

# OpenTheo

## Genesis 2:1 - 2:3



### Genesis - Steve Gregg

In Genesis 2:1-2, God rested on the seventh day after creating the world, symbolically demonstrating that he was finished with his work. This laid the foundation for the Sabbath day, which is discussed throughout the rest of the Bible. The Sabbath remains a symbol of resting in God's finished work, although there is no obligation for Christians to observe the Sabbath, as it is seen as a ceremonial law rather than a moral law. Christians are called to obey and follow the Lord's will every day, rather than being tied to a specific day of observation.

### Transcript

Let's turn to Genesis 2. The first three verses are extremely significant in that they lay a foundation for one of the Ten Commandments, but also for a lot of teaching throughout the rest of Scripture, and that is about the Sabbath day. I myself have been in a lot of controversies, usually with Sabbatarians, over this section and with the later sections of the Bible on the subject, because we read in the first three verses, I did not draw the distinction as we were going through Genesis 1, but there are times when it says that God created, and other times it says He made. And creation seemingly means out of nothing, or at least it's a new infusion of something that wasn't there before, whereas made can simply mean to shape something into something new.

And there's only three times we read in Genesis 1 of God creating. He created the heavens and the earth in verse 1, and He also created the animals in the sea in verse 21, and then He created man in verse 27. The rest of the time it either says He formed or made things, and that allows for the possibility that He just shaped them from stuff He already had on hand.

But creation and making are not necessarily the same thing, and it says that God rested from all His work which God had created and made. Now, God's resting raises the question of why. Why did He rest? He was not exhausted, although one might be forgiven if they were exhausted after doing as much work as He had done, but God is exhaustless.

He's not weary, He does not slumber or sleep, it says in Isaiah. And therefore God didn't need to rest in order to recuperate. I believe His resting was a, as it were, a symbolic act.

Namely, it was His way of saying, I'm done. It's finished. There's nothing more to do.

I've created all that I'm going to create, and that's it. And instead of going on to another day of doing something else, He just rests as if to emblemize the fact that, okay, I'm sitting down now. This is all you're going to get.

This is my entire work of creation. I actually think it has a correspondence, and Hebrews 4 seems to make a correspondence between that and Christ's rest. There's reference to God resting on the seventh day in the book of Hebrews chapter 4, and it says in Hebrews chapter 4 and verse 9 that there remains a Sabbath rest.

That's how it reads in the Greek. In Hebrews 4 and 9, in the New King James it says, there remains therefore a rest, but the Greek word there is a Sabbath keeping, a Sabbath rest for the people of God. Now this verse is sometimes used by Sabbatarians, which would be people who believe you must keep the Sabbath.

Usually they believe in the seventh day Sabbath. The seventh day Adventists would be probably the best known group of this type, but there are many other seventh day groups of Christians who believe that we must keep a Saturday Sabbath. That's the seventh day of the week.

And when they read that the writer of Hebrews says in chapter 4 verse 9 there is a keeping of Sabbath that remains for the people of God, they see that tells us that we must still keep the Sabbath, as the Jews had to do when God gave them the commandments to do so. Now I believe they are misunderstanding Hebrews 4 because he goes on to say, after he says there remains a Sabbath rest for the people of God, he says for he who has entered into his rest has himself ceased from his works as God did from his. And this reference to ceasing from his works, the writer of Hebrews is not talking about a temporary cessation of works every sixth day of labor, but a permanent cessation of works.

And I believe he is referring to the contrast between the Jewish religion and that of Christ. The old covenant and the new covenant. Because throughout this book that is the contrast that Hebrews is making.

And one thing about the old covenant is that it seemed to be a covenant of works. And people had to work, work, work. They had to keep these rituals, they had to do all these things, offer these sacrifices.

And by this work they hoped to be acceptable to God. And it was a works oriented idea of righteousness. Now in the Old Testament God didn't have a works oriented righteousness.

