

## 10 Commandments E7

Speakers in the audio file: Jon Collins and Tim Mackie

Jon: In the book of Exodus, Yahweh liberates the people of Israel from slavery in Egypt, and he brings them to Mount Sinai to establish an intimate relationship with them. Israel will be his people, and he will be their God. This is a marriage of sorts. And the marriage vows are what we call the 10 Commandments. Now, most of these commands make sense to us on face value. In fact, they make sense to any culture. Don't murder, don't lie, honor your parents. But today, we'll look at the fourth command, which was utterly unique to Israel, how they set apart one day every week and treated it as utterly different.

Tim: "Remember the day of *Shabbat*, to treat it as holy. Six days you will labor and you will make all of your work. But the seventh day is a *Shabbat* of Yahweh your Elohim."

Jon: The command goes on to say to stop work on the seventh day because in six days Yahweh made the skies and the land, the sea and all that is in them, and he rested on the seventh day. So the reason for this command is cosmic. It's connected to the story of God creating and bringing order to everything.

Tim: The seven-day creation narrative is clearly being hyperlinked here.

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: God generates, out of generous love, something that is wholly contained within and sustained by God. But that thing needs to then go on a journey of sharing in God's own rest to become one with God.

Jon: On days one through six of the creation narrative, the narrator repeats the line, "And there was evening and morning on that day." But jarringly, the seventh day doesn't end with this phrase, implying that we're still in the seventh day. And the moment of ultimate completion and rest for the cosmos is yet to come.

Tim: The Genesis 1 narrative is trying to teach us to think about all of history as being on this journey of, we're laboring towards this great day of unity and rest and completeness and blessing and sharing in the harmony and *shalom* that is God's own essence.

Jon: And so the fourth command, of resting on the seventh day, is actually an invitation to reflect on the journey of the whole cosmos. We get to partner with God as God's image, but we have to remember that the completion of the cosmos is not up to us.

Tim: Our work is not ultimate. It's not actually what has the final word about where this universe is going. There's a purpose and a worker that transcends us all—God's purpose.

Jon: When the 10 Commands are given a second time, the reason for the Sabbath shifts. Instead of focusing on this coming cosmic rest, it focuses on a coming liberation. Moses says, “Six days you do your work, seventh day you *Shabbat*, so that your slaves can get the same rest from work.”

Tim: Your slave is not your slave on the *Shabbat*. There’s an equality to the seventh day. You will remember that you all were slaves in the land of Egypt, and Yahweh your Elohim brought you out with a strong hand and with an outstretched arm. And so now the weekly *Shabbat* every seventh day is—is a liberation day.

Jon: Today Tim Mackie and I talk about the fourth commandment, “Remember the Sabbath,” with all of its cosmic and social implications. Plus, we’ll look at how the early followers of Jesus balanced obeying the wisdom of the Sabbath with Sunday as resurrection day. Thanks for joining us. Here we go.

[Musical Break (3:32–3:34)]

Jon: Hey, Tim.

Tim: Hello, Jon Collins.

Jon: We’re talking the 10 Words.

Tim: Mhm. We’re talking 10. Ten Commandments, 10 Words, 10 things that God said to the people of ancient Israel as they stood at Mount Sinai entering into a covenant.

Jon: Hmm.

Tim: They got married. Israel got married to a God that day.

Jon: Okay.

Tim: You know there’s—uhm.

Jon: That’d be a cool theme study.

Tim: There’s a Hebrew Bible scholar, Joshua Berman, who was trying to draw attention to how odd the story of God making a covenant with Israel at Mount Sinai would sound in the ancient world.

Jon: Did it?

Tim: Yeah.

Jon: This wasn't a thing you would do?

Tim: Yeah, he said in the ancient world a story about a god getting married in a covenant with a human would sound as strange as a story to us would sound about a human getting married to a cat.

Jon: Ah.

Tim: That's what he—

Jon: Okay.

Tim: That was his analogy.

Jon: That's helpful.

Tim: Yeah.

Jon: It's good to know.

Tim: Mhm.

Jon: It is strange.

Tim: Mhm.

Jon: It's normalized growing up with the Bible and hearing metaphors like "you are the bride" and "the marriage of the Lamb" and these kind of things.

Tim: Yeah. Yeah.

Jon: But you have to take one step back, and you're like—

Tim: Mhm.

Jon: —"Wh-what?"

Tim: Yeah. Now, he's not saying there was no precedent for gods entering into some kind of partnership with humans. The idea of gods enlisting humans to do stuff for them and serve them, that's not new. But what's truly new is the mutuality about a god making godself vulnerable to a human community to partner with and represent him—

Jon: Hmm.

Tim: —to be his kingdom of priests.

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: And attaching God's name, thinking of our last conversation about carrying the name of Yahweh your God for a futile purpose or in vain. That's what's unique, that "I am your Elohim, and you are my people." And that the reciprocity of partnership is—is truly unique, something unique that the Hebrew Bible is contributing to the history of human thought. And so what these 10 Words represent are the first 10 terms of that covenant-marriage partnership between Yahweh, the One Who Is, and the people of ancient Israel.

Jon: Yeah. They're very contextual to ancient Israel.

Tim: Mhm. Yeah. And actually what we're going to look at today, the command number four, is a great example of a highly contextualized command to the life of ancient Israel.

Jon: That's true. The rest of these feel much easier to—to cross any cultural boundaries.

