

Reviewing Sabbath Rest as biblical and missional incentive to God's rest: A reformation study

**Author:**Takalani A. Muswubi¹ **Affiliation:**

¹Department of Missiology,
Faculty of Theology,
North-West University,
Potchefstroom, South Africa

Corresponding author:

Takalani Muswubi,
aaron.muswubi@nwu.ac.za

Dates:

Received: 31 Dec. 2024
Accepted: 29 May 2025
Published: 18 July 2025

How to cite this article:

Muswubi, T.A., 2025,
'Reviewing Sabbath Rest as
biblical and missional
incentive to God's rest: A
reformation study', *Verbum
et Ecclesia* 46(1), a3424.
[https://doi.org/10.4102/
ve.v46i1.3424](https://doi.org/10.4102/ve.v46i1.3424)

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This article reviews Sabbath Rest as the biblical and missional incentive towards God's rest. The relationship between human restlessness and the Sabbath Rest is still one of the most serious, sensitive, contentious, controversial and debatable issues. Many scholars are still discussing this relationship, given the spiritual, psychological and physical effects of human 'restlessness' that characterise our technologically advanced, secularised, consumerist and commercialised-driven society. This article seeks to answer the question: to what extent does our conception (understanding) of the Sabbath Rest helps us address human restlessness? In this regard, this article reviews the concept of 'Sabbath Rest' within the Reformation framework, whereby three things are discussed, firstly, its formation period (direction), whereby God created the Sabbath Rest as signpost of and for God's Rest before the fall of human beings into sin; secondly, its deformation period (misdirection), whereby the God-given Sabbath Rest commands uncover human restlessness after the fall of human beings into sin and lastly, but not the least, its reformation period (redirection), which is characterised by the two distinct periods, namely, the period of Christ's first coming and the second period as the future coming of Christ.

Intradisciplinary and/or interdisciplinary implications: The article adds value not only in uncovering the biblical precepts and missional incentives regarding the nature and intention of the God-given Sabbath Rest as a signpost towards God's Rest, but also in conscientising readers in and outside the faith community to appreciate and acknowledge Sabbath Rest implications and applications including in handling the human restlessness that characterise our technologically advanced, secularised, consumerist and commercialised-driven society.

Keywords: incentive; missional; Sabbath Rest; God's rest; reformation.

Introduction

'You have made us for yourself, and our hearts are restless until they find rest in you' (cf. Augustine's [1969] declaration in the beginning of his *Confessions*, *Confessions* 1.1).

People are restless, why? According to Pascal (1995):

I have often said that the sole cause of man's unhappiness is that he does not know how to stay quietly in his room. ... That is why men are so fond of hustle and bustle; that is why prison is such a fearful punishment ... We think we desire rest, but unconsciously afraid of it ... (pp. 37–40f)

The relationship between human restlessness and the Sabbath Rest is still one of the most debatable issues; many scholars continue to discuss it (cf. Bass 2005:31–35; Brueggemann 2014:ix). This article reviews the concept 'Sabbath Rest' within the three Reformation perspective: namely, its formation, deformation and reformation perspectives.

The formation (direction) regarding the Sabbath rest and God's rest

Möller (2019:9f) discussed one Sabbath with three distinct perspectives, namely the Creation, Covenant and Atonement perspective with Christ as the focal point, contents, and connection of this perspectives. Table 1 indicates the one Sabbath which is distinguished (not separated) into the three perspectives. According to Möller (2019:10), 'The three perspectives ... helped us to appreciate and deepen our understanding of the meaning and goal of the Sabbath. It also gave us a universal view on the process of God's actions of restoration in terms of the intention and goal of the Sabbath after being mutilated by the Fall'.

TABLE 1: Three perspectives of the Sabbath.