Abraham believed in God and it, his believing, was counted to him for righteousness. It says in Genesis 15, 6. So even in the Old Testament faith was the basis of righteousness. And this is true even after the law was given.

As Paul points out in Romans 4, he mentions Abraham, but then he mentions David. Abraham as one who was righteous before the law was given. David as one who was righteous after the law was given.

And talks about how David knew the blessedness of a man who is righteous apart from works of the law. And he quotes Psalm 32 where David said, how happy is the man whose sins are forgiven. How blessed is he against whom the Lord does not impute sin.

Psalm 32.1. Now Paul quotes that in Romans 4 to say David knew the blessedness of justification. He knew the blessedness of forgiveness. Though he lived after the law was given and he obtained that forgiveness without the law.

The law didn't have any way of giving it to him. Under the law he should have been put to death. The law could only condemn him.

But God forgave him and therefore David along with Abraham and every saint of the Old Testament knew a righteousness that was through faith not by works. However, the religion of Judaism, especially as it had developed after the Babylonian exile and therefore in Paul's time. Paul's day had come to see righteousness as a matter of being circumcised and keeping the Jewish law.

A matter of works. The writer of Hebrews says well, it's not about works. The person who has entered into God's rest has ceased from his own works.

But what is he resting in then? Well, he would then be resting in God's works, in Christ's finished works. In Hebrews also in chapter 10 we have this contrast made between the Old Covenant and the New. In Hebrews 10 it says in the beginning for the law having a shadow of the good things to come and not the very image of the things can never with these same sacrifices which they offer continually year by year make those who approach perfect.

For then would they not have ceased to be offered? For the worshippers once purged would have had no more consciousness of sins. But in those sacrifices there is a reminder of sins every year. Now what it means is under the law they had to offer the sacrifices of the day of atonement annually.

Even though each time it was done it brought about as it were the atonement of the nation. It wasn't permanent. It had to be done again every year.

These sacrifices of the Old Testament did not have a permanent effect. They had to be repeated. But then it says in verse 11, Hebrews 10, 11.

Every priest stands ministering daily. He means the priests in the Old Testament. They stand ministering daily.

Now the emphasis is here on the word stand. As you study Exodus you'll find that God gave instructions for the building of the tabernacle and its furnishings. But one furnishing that was not found in the tabernacle was a chair.

There was no resting in the tabernacle. The priests had to stand and work every day. Every priest stands ministering daily and offering repeatedly the same sacrifices which actually can never take away sins.

But this man, meaning Jesus, after he had been ministering daily, he was given a chair. He was given a chair. He was given a chair.

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He was given a chair. After he had offered one sacrifice for sins forever, sat down. And so the contrast is between the priests who are standing because their work is not finished.

They have to keep repeating their same sacrifice. It never really gets the job done. Christ on the other hand manages to get the job done with a single sacrifice of himself and manages to sit down.

In other words, he finishes his work and he enters a posture of rest in his finished work. That's what God did when he finished creating. He rested and as it were sat down.

The Bible doesn't say that in Genesis that God sat down, but He rested. It says that He entered into a day of repose. And it says in verse 3 of Genesis 2, then God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it, because in it He rested from all His work which God had created and made.

Now God sanctified the seventh day. Later He commanded Israel to observe the Sabbath day. It's interesting we do not find here a statement that God ever commanded anyone to rest on the Sabbath day.

It says that God rested and we read of Him sanctifying it, but we don't read of Him saying you shall do no work on the Sabbath day. He didn't say that to Adam as far as we

know or to anyone else until after the Exodus. Now the first actual command to keep a Sabbath day was before the Ten Commandments, but not much before.

Probably only a few days before when God began to give manna to the children of Israel in Exodus chapter 16. He said I want you to gather manna every day except on the seventh day. I want you to gather twice as much on the sixth day and not gather any on the seventh day.

