Fourth Commandment

This is another command that is seen in Scripture as a single command that sums up the whole of Torah...and is seen as becoming one of the presenting causes for the exile. The Fourth Command also becomes one of the main bones of contention between Jesus and the Jewish leadership and a reason the leadership rejects Jesus as messiah and deem Him as a clear and present danger to Israel and her future. He is deemed a danger because as a rabbi he teaches others to ‘break’ Sabbath...which if it is one of the causes of the exile will prevent God from blessing Israel now or in the future.

The ECO Essential Tenets speaks of the Fourth Commandment in this way... “observe the Sabbath as a day of worship and rest, being faithful in gathering with the people of God;”

The Heidelberg Catechism reflects on the Fourth Commandment in this way... “What does God require in the Fourth Commandment? First, that the ministry of the gospel and Christian education be maintained, and that I diligently attend church, especially on the Lord’s day, to hear the Word of God, to participate in the holy Sacraments, to call publicly upon the Lord, and to give Christian service to those in need. Second, that I cease from my evil works all the days of my life, allow the Lord to work in me through his Spirit, and thus begin in this life the eternal Sabbath.”

In what way is the Sabbath eternal? What does that imply for our observance of the Fourth Command? See Col 2:16ff.

On what basis did the Sabbath move from Saturday to Sunday? Was this right?

The Westminster Shorter Catechism says, “What is required in the Fourth Commandment? The Fourth Commandment requires the keeping holy to God such set times as he has appointed in his Word; expressly one whole day in seven, to be a holy Sabbath to himself. Which day of the seven has God appointed to be the weekly Sabbath? From the beginning of the world to the resurrection of Christ, God appointed the seventh day of the week to be the weekly Sabbath, and the first day of the week ever since, to continue to the end of the world, which is the Christian Sabbath. How is the Sabbath to be sanctified? The Sabbath is to be sanctified by a holy resting all that day, even from such worldly employments and recreations as are lawful on other days; and spending the whole time in the public and private exercises of God’s worship, except so much as is to be taken up in the works of necessity and mercy. What is forbidden in the Fourth Commandment? The Fourth Commandment forbids the omission, or careless performance, of the duties required, and the profaning of the day by idleness, or doing that which is in itself sinful, or by unnecessary thoughts, words, or works, about our worldly employments or recreations. What are the reasons annexed to the Fourth Commandment? The reasons annexed to the Fourth Commandment are: God’s allowing us six days of the week for our own employments, his challenging a special propriety in the seventh, his own example, and his blessing the Sabbath Day.”

What is the implied promise in the Fourth Commandment?

What does the Fourth Commandment mean by ‘keeping the Sabbath Day holy?’