Tim: Exactly. In other words, the face-value reading, the first reading, even in translation, commands one, two, and three are pretty easy for contemporary readers—uh—actually readers of any time and culture to just be like, "Oh, yeah, I get it. No other gods, no idols, don't carry or take the name of God in vain."

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: Whatever that might mean. There's a perception that they're pretty easy to just copy and paste into my cultural setting.

Jon: Yeah. And then the ones later will also feel the same.

Tim: Mhm. Honor your father and mother, don't kill, commit adultery, don't steal, bear false witness, don't desire ...

Jon: And I think what makes the 10 Commandments, then, so enduring is how transferable they are to any setting.

Tim: Yeah. That's exactly right. That's right. And that actu—that's a part of their intention in—in being set in front of all the other hundreds to follow.

Jon: Okay.

Tim: Yep.

Jon: But then this one.

Tim: This, number four.

Jon: Number four.

Tim: Which literally is, “Remember the day of the Sabbath, to keep it holy.”

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: Sabbath is very explicitly—all throughout the Bible, Old and New Testaments—refers to, from Friday at sundown to Saturday at sundown.

Jon: Hmm.

Tim: Mhm.

Jon: Where does—it spells it out?

Tim: Yes.

Jon: The—the time?

Tim: Yeah.

Jon: Okay.

Tim: The seventh day.

Jon: That’s the seventh day?

Tim: Yeah. Because the day begins at sundown in the Bible.

Jon: Yeah.

[Laughter]

Jon: Mhm.

Tim: So, we’ll get into all this.

Jon: Okay.

Tim: But the point is, is that number four is the most culturally specific to the life and the liturgy and religious calendar of ancient Israel and then of later Judaism. So let’s get ourselves into the heads of an ancient Israelite. What is the fourth command all about? First, let’s read it. And that immediately is going to confront us with another puzzle, which is the fact that this fourth command—remember, the 10 Commandments appear two times in the Torah—and this fourth command in the two versions is the most different of any of the 10 Commands.

Jon: When it's restated, it's stated in a different way.

Tim: Yep. So the Exodus 20 version and the Deuteronomy chapter 5 version are really different.

Jon: Mmm.

Tim: The same command—keep the Sabbath—but the way it's worded and why you do it? Totally different. So first, let's just read the Exodus version, make sense of it.

Jon: Okay.

Tim: Then let's compare it with the Deuteronomy version, make sense of it. And then we'll ask some of the bigger questions that arise from both.

Jon: Deal.

[Musical Break (8:55–8:59)]

Tim: Okay. Exodus 20 version reads like this: "Remember the day of *Shabbat*." So I'm actually not translating there—I'm transliterating the word *Shabbat*.

Jon: Okay.

Tim: That's how you say it in Hebrew.

Jon: Say it in Hebrew.

Tim: Hebrew word. Yeah.

Jon: The day of *Shabbat*.

Tim: Yep. The day of *Shabbat*—to treat it as holy.

Jon: Okay.

Tim: "To consecrate" or "to sanctify" are common English translations.

Jon: Hmm.

Tim: Those are funky words—

Jon: Those are funky words.

Tim: —that mean, to recognize and then treat something as sacred—one and only, set apart in relationship to the one-and-only, set-apart God. So there’s something sacred about this day because it has a unique relationship to the sacred, unique, one-and-only God.

Jon: We’re just talking about recognizing and treating it—

Tim: Mhm.

Jon: —with the sanctity that it has.

Tim: Yeah. Yep.

Jon: And you can use a special word for that—

Tim: Yeah.

Jon: —like “sanctify” or “consecrate.”

Tim: Yeah. To consecrate it, to set it aside, recognize it, and then treat it as holy. These are all English ways of getting at what the Hebrew phrase is—*leqaddesho*.

Jon: Hmm. I’m imagining it’s a mental state, a perception of what this thing is, but then also the way that you interact with it.

Tim: Yeah. There’s a 24-hour period that, in your mind, you’re to recognize, “That one’s different.”

Jon: Okay.

Tim: And then how you behave in that 24-hour period should be different.

Jon: And that’s treating it as holy.

Tim: That’s treating as holy. Okay.

Jon: Alright.

Tim: How, exactly? Well, the command goes on: “Six days you will labor, and you will make all of your work”—or do, the verb is *‘asah*. It’s the most general Hebrew word “to do” or “to make.”

Jon: Okay.

Tim: To be active.

Jon: Alright.

Tim: Produce something. So “for six days, you’ll labor and do your work. But the seventh day is a *Shabbat* of Yahweh your Elohim. On it, you will not make or do any work.”

Jon: Yeah. Okay.

Tim: Six days work, seventh day *Shabbat*.

Jon: Forced rest.

Tim: *Shabbat* means to stop. It’s the Hebrew verb that means ... well, the verb means to stop and then the noun means to ... a cessation or a stopping.

Jon: Okay.

Tim: Mhm. So what does it mean to remember this day and treat it as different than all the other days? Well.

Jon: You’re not going to work.

Tim: You have all these days where you work, but then the *Shabbat*, you don’t work. And that’s because it’s a *Shabbat* of Yahweh your Elohim.

Jon: Hmm.

Tim: What does that mean? First of all, you get a list of who it is that’s supposed to honor the holiness of this day of *Shabbat*. It’s you, your son, your daughter, your male slave, your female slave, your cattle, and the immigrant who’s in your gates.

Jon: Is that seven?

Tim: Seven.

Jon: Ha!

Tim: Of course.

Jon: Of course.

Tim: Of course.

Jon: So everyone.