So that was like the first time that we know of that God indicated that something different should be done on the seventh day. And not very long after that God has them at Mount Sinai and they are going to be in the fourth commandment, remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy. And He tells them to do all their work on the sixth day and to rest on the seventh day.

Now the question has often arisen, is it a Christian obligation to keep the Sabbath or is it merely an Old Testament obligation? Now the standard answer that Christians have usually given is that we still keep the Sabbath, but we keep it on a different day than the Jews did. The Jews kept it as commanded on the seventh day which was Saturday. But it is often said that the Sabbath was changed for the Christians to Sunday in order to commemorate not the final day of God resting after creation, but to commemorate the resurrection of Christ which took place on a Sunday.

And therefore we sometimes hear from the older theologians that Sunday is the Christian Sabbath. And that is why church has traditionally been held on Sunday mornings. It is why in many Christian lands Sunday was once a time when businesses were all closed and people weren't really going to work on Sunday.

In fact there were times in Europe, in Christian Europe back when there were Christians there, that it was illegal to work on Sunday because those were Christian countries and because the Christian Sabbath was considered to be Sunday. Now Sunday is not the Sabbath. Sunday indeed was a day that Jesus rose from the dead and apparently Christians worshipped.

The seventh day Adventists are mistaken when they say that Constantine changed the Sabbath from Saturday to Sunday. They are quite wrong about that. Or some say the Roman Catholic Church did that.

But actually Justin Martyr in the early second century and we even have in the book of Acts a gathering of Christians on a Sunday mentioned in Tyre where Eutychus fell out of the window. But they do not say it was a Sabbath. In fact in the book of Acts even though it does record Christians meeting on a Sunday it never says that it is a Sabbath but it does, the book of Acts uses the word Sabbath many times.

On the Sabbath Paul went into the synagogue to preach. Why? Because Jews were there

and he wanted to preach to them. The Sabbath in Acts is still Saturday.

It is still the Jewish Sabbath. The term Sabbath is never used of another day of the week than the seventh day. So if we are required to keep the Sabbath, presumably we are required to keep it on the day that it always has been, Saturday.

The question is are we required to keep the Sabbath? Now my suggestion is that the New Testament nowhere places the obligation on Christians to keep the Sabbath day. It does say that we enter into God's rest which is a spiritual thing and in my opinion is the thing that the Sabbath day depicted in ritual form. You know that the rituals of the Old Testament all were types and shadows of spiritual things in the New Testament.

That is true of all the holy days, Passover, Pentecost, Tabernacles, they were ritual emblems of spiritual realities. Sabbath day was also a holy day. A weekly one, there were annual holy days, there were monthly holy days, the new moons, and there were weekly holy days.

And Paul you know said in Colossians 2.17, let no one judge you concerning festivals, that's the annual holy days. Or new moons, he said, which are the monthly ones, or Sabbaths, which are the weekly ones. He said these things were a shadow for the present time, but the substance, the body is of Christ.

That is to say these holy days were rituals that looked forward to something more substantial, something more permanent, and that was Christ and those things associated with Christ and his kingdom. And the rest that we come into when we enter into God's rest and cease from our own works for righteousness, that is the keeping of Sabbath I believe that was ritually foreshadowed in the Sabbath day. Now our Sabbath dad and his friends say that, but the Sabbath observance doesn't just go back to the Ten Commandments of the law, it goes back to the creation.

We first read of the Sabbath here. It is true, we do. And when the law was given, it harks back to this story.

When God gave the Ten Commandments to keep the Sabbath day work six days and rest one day, because in six days the Lord God made the heavens and the earth and the sea and all that is in them, and he rested on the seventh day. Truly, this story in Genesis 2 verses 1 through 3 is the basis for the command that was later given to keep the Sabbath. But there is no suggestion in this story that a command was ever given prior to the exodus that people were supposed to observe the Sabbath.

We only read that God did it. Now, true, it does say he sanctified it, and we need to look at that. It says God blessed and sanctified the seventh day.

