

Entering The Rest of God: Adam to Revelation

I. THE SEVENTH DAY

Stand by the roads, and look, and ask for the ancient paths, where the good way is; and walk in it, and find rest for your souls. (Jer. 6:16) ^{ESV}

- A. We left off in our previous session having begun to broach the biblical definition of rest and the fact that God rested on the seventh day. It will be over the next two sessions that we will attempt to glean a more concrete and clear understanding of this topic. With that said, we must briefly return to the seventh day of Creation in order to highlight a couple of key points that we were unable to get to in our last session.
- B. When we understand Genesis 1 as being an account of the creation of physical things and then get to Genesis 2:2 where God is resting on the seventh day, we have a tendency to think of the verse as an afterthought. It appears to be nothing more than an addendum or postscript. For many believers and scholars alike the only theological importance the seventh day carries relates to the Jews' command to observe the Sabbath and keep it holy.
- C. In the modern world it is hard to see the deep well of meaning this verse holds. This is compared to a reader in the ancient world who would have recognized how important this scene was in the Text. They would have instantly deduced this portion of scripture as referring to *the temple* and thus concluded that day seven of creation was the most important of all the days.
- D. If we only approach the days of creation as having a *physical* role, then day seven has little, if any, significance. But when we look at it from a *functional* perspective (that it was created to have a function and purpose) then day seven is the pinnacle point where you realize that none of the previous days have meaning without it.
- E. What set the ancient reader apart from us was their understanding that it is in a temple, and only a temple, that a deity rests. This was the purpose of temples. They understood temples to be a place for divine rest.
- F. In our previous session we talked about the definition of rest (natural and biblical), it is here that we are able to begin expanding the information we have on it a bit more. In the ancient world when peacefulness exists, stability is established and/or a "settling down" has taken place after a time of crisis then *rest* is the result. The outcome of this is the ability for normal routines and operations to be undertaken, established and enjoyed. Thus rest is more of an engagement without obstacles rather than disengagement without responsibilities.¹

II. ADAM IN THE GARDEN

Then the LORD God took the man and put (hb. yanach) him in the garden of Eden to tend (hb. abad) and keep it (hb. shamar). (Gen. 2:15)

- A. The typical view of this verse is one that points to Adam's primary occupation as being the world's first gardener or farmer. But at the most elementary level this is a questionable perspective. If you think about it, Adam lived in paradisiacal perfection and their punishment after eating from the forbidden tree was they had to work the ground.² Upon closer examination the passage reveals much more was intended by the author's description of Adam's job.
 - 1. Verse 15 reiterates the placement of the man within the Garden of Eden (also v. 8). The word translated as "put" in the English text should be translated differently. The Hebrew word used, 'yanach' comes from the root word 'nuach', which means 'to rest'.

¹Walton, John H. *The Lost World of Genesis One: Ancient Cosmology and the Origins Debate*. (Downers Grove, Ill: IVP Academic, 2009), p 72-73

²If working the ground was the result of the fall then why would working the ground be something that took place prior to the fall?

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2. The choice of language in verse 15 literally means that Adam was 'set to rest' in the Garden. Interestingly, this word is also used later in the Old Testament to describe God's Sabbath rest and His desire for a resting place.³
 3. We can't stop there with this verse because we must look at what it means for man to rest in the garden. What was Adam's occupation?
 4. Now it is true the word often translated 'cultivate' in Genesis 2:15 can have an agricultural meaning when standing alone.
 5. Yet whenever these two words (*hb.abad* and *shamar*) are paired together throughout the remainder of the Old Testament within a fifteen word range, they *always* refer to either to the Israelites serving God and keeping His commandments or to the priests who serve the Lord and guard His sanctuary. (Num. 3:7-8; 8:25-26; 18:5-6; 1 Chr. 23:32; Ez. 44:14) A study that would be worth your time would be looking into the lost teaching amongst Christians that the Garden was recognized as one of the first temples.⁴
 - a. Thus the best rendering for this passage is that Adam was set to rest within the Garden in order *to serve and guard* the Garden of the Lord. This does not necessarily preclude the idea of Adam actually stewarding the physical features of the Garden but clarifies this was an overtly *priestly service* (just as priests and Levites were later to care for the tabernacle/temple).
 6. As tempting as it is to linger beneath this for the remainder of our session, we must press on and stay focused. Help Lord!
- B. The next scene we come to that keeps to our theme involves the creation of the woman. It is here that we see a principle being set forth that has profound consequences for both man and woman.

