

## Profaning the Sabbath, Part One

Nehemiah 13:15-22

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### I. Introduction

*“We are not our own; therefore, neither is our own reason or will to rule our acts and counsels. We are not our own; therefore, let us not make it our end to seek what may be agreeable to our [sinful] nature. We are not our own; therefore, as far as possible, let us forget ourselves and the things that are ours. On the other hand, we are God’s; let us, therefore, live and die to him. We are God’s; therefore, let his wisdom and will preside over all our actions. We are God’s; to him, then, as the only legitimate end, let every part of our life be directed!”* John Calvin, *Institutes*, Book 3

### II. Is this Relevant?

#### A. Termination of the Jewish Sabbath (Col 2:16; Rom 14:1ff)

The particular form the Sabbath took in the OT – namely, worship on the 7<sup>th</sup> day of the week - is no longer binding. Paul makes quite clear that Christians are not bound to the Jewish calendar, not bound to the holy days that shaped OT piety. He remarks in Colossians 2:16-17, *“Let no one judge you in food or in drink, or regarding a festival or a new moon or sabbaths, which are a shadow of things to come, but the substance is of Christ.”* All those festivals pointed to Christ. In Him they reach their appointed goal or fulfillment. Hence, we do not observe the Jewish Sabbath, the 7<sup>th</sup> day Sabbath.

#### B. The Sabbath and the Lord’s Day (Acts 20:7; 1 Cor 16:2; Rev 1:10)

The urge to flatten time and make every day the same is not a \_\_\_\_\_ impulse. Rather it is an \_\_\_\_\_ impulse. For if we are simply animals, with no sense of greatness, no image of God in us, then there is no point – other than sentimentality – for distinguishing one day from another. Every day is just a practical day, another day to work and scratch out a living and survive. But this is not all that we are – we are creatures made in the image of God to reflect His glory.

*As it is the law of nature, that, in general, a due proportion of time be set apart for the worship of God; so, in His Word, by a positive, moral, and perpetual commandment binding all men in all ages, He has particularly appointed one day in seven, for a Sabbath, to be kept holy unto him: which, from the beginning of the world to the resurrection of Christ, was the last day of the week; and, from the resurrection of Christ, was changed into the first day of the week, which, in Scripture, is called the Lord's Day, and is to be continued to the end of the world, as the Christian Sabbath. (WCF, XXI.7)*

### III. Holy Day or Market Day?

#### A. To market, to market

1. The Sabbath Command (cf. Ex 20:8-11; Dt 5:12-15)

2. The Call to Faith (cf. Ex 16; Ezek 20:10-17)

Because the Sabbath demanded that the people rest from their labors, rest from their time of production, from commerce, the Sabbath was essentially a call to \_\_\_\_\_ – to trust God's Word, to believe that as they honored Him, He would bless them. The Sabbath was a call to believe in the Living God. If we honor Him, putting Him and His kingdom first, then He will bless us and strengthen our labors. If we honor the Sabbath, then He will bless us in accordance with His promises. The Sabbath was not mere \_\_\_\_\_.

#### B. Nehemiah's Response

1. Profaning the Sabbath (cf. Jer 17:19-27)

2. Sanctifying the Sabbath

#### C. Cry of Faith

### IV. Conclusion