Now sanctify is a word that comes from the same root as the word holy. He made it a holy day. And the word holy means set apart from others.

Set apart for God from others. In the Old Testament times, at least under the Jewish law, the Sabbath day was not an ordinary day. It was as holy as separate days.

Set apart from the other days. Something different was to be done on that day. Now, did God sanctify it at this time in Genesis chapter 2? If so, then I think the Sabbath day might have a good case, that from the very beginning God sanctified, set apart the seventh day of the week to be observed on a weekly basis by people.

It's a different kind of day. It's holy. It's separate.

But I'd like to just observe, if I could, the relationship of chapter 2 verse 3 with the other verses. Unfortunately, the New King James begins verse 3 with the word then. And if that is the correct translation, then it would say that when God rested at that time then, He sanctified the seventh day.

So that on the seventh day of creation, He then set it apart as a day to be observed. However, the word then appears in verse 3 only in the New King James and the New American Standard Version. Both versions.

But I've looked it up in several versions, including the Greek Interlinear of the Old Testament and the Young's Literal Translation and many others. And the word then does not really appear in the Hebrew there. Many translations simply have the word and.

For example, the NIV, the Young's Living Translation, the New Living Translation, the American Standard, that's not the New American Standard, the Older American Standard Bible, as well as the Interlinear Bible. They all have the word ands, not then. And God sanctified it.

In fact, the ESV, which is one of the better newer translations, the English Standard Version, and the RSV both have the word so. So God sanctified the Sabbath. Now, why does that matter? Well, it matters because of this.

The question is, how does verse 3 function in this narrative? Remember who wrote this book, the book of Genesis? Moses wrote the book of Genesis. And who did he write it to? The Israelites who came out of Egypt, who were at Mount Sinai probably, at the time he wrote it, when the law was given. It's entirely possible that what Moses was saying is this.

God rested on the seventh day after he finished the creation. And so for this reason, he subsequently sanctified it in the Ten Commandments and said to observe it. In other words, he would not be saying that it was at that time in Adam's day that God sanctified it, but God sanctified it at a later date because on this earlier occasion he had rested.

The word so or and would allow for that. Even then could, if we understood then not to mean at that time, but subsequently. Subsequently God sanctified it.

Now, one reason I think this may be correct, though a person could reject it if they want, is that, you know, we have two creation accounts. We have another one that begins at verse 4 and ends, you know, at the very end of the chapter. And in that second account we have the story of how God made the man and eventually made the woman and brought them together and we have the first marriage.

And then it says in verse 24 of chapter 2, therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife and they should become one flesh. Now, do you see the story of Adam and Eve in chapter 2 is given in order to let us know why people get married. There is this ongoing institution of marriage for all time, or at least subsequently to this time, where men leave their father and mother.

Now, Adam didn't leave his father and mother, so this is really talking about marriage in general, not just the case of Adam and Eve. Adam didn't have a father and mother to leave, but because God brought them together, because God did this thing in this story, therefore, ever since that time, men have left their fathers and mothers and taken wives and become one flesh. In other words, the second creation story seems to be told in order to tell us why people get married.

It's possible that the first creation story is told in order to tell the Jews why God told them to keep the Sabbath. Because God worked for six days, as reported, and he rested on the seventh day. Therefore, or so, God has subsequently at Mount Sinai ordained that the Sabbath should be kept a holy day because of his resting.

He never commanded him to keep it before that, but when he did command it, it was because of this. And so, it would appear that we have two creation stories giving different angles of the creation. They're both true.

As I said, the second one is going to simply focus more thoroughly on the sixth day. But one is a chronological story that gives the six days so that it can point out on the seventh day, God rested. And now, hundreds of years later at Mount Sinai, God tells the Jews, I want you to commemorate that by resting on the seventh day.

He sanctified it because of this resting on this occasion. Later, he tells us how marriage got started and why marriage as an institution came into being. These two creation stories are capped, after the stories are told, by application.

