

Jesus could say "Man was not made for the Sabbath but the Sabbath is made for man." (Mark 2:27) Many a tired soul in the passage of life has lived in the hope of the day of rest. So strong was the concept in Hebrew culture that some of the Mediaevalists interpreted the Song of Solomon as the love between a godly man and the Sabbath. We are not convinced of that but we are absolutely sure that God knew best and so gave us a day to be set apart for Him.

Perhaps at this point it is proper to observe that deeds honoring God are fit activity for Sabbath. So Jesus healed on the Sabbath, not on a wholesale pattern, but incidentally as he became aware of a particular need. A deed of mercy on Sabbath honored a God of mercy. And when Jesus' disciples ate the grain pulled from the stem, he observed with an Old Testament allusion the propriety of so doing. Jesus would not have condoned the development of a Galilean fast-food line on Sabbath but he did not think his own should go hungry needlessly. He was not going to build a hospital on Sabbath but where a needy person appeared he was not going to turn his head and walk away. The Lord in heaven was honored in showing mercy and love...and honoring Him is the heart of the Sabbath.

The Sabbath: Present Views

Today many questions are asked about Sabbath. Should we keep it? Why is the command not repeated in the New Testament as all others are? Is not one day just as good as another? These complicate the beauty of the teaching and do so in a very exasperating way in that they easily lead to hypocrisy and artificial standards. But they must be answered.

The nature of the Sabbath command, the antiquity of its observance and its use before and after the giving of the law offer an interesting study.