And the Lord God caused a deep sleep to fall on Adam (hb. meaning, "red dirt"), and he slept; and He took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh in its place. 22 Then the rib which the Lord God had taken from man He made into a woman, and He brought her to the man.... 20 And Adam called his wife's name Eve (hb. meaning "life-giver"), because she was the mother of all living. (Gen. 2:21-22; 3:20)

- C. The picture given is one where God puts Adam into a deep sleep and then removes his rib bone to create Eve. The purpose of the rib is to protect the vital organs inside the human. The meaning of Eve's name helps us see that when man is at rest in God, life will come forth.
- D. After some time we then get to a major transitional moment in human history. Due to the deep levels of wickedness found amongst humanity, God must judge the earth for rejecting Him in their autonomy. He raises up a man named Noah (*hb. "Noach"*) who's name means, "man of rest".
- E. We then see God calling Abram out of the ancient region of Chaldea for the purpose of setting apart a line for the Messiah to come from. In order for this to happen, God would make an unconditional covenant with him.

So He said to him, "Bring Me a three-year-old heifer, a three-year-old female goat, a three-year-old ram, a turtledove, and a young pigeon." 10 Then he brought all these to Him and cut them in two, down the middle, and placed each piece opposite the other; but he did not cut the birds in two... 12 Now when the sun was going down, a deep sleep fell upon Abram... 17 And it came to pass, when the sun went down and it was dark, that behold, there appeared a smoking oven and a burning torch that passed between those pieces. 18 On the same day the Lord made a covenant with Abram, saying: "To your descendants I have given this land, from the river of Egypt to the great river, the River Euphrates— 19 the Kenites, the Kenezites, the Kadmonites, 20 the Hittites, the Perizzites, the Rephaim, 21 the Amorites, the Canaanites, the Girgashites, and the Jebusites."

³Ross, *Recalling Hope of Glory*, p 105

⁴First, the greatest indication that the Garden is to be understood primarily as the first sanctuary is seen through the way in which future sanctuaries and temples described in Scripture are clearly patterned after it (Ex. 25:31-36; 1 Kgs. 6:18, 29, 32; 7:49). Second, in Genesis 3:8, the verbs used to describe God walking through the Garden are used later in the Old Testament to describe God's presence with Israel in His Tabernacle and Temple (Lev. 26:12; Dt. 23:15; 2 Sam. 7:6-7). Finally, the major reason is found in the lamentation of Ezekiel 28 where the subject of the oracle is said specifically to have defiled the sanctuaries (plural).

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- F. The biblical narrative continues on telling the accounts of Abraham's descendants – Isaac, Jacob and Joseph, with the book of Genesis ending with the blessing of Jacob's twelve sons (and grandsons) while they are in the land of Egypt.
- G. It would be after living there for two hundred thirty years that God would raise up a deliverer named Moses (*hb. Moshe*). Moses would have three forty-year seasons during his lifetime (Prince of Egypt, shepherd in Arabia and the leader of the Exodus). After delivering the Israelites from Egypt's oppression the Lord takes them to Sinai where He gives them His word and instructs on the building of a tabernacle.
- H. When the tabernacle was built we see the whole camp being oriented around it - it was at the very center. God desired to consecrate His people but the only way this could be achieved was for them to make a space for Him.

Now therefore, if you will indeed obey my voice and keep my covenant, you shall be my treasured possession among all peoples, for all the earth is mine; 6 and you shall be to me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation. These are the words that you shall speak to the people of Israel. (Ex. 19:5-6)

- I. The purpose of the tabernacle was to perpetuate what was experienced and received at Sinai. He left it up to them to make a space for Him.
- Let them construct a sanctuary for Me, that I may dwell among them. 9 According to all that I am going to show you, as the pattern of the tabernacle and the pattern of all its furniture, just so you shall construct it.*** (Ex. 25:8-9)

See that you make them after the pattern for them, which was shown to you on the mountain. (Ex. 25:40)

Then you shall erect the tabernacle according to its plan which you have been shown in the mountain. (Ex. 26:30)

You shall make it hollow with planks; as it was shown to you in the mountain, so they shall make it. (Ex. 27:8)

Now this was the workmanship of the lampstand, hammered work of gold; from its base to its flowers it was hammered work; according to the pattern which the LORD had shown Moses, so he made the lampstand. (Num. 8:4)

“All this,” said David, “the LORD made me understand in writing by His hand upon me, all the details of this pattern.” (1 Chr. 28:19)

And He built this sanctuary like the high heavens, like the earth, which He has founded forever. (Ps. 78:69) ^{ESV}

Our fathers had the tabernacle of testimony in the wilderness, just as He who spoke to Moses directed him to make it according to the pattern which he had seen. (Acts 7:44)