Sabbath Rest	Formation (creation) time	Deformation (after fall into sin)	Transformation (Jesus's coming)
Texts	Genesis 2:2–3	Exodus 20:8–11; 31:14–17; Deuteronomy 5:12–15	Hebrews 4:1–11 (first and second coming)
Time (day)	On the seventh day (Sabbath)	On the seventh day (Sabbath)	Today or any day or any time (24/7)
Time (period)	Creation (before Sin)	Israelites (under Old Testament Law)	Church (under New Testament grace)
Reference (to)	Creator (God's Rest)	Covenant (Sabbath Rest)	Atonement (Rest in Christ)
Meaning	Hebrew שָׁבַת (to stop creating)	Hebrew שָׁבַת (to stop sinning and reflect)	Hebrew שָׁבַת (reflecting and celebrating)
Attitude	Satisfied, contented and delighted	Satisfaction and contented on God alone	Satisfaction and contented on Christ alone
Text references	Ps 92:2; Is 56:2ff; 58:13f	Gn 2:2f; Ex 20:10f	Mk 15:25, 33–37

Source: Möller, F.P., 2019, 'Three perspectives on the Sabbath', *In die Skriflig* 53(1), a2394. <https://doi.org/10.4102/ids.v53i1.2394>

The concepts 'Sabbath Rest' and 'God's Rest'

Sabbath Rest and God's Rest are two integral, complementary and inseparable terms, yet distinct. The verb *Shabbath* [שָׁבַת] means to stop. In Table 1, the verb 'rest' is used to mean distinct things in different periods, namely, in Genesis 2:2 it is used in connection with God who stopped creating activity on the Seventh day, not because of being physically exhausted, tired, weary or fatigued (cf. Ex 31:17; Is 14:4; 40:28), but because the creation activity has been completed and God was satisfied and well pleased with the final product and ceased his creation activity with nothing more to add and hence no need to improve it and hence He rested (cf. Schenck 1999:71). The concept rest indicates the state or the manner of God from human perspective (Möller 1997:26). The word God's Rest is derived from the Hebrew noun נָחָה (*nuach*) which means to rest in the spiritual sense of having peace and security. It is related to nouns such as peace שְׁלוֹם (*shalom*) and 'to be secured' שְׁלָה (*sh'lah*), portray and express God's state of rest, which is an ultimate (eternal) rest – future (eschatological) and final (consummation) rest (cf. Dumbrell 1984:178; Lowery 2000:82ff; Gaffin 1986:42). Under the Creation Sabbath perspective (cf. Table 1), God initiated Sabbath Rest.

The concept 'Sabbath Rest'

God originated and initiated creation. God was the main active subject on that first week of creation and his creation activity was good and perfect (Gen.1:31). God sanctifies the seventh day. The word 'holy' which is used here for the first time, is derived from the Hebrew word שִׁוֵּק which means to set apart, to sanctify and to elevate (Gn 2:2f; Lowery 2000:102). In such a holy-day, God's people's attitude, state of mind and time should be turned from their own ways and pleasures, and take a delight in and be devoted and dedicated to the LORD (Ex 31:13f; Is 58:13f). There are at least three reasons why the seventh day is a special memorial holiday, namely, *firstly*, His creation had been finished (completed) (Gn 2:2 and He was fully Satisfied with and delighted by what He created, saying it was very good and well-done (cf. Gn 1:1–2:3; Wolf 1981:32,137); *secondly*, God rested. He stops creating, for there was nothing else or no further work to be done (cf. Gn 2:3).

He was not resting because He was weary or tired, because as an omnipotent God (cf. Gn 2:7f; 8:4; Ex 20:9–11; 31:17; Nm 11:25f; Dt 5:13; 2 Sm 21:10; Is 14:3; 28:12; 40:28; Ps 7:6; 35:23; 44:23; 59:4; 12:3–4); *thirdly*, He blessed the seventh day.

Sabbath temporal rest is designed, described and destined for God's eternal Rest

God's Rest is designed (planned) and destined as eternal rest so that Adam and later Eve is placed in the Garden to experience God's rest, which is His presence, power, peace and purpose (cf. Gn 2:15–3:9). The author used the Hebrew verb *nuach* הָיָה to put (or to place) interchangeably with the word to rest, to describe (uncover) that, it is part of God's designed (ultimate plan) to put (or place) Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden which functions not only as a temporal and spatial place, but also as a signpost to point to God's eternal time and space (cf. Ps 127:2; Pr 11:17; Is 58:13). In other words, in putting or placing Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden which was designed (destined) as a never-ending space, but it was designed with an ultimate 'eternal' design and destination (purpose) so that creation (human and nature) experience God's rest, which is His presence (fellowship), His peace (safety and security), and power (authority) (cf. Lowery 2000:102). God reveals His eternal rest (an ultimate design with eternal destination (purpose) through the Sabbath Rest (the seventh day) which uniquely has no formula phrase, 'there was evening and morning' which appeared on each of the 6 days of creation to offer temporal and spatial direction and demarcation (cf. Fergusson 2010:73; Lowery 2000:90).

