

## **16. Origin and Purpose of the Sabbath**

“WE believe that the seventh-day Sabbath was instituted at the end of the creation of the world in six literal days; that it is a memorial of creation, and a sign of re-creation, or redemption. That it is a vital part of the moral law, the Ten Commandments; that it is essentially a spiritual institution. That God intended it to be observed in all ages by all men; that Christ and His apostles always, both before and after the crucifixion, observed the seventh-day Sabbath, and therefore it is the rest day of all Christians.” - A. L. Baker, in Bible Truth Series, No. 45.

### **SELECTED REFERENCES**

DA 281-289, 769. PP 295-297; 8T 197-200; [8] Pages 141-149. [9] Pages 287-299.

Memorize: Genesis 2:2, 3.

### **A. THE ORIGIN OF THE SABBATH.**

A. Genesis 2:2, 3; Job 38:4-7; Exodus 20:8-11; Numbers 23:19, 20; 1 Chronicles 17:27.

‘The Sabbath was made for man.’ It had its origin in Eden, before man had sinned, and therefore cannot have been made for a limited time merely, or for a portion only of the human race; nor was it instituted originally as a part of the plan of redemption. It was made for sinless man. Its place in the plan of God is too little understood. Its history, intent, and nature are of vital interest, and should be known by all.” -E. K. Slade, in Bible Truth Series, No. 28.

“Christ is Creator as well as Redeemer. It was Christ who brought this world into existence and peopled it with human beings; just as it was Christ who later came into this world and re-created men through redemption. Christ, the Author of the Christian religion, is also the Author of the Sabbath. This truth is clearly taught in the New Testament. John 1:1-3,10,14. . . . He made all things. There was nothing made that He did not make. He made the world in six days. Therefore it was Christ who rested on the seventh day. Christ made the Sabbath. . . . The Sabbath was made two thousand five hundred years before the law was given on Sinai. It was made at the time of creation. . . .

“Christ needed no rest (Isaiah 40:28), and yet we have the record that ‘on the seventh day He rested, and was refreshed.’ Exodus 31:17. Christ rested because He was laying the foundation of a divine institution, and He was refreshed because He took profound pleasure in conferring upon men such a beneficial institution as the Sabbath proves to be to all who observe it. He took delight in bringing into existence an institution which He designed should ever be a memorial of His great work of creation, and ever serve to remind His creatures of the true God. . . .

“It is plain that the blessing of the seventh day can never be removed or reversed. It will remain a blessed and holy day as long as time lasts, and throughout all eternity. . . . The Sabbath institution is not a movable institution that was placed on one day, but which can be changed and transferred to some other day, as many seem to think. It is the day itself which is the Sabbath. ‘The seventh day is the Sabbath.’ - C. B. Haynes, in “The Christian Sabbath,” pages 9-17.

“The Sabbath and its observance were . . . ancient and widespread, even as old as the world itself, and bearing the sanction both of angels and of God. When the foundations of the earth were laid, when the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy, then was laid the foundation of the Sabbath. Well may this institution demand our reverence; it was ordained by no human authority, and rests upon no human traditions; it was established by the Ancient of days, and commanded by His eternal word.” - GC 455.

“And sanctified it. [Hebrew, kadash]. It is by this term that the positive appointment of the Sabbath as a day of rest to man is expressed. God’s sanctifying the day is equivalent to His commanding men to sanctify it. As at the close of the creation the seventh day was thus set apart by the Most High for such purposes, without limitation to age or country, the observance of it is obligatory upon the whole human race, to whom, in the wisdom of Providence, it may be communicated. This further appears from the reason why God blessed and sanctified it, viz., ‘because that in it He had rested,’ etc., which is a reason of equal force at all times, and equally applying to All the posterity of Adam. And if it formed a just ground for sanctifying the first day which dawned upon the finished system of the universe, it must be equally so for sanctifying every seventh day to the end of time. The observance of the day is moreover enjoined in the

decalogue, which was not abolished with the peculiar polity of the Jews, but remains unalterably binding upon Christians in every age of the world. . . . The sanctification of the seventh day in the present case can only be understood of its being set apart to the special worship and service of God.” - George Bush (Presbyterian), in “Notes, Critical and Practical, on the Book of Genesis,” 1838 ed., note on Genesis 23, Vol. I, pages 47-49.

## **B. THE REASONS FOR A SABBATH.**

### **1. For a memorial. Psalm 111:4; Exodus 20:11; Deuteronomy 5:15.**

“In Eden God set up the memorial of His work of creation, in placing His blessing upon the seventh day. The Sabbath was committed to Adam, the father and representative of the whole human family. Its observance was to be an act of grateful acknowledgment, on the part of all who should dwell upon the earth, that God was their Creator and their rightful Sovereign, that they were the work of His hands, and the subjects of His authority. Thus the institution was wholly commemorative, and given to all mankind. There was nothing in it shadowy, or of restricted application to any people.” PP 48.

“The most judicious commentators agree that Adam and Eve constantly observed the seventh day, and dedicated it in a peculiar manner to the service of the Almighty. And that the first Sabbath, which Philo (one of the most ancient writers) calls the birthday of the world, was celebrated in Paradise itself.”-John Kitto (imputed author), in “An Illustrated History of the Holy Bible,” 1866 ed., page 47, note.