Tim: Everybody. Yeah, so it begins with you. First of all, all the pronouns in here are second-person masculine singular. So ...

[Laughter]

Tim: Sorry.

Jon: I—

Tim: I'm so sorry.

Jon: My brain just, like, turned off when you—

[Laughter]

Jon: —when you said, “Second-person masculine singular.”

Tim: The moment I utter grammar terminology, you're just like—

Jon: —I'm just like, “Ahhh. What world am I in?”

Tim: Okay. The “you” there is a single man.

Jon: Okay.

Tim: Meaning that the first layer of audience presumes an ancient patriarchal and traditional society, an arrangement where the—the man is a patriarch, or the head of a state, and head of an extended family.

Jon: Yeah. And he's going to have sons and daughters. He's going to have male slaves, female slaves.

Tim: Mhm. Yeah. That's the presumed setting. So what's interesting is missing from this list—that's going to come in another list that's similar to this later on—is your wife.

Jon: Oh, no mention of your wife.

Tim: Yeah. Down in command number 10, where it says, “Don't covet your neighbor's wife,” that's the first on the list of—and then it's like your male, his male slave, female slave, ox, donkey.

Jon: Well, but—yeah, they can't have eight in the list, right?

Tim: Exactly. My point is, is that the list has been trimmed—

Jon: Ah.

Tim: —so that it's precisely seven—

Jon: Okay.

Tim: —seven on the list. So it's a good example of how biblical authors selectively create groups of seven on purpose.

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: So seven is—uh—again, it's-it's the Hebrew word *sheva'*. It's spelled with the same letters as the Hebrew word *sava'*, which means to fill up or to satisfy, complete. So it's a very common literary device to arrange things in groups of seven. But also notice that this is a command about the seventh day.

Jon: Right.

Tim: So the seventh day is a completion of work. There should be no—rest. And who is it that gets to benefit from the resting from work? Everybody.

Jon: That's the point.

Tim: Seven-part list. The complete community. Yeah.

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: Yeah. Now back to that—remember that little puzzle? What does it mean that the seventh day is a *Shabbat* of Yahweh?

Jon: Mhm.

Tim: What does that mean? Well, we come back around to that in verse 11. We'll recall that in six days, Yahweh made the skies, the land, and the sea and all that's in them. And he rested on the seventh day. So the word "rest" there is different. It's the name Noah—

Jon: Noakh?

Tim: —as a verb. Yeah, *nuakh. nuakh.* And *Shabbat* and *nuakh* are synonyms in Genesis. And here they're brought together.

Jon: To stop is to rest.

Tim: Yeah. To *Shabbat* is to stop. And the *nuakh* provides another nuance of meaning. It presumes that you've stopped. And now you're having the restorative experience of—

Jon: Hmm. Of having stopped.

Tim: —of having stopped, and you are resting, and you're settling, and you're enjoying. So *Shabbat* is, you stop so that you are now settling down.

Jon: Mhm.

Tim: Resting is about having settled, you enjoy something. So they work together. So why is it that you work for six days and then *Shabbat* on the seventh? Because Yahweh worked for six days and then *nuakh*-ed on the seventh.

Jon: And this is referring to Genesis 1.

Tim: Mhm. Mmm. Yes. And which the last line is a command: “Therefore, Yahweh blessed the day of *Shabbat*, and he made it holy.”

Jon: Hmm.

Tim: Which links you back all the way up to the first line, which is, “Remember the day of *Shabbat* to treat it as holy.”

Jon: Mmm. Yeah. When God ordered all of the cosmos—

Tim: Mhm.

Jon: —he was laboring in some way?

Tim: Yeah. Okay. So wow, let’s think about this. So the seven-day creation narrative is clearly being hyperlinked here.

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: It opens with God speaking, but then there’s two verbs that God is the subject of in the seven-day narrative. It’s either *bara’*, which is to create, which, only God is ever the actor of the verb *bara’* in the Hebrew Bible. A human never *bara’*-s, but God does.

Jon: Okay.

Tim: *Bara’* essentially means God produces something that has no precedent.

Jon: Hmm.

Tim: It’s an innovation.

Jon: It’s a very specific word.

Tim: Yes. Yeah.

Jon: It’s only used of God’s actions.

Tim: Only God *bara’*-s. But then God also *’asah*-s, which means to make or to do. So he makes the big light and the small light and the stars, makes them.

Jon: Hmm.

Tim: And then that's what humans do when they do their work, they *'asah*.

Jon: Okay.

Tim: And it kind of makes sense. If God—only God *bara'-s*—he generates out of God's own self all the stuff, the stuff with which one can *'asah*.

[Laughter]

Tim: And then God *'asah-s* with the stuff that he *bara'-ed*.

Jon: Mhm.

Tim: And then he calls humans also to *'asah*.

Jon: Okay. Alright.

Tim: I don't know if that—does that make any sense?

Jon: I was following.

Tim: So the point is, is that God *bara'-s*, humans can't do that. But God also *'asah-s* with the stuff that he *bara'-s*, and humans can *'asah*. In fact, that's what God created and appointed humans to do.

Jon: To work and to keep.

Tim: To work and to keep.

Jon: And that work is *'asah*?

Tim: Mmm.

Jon: That's a different word.

Tim: Exactly. It's a synonym.

Jon: It's a synonym.

Tim: La—it's the word "labor" here.

Jon: Oh, it's in here.

Tim: Yep. Verse nine.

Jon: Labor.

