenney, op. cit., p. 250.
- ³⁷The separation between Christianity and Judaism was a process, not a sudden break; and though the official break was in Rome, other separations occurred elsewhere (e.g. Jerusalem; see Tenney, op. cit., p. 351.)

³⁸Bacchiocchi, op. cit., p. 211.

³⁹Ibid., p. 234.

⁴⁰William Wilson, Old Testament Word Studies (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publications, 1978), p. 220; see also Samuel Prideaux Tregelles, trans., Gesenius' Hebrew and Chaldee Lexicon (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1979), p. 725; see also J. D. Douglas, ed., The New Bible Dictionary (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1962), p. 530.

⁴¹Joseph H. Thayer, Thayer's Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1977), pp. 6-7.

⁴²Ibid., p. 6.

⁴³George A. Buttrick, ed., The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible, I (New York: Abingdon Press, 1962), 676.

⁴⁴Wilson, op. cit., pp. 352-353; see also Aaron Pick, Dictionary of Old Testament Words for English Readers (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publications, 1977), pp. 374-375.

⁴⁵Ibid.

⁴⁶Clinton Morrison, An Analytical Concordance to the Revised Standard Version of the New Testament (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1973), p. 482.

⁴⁷Thayer, op. cit., pp. 373-374.

⁴⁸Gerhard Kittel and Gerhard Friedrich, eds., Theological Dictionary of the New Testament, II (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Pub., Co., 1971), p. 350.

⁴⁹Williams Lukyna, Pulpit Commentary, eds. H. D. M. Spence and Joseph S. Exell, Vol. XV (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Pub. Co., 1950), pp. 450-454.

⁵⁰For an excellent presentation of rest--spiritual, physical, and eschatological--read Hebrews 3 and 4; see also Colin Brown, ed., The New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology, III (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Pub. House, 1978), p. 257.

Chapter 5

CONCLUSION

THE LORD'S DAY IS FUNCTIONAL-BIBLICAL-NECESSARY

In order to make the thesis statement of this dissertation valid and applicable, three criteria need to be met:

- (1) A proper observance of the Lord's Day is functional;
- (2) A proper observance of the Lord's Day is biblical; and
- (3) A proper observance of the Lord's Day is necessary.

A proper observance of the Lord's Day includes worship of God, fellowship with other believers, rest, and service to others.

Observance is Functional

In order for something to be functional, it must have or serve a purpose, it must be accessible, and it must be usable. The observance of the Lord's Day provides a recurring, regular time for rest from everyday pressures in the physical, mental, and spiritual realms. It provides an opportunity to worship God and have fellowship with other believers. Man can take his mind off himself and his own affairs and take time to minister to the needs of others. The observance of the Lord's Day is equally accessible to all: all men have seven days in the week. The observance of the Lord's Day is usable in that

churches and other places of worship are available for use on the Lord's Day for meeting man's needs for worship and fellowship; rest is man's option, free for the choosing--no one need work seven days a week; and there is never a lack of people in need for whom service may be rendered.

The observance of the Lord's Day should be a normal, characteristic action of the Christian. Those who have accepted Christ as their Savior should want to set aside a special time to worship God, the source and means of that salvation. Fellowship, also, should be a normal action because of the desire to share joys and sorrows and to uplift one another in testimony and in prayer. The Christian should make one day holy, set apart from the other days of the week to rest from labor. Neither a selfish rest nor a total cessation from work, it should provide a change in both physical and mental labor from the previous six days and also be a preparation for facing the demands of the upcoming six work days. The normal action of the Christian should also be characterized by service to others through help and acts of kindness.

The observance of the Lord's Day is functional in that it is a day with special duties to perform. These duties as described above should be the natural choice of the Christian--not impersonal rules to be followed and enforced. When Christians keep the Lord's Day as a day of worship and fellowship, it must be carefully drawn out that they do not do this to be saved--they do this because they are saved.

The Jewish Sabbath and the Lord's Day are both associated with rest. However, the rest of the Lord's Day is not the inactivity of the Sabbath, but the restful activity of the service of God. The fourth commandment deals with work and rest, which are essentials for life. The Sabbath was never made to be a day of gloom or restriction, but a day of gladness to think upon God, to cease from work. "Rest is frictionless service without weariness, because it is the service of God and in it all activity takes the form of worship."¹

Sunday is often considered free time, and man wants to do what he likes to do in his free time, whether it be fishing, camping, golfing, traveling, or watching the "pros" at the ball park. If these are dominant desires, an hour in church will make a man feel like he is cheated. Ideally, the day should be the Christian's weekly witness to the resurrection of Christ. The Christian should value Sunday as his great opportunity for worship, rest, and works of mercy. The sanctity of the day should be respected as especially holy in a week of which all the days are God's. But to many, Sunday is just a second Saturday. The Christian should view the institution of Sunday as part of the perfect law of liberty, the law of love. He should observe the day in a faith which renounces all confidence in his own self and works and rests in God only for deliverance from the guilt and power of sin. He should observe the day in meeting with

God's people with joy. The Christian should observe the day in acknowledgment that it especially belongs to the Lord.