The concepts Sabbath Rest and God's Rest, and the temporal and earthly Garden of Eden

The sphere of temporal and eternal rest explained by the Garden of Eden as a temple

When comparing the Garden of Eden and the Temple, there are three main aspects to take note of: firstly, there is one Hebrew word לְבֵית which is used for temple and royal palace (cf. Strong, 1890:1964; Gaffin, Jr. 1986:42); secondly, the central sphere of an intimate relationship and fellowship between God and humanity is described, as the tree of life at the centre of the Garden and the Holy of Holies in the centre of the Temple (Dumbrell, 1984:178); thirdly, it is in that central sphere, whereby Adam and Eve, (before sin), the High Priest (after sin in the Old Testament era) and Jesus Christ, our High Priest (in the New Testament era, after conquering sin, death and Devil) had one thing in common, an intimate relationship and fellowship with God which is symbolised by walking and talking with God). In that regard, Adam and Moses who point to Jesus Christ are like the High Priest who stood and live in God's presence ('corum Dei') in worship and fellowship with ever-present God. Adam represents the whole humanity (walked and talked with God, cf. Gn 2:15–3:9); *Moses (and Priesthood system) who represents God's people* in the Old Testament, walked and talked with God in the in a sanctuary (tabernacle) or the meeting tent (cf. Ex 25:8; 29:11; 33:7–11, Nm 7.89) and *Jesus Christ (in the Melchizedek Priesthood system)* entered the Most High Place and is there now before God to help us (cf. Heb 5:6; 6:19f; 9:12ff).

The sphere of temporal and eternal rest explained by the Garden of Eden as a paradise

God created an enclosed space, called the Garden of Eden, which is also called the paradise or the garden of happiness, pleasure, joy and/or delight (cf. In Gn 2:8–17). It symbolises not only God's sphere or state of rest before the fall, but God's paradise or dwelling place of believers after death (cf. Lk 23:43; 2 Cor 12:4). The Greek word *παράδεισος* is borrowed from the Mede-Persian word *pairidaeza*. It is composed of two compound words, *pairi* (means around) and *daeza* (means wall). The Septuagint (LXX) translated the Hebrew word גן or Greek word κήπος as an enclosed or a fenced garden (cf. Bremmer 1999:1ff). The word occurs three times in the Old Testament in Nehemiah 2:8; Ecclesiastes 2:5 and in Song of songs 4:13. It's also used in Revelation 2:7 (cf. the LXX, ἐν τῷ παραδείσῳ τοῦ θεοῦ). It refers to the heavenly dwelling of the believers after death (cf. Lk 23:43; 2 Cor 12:4).

The vision (image) of temporal and eternal rest was and is still ensured

The Old Testament vision (image) of the renewed and/or restored life, is illustrated by the vision of the renewed and restored Dead Sea with a heavenly (healthy) garden environment with a well-watered flora (plant) kingdom with trees which produces (provides) beauty and also fruits (food) and herbs for healing (herbal medicine) for the well-fed and protected fauna (animal) kingdom (cf. Gn 1:11, 29f; 2:9; Rv 22:1–2). We are reminded that we are renewed and restored eternal beings in Christ to have eternal life (cf. Gn 1.30; Is 41:18f; 61:5; 65:20; Ez 43.18f; 47:8ff; Zch 14.21; Jl 2:22f).

In God's Rest the renewed (restored) Heavens and Earth is guaranteed

God initiated the Sabbath Rest in the Garden of Eden, as an earthly and temporal Rest which visualises not only the promised and renewed (restored) Heavens and Earth (cf. 1 Cor.6:19; 2 Cor. 6:16; Jn 2:21; Carson 1982:61) but also the new city and temple of God in the new Jerusalem in the renewed Heaven and Earth, where our God-given work will be done with great pleasure, joy and happiness with all curses, negatives and enemies removed in Christ (cf. Rv 21:1–22:2). God's rest is finally and ultimately realised and guaranteed in the promised, renewed and restored sphere or state of Heaven and Earth.

