

Lord of the Sabbath

Program #4

The Fourth Commandment

LawstSheep Ministries

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Hello, again. This is Brother Kenny wishing you a most delightful Sabbath day!

If you have accepted Jesus as the Lord of the Sabbath AND want to keep the Sabbath that He made for man's good, then what should you do, or not do, each seventh-day of the week?

To find some answers we need to go to the written word of God and see exactly what was commanded by the LORD. The first time the Sabbath is mentioned in Scripture is in Exodus 16: 23-30, and Moses is speaking:

Then he said to them, "This is what, the LORD has said: 'Tomorrow is a Sabbath rest, a holy Sabbath to the LORD. Bake what you will bake today, and boil what you will boil; and lay up for yourselves all that remains, to be kept until morning.' So they laid it up till morning, as Moses commanded; and it did not stink, nor were there any worms in it. Then Moses said, "Eat that today, for today is a Sabbath to the LORD; today you will not find it in the field. Six days you shall gather it, but on the seventh day, the Sabbath, there will be none.

Now it happened that some of the people went out on the seventh day to gather, but they found none. And the LORD said to Moses, "How long do you refuse to keep My commandments and My laws? See! For the LORD has given you the Sabbath; therefore He gives you on the sixth day bread for two days. Let every man remain in his place; let no man go out of his place on the seventh day." So the people rested on the seventh day.

There are a number of important aspects about the Sabbath that are revealed in this account:

1. Note that this command concerning the Sabbath centered around the manna from heaven that God miraculously gave to his people Israel wandering in the wilderness BEFORE the Ten Commandments were given at Mt. Sinai.
2. Note that while it is a Sabbath of rest for the people, it is "a holy Sabbath to the LORD."
3. Also, the people were to bake and boil the manna, the heavenly bread, on the sixth day and lay it up to be eaten on the seventh day. Manna would be provided by God for them six days but no manna would be provided on the seventh day.

As is so common with men, the Israelites failed to heed God's command and some still

went out to look for manna on the seventh day (apparently not gathering a double portion on the sixth day as God said He would provide them).

God shows some annoyance with Moses that God's chosen people would not heed His commandments and laws. They were not to store the manna until the next day. It would not last until then. It would spoil and develop maggots. But, some people disobeyed.

God wanted them not to have to gather food on the Sabbath and to rest from this daily work on the Sabbath. To enable this, He provides them bread for two days on the morning of the sixth day. God even told them to boil or bake what was needed for the Sabbath on the sixth day, and it would not be spoiled for eating on the Sabbath. God's love and care for them is amazing, even performing miracles to meet their basic needs.

And, finally, God further commands that the people not go out of their place on the Sabbath so they will surely rest on the seventh-day from this work of gathering their daily bread. DO NOT fail to see, however, that the Scripture clearly states that it is to be a "Sabbath TO the LORD."

Now, I have dear Christian friends who sincerely believe they do not need to keep the Sabbath as a day of rest from weekly work because they are not "under the Old Covenant" or "not under the Law of Moses."

Well, I can assure you that I do not keep the Sabbath because I believe I am "under the Law of Moses." I am not an Israelite by blood, at least as best I know. And, I am NOT going to trace my family history, or genetic makeup, to try to determine that racial history.

I do know of Sabbath keepers who have tried to determine whether they are of the blood line of Jacob, the first Israelite. Some try to determine of which of the twelve tribes of Jacob/Israel they are descendents. I know that for many it gets very complex and difficult to determine with confidence. Confusion may be increased by the distinction between Israelite fathers or mothers and when there appears to be a mixing of Israelites with Gentile spouses.

According to Titus 3: 9, disciples of Jesus are to avoid genealogies. They are said to be unprofitable and useless. Why? Once the Savior, Jesus, the Christ, appeared by the grace of God, our ancestry was no longer the critical item on who would receive the promise of eternal life. Why would someone ignore God's admonition in this regard? Can't both "Jews" and "Gentiles" accept Jesus as their Savior and Lord? According to Col. 3: 11, the new man in Christ, in the image of the one who created him, is neither Greek nor Jew.

I DO NOT do a number of the things Moses commanded Israel to do. One example is that as a Gentile, I do not tithe to the Levites. The Israelites of the tribe of Levi were the Levitical priesthood selected by God for service to His chosen nation and people: Israel. The law of the tithe is for the eleven other tribes of Israel to support the tribe of Levi which was set aside for God's service to them. The tribe of Levi was not given land from

which to gain their daily bread like the other tribes.