Observance is Biblical

The Sabbath is of very ancient origin, and its observance was a distinctive mark of Judaism. The Old Testament expressly connects the term "sabbath" with the root meaning "to desist, to stop work" (Exodus 20:11; Gen. 2:2-3). But while it does homage to God, it also benefits man (Ex. 23:12; Deut. 5:14).

Jesus was careful to observe the Sabbath. However, he encouraged his followers to be more concerned about the true spirit of the Sabbath rest rather than about the letter of the law: "the Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath" (Mark 2:27, NIV). The Sabbath was not intended to be a heartless master that man must serve regardless of the cost to himself; rather it was given to meet man's need for rest. In Mark 2:28, Jesus was not asserting his freedom to violate the Sabbath law, but rather He was declaring His qualification to interpret that law.

At first sight, one might be tempted to think that the early Church put in place of the Sabbath not only another day, but a quite different celebration. It was often maintained that to celebrate Sunday would be to disobey the Old Testament commandment which states that the Sabbath is to be holy. One must recognize, however, that the Christian Sunday is the "day of the Lord" in so far as it is the day of

Christ, i.e., of His resurrection. The idea which underlies John 5:17 justifies the disobedience in terms of the divine plan of salvation, since this saying, in basing the day of human rest on the divine rest, considers the death and resurrection of Christ alone the inauguration of the true "rest of God." It is a reminder that all the institutions of the Old Covenant have their fulfillment in Christ. Thus there is an internal link between the idea of Christ's resurrection and the idea of the rest of God. The Old Testament looks back to the first creation; the New Testament embraces, in looking at Christ, creation, redemption and new creation.²

The physical relaxation which the rest of the Sabbath provides may be regarded as the preliminary preparation necessary to experience the totality of the divine blessings of creation and redemption which the day commemorates. The themes of the Sabbath spell out and encompass the unfolding of the redemptive history: creation (Gen. 2:2-3; Ex. 20:11; 31:17), liberation (Deut. 5:15; 15:12-18; Lev. 25:2-54), covenant consecration (Ex. 31:13, 14, 17; Ez. 20:20), redemption (Luke 4:18-21; 13:12,16; John 5:17; 7:23; Matt. 11:28; 12:5-6; Heb. 4:2,3,7), and eschatological restoration (Is. 66:23; Heb. 4:11). By evoking and commemorating God's saving activities, the Sabbath provides the believer with a concrete opportunity to accept and experience the total blessings of salvation. The stopping of one's doing on the Sabbath represents the experience of being saved by God's grace.

It is an expression of renunciation to human attempts to work out one's salvation and an acknowledgment of God as the author and finisher of one's salvation. The above themes of the Sabbath are present in the Christian's observance of the Lord's Day, thus bringing about a direct link between the Old Testament Sabbath and the Christian's Lord's Day.³

The Bible gives the authority and the direction that Christians need for observance of the Lord's Day (Mark 2:27). Rest for the body, mind and soul is needed. Rest, refreshment and growth come from worship and fellowship.

Beginning with a biblical foundation, a proper observance of the Lord's Day should be part of a Christian's walk with God. Since New Testament times, most Christians have chosen the day of the resurrection as the Lord's Day and made it their "sabbath." On that day they took their solemn weekly rest and celebrated the Lord's Supper.

The full restoration of the Lord's Day as a day of rest dedicated to God is vital for promoting Christian living in this day. This restoration should not be a return to some outdated legalism, but a fostering of the true spirit of a day given to the things of God.

The Lord's Day could be a day when Christians go deeper into the meaning of life and its joys. Besides worship, a Christian might take up a book, visit a friend, spend quality time with the family. It is a day to be more alert and attentive to others.⁴

The physical rest of the Old Testament Sabbath has been reinterpreted in the New Testament as having its fulfillment in Christ, who delivers the Christian from the bondage of sin. There should be a continuity, though not an identity, between the physical rest of the Jewish Sabbath and the rest of the Lord's Day. If we push for an identity, then the definition of Sunday rest will gravitate toward rules and regulations more appropriate to the age of childhood than to that of maturity (childhood as used by Paul in Galatians 4). If, however, we deny all continuity, we destroy the very meaning of the Lord's Day, for then there is no interruption of our work as a sign that we hope in the election of grace in Christ, and not in our own works. Between these two extremes, the Christian must seek the will of God for his use of the Lord's Day.