Moses is saying, now we keep the Sabbath. Now we get married. Why? Well, here's the story of how that got started.

Here's the story of how that got started. Here's the story that informs our practices today. At least, I think it's entirely possible.

It's not that it's not saying that God sanctified the Sabbath way back then in Adam's day, but that he did so at a later because of what happened in Adam's day. Because God



rests on the seventh day. So, for that reason, in other words, he sanctified it when he did, in Moses' day, as a day to be observed.

Now, I just want to say that the New Testament has a lot to say about the Sabbath, but it does not say that Christians should keep the Sabbath. And it's a very strange thing. The Sabbath is mentioned in the book of Acts.

It's mentioned in the Gospels many times. Sometimes, Sabbatarians will say, well, we keep the Sabbath because Jesus kept the Sabbath, and because Paul kept the Sabbath. Really? Where do you find that in the Bible? Well, it says, as his custom was, he went into the synagogue on the Sabbath.

Yes, it does say it was his custom to go into the synagogue on the Sabbath. Where does it say he kept Sabbath? Going to the synagogue was never commanded to be done on Sabbath day. There was no law of the Sabbath that said you should go to the synagogue.

The synagogue was invented centuries after Moses' time, after the Babylonian exile. Going to synagogue was not the same thing as keeping the Sabbath law, because there was no Sabbath law that ever mentioned going to the synagogue. Yes, Jesus and Paul did go to the synagogue on the Sabbath.

Do you know why? That's where they had an audience. When it wasn't the Sabbath, they preached to people in the open streets or in the hillsides or wherever they found people. On the Sabbath, the best place in Israel to find Jews is in the synagogue.

So they went there and preached. They went there to evangelize. We do not read that the Christians had their meetings there on that day.

We read that the evangelists, Jesus and Paul, etc., went there on Sabbath days because there were people there to preach to. And that's exactly what they did, they preached to them. That is not a record of either Jesus or Paul being Sabbath keepers.

In fact, we have one statement in the Scriptures that says that Jesus broke the Sabbath. I made this point in our Authority of Scriptures lectures, but it should be brought up at this point in John 5. John himself tells us that Jesus broke the Sabbath. John 5 and verse 18.

It says, Therefore the Jews sought all the more to kill Jesus, because he not only broke the Sabbath, which John apparently affirms is the case, but also he said God was his Father, which is also the case. He did say that too. Jesus did both those things.

He broke the Sabbath, John says, and he called God his Father. So they wanted to kill him for two reasons. Now, Sabbatarians who believe you must keep the Sabbath feel like Jesus could never break the Sabbath because he is God and he would be sinning to break the law.

No, he is the Lord of the Sabbath. He made that very clear in his teaching elsewhere in the Synoptics. He said, Therefore the Son of Man is Lord also of the Sabbath.

If he is the Lord of the Sabbath, then it has to obey him. He doesn't have to obey it. I gave the illustration of a policeman with his red light splashing a siren on, driving at 100 miles an hour on the freeway in pursuit of a criminal.

Is he breaking the speed limit? Yes, he is. Is that okay? Yes, it is. He is authorized.

If I drive 100 miles an hour on the freeway, I'm breaking the law and I can get arrested. If a policeman drives 100 miles an hour on the freeway, he is also violating the speed limit, but that's okay. He can do that.

That's his job. He is authorized to do that. Jesus can do what he wants on the Sabbath because he is the Lord of the Sabbath.

What's more, his disciples can do what he wants on the Sabbath because he is the Lord of the Sabbath. Let me turn your attention quickly over to Matthew 12. Jesus does give a positive teaching about the Sabbath, but it's not exactly Sabbatarian in its contents.

In Matthew 12, beginning at verse 1, it says, At that time Jesus went through the grain fields on the Sabbath, and his disciples were hungry and began to pluck heads of grain and to eat. But when the Pharisees saw it, they said to him, Look, your disciples are doing what is not lawful to do on the Sabbath. What was not lawful about that? They were harvesting grain.

