

To comprehend what it means we need to consult Deuteronomy 5:12-15 where Moses reiterated the law nearly 40 years later as Israel prepared to enter the land of promise. The repetition is normal...it was a new generation leading the way into Canaan and their memory of the past was not as precise as it should have been. To tell them of the seriousness of their venture and of the requirement of God, Moses first reviewed the Israeli history and then reviewed the law. In the legal review most commands are repeated almost verbatim but this command finds a significant addition. Moses does not discuss creation at this point but deliverance from Egypt (Dt. 5:13) and this gives us an important clue in Sabbath observance. The observance of the Sabbath is in connexion with some dramatic act of God's providence. Before the institution of the nation the Sabbath commemorated the providential work of Creation. With the coming of Israel as a national entity, the Sabbath commemorated deliverance from Egypt. But the church commemorates a deliverance from sin as provided by Jesus Christ when he dies as an offering to God. Consequently Christians remember the first day (Acts 20:7) and the freedom from sin that came with the resurrection. So in a technical sense the Christian community does not keep the Sabbath, it was never in Egyptian bondage, but it does keep a day to the Lord. We might say that anyone who fails to do so has forgotten that in all ages and to all people God has set apart a day for our enjoyment and the worship of Himself.

It is important to see that the reality of the day is more meaningful than the number. But the number is in no sense trivial or unmeaningful. Time for God is the essential item, however and those who have not any time for Him are empty of soul. Those who seek alternate days lose in the fellowship of other believers. The emphasis is that while there is a discontinuity of practice there is a continuity of ideal. A day, free of