The Sabbath was given to man, by God, for worship and rest, to designate the day He rested. The Lord's Day designates the day Christ arose from the grave. The Christian has a new principle (repent and believe) and a new center (Christ).

Observance is Necessary

As presented in Chapter 2, man needs a day set aside for his total health (physical, mental and spiritual). The benefits that are derived from setting aside a day for rest, worship and fellowship are great. The individual is refreshed in body, mind and spirit. This refreshing brings about a

more prepared body and mind to face the future without the doubts and fears which plague the non-Christian. The refreshing also brings about a clearer mind more able to cope with the pressures of life between Lord's Days.

From a day of rest, worship and fellowship, the Christian also receives a renewed perspective of himself and his relationship with God. This renewed perspective also aids him in keeping in focus his purpose and his goals.

Just as there are physical laws which are unchangeable and fixed, so there are spiritual laws and laws governing our minds. If we violate them we will suffer the consequences. One of these laws demands a time for rest, a time and place to set aside the pressures of everyday life. Dwight Carlson states:

The important thing is that we have a safe place to come home to. A place where we experience acceptance, communication, openness, times of fun, and the ability to love and be loved, free from manipulation. A safe place will help replenish energy used during the day and refresh us for the next day of confrontation with the world.⁵

The principle that underlies Carlson's concept of a safe place can be used for describing the Lord's Day as a safe time. This safe time should have all the ingredients of Carlson's safe place: acceptance, communication, openness, times of fun and time to love and be loved, and a time to replenish the body, mind and spirit for the confrontation with the world in the coming week.

Charles Allen has a number of things to say about having a day set aside during the week:

God gave to man the Sabbath as a reward for his labor. The man who labors deserves to rest, and to forget God's gift is only to cheat ourselves. A quote from Sholem Asch's book, East River, "When a man labors not for a livelihood, but to accumulate wealth, then he is a slave. Therefore it is that God granted the Sabbath. For it is by the Sabbath that we know that we are not working animals, born to eat and to labor. We are men. It is the Sabbath which is man's goal; not labor, but the rest which he earns from his labor." We have now well established the fact in our own nation that one can do more work in six days, even in five, than in seven. A run-down person is an unproductive person.⁶

We have spent so much time arguing about what we should not do on Sunday that we sometimes forget what we should do. The person who does not spend time away from the daily grind of life goes blind in his soul. The philosopher Santayana tells us, "A fanatic is one who, having lost sight of his aim, redoubles his effort." And much of the feverish haste we see today is by aimless, purposeless people. God says we need a day a week to keep our aim. As a pastoral counselor, it is rare, very rare, to find an uncontrolled person who regularly worships God and keeps His day holy.⁷

Man needs relaxed re-creation and spiritual inspiration. Just as men build telescopes to gain a clearer view of the stars, so almost since the dawn of civilization, have men built churches and set aside a day to worship, in order to gain a clearer view of God and the high purposes of life.⁸

Man has a need for daily rest. But more importantly, he has a need for a day of rest--a day to be kept holy, a day to rest and replenish the body, mind and spirit. He needs a day to spend in worship, in fellowship, and in deeds of kindness. A Christian will never realize nor will he ever know the wonderful benefits of properly observing the Lord's Day

if he fails to accept the responsibilities, not only to himself, but to God and to others, which come with being a Christian.

NOTES

¹Roger T. Beckwith and Wilford Scott, This is the Day (Greenwood, SC: The Attic Press, Inc., 1978), p. 119.

²Oscar Cullman, Early Christian Worship (Chicago: Henry Regnery Company, 1953), pp. 92-93.

³J. Vernon McGee, The Sabbath Day or the Lord's Day--Which? (Los Angeles: Seth's Printing, 1979), pp. 318-321.

⁴"The Christian Council Statement on Sabbath Observance," Sunday, Oct.-Dec. 1979, p. 23.

⁵Dwight L. Carlson, Run and Not be Weary (Old Tappan, NJ: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1974), p. 108.

⁶Charles L. Allen, God's Psychiatry (Old Tappan, NJ: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1953), p. 25.

⁷Ibid., p. 26.

⁸Ibid., p. 27.

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