

# Sabbath Enthronement

<sup>1</sup> Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host of them.

<sup>2</sup> And on the seventh day God finished his work that he had done, and he rested on the seventh day from all his work that he had done.

<sup>3</sup> So God blessed the seventh day and made it holy, because on it God rested from all his work that he had done in creation.

## Genesis 2:1-3

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### The Work of Gods

I SAY “**JIM BROWN**,” AND YOU SAY? Without the right context (and certainly many of you won't have the right context for this), you might say, “**Charlie Brown's brother?**” Maybe someone would say, “**Is that the husband of Mrs. Brown, who has a lovely daughter?**” All these sixties pop-culture references, and some of you are still sitting there scratching your head. What are you talking about, pastor? For those who understand the context, you know who he is. In fact, believe it or not, for having such a common name, there is only one “Jim Brown” who comes up on Wikipedia. There is only one Jim Brown.

A couple years back, the NFL Network did a show on the 100 greatest football players of all time. Ranked #2 was Jim Brown, running back for the Cleveland Browns from 1957-1965. He is the only runner to average more than 100 yards a game and over 5 yards a carry for his entire career. During the segment, which had **Burt Reynolds** of all people talking about him (Reynolds and Brown made movies together), Burt says, “**Jim thought on Sundays, and these are his words, that he was a god, that nobody could hurt him, nobody could touch him, nobody was better, and he proved it every Sunday.**”<sup>1</sup> When I heard that quote this week, I thought, you don’t get a better introduction to what I’m talking about today.

We could debate, I suppose, whether going onto a field to engage in a game is work or play (I think for some it is work, and for others it is play, especially for those who work very hard the rest of the week). But for this story, it is safe to say that this is where Brown tried to prove to the world that he was a god. For him, the stadium was his cathedral, the field was his throne, the lights shining down were his glory-cloud, the roaring crowd was were his worshippers, and Sunday was

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<sup>1</sup> Burt Reynolds, “Top 100 NFL Players of All-Time: #2 Jim Brown,” NFL Network, 2010. <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WkTq3aAhJ7c>. Reynolds later adds, “For me a lot of people want to talk to me about other actors. Nobody wants to talk to Jim Brown about other football players. They want to talk about Jim Brown. Even people who never saw him play, you say ‘Jim Brown’ and the sort of whisper, ‘Did you see him? Did you know him?’”

the day for them to worship him. He was their god, glorified and enthroned in their praises.<sup>2</sup>

Running was his gift, just like **Eric Liddell**, the 1924 Olympian who was made famous in the 1981 movie *Chariots of Fire*, who is in some ways the exact opposite of Jim Brown. Liddell was fast, but he would not run on Sundays, not even during the Olympics, and most certainly he would never run to prove himself to be a god. In fact, in the movie he famously says, “**I believe God made me for a purpose, but he also made me fast. And when I run I feel His pleasure.**” Liddell gave glory to God, not himself.

What is curious to me is how **both of them treated the Christian Sabbath as holy**. One saw it as holy to God, the other as holy to himself. Reformed Christians are among the very few left in all of Christendom who still see a day of the week as holy. It is not Saturday as it was in the OT, but Sunday—**The Lord’s Day**, for on it, Jesus proved himself to be God. We take it as continuing in some form today the fourth commandment. In the Exodus version it reads, “**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, you, or your son, or your daughter, your male servant, or your female servant, or your livestock, or the sojourner who is within your gates. For in six days the**

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<sup>2</sup> This is not meant to say that all professional athletes see themselves or their game or the crowds or any of the rest of it this way. Some see it *very* differently. But not Jim Brown.

LORD made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is in them, and rested on the seventh day. Therefore the LORD blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy” (Ex 20:9-11). This passage grounds the commandment in creation. Creation is a gift that God gave to all humanity, not just Israel, so in this way we understand that this commandment is not peculiar just to the people of Israel, but has lasting, binding status upon all people. Today we are looking at the passage in Genesis 2:1-3 that grounds the commandment here.

But before I get to that, I also want you to consider the version of the commandment as it is put in Deuteronomy 5. Everything is the same except the reason for the commandment. It gives the reason as, “You shall remember that you were a slave in the land of Egypt, and the LORD your God brought you out from there with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm. Therefore the LORD your God commanded you to keep the Sabbath day” (Deut 5:15). The theme is one of deliverance by a mighty King.