Tim: Yeah. Six days you will labor, it's the word *'avad*.

Jon: *'Avad*.

Tim: Which means to produce.

Jon: Okay.

Tim: Productive work.

Jon: Okay.

Tim: Yeah. So, yeah, God's depicted as a laborer. And the way that God labors is by speaking and then making. So days one through three is, separates light and dark. He separates the waters from the waters. That's day two. Day three, he separates the dry land from the waters and then summons the plants to come up out of the ground.

Jon: Okay.

Tim: Boom.

Jon: Boom.

Tim: Days four through six. Day four, he populates the light in the dark realms with the lights.

Jon: Mhm.

Tim: Then he populates the waters above with the birds and the waters below with the fish. And then day six, he populates the land and calls up animals out of the ground and then creates and appoints humans to rule over the ground. Yeah.

Jon: So that's the work, and then he stops and he rests. And he—what does he say?

Tim: Yeah. So it reads like this. This is Genesis 2, verses 1 and to 3: "And so they were completed, the skies and the land and all their inhabitants. Elohim completed on the seventh day the work that he had made, and he rested on the seventh day from the work that he had made. And Elohim blessed the seventh day and set it apart as holy because on it he rested from all his work, which Elohim created to make."

Jon: Hmm. Yeah.

Tim: I tried to kind of make the middle lines rhyme.

Jon: Mhm. Oh, yeah.

Tim: Each one of them is seven words in Hebrew.

Jon: Oh.

Tim: The three lines that have the word “seven” in them, the—the phrase “seventh day,” are themselves made with seven words.

Jon: Wow. Cool.

Tim: Yeah, super cool. So he completed, he rested, and he blessed the day. So the idea is that when God generates something out of God’s own self that is not God, but that’s sustained and ordered by God, there’s some energy involved there, movement out of God’s own self.

Jon: Mhm.

Tim: God generates out of generous love something that is not God but that is wholly contained within and sustained by God. But that thing needs to then go on a journey of sharing in God’s own rest to become one with God. And that’s the framework of the concept of creation in the story of the Bible.

Jon: The journey is going to include work—

Tim: Yeah.

Jon: —but then also rest.

Tim: Yeah, a journey of separation, of distinguishing, of things becoming their own thing, but then also with things realizing—

Jon: What do you—what do you mean—what do you mean by that?

Tim: Oh, the separating of days one through three.

Jon: Oh, sure.

Tim: So God begins to order by separating things, the night and—day and night, and waters above and below, and dry land and sea. But then these inhabitants are meant to begin joining things back together again. So you have the lights that create this orderly partnership and alternation between the day and the night.

Jon: Hmm.

Tim: And all of a sudden, the things that are separate start working together.

Jon: Oh, interesting.

Tim: And then you get the waters above and the waters below, with their creatures.

Jon: Hmm. Creates kind of an ecosystem that works together.

Tim: Yeah, they function together like an ecosystem. And then you get the land, which is this in-between, between the waters above and the waters below. And then the rulers on the land are actually, then, commissioned to, like, unite all of it by ruling over all of it.

Jon: Wow. Yeah.

Tim: The birds of the air, the fish of the sea, and the creatures on the land.

Jon: Yeah. To work and keep it.

Tim: Yeah, so there's the separating, but then this unifying.

Jon: Hmm. Okay.

Tim: I mean, these are the basic, like, subterranean ideas at work in the creation story. And just as creation itself is both separate from God but then also meant to be unified and connected with God. And so there's this period of laboring, but then that laboring culminates in this great seventh-day rest where you stop and you enjoy the goodness of what? Of all that results from that. And what's interesting and—all the way back in our series on the Sabbath, years ago, over the video and the podcast series—the way that the six days are marked, each day opens with “and God said,” then God is making or doing something. And then it ends with saying, “And there was evening and there was morning, the X day.” One, two, three, four, five, six. And that little signal for the ending, it never happens with day seven.

Jon: Day seven doesn't get that final marker: “And there was evening and morning on the seventh day.”

Tim: Hmm-mm. Yeah.

Jon: It's a day that doesn't end.

Tim: It's the day that doesn't end. So, I quoted, then, in that series, and I'll quote it again now, a great little book on the concept of Sabbath and Jubilee in the biblical story by scholar Richard Lowery. He puts it this way. He says, “The seventh-day account does not end with the expected formula, ‘there was evening and [there was] morning.’” That phrase concluded days one through six. And so “breaking the pattern in this way emphasizes the uniqueness of the seventh day and [it] opens the door to”—and he calls —“eschatological interpretation.” Literally, “the sun has not yet set on God's Sabbath.”

Jon: Alright.

Tim: So I think what he's saying is the seven-day creation narrative is trying to tell us about the foundation of the cosmos we inhabit, therefore pointing to the past. But it's also open-ended in the last—the fact that the seventh day has no end.

Jon: Mmm.

Tim: It's ongoing, which opens the door to say, "Well, perhaps the seven-day narrative is also a way of thinking about all of history—"

Jon: Hmm.

Tim: —and that all of history is on this arc of separating but gathering up towards this grand unification. And that grand unification is something out there, yet in the future." That's what he means by "eschatological."

Jon: The final sunset.

Tim: Yeah. And *eskhatos* is—the Greek word *eskhatos* means the end or the completion.

Jon: Mmm.

Tim: So "eschatological" means that the seventh-day narrative is actually a way of thinking about the end of history, the completion of history.

Jon: And the completion of history would be union back with God.