For most farmers, that was work, and therefore that shouldn't be done on the Sabbath day. They were winnowing grain. They were separating the wheat from the chaff by rubbing it in their hands.

One of the other Gospels tells us in the parallel account, they were rubbing it in their hands. That's winnowing, separating wheat from chaff. That's work.

And they were, of course, eating it. But there's nothing wrong with eating on the Sabbath, but working was not permitted. And the Pharisees see the disciples harvesting and winnowing grain on the Sabbath.

And Jesus said to them, Have you not read what David did when he was hungry? He and those who were with him, how he entered the house of God and ate the shewbread, which was not lawful for him to eat, nor for those who were with him, but only for the priests. Or have you not read in the law that on the Sabbath the priests in the temple profane the Sabbath? That means they treat it like a common day. The priests do the same thing on the Sabbath as they do every day.

They treat it like a common day, not a holy day. They profane the Sabbath. The word

profane means to make it common, treat it like common.

And they're blameless. But I say to you that in this place there's one greater than the temple. But if you had known what this means, I desire mercy, not sacrifice, you would not have condemned the guiltless.

For the Son of Man is Lord even of the Sabbath day. Now what's this teaching about? Some people say, well, the disciples weren't really breaking the Sabbath because Jesus wouldn't defend them if they broke the Sabbath. Certainly he wouldn't defend them if they committed adultery or murder or stealing and broke other ten... So they say Jesus would not defend him if they really were breaking the Sabbath.

What they were really doing is simply breaking the Pharisees' traditions about the Sabbath. Well, you know, if that's what Jesus thought, he could have said something like that. He did say something like that on another occasion when they were criticized for not washing their hands.

He said, you people, that's your traditions. You violate the word of God to keep your traditions. That was a different issue.

Washing hands was a tradition of the Pharisees and Jesus wouldn't let them criticize his disciples for ignoring those traditions. If Jesus thought his disciples were well within the bounds of Sabbath observance, but violating only the traditions of the Pharisees by doing what they were doing, he could have said something along those lines, but that's not the argument he gave. He said, didn't you hear how David also broke the law? They say, your disciples are breaking the law.

I said, well, you know, David did it once. He broke the law too. Jesus takes it for granted they're breaking the Sabbath, but he says it's similar to when David broke the law.

He was hungry. He broke the law. He ate the showbread.

That wasn't allowed. That was against the law. But you see, what kind of law was that against? It was against a ceremonial law.

Who's allowed to eat the showbread? Only the priest. David's not a priest. He shouldn't eat.

He broke the ceremonial law because he was hungry. His needs as a human being were greater than the ceremonial requirements. And Jesus said, if you just learn what this means, I will have mercy and not sacrifice.

Sacrifices are ritual requirements of the law, but mercy is more important. You see someone who's hungry, you can break the ceremonial law. Mercy is more important than the sacrificial system and its rituals.

But notice, Jesus, when he talks about his disciples breaking the Sabbath, compares it with David breaking a ceremonial law, not a moral law. Jesus apparently sees the Sabbath as a ceremonial law, not a moral law. And he gives a second example.

He says, also the priests in the temple, they break the Sabbath too. They treat it like an ordinary day, but they're blameless. Now he expected they would say, oh, but that's different because they're serving, they're doing the work of the temple.

And Jesus said, well, but I'm greater than the temple. My disciples are doing my work. If the priest can break the Sabbath doing temple work, then my disciples can break the Sabbath doing my work because I'm greater than the temple, he says.

He says, therefore, the Son of Man is Lord even of the Sabbath. And let me tell you what I think that means. I think what he's saying is this.

The Son of Man is the Lord, period. He's the Lord of these disciples. Their duty is defined by his wishes because he's their Lord.