This passage is not often connected to the Sabbath in creation, but it should be. I want you to listen to how deliverance and rest are connected to dominion (the major theme just prior to day 7 in Genesis 1) by Nehemiah, “But after they had rest they did evil again before you, and you abandoned them to the hand of their enemies, so that they had dominion over them. Yet when they turned and cried to

you, you heard from heaven, and many times you delivered them according to your mercies” (Neh 9:28). The verse presupposes that the rest Israel had came because of deliverance by God, the exact same idea as found in Deut 5:15. When they had rest, they had dominion. But when they sinned and did evil, God abandoned them and their enemies had dominion. Therefore, God had to intervene in Israel to free them again, to deliver them, so that they might again have rest.

The passage today tells us about God’s rest. What kind of rest was it? Why did he do it? His rest becomes both a pattern and a goal for humanity, and especially for the people of God. But we need understand this rest properly. It is not enough to merely think of it as ceasing from labor, though it is that. Much less is it the idea of taking a long nap. To make sense of Sabbath and its ongoing importance, we have to understand day seven in its context, on its terms. Otherwise, the whole idea will fly past many people, and they will wholly misunderstand it, as most Christians do in our day. To them the Sabbath might as well be Mrs. Brown’s husband who has a lovely daughter.

## Sabbath Culmination

The Sabbath is the culmination of the six work days of Genesis 1. Six times God made a pronouncement, “And God saw that it was good” (Gen 1:4, 10, 12, 18, 21, 25). At the

end of the sixth day, after making man in his image, he makes a final seventh pronouncement, “**And God saw everything that he had made, and behold, it was very good**” (31). The creation of man is the culmination of the work week, which itself ends on a culminating final day of rest.

With that, the story goes immediately into our short passage today. **Genesis 2:1-3** consists of 35 words in the Hebrew. 35 is divisible by 7 (7 x 5). Given the many patterns of seven throughout Genesis 1,<sup>3</sup> this is certainly deliberate. More so are the three central statements in **vv. 2-3**. These three statements (three for emphasis) each consist of seven words, and each contain the word “**seven.**”

### Pattern of Seven in the Telling of the Seventh Day

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1 <sup>st</sup>	And on the <b>seventh</b> day God finished his work that he had done.							
2 <sup>nd</sup>	and he rested on the <b>seventh</b> day from all his work that he had done.							
3 <sup>rd</sup>	And God blessed the <b>seventh</b> day and sanctified it.							

What exactly is going on here? *A prima facie* reading demonstrates that God is done working. Thus, he rests. But what does it mean that God “rests?” Some people read it literally, thinking that he must have gotten tired after all that work. The Koran, thinking itself very clever that its god is

<sup>3</sup> See the sermon “Temple Building” (Gen 1:3-2:3).

not like the God of the Jews says, “We<sup>4</sup> created the heavens and the earth and all that lies between them in six spans, and no weariness came upon us” (Surah 50:38). Ha ha! We got ‘em. Their God gets tired; ours does not. Following this, many people today who think that God needed a coffee break because he was drained of energy are actually functionally Muslim when they take this view of the Christian God.

It is heretical to think that God grew faint. No, God did not get tired. God did not take a nap. God does not get tired or weary. And the Bible is not teaching that he did. That is not the point. “Listen! The LORD's arm is not too weak” (Isa 59:1 NLT). “Have you not known? Have you not heard? The LORD is the everlasting God, the Creator of the ends of the earth. He does not faint or grow weary” (Isa 40:28).

Rather, this “resting” is first and foremost a kind of satisfaction and delight in his work. John Owen says, “For God so rested from his [works] as to take the greatest delight and satisfaction in them, to be refreshed by them ... Ex 31:17 ... Indeed God's rest from and upon his works, besides a mere cessation of working, consisted principally in the satisfaction and complacency he had in them.”<sup>5</sup> First God evaluates his work (“very good”), then he takes delight. This is his Sabbath.

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<sup>4</sup> The Koran either uses the Royal “we” (plural of majesty) or the plural of exhortation (talking to the divine council), see sermon “The Image of God” (Gen 1:26-31).