God's eternal Rest is experienced in time and in place through the Sabbath Rest: The God's eternal Rest is realised and experienced in time and in place through the Sabbath Rest which is a foretaste of the world to come so that God is glorified by humans and the rest of creation (cf. 1 Cor.10:31; 15:28; Lowery 2000:90; Moltmann 1985:276). God initiated His eternal Rest as a point of remembrance (reference) and as a point of destination (to God-ward direction) so that creation (human and nature) Rest in God as an ultimate goal (cf. Heschel 1951/2003:21). All of creation will 1 day, at the consummation, be redirected towards God.

God is an envisioned eternal Temple and God's eternal Rest in time and space: God is an envisioned eternal Temple and eternal Rest in time and space through the Sabbath Rest.

The holy of the holies at the centre of the temple symbolised God's Rest in the renewed or restored Garden of Eden, where the God will be the Temple with His intimate and personal presence (in fellowship with His renewed people), His peace (where safety and security is ensured), power (authority is centred), and purpose (will is done) to bring an intended shalom and ultimate plan (design) to its final realisation, perfection and consummation in Christ Jesus (cf. Rv 21:22; 22:1f). He'll dwell freely among His people. In that regard, Adam and Moses who were put or placed or rested in time and in place *not only to be the type of or point to Jesus Christ who entered this glorious heavenly Temple (sanctuary)* (cf. Is 60.13; Ez 40–48; 2 Chr 3; Hagai 2; Rv 21:3), *but also to envision the heavenly temple as an ultimate sphere (state) of fellowship with His people (an eternal Sabbath Rest with God in Christ by His Spirit)* (cf. Gn 2:2f; Ex 20:8–11; 23: 12; 31:17; Cassuto 1967:245, 404; Gane 1999:311ff; Sailhamer 1992:309; Vos 1948:139; Waltke 1991:4).

The deformation or misdirection period and God's Rest

Sin deformed and misdirected humanity from God's Rest (Sabbath Rest)

After their fall into sin, Adam and Eve, with the rest of humanity that came after them, became nakedness, restless, fearful and guilty of sin and of death (cf. Gn 3:7f). Adam and Eve after sin, no longer walked and talk with God as they did before their fall into sin (cf. Gn 2:15–3:9). They forfeited and lost entry to God's sphere of rest and His blessed and gracious presence. Sin has deformed and misdirected humanity from God's Rest, led by Adam. Because of sin, Adam and Eve and the rest of humanity not only hid themselves from God and were separated from Him, but sin also suppress and substitute His truth with other created objects or beings (cf. Is.2:8; Ro.1:18-32). According to Dumbrell (1984:146), the effect of sin is manifested in the ignorance (negligence) of the Sabbath laws and in trading and cheating on Sabbath, and hence broke the covenant with God and failed to enter His rest (cf. also Ex 17:1f; Nm 13–14:11; 2 Sm 7:8–17; Am 8:5f; Is 28:12; Jr 17:21ff; 1 Cor 10: 1–11; Spier 1992:18). The question was: how Jesus will lead humanity and the rest of creation back to God and His direction as their ultimate rest and shalom? God initiated the reconciliation ministry to mankind out of captivity through men such as Adam (cf. Gn 3:9, 15); Noah (cf. Gn 9:27); Abraham (cf. Gn 12:1ff), Moses (cf. Ex), Joshua and others. It is through God's choice of Israel, godly kings and faithful priests that God's plan was carried forward, the plan of the Messiah who would bring people back into His rest.

The Sabbath Rest as God's fourth commandment

According to Calvin (2006):

First, therefore, God rested; then he blessed this rest, that in all ages it might be held sacred among men: or he dedicated every seventh day to rest, that his own example might be a perpetual rule. (pp. 106f; 1950:437)

However, after the Adam and Eve fell into sin the Sabbath Rest was given as the fourth of the ten commandments with two aspects, namely, the ceremonial aspect (Sabbath keeping with figures and for a season was meant for the Jews) (cf. (Calvin 1972:106, 343)) and the moral aspects which demands constant rest, the rest of our lives to (1) allow God to work in us through the hearing of the word, sacrament administration and public prayer; (2) provide time to meditate on Him, His word and deeds, and to serve Him; (3) allow dependent workers freedom to worship God (cf. (Calvin 1972:106, 343)). The intention is to address the question as Costa (2016) puts it:

