

"IN THE BEGINNING: A Study of Creation"

THE SEVENTH DAY (Gen 2:1 – 3)

God's creative work reached a climax on day six with the creation of man and woman. It seemed like with each subsequent creation day, more and more details were revealed about the events of that day. God didn't create anything on the seventh day and yet He chose to include it as part of creation. Let's see if we can find out why.

(NIV, Gen 2:1), "Thus the heavens and the earth were completed in all their vast array."

"vast array" in the Hebrew is, "tsaba" and means "a mass of persons (or figurative things), especially regularly organized for war (an army)". The implication here is that when God created the living organisms (plant and creatures) He didn't just create one or two of each, but many.

(NIV, Gen 2:2), "By the seventh day God had finished the work he had been doing; so on the seventh day he rested from all his work."

All English translations use the word "rested". We know that God is omnipotent (ie. All powerful) so what does it mean when it says that God rested? Was He tired? Fatigued? That doesn't seem right. The original Hebrew word in this verse is "Shabath" where we get our English word, Sabbath. It means, "to desist from exertion; (cause to, let, make to) cease, celebrate, leave, put away (down), (make to) rest."

"Rested" simply means "ceasing from doing something". So on the 7th day God simply stopped creating. Shabath can also mean celebrate (though not necessarily in the context of this verse). But it does paint quite a picture. God ceases his work on creation and on the 7th day there is celebration in Heaven.

(NIV, Gen 2:3), "And God blessed the seventh day and made it holy, because on it he rested from all the work of creating that he had done."

It is pretty interesting that God chose the 7th day, the only day that He didn't create anything, to set apart and make holy. That leaves us with the question... Why? Let's examine some additional verses...

(NIV, Exo 16:23), "He said to them, "This is what the LORD commanded: 'Tomorrow is to be a day of rest, a holy Sabbath to the LORD. So bake what you want to bake and boil what you want to boil. Save whatever is left and keep it until morning.' "

(NIV, Exo 16:28-30), "Then the LORD said to Moses, "How long will you refuse to keep my commands and my instructions? [29] Bear in mind that the LORD has given you the Sabbath; that is why on the sixth day he gives you bread for two days. Everyone is to stay where he is on the seventh day; no one is to go out." [30] So the people rested on the seventh day."

(NIV, Exo 23:12), "Six days do your work, but on the seventh day do not work, so that your ox and your donkey may rest and the slave born in your household, and the alien as well, may be refreshed."

(NIV, Lev 25:3-5), "For six years sow your fields, and for six years prune your vineyards and gather their crops. [4] But in the seventh year the land is to have a sabbath of rest, a sabbath to the LORD. Do not sow your fields or prune your vineyards. [5] Do not reap what grows of itself or harvest the grapes of your untended vines. The land is to have a year of rest."

(NKJV, Heb 4:8-11), "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."

God's word repeatedly makes mention of a day of rest. It must be important if it is repeated. Scripture mentions some very practical reasons for days of rest.

Almighty God demonstrates to us first, what He expects from us. He leads by example.

GROUP DISCUSSION

- In Exodus 16:28-30 there is reference to the Sabbath. What significance do you see in the fact that God provided 2 days worth of bread on the sixth day?
- Why do you think that God placed so much importance on the Sabbath?