<sup>5</sup> John Owen, *The Works of John Owen*, ed. William H. Goold, vol. 4 (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, n.d.), 332.

Have you ever finished a long, difficult project only to take a step back and say, “That’s actually pretty good.” You take joy and satisfaction and delight and pride in what you have accomplished, not because you are arrogant, but because you have done what you were created to do. That is what the rest is here. Being that Christian Sabbath is modeled on the creation Sabbath, it is reasonable to conclude that our day of rest should also be a reflection, a putting into proper perspective, a recognizing the sanctity of our work done the rest of the week to the glory and honor of God’s name.<sup>6</sup>

So **Richard Gaffin** says, “The original concern of the weekly Sabbath ... is for restful reflection on our lives, before God, in view of the ultimate outcome of history ... for reviewing our cultural calling and activities of the past six days in light of ... the ultimate outcome of history.”<sup>7</sup> Gaffin and his mentor Geerhardus Vos both view the Sabbath as a reflection on things to come as well as on things that have been. We’ll get to that shortly.

Many of you have difficult jobs, even jobs that seems hopelessly ruined by the fall. You wonder, “How can I

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<sup>6</sup> Our Confession says, “The sabbath is then kept holy unto the Lord, when men, after a due preparing of their hearts, and ordering their common affairs aforehand, do not only observe an holy rest all day, from their own works, words and thoughts, about their worldly employment and recreations ...” (LBC 1689 22.8a). In light of “holy rest,” and Owen’s words, it is reasonable to conclude that this holy rest must also include holy reflection and delight in those things as done to God’s glory.

<sup>7</sup> Richard B. Gaffin Jr., *Calvin and the Sabbath* (Fearn, Ross-shire, UK: Christian Focus Publications, 1998), 156.



possibly reflect on my work or see it as good in any way?” The answer starts by taking your work and placing it at the feet of God. If you are not doing something immoral in your work, then your work is holy work, because it is being done in God’s temple. This is a practical implication of understanding creation as God’s temple. The work of the priest was holy because of *where* it was done.

When you put your work at God’s feet, you recognize that he is sovereign over you, has commissioned you to work, do not have dominion, to copy and reflect him before his creation. There is nothing more important when you have a job that seems meaningless than to put it within this kind of a context, for suddenly, when you do, it takes on a new shape, a new function, a new purpose in your mind. When you understand that God is pleased with what you do, simply because you are emulating him, then that work can’t be seen as a drudgery any longer. We will look more at this when we come to the command that God gave to Adam regarding the Garden of Eden.

## **Sabbath Enthronement**

In light of what I’ve just said, we need to now add to the meaning of God’s Sabbath. The most foundational things to understand will escape you, like Jim Brown escapes those unfamiliar with the NFL, if you are not familiar with the context. The context is found by knowing the culture and

ideas of the time and by comparing Scripture with Scripture. Let's start by thinking about other Ancient Near East creation stories. You see, there is a parallel to God's seventh day rest found throughout the ancient religious world. A king takes his "rest" when he has completed creation and/or the creation of his temple. Here are some examples:

In a Sumerian story called *The building of Ningirsu's temple* (Gudea, cylinders A and B) we read about the temple being built in order to provide a resting place for Ningirsu and his consort Bau.<sup>8</sup> The building of the temple takes seven days

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<sup>8</sup> Gudea Cylinders A and B, 1182-1202 (Cyl. B, 14.21–23): "The temple towered upwards in full grandeur, unparalleled in fearsomeness and radiance. Like a boat it ..... and ..... Its owner, the warrior Ningirsu, came out as the daylight on the dais of Ĝir-nun. Its ..... resting on supports was like the blue sky in all its splendour. Its standards and their caps (?) were Ningirsu himself emanating fearsomeness; their leather straps stretched out in front of them were green snake-eater birds bathing. Its owner, the warrior Ningirsu, stood like Utu in his most fascinating blue chariot. Its throne, standing in the *guena* hall, was An's holy seat which is sat upon joyfully. Its bed, standing in the bedroom, was a young cow kneeling down in its sleeping place. On its holy quilt (?), strewn with fresh herbs, Mother Bau was resting comfortably with Lord Ningirsu." <http://etcsl.orinst.ox.ac.uk/cgi-bin/etcsl.cgi?text=t.2.1.7#>.



