

A DAY TO REMEMBER

ARE YOU TRAVELLING TOO FAST?

TRY JESUS COURSE BOOK 17

Several years ago, newspapers told how a new Navy jet fighter shot itself down. Flying at supersonic speed, it ran into cannon shells it had fired only a few seconds before. The jet was travelling too fast.

TOO FAST?

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Are you travelling too fast? Apparently many people are! Social researcher **Hugh Mackay**, in his book *Generations*, quotes a typical father:

You ask yourself, what is the point of all this? Why are we all rushing about? There must be more to life than this. I hear my wife saying to the kids that Daddy is having his midlife crisis, but I don't think she realises that it is true. Sometimes I just feel like walking away from the whole thing.

I'm sure my father didn't have a midlife crisis. His life was much more calm and much more organised. I seem to lurch from crisis to crisis, but this one [retrenchment] is the worst. I can't even rely on job security anymore.

Where can we find security and peace of mind? We live in a society where the pace of life is increasing and where God has largely been relegated to a superstitious past. The Bible, however, still has relevance for us today.

The Biblical World View

1. What does the very first verse of the Bible tell us about God? Genesis 1:1 (page 1 in NIV Bible: International Bible Society, 00195)

In the beginning _____ the heavens and the earth.

The very first verse of the Bible gives the basis of the biblical world view. It tells us that God is there and He acts in space-time history. The Creation story of Genesis chapter one is perhaps the most important passage in the whole Bible for us in the 21st century. This story, more than any other, gives human beings their place in the universe and meaning for their existence. It forms the basis of the biblical world view. Notice again the words of world-renowned theologian and philosopher Carl Henry:

Indeed the doctrine of creation is so basic as to be the indispensable foundation for any tolerable, viable

2 + *human existence. The proof of this is being spelled out in the progressive disintegration of the spirit of life of*
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modern, homeless man. When the truth of this is clearly seen, the Church will speak about God the Father, Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth, with a new relevance to today's growing crowd of lonely men, to its lost and nameless, to its homeless and hopeless men. For the Prodigal Son "came to himself" only when he remembered his father. (An Anchor for a Lonely Crowd)

The Creation story tells us **first**, that **God is sovereign** - He made the universe and all that's in it. He is the supreme Creator of heaven and earth. While He is intimately involved in it, He is not the universe or even part of it. He is a Person over it just as the builder of a house is not part of the house, but is the creator of it.

The second thing the Genesis account tells us is **the real nature of human beings**. We are finite (that is, we are limited), dependent, with delegated authority, yet unique, godlike, personal, and of infinite worth. We have the ability to think, choose and act.



A Memorial of Creation

2. When God had finished creating this world, what did He do? Genesis 2:1-3 (page 2)

By the seventh day God had finished the work he had been doing; so on the seventh day he _____ from all his work. And God _____ the seventh day and made it _____, because on it he rested from all the work of creating that he had done.

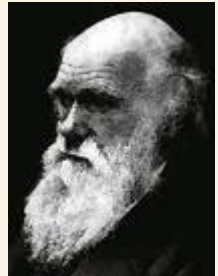
3. Of what was the Sabbath a memorial? Exodus 20:8-11 (page 54)

- that we should worship the things God made that we don't need to work for a living
 that God created the world that life happened by chance

ANSWERS TO THE BIG QUESTIONS ABOUT LIFE

The Sabbath tells us the most important things that we need to know; **where we came from, why we are here, and where we are going**. Life didn't happen by chance; we were created by a loving Creator. The purpose of our creation was so we could have close friendship with God. That friendship, which was broken by sin, was restored spiritually through Christ's death on the cross and will be literally restored when Jesus comes a second time.

In 1844 **Charles Darwin** developed his idea of natural selection in an essay that was expanded into the book ***On the Origin of Species***. (E Peter Volpe, *Man, Nature, and Society*)



This book [*Origin of Species*], published in 1859, has done more to undermine popular belief in God, and thus the meaning of life, than any other book.

(Colin Brown, *Philosophy and the Christian Faith*)



Western scientific reasoning has concluded that humans are a biological accident and thus a biological absurdity. Scientific reasoning has reduced humans to a rabbit - or an atom. Of course there were other factors that occurred in philosophy and science that set the stage, as it were, for Darwin's book having such an impact, but it is nonetheless true that Western thought changed under the influence of the evolutionary theory.

Once we deny the existence of God, human beings become nothing. Based on an evolutionary world view, there are no meaningful answers to the big questions, Where did we come from? Why are we here? Where are we going? If the past is hazy and the future blank, then what happens in between does not matter. The Sabbath answers these big questions about life.

Where did we come from? Life is not a biological accident. God created us as His children.

We were made in the image of God, with individuality, personality, and the power to think, choose and act. We are here by design not by chance. The past is not hazy. Life is run by law not by luck. This is why the Sabbath is enshrined in the very heart of the Ten Commandments.