That's how a disciple's duties are defined. What is the will of the Lord? What does the Lord want? He's my master. I'm his servant.

I don't have to worry about anything except what business does the Lord want me to be upon. There is no authority above my Lord. And therefore, on Monday, I must be about my Lord's business.

He's the Lord of Monday. He's also the Lord of Tuesday, so I have to be about his business on Tuesday. He's the Lord of Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday also.

And you know what? He's even the Lord of the Sabbath. The Son of Man is Lord even of the Sabbath day, along with the other days. He's the Lord of every day.

And that means the disciples have only one obligation, any day. They don't have to look at the calendar, watch to see if it says, oh, can't do anything. You just say, no, what does Jesus want me to do? That's what I have to do.

What day is it? It doesn't matter. He's the Lord of all the days. Therefore, when sometimes they say, well, where in the Bible does it say that God lowered the Sabbath day to the level of others? It doesn't.

He elevated all the days to the level of the Sabbath day. The Jews had to observe one day as the Lord's day to us all the days are the Lord's days. He's the Lord every day.

And therefore, we do our obligations to do on the Sabbath. What is our obligation on any other day? Whatever Jesus wants. Now, of course, if we're the type of people who do whatever we want many days of the week, then we're, of course, in violation of our Christian duty.

We're supposed to follow the Lord all the time. If we're doing our own will, six days a week, we're not going to placate God by taking one day out and say, okay, I'll do the right thing one day. I'll make this day your day, God.

The other day is mine. And it's like, it's like people who waste 90% of their income on, you know, on, you know, on when they're supposed to be the stewards of 100% for God. It's all God's all of our time, all of our money.

It's all the Lord's. He's the Lord. Slaves don't own anything.

They don't have any time of their own. It's all they belong to the one who has bought them with a price and who owns them. And so Jesus is teaching, I believe that it's not a matter of what, whether it's Sabbath or not, it's a matter of who's the Lord of these people.

If they're doing what he wants them to do, then no one can criticize them. And it doesn't matter what day of the week it is. Christians should be doing the will of Jesus.

And, uh, it might not, it might be that the will of Jesus would be for you to do some kind of good works on the Sabbath day. And in the next section of Matthew 12, it's another Sabbath and another Sabbath teaching of Jesus says, now, when he had departed verse nine from there, he went into their synagogue and behold, there was a man who had a withered hand. And they asked him saying, is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath? Their opinion was the answer is no.

And they did it. So they might accuse him. And he said to them, what man is there among you who has one sheep? And if it falls into a pit on the Sabbath, will he not lay hold of it and lift it out of how much more value than is a man than a sheep? Therefore, it is lawful to do good on the Sabbath.

There's teaching of Jesus Christ about the Sabbath. What is it lawful to do or not to do on the Sabbath? It's lawful to do good on the Sabbath. Now, what is it lawful to do the other days? Bad? No, it's never lawful to do anything but good.

It's lawful to do the same good that you do any other day on the Sabbath day. Your life is supposed to be full of good works. We are in his workmanship created in Christ Jesus for good works that God has afforded that we should walk in.

Ephesians 2.10 says, Paul says in Titus chapter two, that God, Jesus redeemed a people for himself who were zealous for good works. It's good to do good work. That's what we're supposed to be doing.

That's what we're supposed to be doing all the time. Everything you do should be good. I mean, we're not perfect, and we do things that aren't good.

But when we do, we realize we fell short of what we should do. What we should do is the right thing. And it is lawful to do the right thing, even on the Sabbath, Jesus said.

You see, by Jesus being the Lord even of the Sabbath and saying it is lawful to do good on the Sabbath, he's essentially said the Sabbath is essentially like any other day for my disciples. Because it's always necessary for my disciples to observe my lordship and to do what's good. Now in the early church, in the book of Acts, they didn't keep the Sabbath day.

They didn't have their meetings on the Sabbath. They kept every day. They met daily from house to house.