The Gudea Cylinders

and there is a [seven day ceremony](#) commemorating its completion.<sup>9</sup>

In the Egyptian creation story the *Memphite Theology*, we see “Ptah come to rest after making everything and every divine speech as well, having given birth to the gods, giving made their towns, having founded their homes, having set the gods in their cult-places, having made sure their bread-offerings, having founded their shrines” (Memphite Theology Col. 61).

In the Canaanite *Baal Cycle*, a temple is built for Baal, “Beloved of El.” It is “the throne of his kingship, the place of rest<sup>10</sup> from the siege of his dominion” (Baal and Yam, CTA 1.4.4.20-25). Another Sumerian hymn called *Temple Hymn of Kesh* or *Liturgy to Nintud on the Creation of Man and Woman* it says, “House ... inspiring great awe, called with a mighty name by An; house ... whose fate is grandly determined by the Great Mountain Enlil! House of the Anuna gods possessing great power, which gives wisdom to the people; house, reposeful dwelling of the great gods! House, which

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<sup>9</sup> Gudea Cylinders [617-624](#). “It took one year to bring the great stones in slabs and it took another year to fashion them, although not even two or three days did he let pass idly. Then it needed a day's work to set up each one but by the seventh day he had set them all up around the house.” And 1211-1223 (B 17.19): “When his master entered the house, for seven days the slave woman was allowed to become equal to her mistress and the slave was allowed to walk side by side with his master. But the ritually unclean ones could sleep only at the border of his city.”

<sup>10</sup> The translation I have has “from the back rest” (i.e. the king's throne), but notes that the phrase literally means “place of rest.” See N. Wyatt, *Religious Texts from Ugarit*, 2nd ed., Biblical Seminar, 53 (London; New York: Sheffield Academic Press, 2002), 49–50.

was planned together with the plans of heaven and earth, with the pure divine powers; house which underpins the Land and supports the shrines!”<sup>11</sup>

The Pharaoh’s erected many temples and put inscriptions on them so that all would know their purpose. One from Amenhotep II reads, “Who raises a monument in Karnak, a marvelous thing ... a place of rest for the lord of gods, made like his throne that is in heaven.”<sup>12</sup> The famous Ramses II writes of a temple he built in Karnak, “... building his house in eternal work ... he ceased not seeking to do excellent things ... excellent and eternal work ... making for him the ‘Temple-of-the-Spirit-of-Ramses’ ... a resting-place for the lord of gods, a beautiful refuge for the divine ennead [the Egyptian divine council].”<sup>13</sup> Another one he built in Kurna reads, “... making for him a house of millions of years ... wherein Amon rests, like Ra, in the horizon of heaven.”<sup>14</sup>

The Babylonian Enuma Elish says, “He founded his dwelling (temple) upon Apsu, he secured Mummu, held him firm by a lead-rope. After Ea had captured and vanquished

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<sup>11</sup> Temple Hymn of Kesh 4.80.2, D.58A-F, <http://etcsl.orinst.ox.ac.uk/cgi-bin/etcsl.cgi?text=t.4.80.2#>. See John Walton, *The Lost World of Genesis One* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2009), 75-76.

<sup>12</sup> Eighteenth Dynasty: Amenhotep II, Building Inscriptions §881 (in James Breasted, *Ancient Records of Egypt*, 4 vols (New York: Russell and Russell, 1906): 2:255.

<sup>13</sup> Nineteenth Dynasty: Ramses II, VIII. Temple of Karnak §510 (Breasted, 3:217). <http://archive.org/stream/JamesHenryBreasted.....ancientRecordsOfEgypt/Vol.3byHouseOfBooks#page/n249/mode/2up>

<sup>14</sup> Nineteenth Dynasty: Ramses II, X. Temple of Kurna §521 (Breasted, 3:221).

his foes, Had won the victory over his opponents, In his chamber, in profound quiet, he rested. He called it ‘Apsu,’ meaning ‘They Recognize Sanctuaries’” (EE 1.71-76).

Indeed, this entire creation story is all about the gods creating so that they can finally rest.