Tim: Yeah. About all creation coming back into rest, a state of rest within the generous love of God.

Jon: Hmm.

Tim: And that definitely seems to be how later biblical authors understood the meaning of the seventh day. That's why Isaiah, at the end of Isaiah's scroll, will talk about God creating a new skies and a new land and all the nations coming to the mountain of God to celebrate all of these patterns of rest and Sabbath. This is how the end of Isaiah—

Jon: Mmm. And he talks about, like, a new sun rising, right? Light dawning.

Tim: Yeah, actually what he says is, "You won't even need the sun and the moon anymore because God's light will be brighter than the light of seven days."

Jon: Yeah, God's light is the next sunrise.

Tim: Yes, exactly.

Jon: It's the eighth sunrise.

Tim: So yeah, so you don't need the lights of day four anymore, because you've got the eternal light of day one, which is God's light, you know, shining.

Jon: It's pretty cosmic.

Tim: It's pretty cosmic. Yeah, so the end is like the beginning or the beginning is like the end, and so the Genesis 1 narrative is trying to teach, I think, teach us to think about all of history as being on this journey of, we're laboring towards this great day of unity and rest and completeness and blessing and sharing in the harmony and *shalom* that is God's own essence. And what if, because that's such a long journey—

Jon: Yeah, when is it again?

Tim: The, the universe—

Jon: When's that going to happen?

Tim: Exactly.

[Laughter]

Jon: Do you have a—can I put it in my calendar? Set an alarm?

Tim: Yeah, so what the fourth command is about, is about—Israel is to structure its actual life rhythms along that storyline and then reenact the whole history of the universe—

Jon: Once a week.

Tim: —every week. So that six days of labor culminating in a seventh day of rest becomes a way of participating in the grand story of what God is doing and has in store for all of creation.

Jon: Hmm.

Tim: It's an imitation of, of God. Yeah.

Jon: Hmm.

Tim: Yeah.

Jon: This command is an invitation to think of the journey of the entire cosmos.

[Laughter]

Tim: Yeah. Yeah.

Jon: Wow.

Tim: Well, yeah, it's cosmic.

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: It's a cosmic participation in something bigger than us. So there's an important statement about reality to say, "I'm an image of God. I'm called to discover the vocation that God has for me and that he's instilled within me to contribute in some way to the working of the world, but our work is not ultimate." It's not actually what has the final word about where this universe is going. There's a purpose and a Worker that transcends us all—God's purpose. That's what determines reality. And so I can stop and just enjoy the good things that God's given me and not think that the universe rests on my labor.

[Musical Break (28:12–28:16)]

Tim: So that was all the Exodus version.

Jon: Okay.

Tim: Let's check out the Deuteronomy 5 version. It's helpful to pull them up in parallel columns, just so you can see them.

Jon: Yep.

Tim: So here's the opening line of the fourth command in Deuteronomy 5: "Keep the day of *Shabbat* to treat it as holy, just as Yahweh your Elohim has commanded you."

Jon: Okay. And I'm looking at the Exodus 20 version on the side. It says, "Remember the day of *Shabbat*," instead of, "Keep the day of *Shabbat*."

Tim: Yeah, to treat it as holy.

Jon: So that's a synonym, I suppose. Remember, keep.

Tim: Remember the day of *Shabbat*; keep the day of *Shabbat*.

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: Yeah. What's interesting is, if you're going to keep it, you need to have remembered it.

[Laughter]

Tim: And if you remember it, the whole point is that you remember it and then you keep it.

Jon: Yeah. For a purpose.

Tim: Yeah. Remember and keep.

Jon: Mmm.

Tim: Deuteronomy 5 goes on: "Six days you will labor and do all of your work."

Jon: So that's the same?

Tim: Yep. It's the same as Exodus. "But the seventh day is a *Shabbat* for Yahweh your Elohim. You will not do any work." Virtually the same.

Jon: Okay.

Tim: Couple single words different, but virtually the same. And then here's the list. Same list.

Jon: Same list?

Tim: Who-who gets to benefit? Well, let's check it out. You, your son, or your daughter. That's the same. Your male slave or your female slave.

Jon: Mhm.

Tim: That's the same. Your ox, your donkey, or any of your animals, or the immigrant who's in the gates.

Jon: It's a bigger list.

Tim: Bigger list.

Jon: More animals in this list.

Tim: Yes. Yeah. Exactly. Yes.

Jon: And there's nine now?

Tim: There's nine in the list of Deuteronomy 5, instead of seven in Exodus. Yeah.

Jon: Okay.

Tim: So basically, we've added "donkey, or any animal."

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: So Exodus 20 only had your cattle, like your ox, oxen.

Jon: Okay.

Tim: Which apparently is meant to stand for all your animals, but Deuteronomy 5 comes and fills that out. Your ox, your donkey, any of your animals.

Jon: Okay.

Tim: Deuteronomy 5 continues on and gives a reason: "So that your male slave and your female slave may rest just as you rest."

Jon: Hmm.

Tim: So that reason, Deuteronomy stands in the place of the reference to the seven-day creation narrative in Exodus 20. So Exodus 20 is, "Six days you labor, seventh day you *Shabbat*." Why? "Because in six days, God made everything, and then on the seventh day, he rested."

Jon: Hmm.

Tim: That's the rationale.

Jon: Yeah. It gets cosmic.

Tim: It gets cosmic. Here, in Deuteronomy 5: "Six days you do your work, seventh day you *Shabbat*," so that your slaves can get the same rest that you—and the implied "you" there is a slave owner—rest.

