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God gave the Israelites the sabbath because he wanted them to practice observing rest and dedicating a day to worshipping God without the distractions of normal day-to-day business. According to the book of Deuteronomy (NIV, Deut 5:15), the sabbath serves as a day when God reminds the Israelites that they are no longer in captivity where they were working as slaves who had no rest, He requires that they observe the Sabbath as a reminder to them that rest is essential and they are no longer slaves. This for me is an important concept to grasp, it is a good reminder that we were not created to work without rest, rest is essential not only for our well-being in the physical, sense but for our spiritual well-being as well. The Sabbath is also considered a holy day that is to be dedicated to God (NIV, Ex 20:8-11), this means that there should not be any activity done on the sabbath that takes the focus away from God.

According to Exodus 20:8-11, labor is prohibited, the scripture stipulates that no one should do any work on the Sabbath, not even the children, slaves, or foreigners living in the land. Nehemiah 13:15-16 further elaborates that selling of food is not allowed on the sabbath, I think that this scripture goes beyond the selling of food, I think it refers to selling all kinds of merchandise. Jeremiah 17:21-22 also adds to the list of things that should not be done on the Sabbath and it mentions that no load should be carried, and no load should be carried from the Israelites' houses (NIV, Jer 17: 22). I do not think that the command to obey the sabbath still stands today, the first reason for this is because the Sabbath was set for a specific

reason after the Israelites were freed from slavery in Egypt and they were used to working like slaves, the Sabbath was then God's way of showing grace and reminding them that they are his children and not slaves and therefore they need to rest and observe his statutes on the day of Sabbath. The second reason why I do not believe that the Sabbath still applies today is the fact that Jesus performed what could traditionally be considered "work" in the Old Testament when he healed people and taught on the Sabbath.

While I do not think that the Sabbath is a command as it was when it was initially given to the Israelites, I still think that it is beneficial for a Christian to observe the Sabbath, Jesus did not absolve the Sabbath when he came so therefore, I do not think that we should stop observing it. I do think however that how we would practice it today would differ slightly from the initial recommendation in the bible in the books of Exodus 20:8-11, Nehemiah 13:15-16 and Jeremiah 17:21-22. One example of how this would be different is that in modern societies, our churches are often a distance away from our homes which means that we must drive or take some form of transportation to get there, the act of paying for an uber to get to church is already in violation of the scripture in Nehemiah 13:15-16 which is against conducting of business, the act of paying someone to get you to a destination would be considered a violation of the Sabbath. I think we should observe the Sabbath to practice rest and use the day to give time to God, but I do think that we would need to be aware of the things that we cannot do without that would be considered a violation of the Sabbath and figure out a way to navigate such a complex situation.

I am conflicted about when I think the Sabbath is between Saturday and Sunday. I am convinced that if we were to go according to an ancient calendar that was used around the time of the Old Testament the Sabbath would surely not fall on a Sunday. Saturday is probably when the Sabbath is but for me, I consider a Monday the first day of the week and therefore the 7th day falls on a Sunday which makes that day the day of the Sabbath. There is

so much that is lost in translation regarding the biblical times and the times that we currently live in, this causes some level of confusion regarding certain things such as when the day of the Sabbath is. This is a confusion that is prevalent throughout the entire Christian community. I think that since we no longer live under the law, it is not of much importance when the day is but the principle is that we need to observe the Sabbath on the 7th day of the week, regardless of whether we consider that day to be Saturday or Sunday.

Works Cited

Keener, Craig S., and John H. Walton, eds. NRSV, Cultural Backgrounds Study Bible: Bringing to Life the Ancient World of Scripture. Zondervan, 2019.