There are many more examples just like these. You can think of these ANE stories and their biblical counterparts much like we would by comparing Jim Brown to Eric Liddell, a perversion of truth but still capable of teaching us. In this case, they teach us the context of the Genesis story and other biblical commentaries on it. What other biblical commentaries? Take these for example,

Isaiah says, “Thus says the LORD: ‘Heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool; what is the house that you would build for me, and what is the place of my rest?’” (Isa 66:1). Similarly the Psalm, “Let us go to his dwelling place; let us worship at his footstool!’ ... For the LORD has chosen Zion; he has desired it for his dwelling place: ‘This is my resting place forever; here I will  dwell, for I have desired it’” (Ps 132:7-8, 13-14). The temple on Zion was a copy of the heaven and earth.

In the NT, Stephen talks about Isaiah saying, “Yet the Most High does not  dwell in houses made by hands, as the prophet says, ‘Heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool. What kind of house will you build for me, says the

Lord, or what is the place of my rest? Did not my hand make all these things?” (Acts 7:48-50).

As with the heavenly king and rest, so also with earthly kings and rest. It says of King Asa, “He took away the foreign altars and the high places and broke down the pillars and cut down the Asherim and commanded Judah to seek the LORD, the God of their fathers, and to keep the law and the commandment. He also took out of all the cities of Judah the high places and the incense altars. And the kingdom had rest under him” (2 Ch 14:3-5). When he carried out his dominion as king, Israel had rest. But of the wicked king the opposite occurs. It says, “You have made his splendor to cease (*shabbat*) and cast his throne to the ground” (Ps 89:44).

Basically, what this comes down to is, as Michael Horton says, “The temple was a microcosm of creation”<sup>15</sup> and on the other hand, as the *Bible Backgrounds commentary on the Old Testament* says, “The cosmos can therefore be described in architectural terms as a temple would be.”<sup>16</sup> Deity’s rest is achieved in a temple, generally as a result of order having been established.<sup>17</sup> Or, after victory is achieved. The former

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<sup>15</sup> Michael Horton, *The Christian Faith: A Systematic Theology for Pilgrims on the Way* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2011), 400–401. Some good studies of this include my *Waters of Creation* book, Vern Poythress, *The Shadow of Christ in the Law of Moses*; Greg Beale, *The Temple and the Church’s Mission*; T. Desmond Alexander, *Heaven on Earth*, and almost anything by John Walton.

<sup>16</sup> BBCOT, Psalm 104:3: Cosmos as Temple.

<sup>17</sup> John H Walton, *Zondervan Illustrated Bible Backgrounds Commentary (Old Testament): Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy*, vol. 1 (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2009), 23.

is the fourth commandment according to Exodus, the later is the commandment according to Deuteronomy.

So when God rests on creation, his rest is his enthronement as king in his temple. As John Walton comments, “The role of the temple in the ancient world is not primarily a place for people to gather in worship like modern churches. It is a place for the deity—sacred space. It is his home, but more importantly his headquarters—the control room. When the deity rests in the temple it means that he is taking command, that he is mounting to his throne to assume his rightful place and his proper role.”<sup>18</sup>

If God’s rest really is his taking the seat of control and being enthroned in creation, as it always is everywhere else in the ancient world, and certainly seems to be in the Bible too—remember how creation begins with the Spirit hover over the waters? Ps 29:10, “The LORD sits enthroned over the flood; the LORD sits enthroned as king forever”<sup>19</sup>—then

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<sup>18</sup> John Walton, *The Lost World of Genesis One* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Academic, 2009), 75.

<sup>19</sup> Consider also, “And whenever the ark set out, Moses said, “Arise, O LORD, and let your enemies be scattered, and let those who hate you flee before you. And when it rested, he said, “Return, O LORD, to the ten thousand thousands of Israel” (Num 10:35-36); “Now when the king lived in his house and the LORD had given him rest from all his surrounding enemies ... And I will give you rest from all your enemies. Moreover, the LORD declares to you that the LORD will make you a house” (2Sa 7:1, 11); “I had it in my heart to build a house of rest for the ark of the covenant of the LORD and for the footstool of our God, and I made preparations for building. But God said to me, ‘You may not build a house for my name, for you are a man of war and have shed blood’” (1Ch 28:2-3); “The LORD is in his holy temple; the LORD’s throne is in heaven” (Ps 11:4);

part and parcel of Sabbath worship is the coming together to recognize that God is the King, the Sovereign, the Monarch, the Ruler of All. This involves worship of the King. That is part of what you do when you put your work at his feet.