Jon: So it gets very civil—

Tim: Mhm.

Jon: —versus cosmic.

Tim: Yeah. Yeah. Your slave is not your slave on the *Shabbat*, as it were.

Jon: Oh. Yeah.

Tim: Your slave gets the same rest from work that you—

Jon: Gets treated the same.

Tim: Yeah. Yes. There's an equality to the seventh day.

Jon: Hmm.

Tim: And then you go back to that list, and you're like, "Oh, yeah, your son or your daughter, slaves, animals, immigrants, everybody becomes an equal, as it were."

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: The day of *Shabbat*. This is, like, has kind of a social angle to it.

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: As opposed to a cosmic angle. Isn't that interesting?

Jon: Right. Yeah.

Tim: Now this social angle of social equality, the Sabbath is about a temporary pause in—what do you say?—social hierarchies of power and labor.

Jon: Mmm. Yeah.

Tim: Everybody just stops and rests. And then verse 15 of Deuteronomy 5 comes and provides a reason for all this that is also different from the Exodus version. Verse 15 reads, "And you will remember that you all were slaves in the land of Egypt, and Yahweh your Elohim brought you out with a strong hand and with an outstretched arm; therefore Yahweh your Elohim commanded you to keep the *Shabbat*."

Jon: Hmm.

Tim: So you used to be slaves in Egypt.

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: And you were laboring without any rest every day, all day, every day. No rest.

Jon: Yeah. How'd you like that?

Tim: Yeah. Right. That was terrible. That was dehumanizing. So we're recalling Pharaoh's brutal enslavement of the Israelites. And then, also, you know, there was that moment after Aaron and Moses confronted Pharaoh, and then Pharaoh's like, "More bricks, less straw."

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: Like, keep meeting your quota, he just turns it up and no rest, no *Shabbat*. So that type of maximizing profit at the expense of human life and flourishing is viewed as a chaotic death force in the world.

[Laughter]

Tim: And Yahweh liberated his people from that. And so now the weekly *Shabbat* is a way of reenact—it's like, this is like a liberation day.

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: Every seventh day is—is a liberation day.

Jon: Okay. To press—it could have gone farther.

Tim: Mmm. Mhm.

Jon: At this moment, it could have been, “Actually, you know what, this whole slave ownership thing—”

Tim: Totally.

Jon: “What a farce.”

Tim: I—totally. Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah. That's great.

Jon: “You know what? Actually, let's not participate in it at all.”

Tim: At all. Yeah. Sure. That's right. So you can see a trajectory headed that direction. Every seventh year, the scaled-up annual version of the seventh year was about the forgiveness of debt and the release of slaves, Israelite slaves.

Jon: Hmm.

Tim: Not non-Israelite slaves, but Israelite slaves.

Jon: Okay.

Tim: And then the Jubilee was about forgiveness of debts, release of slaves, and anybody who lost land in the last 49 years gets that returned back to them, too, which was often, of course, something that caused people to sell themselves into slavery, was they lost their family land. So I guess what you can say is, yeah, God didn't work within human history to drop the conviction of what took humans many later generations to own as their own conviction. He didn't, like, drop that back in history, but he did set—

Jon: He set it in motion.

Tim: —he did something in history that set in motion a trajectory, a liberationist trajectory that ended in the abolition of the slave trade in—in certain cultures. Of course, different forms of different slave trades still exist in the world today. But I just want to acknowledge your point, like, it's super important. And that's an important thing to acknowledge, that God's timeline for working out his redemptive purpose is—

Jon: It's back to this cosmic journey.

Tim: —much slower than we would prefer.

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: And that much slower has led to a lot of hurt and abused people and communities through history. And that's something each of us has to take up with God on our own journey. So thank you for bringing that up. That's important.

Jon: Yeah. I'm always happy when God's slow with me.

Tim: That's a great point. Totally.

Jon: Right.

Tim: Yes, that's right.

Jon: Patient with me.

Tim: Yeah. And maybe that's—that's a part of how these two work together. So God has enlisted humans as his partners in co-creating and guiding creation on this journey to the ultimate seventh-day rest. And that's kind of like the Exodus version.

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: So every seventh day, remember that humans are not in charge. Your labor isn't determining the future of the universe. You can stop and rest. You're not a work machine. You're a human image of God, which means there is coming a time of rest, and you can stop and enjoy a taste of that future rest right here in the present.

Jon: Yeah. Now we can, from our vantage in history, say, "Why didn't this go farther?"

Tim: Mhm.

Jon: We could flip it, and we can acknowledge this actually is—in the time and place it was—pretty radical.

Tim: Yes. Very radical. Yeah. Yes. And then the Deuteronomy version comes along and adds to the creation story, the Exodus story, and says the Exodus story is, in a way, of

God working to liberate his people so that they can enjoy this rest. And how remarkable that the foundation story of God's covenant people in the story of the Bible is God noticing the outcry of oppressed slaves, liberating them from an imperial oppressor, and then elevating them to the role of his spouse and marrying a human community and appointing them as priests and rulers. Like, that is so—such a remarkable story.

Jon: Hmm.

Tim: And that is essentially a way of thinking about what the creation story is—God elevating a dust creature to a place of God's representative image to be royal kings and queens over creation. But lest they forget that they are not God, the weekly Sabbath forces you to stop. So what I love is the Deuteronomy version kind of throws it in your face in a really communal way to say, like, during the six days, human communities, we tend to operate and make up stories about how you belong to me, I—

Jon: Mmm.