Now, were not the Ten Commandments the basis of the Old Covenant with Israel? Of course they were. This covenant was a marriage covenant. God would symbolically be their husband and provider and Israel would symbolically be the wife of God, submitting to her husband in ALL things. Unfortunately, Israel broke this covenant and God literally divorced His wife. Was there a problem with the covenant; or with the people?

This is not the place to explore what is called in the Bible the Bride of Christ. But, if you think you will be among that bride, expect to have the Ten Commandments written on your heart. I believe the Bride of Christ will indeed willingly and happily keep the Sabbath with their husband, the Lord of the Sabbath.

Now, while some disciples of Christ will claim that they do not have to keep the Sabbath laws of God, they will claim they DO have to keep the other nine Commandments of the Old Covenant. What disciple does not believe it is sin to murder, lie, steal or dishonor their mother and father? This would not just be unscriptural in my opinion, it would be illogical for God to write Ten requirements of His Covenant with His finger in stone, and then decide to make it only Nine! Hey, anyone have a sand blaster eraser for God?

If God made such a fundamental change, you would surely think He would make a clear point about a change of that significance. If you can show me scripture in the Bible where the Sabbath command has been deleted while the other Nine Commandments are retained, I'll promptly end this Lord of the Sabbath Program!

I sometimes listen in amazement when a New Covenant radio preacher uses the Old Testament law of the tithe to beg for, or require, financial support for their ministry, as if the Levitical tithe (not even one of the Ten Commandments) is for Christians today. But, at the same time he insists that one of the Ten Commandments for Israel does not apply today. It is mind boggling. Plus, they make that claim without a Scripture to back it up.

I hope it is plain to you that the Sabbath day command was actually given to Israel BEFORE the Ten Commandments were given at Mt. Sinai. So, even if the frequent claim that Christians today are not under the Sabbath law because it is part of the Old Covenant were true, what can you say about a law given by God before the codification of His law in the Ten Commandments and the Old Covenant with Israel? Are you not under that law either?

Somehow, the sin of murder, evident by the slaying of Abel by Cain, and God's reaction as being against His will (long before He gave the Ten Commandments to Israel), is still in effect today for all men and for their good. Yet, the Sabbath law of rest, made and blessed at Creation for man, and given and kept by Israel per God's command even BEFORE the Ten Commandments were given, is not for today. The commandment against murder applies still today for Christians, but the Sabbath law no longer applies to Christians today. Go figure!

Well, if the LORD intended from the beginning to make a certain day of the week for mankind and then also sanctified it, should anyone be surprised when He included it in the written Ten Commandments given to Israel by Moses? So, what exactly did the LORD require of His people regarding the seventh-day of the week? Thank God, we have His word to inform us. We do not need to be in the dark. His light has shown us His way.

In Exodus 20, we find God speaking to Moses on the top of Mt. Sinai giving the Ten Commandments to Israel. The Fourth Commandment is found at Verse 8:

Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy.

In its most simple expression, two things are being commanded to be done. First, the Sabbath day is to be remembered. It is to be brought to mind. There is no doubt from Scripture that this is the day when God rested after six days of creative work after all that was made (the heavens, the earth and man) was made. It is the day that the Word of God, which became Jesus, God in the flesh, rested. It is the day that was made, blessed and sanctified by God at the time of creation. Was it made just for Israel; or for all mankind? Did Israel exist at creation? Did man exist at creation?

Our world is dominated by the supposedly scientific ideas of a “big bang” creation of a material universe leading to an evolution of life over billions of years that eventually led to the species of man. A believer in Jesus is urged to accept God’s account of creation. I do. Do you?

This is a foundational understanding in the concept of God and man, their relationship and their purpose. The Sabbath IS the commandment that brings this to man’s mind. Just consider the impact in our world, and even in our families, if each week we remembered this God, our Creator, and the day He rested from His creation of all things?

But, more than remembering this great Truth, the second part of the command is to keep the Sabbath day holy. Basically, something holy is something set apart by God for His purpose. It is a day to be kept separate and different from the other days and to be dedicated to our God. It is not difficult to understand that mankind, made in the image and likeness of this God, should remember Him and show by our action an appreciation of our great and Almighty Creator who created us alive out of the inert dust of the earth.

But, if that was all the instruction from God that we had concerning the Fourth Commandment, we would be left with a rather vague impression of just how to carry out the two elements of His command. Our Bible tells us that God knows our needs before we even ask. And, fortunately, we see this regarding the Sabbath day command. So, we find more words spoken by God to Moses in the commandment. In fact, the Fourth Commandment is the longest of the Ten Commandments! Surprising, isn’t it?