You worship him as king. As so many Psalms train us, there is a direct correspondence between God in his temple, God on his throne, God and creation, and God as king. Thus, it is the duty of all mankind to worship this King and none other.

This is why Genesis 1 is so **heavily polemical** in nature. It is a direct confrontation, forcing Israel, who knows the other creation stories, to decide who is Creator, who is King, who is worthy of worship? Is it Baal? Is it Marduk or Ea? Is it Ptah or Ra or Rameses ... or Jim Brown? Or is it Yahweh?

As second important feature of God's enthronement relates to the image of God in man. Remember, to be an image bearer is to be God's representative by carrying out dominion and ruling in knowledge, holiness, and righteousness over all things he has put under our feet. We

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“The LORD has established his throne in the heavens, and his kingdom rules over all” (Ps 103:19);

“The LORD reigns; he is robed in majesty; the LORD is robed; he has put on strength as his belt. Yes, the world is established; it shall never be moved. Your throne is established from of old; you are from everlasting. The floods have lifted up, O LORD, the floods have lifted up their voice; the floods lift up their roaring. Mightier than the thunders of many waters, mightier than the waves of the sea, the LORD on high is mighty! Your decrees are very trustworthy; holiness befits your house, O LORD, forevermore” (Ps 93:1-5); “Hear, you peoples, all of you; pay attention, O earth, and all that is in it, and let the Lord GOD be a witness against you, the Lord from his holy temple. For behold, the LORD is coming out of his place, and will come down and tread upon the high places of the earth” (Mic 1:2-3).



were created to be kings in the stead of God on earth, not over him, not beside him, but under his omnipotent authority as a means of his sovereignty, to reflect him to the universe.

This gets back to the idea of reflecting upon our work during the Sabbath. The idea is to reflect on our kingly work in the context of holy worship. Since the whole world is a temple, then even “secular” work is holy in a way and worthy of the image bearer. But we need a day in a week to think on this relationship and to rest from those labors because, for us, they are tiring, and refreshment comes when we give our work back to God, as Eric Liddell did.

And yet, though we were created to work this way, we know that apart from Christ, the image is shattered and we fail to carry it out as we ought. God knew that we would fall into sin, and thus, the Sabbath enthronement of Yahweh is not only a looking back on what he has done, but a looking forward to the work of God-man, in whom we find the eschatological meaning and purpose of God’s Sabbath.

## **Sabbath as Consummation**

To get at this, consider the language of **Genesis 2:1**, “**Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host of them.**” Their language is that **it was finished**. The work was finished. Again, **Genesis 2:2**, “**And on the seventh day God finished his work that he had done, and he rested on**

the seventh day from all his work that he had done.” To finish the work is to rest from the work, that’s what it says.

With this in mind, consider the way John describes Jesus’ very last words, “Jesus had received the sour wine, he said, ‘It is finished,’ and he bowed his head and gave up his spirit” (John 19:30). What does it mean that he gave up his spirit? It means that he **died**. What is death often called in the Bible? **Sleep**. Over and over it is called resting with your fathers. Earlier in John, “Now Jesus had spoken of his death, but they thought that he meant taking rest in sleep” (John 11:13). So when Jesus had finished his work, he rested.

What else happened? Ephesians says that God “worked in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly places, far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and above every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the one to come. And he put all things under his feet and gave him as head over all things to the church” (Eph 1:20-23). This complex passage puts God working, Christ being seated, rule, dominion, and a citation from Psalm 8 (which we looked at as a commentary on the image of God) together in Christ. Are you starting to sense what’s going on when Christ is seated?