Is the Sabbath still relevant for today? Should the Sabbath be observed by Christians? Which day is the Sabbath? Is it Saturday, the seventh day of the week, or Sunday, the first day of the week, or is it one day in seven that one arbitrarily chooses to rest on? Has the Sabbath been changed from Saturday (the seventh day) to Sunday (the first day of the week) in commemoration of the resurrection of Jesus? (p. 123)

Handling the questions regarding the Sabbath Rest in the fourth commandment

In his letters, Paul addressed diverse issues, including the issue of keeping the 'holidays' coming from within the Church or internal contestation among Christian believers (cf. Rm 14:5f) or externally, by those outside who wish to impose a legalistic observance of days (Gl 4:10; Col 2:16). On one hand, Paul does not advocate for the Sabbath-keeping (Sabbatarian-view), because we are no longer under the Mosaic law and Sabbath shadow which is already fulfilled in Christ. On the other hand, he does not give a dogmatic (doctrinal) order or command on what we ought to observe any specific day, or any days at all as a special religious observance. He opposed a legalistic observance that imposes a specific 1 day or days on Christian believers as a means of attaining one's right standing before God (cf. Gl 4:10; Rm 14:5f). Paul is silent on this issue, and he did not elaborate and clarify which day he believe was fit for Christian worship. He simply refers to 'the day' which can imply any day including Sunday or the Lord's Day and hence leaves it up to the independent Christian conscience on the condition that they regard or observe the day as unto the Lord without qualifying it (cf. Rm 14:5f). Paul shows that there is freedom in this area as he readily acknowledges that there are some that regard one day as better than another, while another esteems all days alike (cf. Rm 14:5; Lenski 2008:821; Moo 1996:842).

BOX 1: The descriptions of the gatherings on the first day or Lord's Day.

Gatherings

At the Council of Jerusalem, the apostles gave Gentile believers some laid down rules and regulations, but the Sabbath keeping is not one of them (Ac 15:28f)

Jesus mentions moral sins that arise from the sinful heart and Sabbath breaking is not one of them (Mk 7:21f)

Paul lists 20 sins in Romans 1:29–32 and Sabbath breaking is not included among them

Paul lists 10 sins that bar one's entrance into God's Kingdom and Sabbath breaking is absent from the list (1 Cor.6:9f)

Paul lists 15 sins that also bars one's entrance into the Kingdom of God and Sabbath breaking is not among them (Gl 5:19–21)

Paul lists 18 sins and Sabbath breaking is not one of them (Tm 2 3:1–4)

A total of 13 sins are mentioned that bar one's entrance into the holy city, New Jerusalem, and Sabbath breaking is not one of them (Rv 21:8; 22:15)

The nine commandments which are repeated and reiterated in the NT become part of the 'law of Christ' (1 Cor 9:21; Gl 6:2; Rm 8:2; Ja 1:25; 2:12; 2:8), all of which can be subsumed under the 'law of Christ' which is the new covenant law that believers are to adhere to

There are Old and New Testament texts that describe the practice of gathering on the First Day or Lord's Day. Jesus Christ, his disciples and the early Church gathered on the Lord's Day, with specific liturgical content, including: (1) the public gospel preaching; (2) the two sacraments administered, namely baptism and holy supper; (3) the elders and diaconal service, including the almsgiving (Mt 28:1; Mk 16:2,9; Lk 24:1; Jn 20:1, 19, 26; Ac 1:14; 2:1; 20:7; 1 Cor 16:1f; 2 Cor 9:12f; Phlp 4:18; Tt 1:15; Lv 23:15f; Dt 15:9; Ac 20:7)

Source: Costa, T., 2016, 'The Sabbath and its relation to Christ and the Church in the New Covenant', *Southern Baptist Journal of Theology* 20(1), 129

A prescription to observe on the first day of the week for Christian worship

The New Testaments texts neither prescribe nor command Sabbath and Sunday keeping as it is a ceremonial part of Jewish ceremony abolished in Christ. Box 1 lists some of the text.

From Box 1, this article concurs with point 9, namely, the description of the practice of gathering on the First Day or Lord's Day. The practice is motivated by the following mentioned and the discussed biblical text.