They broke bread. They continued daily in the apostles teaching and prayers and fellowship. They didn't have a day that was holy.

Not every day was holy. The early church observed every day as a fellowship and worship and instructional day, just like nowadays people do on Sundays or Saturdays or whatever day they do it. But Paul said, in Romans 14.5, he said, and he's describing the practices of Christians in the church of Rome, he said, one man esteems one day above another.

Another man esteems every day alike. Now almost certainly the Christians who observed one day above another were probably the Jews who'd grown up keeping a special day, but the Gentiles who'd gotten converted, they didn't have that practice, so they just kept every day alike. And Paul, realizing there was some conflict between those two camps in the church, decided to arbitrate and make a decision.

He said, well, let everyone do, let everyone be fully persuaded in his own mind. Everyone follow your own conscience. And as I said in an earlier lecture, Paul could never have said such a thing if the issue was something moral.

If he said, one man thinks it's okay to sleep with his neighbor's wife, the other man doesn't think that's okay, but let everyone do what he's fully persuaded to do. Paul wouldn't answer that way. One man thinks it's okay to murder and to steal, another man doesn't think so.

Let everyone be fully persuaded in his own mind. Paul would never say that. Why? Because Paul would never give permission to the Christians to do immoral and evil things.

But Sabbath keeping, that's a ceremony. It's a ritual. Some do it, some don't, Paul says.

Do what you want. Do what you think is right. Follow your conscience on that.

And so it seems clear that Paul did not believe that Sabbath keeping, in the sense that

the Jews kept Sabbath, was a Christian obligation that carried over into the New Covenant. He was apparently following what Jesus said on that, that, you know, Jesus is the Lord of all the days. I personally believe that of those Romans, when Paul went to Rome, he probably was one of those who esteemed everyday life.

Because I think Paul worked a seven-day workweek. Maybe not with his tent making. He might have taken a day off of his tent making, but when it came to preaching, that was his real work.

And that's what he did all the time. Day and night, he said. When he told the Thessalonians he had been with him, he labored day and night.

He didn't say seven days a week, but sounds like he was kind of a workaholic when it came to preaching. And I don't find any evidence that Paul observed a Sabbath law, unless he was with those who did. Of course, he said in 1 Corinthians 9, when I'm with those who are under the law, I observe the law.

When I'm with those who are without the law, I don't observe the law, except, he said, to fulfill the law of Christ. He said, I'm not lawless, I'm not without law to God, but I'm under the law of Christ. He said in 1 Corinthians 9. So, as I understand it, the Sabbath day here, when it says God sanctified it, I believe this is Moses saying to the Israelites of his own day, as he tells them the story of creation that happened hundreds of years earlier, and says God made everything in six days, and then he rests on the seventh day.

Application time, therefore, so God sanctified the Sabbath. Where? In the Ten Commandments. Did he any earlier time? Not that we know of.

We don't read of him ever distinguishing between the Sabbath and other days, in terms of expectations for human conduct, until the Ten Commandments. Now, of course, it is possible that Adam and Eve did keep the Sabbath day. It's possible that Cain and Abel did, and that Noah did, and so forth.

But, we'd be reading that in where the Bible is silent. And so, you know, I'm inclined to think not. Some people may be inclined to think so, and that's okay.

We couldn't really argue it too much, because there's no record to tell us whether they did or not. Now, we have about 15 minutes more, but that's not long enough to take the rest of the chapter, and since we started this 15 minutes late, it's really time for us to quit. So, I think I'll just make this lecture short.

You probably don't mind that, and we'll just end it at this point. I thought that if I'd covered the Sabbath matter quicker, I might cover the rest of Chapter 2, but there's an awful lot of stuff I have to say about Chapter 2. It's full of important applications that the New Testament makes from its contents, so we'd better not try that in the little bit of time I have left. So, let's go ahead and stop there, and we'll come back to Chapter 2 next

time.