For Christ to be seated is for Christ to be at “rest.” It is identical to what God is doing in **Genesis 2:2-3**. Identical. It is interesting that there is a word in Ugaritic, the cousin

language of Hebrew. The word is *n t*. I read the passage earlier, “Beloved of El, I shall give you a house ... the throne of his king ... the place of his rest.” Place of his rest” can also be translated as “back-rest” as in the back of the throne that the king sits back upon.<sup>20</sup> In other words, in those days, **for the king to rest and for the king to take his seat on the throne were the same thing.**

Hebrews says, “Looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter (finisher) of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God” (Heb 12:2). The next verse is interesting, “Consider him who endured from sinners such hostility against himself, so that you may not grow weary or fainthearted” (Heb 12:3). Consider him, or you won’t rest! All of the work that God did in creation anticipated the work Christ would do in the new creation. In fact, the word “finished” (*teleo*) is also translated as the word “fulfilled.” “For I tell you, that this which is written must be fulfilled (*teleo*) in Me, ‘And He was numbered with transgressors’; for that which refers to Me has *its* fulfillment (*teleo*)” (Luke 22:37 NAS).

In Christ, all things are fulfilled, he takes his seat, and rests. You become a new creation through believing in and trusting in Christ. God’s enthroned rest on day 7 of creation

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<sup>20</sup> N. Wyatt, *Religious Texts from Ugarit*, 2nd ed., Biblical Seminar, 53 (London; New York: Sheffield Academic Press, 2002), p. 50, n. 56.

was always meant to point people towards this reality, in the OT or the NT, it didn't matter. The Sabbath commandment was given to point people to this reality. Lord's Day worship continues to point people to this reality. There is one King and you must trust in him for rest.

Jesus said, “Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls” (Mat 11:28-29). Sabbath was never given to be a burden, as too many grow up thinking that it is. “Oh, we have to go to church, again?” And parents encourage this attitude in their children when they themselves act like that or show it by simply not making Sabbath the priority. They think, “Oh the kids won't know. They won't mind. They won't see it.” They do. Before I ever became Reformed, I was consciously aware that my parents would not do other things with us on the Lord's Day. We were always in church. And they actually seemed to like going! That has impressed all three of their children to this day. When other things get in the way, it is as Dr. Fesko says, “If they labored on the Sabbath, it was a declaration that they themselves could secure the Sabbath rest by their own efforts.”<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> J. V. Fesko, *Last Things First* (Glasgow: Christian Focus Publications, 2007), 195.

Heed the warning of the Psalms and of Hebrews. “I swore in my wrath, ‘They shall not enter my rest’” (Heb 3:11; Ps 95:11). It starts by resting in Christ, the Rock who went with Israel (1 Cor 10:4). When they rebelled, Christ would not fight for them. He would not deliver them. He would give them up to their enemies who would rest.

But God’s rest holds out still. In fact, did you know that of all the days of creation, the **seventh day is the only one without the morning and evening formula**? It isn’t there. Do you think this was an oversight by Moses, that he just got tired of writing that formula out, and just expects that you will know it is supposed to be there? This wasn’t an oversight. It is deliberate, because as Hebrews 3-4 and Psalm 95 show us, God’s rest is something we are constantly called to enter into. It is the rest of the seventh day. It is God’s sabbath rest. Enter My rest. The very idea that it is to be a weekly observance until the end of the world is a sure sign that you can still enter into it.

And when we die, we too will take our seats enthroned with Christ. For Jesus said to them, “Truly, I say to you, in the new world, when the Son of Man will sit on his glorious throne, you who have followed me will also sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel” (Mat 19:28). And it says, “I heard a voice from heaven saying, ‘Write this: Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from now on.’”

‘Blessed indeed,’ says the Spirit, ‘that they may rest from their labors, for their deeds follow them!’” (Rev 14:13).

And what else does it say? “I saw thrones, and seated on them were those to whom the authority to judge was committed. Also I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded for the testimony of Jesus and for the word of God, and those who had not worshiped the beast or its image and had not received its mark on their foreheads or their hands. They came to life and reigned with Christ for a thousand years” (Rev 20:4).

And what else does it say? “I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, ‘Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them as their God. He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away.’ And he who was seated on the throne said, ‘Behold, I am making all things new.’ Also he said, ‘Write this down, for these words are trustworthy and true’” (Rev 21:3-5).

“Heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool; what is the house that you would build for me, and what is the place of my rest?” (Isa 66:1). Come and rest and give up your labors, putting them at his feet, sanctifying them, purifying yourself, and giving worship to the one who reigns

forever, because he has finished the work of our salvation and the Father is pleased and the Spirit rested upon him.