We better read it ALL and discover more of what God considered to be the valid requirements in His marriage covenant with Israel. We further read in Ex. 20: 9-10:

Six days you shall labor and do all your work, but the seventh day is the Sabbath of the LORD your God.

Valuable additional instruction are found here. First, is that we see a timing indication for the "remembering" of the Sabbath day. After six days of labor, the seventh day is the Sabbath of the LORD your God. We remember the Sabbath day once each week of seven days, on the seventh day.

Hence we see the typical seven-day week, still the basis of the world's calendars that we use to manage our daily life on this planet. God's ways are seen even among a world that refuses to accept the God of Abraham, as the Creator of all things, or any god at all! Just the idea of it excites me, my friends! The desk, wall or computer calendar of the most strident atheist glorifies our God and His week of Creation every time he uses it. Amen!

Another thing that fascinates me about keeping the Sabbath holy is the part of the command which is often ignored: that you shall labor six days and rest on the seventh! It is not clear to me that God intends for able-bodied men or women to stop working and retire. I do recognize that the nature of our work may change; as it certainly has for me.

But, have you heard of what is often called the Christian or Protestant work ethic? Well, it certainly has some comfortable roots in the Sabbath command. God is not pleased with a sluggard. He says those who don't work, don't eat. He tells us to learn from the ant how to be industrious. God is so wise and so marvelous that it makes me shudder in awe of Him. I have never had a problem with working six days a week, even twelve hours a day, to earn a good living for my family. The unfortunate truth is I was once comfortable working that way seven days a week! I thought it was being a good leader of my family.

When I learned about the Lord of the Sabbath and that He made a day of rest for me for my benefit, you can probably imagine what a blessing this understanding and obedience meant to me AND to my family. One day each week, dad was around to spend high quality time with our children. I suddenly found the time to focus on our Creator and His word. What a delight this was for me. I highly recommend it for you, and God does too! In fact, He commands that you do this.

Well, let's return to God's instruction manual for His people. I will now read the rest of the story found in Ex. 20: verses 9-11:

In it you shall do no work: you, nor your son, nor your daughter, nor your male servant, nor your female servant, nor your cattle, nor your stranger who is within your gates. For in six days the Lord made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that is in them, and rested the seventh day. Therefore the LORD blessed the Sabbath day and hallowed it.

Wow! More instruction on what it means to keep the Sabbath day holy to the LORD. Here we see that one's entire household, even your servants and strangers (meaning those

under your control that are within your gates and not Israelites belonging to the nation of Israel) are to rest from their normal labor. In other words, if you were a farmer or fisher, you do not send your children or servants into the fields to sow or reap, or into the rivers, lakes or seas to cast your nets, to do the work you would have normally done all week.

Do you now also see the benefit that comes with Sabbath keeping concerning the modern family? Consider the common problem of children not having sufficient time with their parents or siblings or grandparents to reap the benefits of the family life that God envisioned when He commanded the first man and woman to be fruitful and fill the earth with humankind. Again, we see why the Sabbath is made for mankind's good and is indeed a blessing to keep; and not a burden at all.

God, in his wisdom knows that even cattle need a rest from their work. And, He knows those who serve others (whether as extended family or as indentured or paid servants) will also appreciate a day off from homestead, household or vocational work.

We have pretty much covered the basic, valid requirements that the Lord of the Sabbath gave for keeping His Sabbath day. I am sure there are some listeners who say, "Yes, I knew all that!" Okay, as a brain teaser for you, I have a question. When the LORD commands in Ex. 20: 10 that neither you, your son or daughter, servants, strangers, etc., within your gates are not to do work on the Sabbath, a wife is not mentioned. Why? Did God commit an error of omission? Or, is a wife permitted to do laborious work on the Sabbath?

If you think you can explain this omission, please send me an E-mail to LawstSMinistries@aol.com. Perhaps I will note your answer in our next Program.

The rest of Exodus gives us a number of other commands, laws, ordinances and judgments spoken by God to Moses for the children of Israel to observe. Also included are penalties for disobedience to be imposed by Israel's rulers and authorities. There are also prophecies of what the LORD plans to do to give them the land He promised their forefathers.

A covenant was made with the people who were sprinkled with sacrificial blood as they promised to do ALL that the LORD had said they should do. It is a wonderful example of how the LORD cares for the needs of His people Israel, His bride, His wife and His people.