- J. A total of seven times Moses is commanded by God to build what he *saw* atop Sinai. In essence, the people were to replicate this temple/tabernacle that already existed in the heavenly city. Each of the articles represents something seen by Moses while there.
- K. The account of creation and the account of the building of the tabernacle are both structured around seven acts or decrees. Compare, “And God said” (Gen. 1:3, 6, 9, 14, 20, 24, 26) with “the Lord said” (Ex. 25:1; 30:11, 17, 22, 34; 31:1, 12).
- L. In addition to this, the similarity of language between the original creation and Moses' work in building of the tabernacle is striking (Gen. 1:31, 2:1, 2:2, 2:3 with Ex. 39:43, 39:32, 40:33, 39:43). Moses “saw all the work”, Moses “completed the work”, and “blessed” the people for their labor.
- M. Having this perspective allows the significance of what occurred at Mt. Sinai and the convergence that took place to be better understood. In the Lord descending and resting upon the mountain before His people it was the first true expression of the rest He possessed prior to the fall.

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Now the glory of the LORD rested on Mount Sinai, and the cloud covered it six days. And on the seventh day He called to Moses out of the midst of the cloud. (Ex. 24:16)

N. God's purpose, therefore, in establishing a tabernacle/temple was that He might rest among His people in a way that:

1. Recalled His original rest on the earth in the beginning
2. Mirrored and converged with His sovereign rest in Heaven
3. Pointed to His ultimate eschatological rest upon the earth

O. Joshua

“And it shall come to pass, as soon as the soles of the feet of the priests who bear the ark of the Lord, the Lord of all the earth, shall rest in the waters of the Jordan, that the waters of the Jordan shall be cut off, the waters that come down from upstream, and they shall stand as a heap.” 14 So it was, when the people set out from their camp to cross over the Jordan, with the priests bearing the ark of the covenant before the people, 15 and as those who bore the ark came to the Jordan, and the feet of the priests who bore the ark dipped in the edge of the water (for the Jordan overflows all its banks during the whole time of harvest). (Joshua 3:13-15)

P. David

Then King David rose to his feet and said, “Hear me, my brethren and my people: 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 had made preparations to build it. (1 Chr. 28:2)

Q. Isaiah

Thus says the LORD: “Heaven is My throne, and earth is My footstool. Where is the house that you will build Me? And where is the place of My rest? 2 For all those things My hand has made, and all those things exist,” says the LORD. (Is. 66:1-2a)

III. BRIDGING INTO THE NEW TESTAMENT

A. Matthew

Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. 29 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. 30 For My yoke is easy and My burden is light.” (Mt. 11:28-30)

B. Hebrews

Beware, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God; 13 but exhort one another daily, while it is called “Today,” lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin. 14 For we have become partakers of Christ if we hold the beginning of our confidence steadfast to the end, 15 while it is said: “Today, if you will hear His voice, Do not harden your hearts as in the rebellion.” 16 For who, having heard, rebelled? Indeed, was it not all who came out of Egypt, led by Moses? 17 Now with whom was He angry forty years? Was it not with those who sinned, whose corpses fell in the wilderness? 18 And to whom did He swear that they would not enter His rest, but to those who did not obey? 19 So we see that they could not enter in because of unbelief. 4:1 Therefore, since a promise remains of entering His rest, let us fear lest any of you seem to have come short of it. 2 For indeed the gospel was preached to us as well as to them; but the word which they heard did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in those who heard it. 3 For we who have believed do enter that rest, as He has said: “So I swore in My wrath, ‘They shall not enter My rest,’” although the works were finished from the foundation of the world. 4 For He has spoken in a certain place of the seventh day in this way: “And God rested on the seventh day from all His works”; 5 and again in this place: “They shall not enter My rest.” 6 Since therefore it remains that some must enter it, and those to whom it was first preached did not enter because of disobedience, 7 again He designates a certain day, saying in David, “Today,” after such a long

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time, as it has been said: “Today, if you will hear His voice, Do not harden your hearts.”⁸ For if Joshua had given them rest, then He would not afterward have spoken of another day. ⁹ There remains therefore a rest for the people of God. ¹⁰ For he who has entered His rest has himself also ceased from his works as God did from His. ¹¹ Let us therefore be diligent to enter that rest, lest anyone fall according to the same example of disobedience. ¹² For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discernor of the thoughts and intents of the heart. ¹³ And there is no creature hidden from His sight, but all things are naked and open to the eyes of Him to whom we must give account. ¹⁴ Seeing then that we have a great High Priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession. ¹⁵ For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin. ¹⁶ Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need. (Heb. 3:12-4:16)

C. Revelation

Then I heard a voice from heaven saying to me, “Write: ‘Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from now on.’” “Yes,” says the Spirit, “that they may rest from their labors, and their works follow them.” (Rev. 14:13)