Tim:—you're, you know, about how profit is the name of the game.

Jon: Position and profit. And—

Tim: Yes.

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: Yeah. And then at the—every seventh day, God says, “Stop it. Stop it. The—where this train's headed, it's—”

Jon: That's not going to matter.

Tim: It's—uh—a universe of kings and queens, each sitting under their own fig tree, to use the language of the story of Solomon.

Jon: And so in the Exodus 20 version is a cosmic rest coming. We get to taste it right now. In the Deuteronomy 5 version, there's this cosmic liberation coming.

Tim: Mmm. Mhm.

Jon: And we get to kind of taste it for a moment right now.

Tim: Yeah. Yeah. That's right. Yep. That's a good way of saying it. So Deuteronomy has a—a liberation-from-slavery emphasis, and the Exodus version has a cosmic-participation type of emphasis, and just enjoy the good things that God's given me and not think that the universe rests on my labor.

[Musical Break (39:34–39:37)]

Tim: Within the Hebrew Bible and then in Jewish tradition, the seventh day takes its cue from the Genesis narrative that the markers from the day start from evening to morning. Day begins at sundown, which is crazy for modern Westerners, because we think the day—

Jon: Begins at sunup.

Tim: —ends at sundown and begins at sunrise. That’s not the conception of time in the seven-day narrative.

Jon: Okay.

Tim: So this is why Jewish communities, as far back as we can tell, the seventh day begins on what today we call Friday at sundown. So from Friday to Saturday. And so this is still—you know, in the modern state of Israel, when the modern nation-state of Israel was founded in 1948, that’s how they created and instituted their calendar. And I’ll —I’ll never forget when I lived there during the school year, it took me so long to get used to it.

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: Because Sunday was essentially what Monday is in westernized or Christianized cultures.

Jon: Oh, right.

Tim: Yeah.

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: Okay, so this is interesting, in the earliest Jewish messianic Jesus communities—so, Israelite followers of Jesus as Messiah—Jesus rose from the dead on a Sunday. So as the stories go—and there’s some chronology issues you got to work out between Matthew, Mark, and Luke, and John—but the basic shape of the story is such that he dies, and he’s in the tomb over the Sabbath.

Jon: Hmm.

Tim: So that resurrection and the empty tomb happens on Sunday, which is in the—

Jon: Day one.

Tim: Day one of the new week. Mhm. Yeah. So what happened, then, is you have messianic Jewish followers of Jesus who are both observing *Shabbat* in the traditional way, but then all of a sudden they have Sunday—

Jon: Which is a—an important day.

Tim: —a hugely important day, because it marks the dawn of new creation and the resurrection of Jesus from the dead.

Jon: So now there's two days to stop.

Tim: So now there's—well, and so it created a very blurry period. And I could do a lot more homework here. And anybody who wants to take a deep dive into this, there's a—a really helpful collection of essays by a whole host of scholars of Hebrew Bible, Second Temple Judaism, and New Testament. It's called *From Sabbath to the Lord's Day: A Biblical, Historical, [and] Theological Investigation* that's put together by a scholar named D. A. Carson. And what they're trying to track is, how did you get from Sabbath being on Friday night for messianic Jews, who were all the first followers of Jesus, to later generations, thinking of the Sabbath rest as being fulfilled or honored—

Jon: On Sunday.

Tim: —by resting on resurrection day?

Jon: Hmm.

Tim: How did that happen?

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: And it didn't happen quickly. It didn't happen simply or everywhere all at once.

Jon: Hmm.

Tim: Because the Jesus movement was pretty decentralized. And you had lots of people still honoring *Shabbat* and then also doing something in house-church gatherings on Sundays, maybe after their workday, gathering in the evening of—on Sundays.

Jon: Hmm.

Tim: And it was ac—became a really contentious thing in early church history.

Jon: Right. Yeah.

Tim: As you could imagine. But the Apostle Paul saw all this coming. And he actually worked out, in a few different house-church communities, the churches of Rome and of Colossae and Galatia, where he talked about, “Hey, different ones of you are going to treat different days as sacred and holy.” He's surely referring to the Sabbath.

Jon: Hmm.

Tim: And he trusted that the Spirit of God would guide individuals and communities to use wisdom and to honor the days that they felt they needed to honor to honor Jesus.

Jon: Hmm.

Tim: So he said some might consider one day holy, others might consider it another. And he didn't think it was something that should fracture the Christian community.

Jon: Hmm. I think the most righteous thing to do is to take both days.

[Laughter]

Tim: To start your rest on Friday night.

Jon: And just keep it going.

Tim: Keep it going all through Sunday.

Jon: Yeah.

[Laughter]

Jon: Until Sunday at sundown.

Tim: Yeah. And you're describing a—a version of the ...

Jon: The weekend.

Tim: Of the European and American workweek, probably Canadian and other westernized cultures. I don't—I actually don't know the development of that, of the two-day weekend.

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: But—uh—yeah, just do it both.

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: Yeah.

Jon: Or is that a problem?

Tim: No, I think it's a good example, actually, of reading the 10 Commandments and the rest of the biblical story as wisdom literature, where we are trying to take the deepest insights about God, about reality, about ourselves from the biblical story but also recognize I don't live in the ancient Near East. I'm not an ancient Israelite. I'm also not Jewish living in the Second Temple period. I'm also not a Corinthian or a Roman, you know.