Among these sayings of the LORD are additional ones concerning His Sabbaths. Not only does the LORD indicate the importance and permanence of His Sabbaths, He provides the penalty for disobedience of the Sabbath laws He gave them. We find this in Ex. 31: 12-18:

And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, "Speak also to the children of Israel, saying: 'Surely My Sabbaths you shall keep, for it is a sign between Me and you throughout your generations, that you may know that I am the LORD who

sanctifies you. You shall keep the Sabbath, therefore, for it is holy to you. Everyone who profanes it shall surely be put to death, for whoever does any work on it, that person shall be cut off from among the people. Work shall be done for six days, but the seventh is the Sabbath of rest, holy to the LORD. Whoever does any work on the Sabbath day, he shall surely be put to death. Therefore the children of Israel shall keep the Sabbath, to observe the Sabbath throughout their generations as a perpetual covenant. It is a sign between ME and the children of Israel forever; for in six days the LORD made the heavens and the earth, and on the seventh day He rested and was refreshed."

And when He had made an end of speaking with him on Mt. Sinai, He gave Moses two tablets of the Testimony, tablets of stone, written with the finger of God.

There are two new aspects of Sabbath keeping revealed in these verses. One is that the act of keeping the Sabbath (not the day itself) is a sign between the LORD and His people forever. It is clear that as long as there are Israelites, they will be keeping the Sabbath. Sabbath-keeping is perpetual and forever according to God. I hope that you do not think that Jesus annulled the LORD'S command for His disciples to whom He says He was sent?

The other new aspect is that the penalty for disobedience of the Sabbath command is death. This is often equated with being cut off from the people of God but certainly means you would no longer be viewed as one of God's chosen people. And, in its most serious implication it is the same as the sure death promised to Adam when He disobeyed God. This is a death of the human soul, a cessation of life and existence as a Spirit-breathed living being who could have eternal life in Christ.

In this penalty we see the severity of punishment as equivalent to having more than one god, or committing murder! Also notice that the LORD ended His speaking to Moses just AFTER reviewing the Sabbath commandment. He then handed Moses the two tablets of stone containing the Testimony of the covenant which were written with the very finger of God. The LORD takes Sabbath keeping seriously. Shouldn't you?

We have examined the basics of what the LORD commanded in the Fourth Commandment regarding the Sabbath day. We know it commemorates His own rest and refreshing and grateful appreciation of His work on the seventh day of creation week.

Other Scriptures, and the words of Jesus Himself, provide us additional details concerning how people should and should not keep the Sabbath holy to the LORD. In our next Program we will explore a number of controversial issues concerning Sabbath keeping.

An example that can cause disagreement is found even before we leave the book of Exodus. In Ex. 35: 3, we find the following said by Moses:

You shall kindle no fire throughout your dwellings on the Sabbath day.

Does this mean that those living in the northern hemisphere in January need to shut off their gas furnace on the Sabbath? Can you start a fire in your fire place on a frigid Friday evening? Many issues can be raised about Sabbath keeping as recorded in the Bible, especially in our modern times when conditions are quite different than when the Ten Commandments were first given by the LORD.

Such discussions can feel like iron sharpening iron; and sparks may fly! You don't want to miss this Program which will help you separate the wheat from the chaff in keeping the Sabbath so that it is a delight to you, to your family AND, most of all, to the LORD.

Before closing today, I need to review an important administrative detail. A donation I received last week was in the form of a check made out to LawstSheep Ministries. I had to return the check. There is no checking account in that name.

As a result of 9/11 and the Patriot Act, banks will no longer open checking accounts without a Social Security Number or a Taxpayer ID Number. And, they will not cash a check without having an account number.

A Taxpayer ID Number is obtained through the Internal Revenue Service when you register as a non-profit religious organization with the IRS. I have refused to register LawstSheep Ministries with the IRS.

I imagine you are aware of how some governments have already inserted themselves into what were once considered the guaranteed religious freedoms of church or ministerial organizations and the individuals in them to preach the word of God. Such persecution of the disciples of Jesus preaching the word of God are prophesied to increase as the time of the return of Jesus as Lord of lords and King of kings gets closer.

So, this is why if you wish to support this Program with a donation by check, it would have to be made out to Cash or Kenny Kitzke. And, Kenny Kitzke, would clearly be safer.

Either way, usually on the bottom left of your check is a blank line preceded by the word "For:". By writing or printing "Lord of the Sabbath" in the blank space, I will ensure your donation is applied to expenses for the growth of the Lord of the Sabbath Program. Or, simply add For: LSM. You still can request a receipt for a charitable contribution from LawstSheep Ministries.

Thank you for your understanding and cooperation. And, thank you for your financial support of this ministry. May God be with you and bring you grace and peace until we meet again next Sabbath. I ask this in the holy name of His Son, Jesus, the Christ.