According to Luther (2000) on the practical advice of gathering on one day in a week:

Although the Sabbath is now abolished, and the conscience is freed from it, it is still good, and even necessary, that men should keep a particular day in the week for the sake of the Word of God, on which they are to meditate, hear, and learn, for all cannot command every day; and nature also requires that one day in the week should be kept quiet, without labour either for man or beast. (p. 352)

In his larger catechism (1529), Luther further argued:

[S]ince the mass of men cannot attend on it every day, from the entanglements of business, some one day, at the least, in the week must be chosen for giving heed to that matter ... God set apart the seventh day, and appointed it to be observed, and commanded that it should be considered holy above all others; and this command, as far as the outward observance was concerned, was given to the Jews alone, ... does not apply to us Christians; for it is entirely outward, like other ordinances of the Old Testament, bound to modes, and persons, and times, and customs, all of which are now left free by Christ. (p. 5)

John Calvin and the practical advice of gathering on one day in a week

Calvin (1949) concurred, saying:

There were three reasons for giving this [fourth] commandment: First ... the people of Israel an image of spiritual rest, whereby believers must cease from their own works...to let the Lord work in them. Secondly, he wished that there be an established day in which believers might assemble... to hear his Law and worship him. Thirdly, he willed that one day of rest be granted to servants and to those who live under the power of others so that they might have a relaxation from their labour. The latter, however, is rather an inferred than a principal reason. As to the

first reason, there is no doubt that it ceased in Christ ... (Col. 2:17) that the sabbath has been a shadow of a reality yet to be ... The two last reasons, however, must not be numbered among the shadows of old. Rather, they are equally valid for all ages ... to hear the word of God, to break the [mystic] bread of the Supper, and to offer public prayers; and, moreover, in order that some relaxation from their toil be given to servants and workingmen. As our human weakness does not allow such assemblies to meet every day, the day observed by the Jews has been taken away [as a good device for eliminating superstition] and another day has been destined to this use. This was necessary for securing and maintaining order and peace in the Church. As the truth therefore was given to the Jews under a figure, so to us on the contrary truth is shown without shadows in order, first of all, that we meditate all our life on a perpetual sabbath from our works so that the Lord may operate in us by his spirit; secondly, in order that we observe the legitimate order of the Church for listening to the word of God, for administering the sacraments, and for public prayers; thirdly, in order that we do not oppress inhumanly with work those who are subject to us. (Institutes, Sec.8)

Luther and Calvin agree on two points. Firstly, that the Sabbath Law has two distinct aspects, the moral and ceremonial aspects as explained precedingly and secondly, the choice of the first day is not a matter of principle, but a practical matter (Ursinus, Heidelberg Catechism, Lord's Day 34; 1563, Quest. 103; Bauckham 1982:317).

The reformation or redirection period and God's Rest

The Manna lessons: A Sabbath Rest shadow that points to God's Rest in Christ

In and through history, God repeatedly revealed Himself and His will to His people, promising them the seed (cf. Proto-Evangelism to Adam and Eve in Gn 3:9, 15), Yahweh's dwelling and/or blessing) to Noah through Shem (in Gn 9:27), to Abram (Gn 15:1ff; 17:13), Isaac (sacrificial lamb of God-Gn 17:21; 22:8; Jn 1:29), Jacob (Lv 26:42-Israel-Mt.Sinai-9:5), to David (Ac 2:29f), among others. We learn, therefore that Adam and Eve and their descendant were all invited (urged) to enter God's rest by faith (cf. Ac 2:29f). It is a God-given practical manna test or lesson that God's people in the Old Testament were given and prepared to look forward to, namely, Jesus Christ as the promised manna and Sabbath Rest. God through Moses addressed the emerging Israel community in the lifeless (resources-scarce) wilderness in Exodus 16:22-30 just before the Sabbath day was institutionalised (legitimised) and prescribed at Mt. Sinai as the fourth law of the Decalogue (cf. Ex 16:23-30; 20:8-11; Davis 2003:76; Wenham 1979:320; Yoder, 69; Crossan, 189). He is promising them a much-longed permanent and future rest through the seed which ultimately pointed to Jesus Christ. Between Genesis 2:2f where Sabbath rest was introduced before sin and Exodus 16:4, 22-28, after sin where Sabbath was introduced as a shadow and sign pointing at Jesus Christ, is not only the real and true Manna from heaven (cf. Jn 6:35's record of what Jesus said, 'I am the bread of life; he who comes to Me will not hunger, and he who believes in

Me will never thirst'), but also the real and true Sabbath (cf. Mt 12:8' record of what Christ said, 'the Son of man is Lord of the Sabbath' – cf. Mt 11:28; Mk 2:27). In Christ, God's people find sufficient, generous and holistic Rest in terms of provision (positive aspect) and protection (negative aspect) that the seventh day Sabbath rest is used to point to.