Why are we here? Not to fulfil a meaning- less existence. The Sabbath tells us that we were made for fellowship with God. It was ever meant to be a weekly reminder of our creaturely dependence and our need to worship the Creator, to put God first, not the creation that He had made.

Human beings alone, of all creatures, can worship. The reason why the world's in a mess is because our relationship with God has been broken by sin. People put self and things first instead of God. People have thought, since the 18th century enlightenment, that by the use of reason alone, independent of God, they could arrive at truth about life. All this achieved was to reduce humans to matter and life to meaninglessness. The Sabbath tells us that we are dependent on God and only when we acknowledge that dependence and are reconciled with Him can life have meaning.

As far as God is concerned, Jesus potentially restored that reconciliation at the cross. All that needed to be done to pay for sin and to provide a basis for our acceptance with God was done on Calvary. **This is the objective side of the gospel that needs to be continually stressed in this age of extreme individualism and subjectivism.**

All who accept by faith Christ's perfect sacrifice - this is the subjective side of the gospel - can be reunited in fellowship with God. Life takes on a new meaning for those who do.

Where are we going?

The future is not blank. The Sabbath points to a restored fellowship,

by faith here and now, but in reality when "Eden" is restored. All who accept Jesus as Saviour and Lord are children of the King of the universe, and because they are His children, they will live with Him eternally when He comes back a second time.

4. In what way is the Sabbath a sign between God and His people? Ezekiel 20:12, 20 (page 599)

- it shows that we are equal with God
- Sabbath-keeping saves us from sin
- it acknowledges that God is our Lord and our dependence on Him

In the Creation story in Genesis 1 and 2, both the creation of humans and the Sabbath receive greater coverage than all other creation events. They also are given in sequence, indicating both their connection and importance. "Adam's first full day of life was the seventh day which, one can legitimately assume, he spent not working but celebrating with his Maker the inauguration of the completed and perfect creation" (Samuele Bacchocchi, *Divine Rest for Human Restlessness*, Rome: Pontifical Gregorian University Press, page 20).

The whole purpose of the Creation story is that Adam and Eve, the crowning act of the Creation week, were made for fellowship and friendship, represented by the seventh day Sabbath, with God who is the supreme Creator of the entire universe. This is the major thrust - relationship - not geology or astronomy.

5. The message found in Revelation 14:6-12 is portrayed as the last one to go to all the world before Jesus comes again. What significant call to worship is given to all people in the last period of earth's history? Revelation 14:6, 7 (page 874)

Worship him who _____ the heavens, the earth, the sea and the springs of water.

The issue in the last days is true versus false worship. The entire world will be divided over their allegiance to either God the Creator or the false worship of the beast (creature worship). The next Bible guide will say more about this topic.



A Memorial of Redemption

6. As Jesus hung on the cross He cried, "It is finished" (John 19:30, page 768) then died. What day did He rest in the tomb? Luke 23:50-56 (page 748)

In the beginning God rested on the Sabbath after completing His work of creation. Now Jesus rested from the work of redemption. Though it seemed like a defeat, it was in reality a great victory. When Jesus cried, "It is finished", the destruction of sin

and Satan was forever made certain and a restored creation and a redeemed race were guaranteed. This forever linked the Sabbath with salvation. It is a memorial of both creation and redemption.

7. What did the women do on the following three days "according to the commandment"? Luke 23:50-24:6 (page 748)

Preparation day (day Jesus died, Friday)
The Sabbath (Saturday)
First day of the week (Sunday) _____

For Our Benefit

8. What was made for the benefit of the human race? Mark 2:27, 28 (page 708)

Then he said to them, "The _____ was made for man, not man for the Sabbath. So the Son of Man [Jesus] is _____ of the Sabbath."

The Sabbath is presented in the Bible as the day of which Jesus is Lord, therefore it is the Lord's day. As such it is meant to be of benefit to us. We need to stop and take time "to smell the roses". We need to take time to spend with God. The Hebrew word for "Sabbath" means "rest". Its establishment was to show us that we were made for fellowship with God, and even all the wealth of a perfect creation could not bring ultimate satisfaction. Communion with the Creator and resting in Him is a necessity for all. This is the God-shaped hole in every one of us that we've talked about before.

9. What is it lawful to do on the Sabbath day? Matthew 12:9-12 (page 689)

He said to them, "If any of you has a sheep and it falls into a pit on the Sabbath, will you not take hold of it and lift it out? How much more valuable is a man than a sheep! Therefore it is lawful to do _____ on the Sabbath."

The purpose of the Sabbath is fellowship with God and human beings. It becomes, through Christ, a time not only to commemorate God's creation, but also to experience the blessings of salvation by caring for the needs of others. It's meant to be a day of healing - a day for doing good and helping others in need.