[Laughter]

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: I'm living in my time and place. So what can I do to—to honor the wisdom of these commands? Now, you and I both know people who read the fourth command, and they're like, "God commands it."

Jon: Yeah. Let's do it the way it's commanded.

Tim: So you better figure out what 24-hour period it's referring to.

Jon: And then do it.

Tim: And then you better do it.

Jon: Mhm.

Tim: And I totally respect that. But I—it seems to me that what Sabbath means is the most important thing. And I think that's honoring what Jesus said, which he says, "The Sabbath is made for humans. Humans weren't made for the Sabbath."

Jon: Hmm.

Tim: And so he began to press on what Sabbath observance meant—

Jon: And for him, it wasn't about what day.

Tim: No. No.

Jon: But it was to—what does it mean to rest?

Tim: What constitutes rest?

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: Yeah. But there you see Jesus. What he's saying is that the meaning of the Sabbath is the important thing.

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: And then Paul takes that another step further and says, "You do it on that 24-hour period? That person does it on that 24-hour period. Don't judge each other about how you're honoring Jesus in those different ways." So I guess the wisdom is to say, it is super important for human images of God to not think that they are God.

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: But rather that they're images of God.

Jon: Hmm.

Tim: It's super important that we build into our lives rhythms where we remind ourselves of that, where we imitate God's rest, and where we get a taste of the ultimate Eden rest that's coming for everybody. And where the—all of the separations and hierarchies that we create in our patterns of work, all of that just goes away. And we just Eden rest for everybody. That's super important. And how you and I respond to that? Well, I think it will take a different cultural form than how the Roman churches responded to that in Paul's day, than how Galilean Jewish villagers, you know, responded to it that Jesus was healing among. But I think the point is that we all are honoring the meaning of what the seventh-day rest is about. That's currently where I'm at in thinking through the issue. And well, there you go. There's more to be said. And I also recognize there may be people listening who passionately disagree—

[Laughter]

Tim: —to which I would just say—uhm—you know, have mercy on me, and let's be generous to each other as we follow Jesus. Because I think what we all care about is that, of the meaning of the Sabbath and that it should be honored in our life rhythms in some way.

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: What do you think?

Jon: I just need to just practice it more with my family.

Tim: Mhm.

Jon: We could level up.

Tim: Yeah.

Jon: In our purposefulness in marking this day as set apart.

Tim: Mhm. Mhm.

Jon: And it can get more cosmic in our imaginations.

Tim: Mmm. Sure. Yeah.

Jon: And I think there's things we could do for that.

Tim: Yeah. Every person, community, and family needs to find their way but also not feel the burden to have to make it up yourself. There's two thousand—three thousand plus—years of human communities in the Jewish and Christian tradition doing this and living by this wisdom. And there's so many wonderful ideas and examples to pull from.

Jon: Yeah. Even so, it's surprisingly hard to get sticky, y'know?

Tim: It requires a lot of intentionality.

Jon: It's a lot of intentionality.

Tim: It takes a lot of work to rest.

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: Yeah. Yeah.

Jon: Let's end with the observation that you drew attention to. These first four are all related to how you—

Tim: Oh. Thank you.

Jon: —interact with God.

Tim: Yes. Yes.

Jon: So, "I'm Yahweh, serve me only."

Tim: Mhm. Mhm.

Jon: "Don't make any idols that replace me."

Tim: Mhm.

Jon: So it's one and two, and they're about how you relate to Yahweh.

Tim: Mhm. Yeah.

Jon: Three is “don’t carry my name in—”

Tim: Mhm. Vain.

Jon: —in a noogie way.

Tim: For a—for a—in a nugatory way.

Jon: Nugatory way.

Tim: Uhm, for a futile purpose. Yeah.

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: And then fourth is, “Remember the *Shabbat*.” Remember to keep the *Shabbat*.

Jon: And the *Shabbat* focus is my relationship with God.

Tim: Yeah. It’s a way that you imitate God and that it clearly affects how you relate to people because that whole list of people is, “We’re all going to benefit from the rest together.” Yeah. Commands one through four, the phrase, “Yahweh your Elohim,” is repeated throughout all of—all of the first four.

Jon: Oh, it is. Yeah.

Tim: And then it goes away—

Jon: Oh.

Tim: —in commands five through 10.

Jon: Hmm.

Tim: So the first two commands, yeah, about no other gods, no idols, are very clearly about how you relate to God. Not carrying the name of Yahweh for a futile purpose. That’s about honoring God by how you represent him. And then *Shabbat* is imitating God’s own rest. But every one of those does have implications for how you treat other people.

Jon: Right.

Tim: Idolatry has huge implications for what happens—how people treat people.

Jon: Yeah. How you carry the name does.

Tim: Mhm. Yeah. But they are primarily oriented in the human relationship to God. And that’s going to shift. Command five, the next one, is, “Honor your father and mother.” And it is about humans relating to humans. But there’s some deep connection between how children relate to their parents and then how humans relate to God.

Jon: Hmm.

Tim: And so command five is like a hinge, but we'll talk more about that.

Jon: Great.

Tim: But there you go. We just worked through commands one through four.

Jon: It's great.

Tim: Good work, Jon. Let's take a rest. Let's take a rest.

Jon: Alright. Thanks for listening to BibleProject podcast. Next week, we'll move on to the fifth command: "Honor your father and mother." And we'll see that this command is closely linked with honoring God himself.

Tim: How I relate to somebody who generated and sustains my existence. That's a unique relationship, and that needs to be treated in a special way.

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: And that special way is called "honor."