Two motifs and versions of Sabbath Rest shadows that point to God's Rest in Christ

There are two motifs and/or versions which are used by Yahweh God as reminders and signposts in the hands of God's people to pointing them to Yahweh God as the Lord of Sabbath Rest. *On the one hand, God used the fourth law of Sabbath Rest found in the Exodus version of the decalogue (that is, the Ten Commandments) as a memorial to redirect His people and to point them to look straight back to Genesis 2:2-3. It is called the creation motif, because its observance means that they should remember the past or it points them back to God's creation (Gn 2:2f). It is like a sign-pointer, a foreshadow and/or a signpost to point to and/or a memorial pointing to the past. The weekly observance was prescribed (instituted or legislated) at Mt. Sinai after the Exodus from Egypt (cf. the fourth law-Ex 20:8-11) to be a memorial and/or aimed at explaining the creation motif of honouring and trusting God as the creator. The Lord God is the author of a literal 6 days of creation and a seventh day of rest and paradise before fall – the perfect environment of the Creator and His creation (cf. Gn 2:15,19). On the other hand, God used the Deuteronomy version of the fourth law of Sabbath (and Sabbath Rest) as a memorial to redirect His people and to point them to look straight back to (Ex 12-20f). Therefore, Deuteronomy 5:12-15 is expressing the redemption motif because it is used by God to restate the Exodus motif for the next generation of the Israelites and other nations surrounding them to look towards Yahweh God of Israel and His nature and character manifested in and through His law (word) (cf. Dt 4:5-8). God's people were expected to observe it as a sign-pointer, a fore shadow and/or a signpost to point to and/or a memorial of Yahweh God who led the Israelites not only in the past, that is out of Egypt (their enemy) through Moses, but it was Joshua who will lead them in the conquest of Canaanites (their enemies) through Joshua so that they could enter into His rest which is characterised by peace, safety and secure relationship with Triune God (cf. Dumbrell 1984:145).*

Canaan as a Sabbath temporal and spatial Rest, a symbol that points to God's rest

In and through history God revealed Himself to the Israelites, promising them the land of Canaan not only as a His temporal and present rest in the midst of their enemies (cf. Jr 11.5), but also as symbolic place pointing to a much-longed permanent and future rest (cf. Dt 28:64f; Ps 95:7b-11; Heb 4:2ff; 7ff; Heb 3:7-4:13). God repeatedly promised His people to give them the land of Canaan because it has a symbolic meaning that points to God's rest. *Firstly, Abraham was called out of Ur to the Promised land of Canaan (cf. Gn 11.31; 12:5ff; 13:10ff; 15:7; 17:8 etc). A metaphoric phrase, 'flowing with milk and honey' is a panoramic view of Canaan as the fertile crescent of the land*

not only as God's Promised Land (Jr 11.5), but also as an 'Eden-like' promised land, as the temporal rest against their enemies, a foretaste of His final rest. *Secondly, to his descendants, of the first generation of the Israelites led by God through Moses* from Egypt through the wilderness towards Canaan (cf. Ex 3.8; Nu 13:27–14:7; Dt 26:9; 32:49). *Thirdly, to his descendent of the second generation of the Israelites led by God through Joshua* to conquer Canaanites (as God's enemies cf. Jos.1:13–15; 23:1) and to enter God's rest yet not complete without the King (Pratt 1990:290f) and the other generations led by the kings, namely David and Solomon among others, who conquer their enemies as promised in Deuteronomy 12:9ff; 2 Samuel 7:1, 11 and 1 Kings 5:3ff and led to temporal rest, Shalom, safety, security and political stability (cf. 1 Ki 8:56; 1 Chr 22:9; Dumbrell 1984:145f). *Lastly, but not the least, his descendent of the future (eschatological) generation of God's people led God through future Saviour.* In Psalm 95, David called God's people of his day looked forward to entering God's rest in future and hence not to harden their hearts, in reference those who hardened their hearts in the past generations and didn't enter God's Promised Rest, Canaan. Christ, the architect of God's eternal rest, established God's reign and rest among God's people from all nations and guided them towards God's eschatological rest, which is the ultimate, final, future, and eternal state or sphere of God's rest (where He reigns in peace and prosperity; see Is 11:10; 56:1ff; 66:22f; Jr 31:1f), where God's people from all nations will become members of the faith community (cf. Bauks 2002:473–490; Polan 1986:82; Schramm 1995:117ff).