10. When will we find joy in the Lord? Isaiah 58:13, 14 (page 527)

If you keep your feet from breaking the Sabbath and from doing _____ on my holy day, if you call the Sabbath a _____ and the Lord's holy day honourable, and if you honour it by not going _____ and not doing as _____ or speaking idle words, _____ you will find your joy in the Lord.

11. What was Jesus' custom? Luke 4:16 (page 727)

He went to Nazareth, where he had been brought up, and on the Sabbath day he went into the synagogue, _____ . And he stood up to read.

Because there was no meeting place in Philippi, Paul and his companions went out of the city to the riverside on the Sabbath "to find a place of prayer." (Acts 16:13-15, page 784)

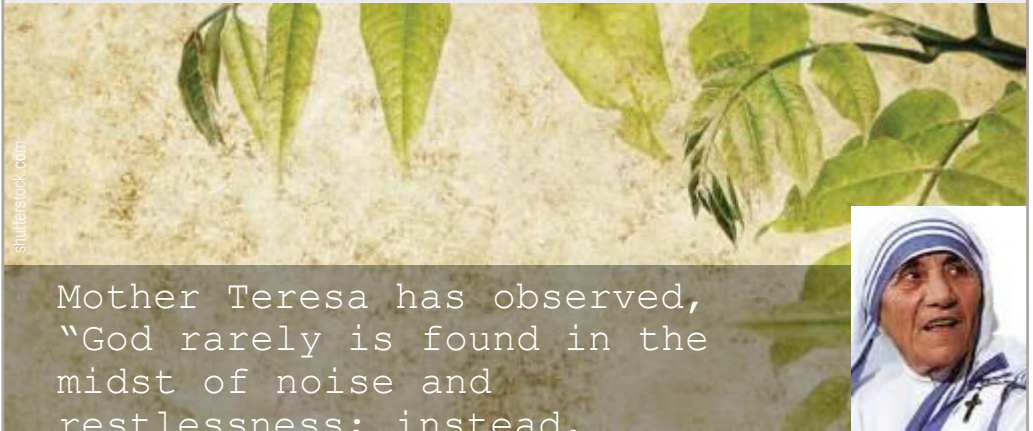
Promise of Rest for a Restless World

12. In the new earth, when will all the redeemed worship God? Isaiah 66:22, 23 (page 533)

"As the new heavens and the new earth that I make will endure before me," declares the Lord, "so will your name and descendants endure. From one New Moon to another and _____, all mankind will come and bow down before me," says the Lord.

13. What did Jesus promise for those who come to Him? Matthew 11:28-30 (page 689)

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



Mother Teresa has observed,
"God rarely is found in the
midst of noise and
restlessness: instead,



Religion is said to be good for the soul. It seems to be good for the body, too. A study by Kenneth Ferraro of Purdue University shows people who regularly worship say they feel healthier than those who don't. From interviews with 1473 people researchers found:

- Of those who said they don't worship regularly, 9% reported poor health and 26% claimed excellent health.
- Among the regular worshippers, just 4% said they were in poor health, while 36% reported excellent health.

While the study didn't determine a reason for the connection, Ferraro says that "people who are devout in their faith have probably adjusted their lives" in other areas. Congregations offer support with stress or family problems. And many religions promote health by forbidding tobacco or alcohol or urging moderate use. Another plus: "Sabbath rest. Having a day ... to relax probably has beneficial results." (Anita Manning, *USA Today*).

In an article by award-winning US journalist Michael Pollan on doing our bit to help the environment, Pollan said, "Maybe you decide to give up meat, which would reduce your carbon footprint by as much as a quarter. Or you could try this: **determine to observe the Sabbath**. For one day a week, abstain completely from economic activity: no shopping, no driving, no electronics."

Slow Me Down, Lord

Slow me down, Lord.

Ease the pounding of my heart by the quieting of my mind.

Steady my hurried pace with a vision of the eternal reach of time.

Give me, amid the confusion of the day, the calmness of the everlasting hills.

Break the tensions of my nerves and muscles with the soothing music of the singing streams that live in my memory.

Teach me the art of taking minute vacations - of slowing down to look at a flower, to chat with a friend, to pat a dog, to smile at a child, to read a few lines from a good book.

Slow me down, Lord, and inspire me to send my roots deep into the soil of life's enduring values, that I may grow toward my greater destiny.

Remind me each day that the race is not always to the swift; that there is more to life than increasing its speed.

Let me look upward to the towering oak and know that it grew great and strong because it grew slowly and well.

Orin L Crain

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The Sabbath is a weekly reminder that we need to take time to be with God, to remember where we came from and what Jesus has done for us.

How do you feel about what the Bible says about the Sabbath?

- I've found this guide has helped me to understand what the Bible says about the Sabbath.
- I feel the pressure and stress of modern living and can see the benefits of the weekly Sabbath. I
- would like to take time to keep the Sabbath.

How do you think the Sabbath will benefit you?

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