God's Rest is in Christ today (any day) not in a certain day or place

In Christ, the Sabbath Rest is fulfilled and restored. Christ as the Son of God and the Son of Man is the new Sabbath Rest, the very substance of and the Lord over the Mosaic law (include the Sabbath laws and Sabbath rest), who bring complete Sabbath rest (cf. Mk 2:27f; Mt 11:28–30). Believers are exhorted to put their trust and faith in Him, so that by believing in Him they enter God's rest (found only in and through Christ-cf. Heb 4:11). To be in Christ is the synonym of being in the presence of and fellowship with the Triune God or to enter and experience God's rest (cf. Jn 14:20ff; Rv 14:13). In Christ we live and in us He lives. We are His temples on earth (cf. Mt 5:19; 1 Cor 6:19; 2 Cor 6:16; Jn 2:21; Carson 1982:61; Dumbrell 1984:120). Reformers, such as John Calvin and Martin Luther, agree on the three basic points: firstly, on the fact that the moral and ceremonial parts of the fourth commandment should be distinguished; secondly, that Christ fulfilled that part of the Old Testament Sabbath that it is no longer applicable to the individual Christians and corporate church to observe (Bauckham 1982b: 317; Becker 2006:110; Luther 2000, Catechism [1529], Heidelberg Catechism 1563, Quest. 103); thirdly, the choice of the first day is not a matter of principle, but a practical matter (Calvin's Institutes, 1559; Zacharias Ursinus, The Commentary on the Heidelberg Catechism, Lord's Day 34; Calvini Opera, 10/1:51).

Conclusion

This article reviews Sabbath Rest as the biblical and missional incentive towards God's rest. The article adds value not only in uncovering the biblical precepts and missional incentives regarding the nature and intention of the God-given Sabbath Rest as a biblical and missional incentive and signpost towards God's Rest, but also in conscientising readers in and outside the faith community to appreciate and acknowledge implications and applications of Sabbath Rest including in handling the human restlessness that characterise our technological advanced, secularised, consumerist and commercialised-driven society. The relationship between human restlessness and the Sabbath Rest is still one of the most serious, sensitive, contentious, controversial and debatable issues. Many scholars are still discussing this relationship, given the spiritual, psychological and physical effects of human 'restlessness' that characterise our technologically advanced, secularised, consumerist and commercialised-driven society.

This article seeks to answer the question: to what extent does our conception (understanding) of the Sabbath Rest help us address human restlessness? In this regard, this article reviews the concept of 'Sabbath Rest' within the Reformation framework, whereby three things are discussed, firstly, its formation period (direction), whereby God created the Sabbath Rest as signpost of and for God's Rest before the fall of human beings into sin; secondly, its deformation period (misdirection), whereby the God-given Sabbath Rest commands uncover human restlessness after the fall of human being into sin and lastly, but not the least, its reformation period (redirection), which is characterised by the two distinct periods, namely, the period of the first coming of Christ (who fulfilled the Sabbath Rest and transformed it as God's Rest in the temporal and spatial realm) and the second period as the future coming of Christ (who will finally transform the already manifested Sabbath Rest into God's Rest in the eternal and celestial realm).

Acknowledgements

Firstly, to Triune God be all glory (1 Cor 10:31 & Col 3:17). Secondly, to Alvinah (my wife-for her Pr 31 support), to Ms Blanch Carolus (academic support) and my children (Vhuhwavho, Mufulufheli, Wompfuna, Thamathama, Lupfumopfumo and Tshontswikisaho for family support).

Competing interests

The author declares that he has no financial or personal relationships that may have inappropriately influenced him in writing this article.

Author's contribution

A.M. is the sole author of this research article.

Ethical considerations

This article followed all ethical standards for research without direct contact with human or animal subjects.

Funding information

This research received no specific grant from any funding agency in the public, commercial or not-for-profit sectors.

Data availability

The author confirms that the data supporting this study and its findings are available within the article.

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