### **2. “For man” (not the Jew only). Mark 2:27,28.**

“God saw that a Sabbath was essential for man, even in Paradise. He needed to lay aside his own interests and pursuits for one day of the seven, that he might more fully contemplate the works of God, and meditate upon His power and goodness. He needed a Sabbath, to remind him more vividly of God, and to awaken gratitude because all that he enjoyed and possessed came from the beneficent hand of the Creator.” - PP 48.

“Common sense says that any commemorative institution should commence at or near the time of the event commemorated; whereas, this supposition of a mere prolepsis leaves ‘a great gulf,’ a vast oblivious chasm of more than two thousand years, between the creation and the Sabbath by which it was commemorated. And even then, to crown the climax of absurdity, it limits that commemoration of an event in which the whole created race are equally interested, to the smallest fraction of that race!”-J. N. Brown (Baptist), in “The Obligation of the Sabbath, A Discussion Between the Reverend J. Newton Brown and W. B. Taylor,” page 49.

### **3. To keep from idolatry. Leviticus 26:1,2.**

“Had the Sabbath been universally kept, man’s thoughts and affections would have been led to the Creator as the object of reverence and worship, and there would never have been an idolater, an atheist, or an infidel.” - GC 438.

### **4. For a sign. Ezekiel 20:12, 20; Exodus 31:17.**

“The religious observance of the Sabbath was the first statute or command of God to men. This institution was a sign between God and them to keep them in remembrance of the creation of the world.”-Dr. Adam Clarke, comment on Ezekiel 20:12.

“The Sabbath is a sign of creative and redeeming power; it points to God as the source of life and knowledge; it recalls man’s primeval glory, and thus witnesses to God’s purpose to re-create us in His own image.” - Ed 250.

“Satan was seeking to exalt himself and to draw men away from Christ, and he worked to pervert the Sabbath, because it is the sign of the power of Christ.” - DA 283.

### **5. For a day of worship. Isaiah 56:6, 7; 66:23; Ezekiel 46:1.**

“When it is therefore said by the inspired historian, that God ‘sanctified the seventh day,’ I must understand him to say, that God set it apart (from the other six days of labor), to be religiously employed by man.” - J. N. Brown, in “The Obligation of the Sabbath, A Discussion Between the Reverend J. Newton Brown and W. B. Taylor,” page 48.

“God designed that its observance should designate them as His worshipers. It was to be a token of their separation from idolatry, and their connection with the true God.” - DA 283.

### **C. THE SABBATH OF THE PATRIARCHS.**

Genesis 4:3, margin; 8:10,12; Exodus 5:4, 5; 16:4,22,30.

“The reckoning of time by weeks is derived from nothing in nature, but owes its existence to the divine appointment of the seventh day to a holy use, in memory of the Lord’s rest from the six days’ work of creation. This period of time is marked only by the recurrence of the sanctified rest day of the Creator. That the patriarchs reckoned time by weeks and by seven of days, is evident from several texts. That they should retain the week, and forget the Sabbath by which alone the week is marked, is not a probable supposition.”-Andrews and Conradi, in “History of the Sabbath,” pages 42, 43.

“At the time of the exodus from Egypt, the Sabbath institution was brought prominently before the people of God. While they were still in bondage, their taskmasters had attempted to force them to labor on the Sabbath, by increasing the amount of work required each week. Again and again the conditions of labor had been made harder and more exacting. But the Israelites were delivered from bondage, and brought to a place where they might observe unmolested all the precepts of Jehovah.” - PK 180, 181.

Luther comments on Exodus 16:4, 22-30, saying, “Hence you can see that the Sabbath was before the law of Moses came, and has existed from the beginning of the world. Especially have the devout, who have preserved the true faith, met together and called upon God on this day.”-Translated from “Auslegung des Alten Testaments” (Commentary on the Old Testament), “Sammtliche Schriften” (Collected Writings), edited by J. G. Walch, Vol. III, col. 950.

### **D. THE SABBATH OF ISRAEL.**

“The weekly Sabbath is a very early institution. It was appointed, and observed the very first week of time. It is no part of the law of ceremonies, which law was occasioned by the entrance of sin, for the Sabbath was established before sin had entered, and would have been obligatory on Adam and his offspring if sin had not been known among them.”-Seth Williston (Presbyterian), in “Five Discourses on the Sabbath,” page 11.

“Leviticus 23:38 expressly distinguishes the Sabbath of the Lord from the other Sabbaths.” - Jamieson, Fausset, and Brown, “Commentary on the Old and New Testaments,” notes on Colossians 2.

“The ceremonial Sabbaths are here [Colossians 2:16] rightly classed with the ‘meats’ and ‘drinks’. . . of the ceremonial system. They were part of ‘the handwriting of ordinances’ (Colossians 2:14), ‘the law of commandments . . . in ordinances’ (Ephesians 2:15) which pointed forward to the cross and expired at the cross. The seventh-day Sabbath of the moral law was instituted at creation before sin cast its dark shadow over the world; this was not abrogated at the cross.”-W. L. Emmerson, in “The Bible Speaks,” page 182.

#### **1. Disregarded, and the result. Leviticus 23:1-3,38; Ezekiel 20:13-17; Psalm 78:52-62; Ezekiel 20:21,24.**

“In every age, transgression of God’s law has been followed by the same result. In the days of Noah, when every principle of right doing was violated, and iniquity became so deep and widespread that God could no longer bear with it, the decree went forth, ‘I will destroy man whom I have created from the face of the earth.’ . . . The inhabitants of Sodom passed the limits of divine forbearance, and there was kindled against them the fire of God’s vengeance. The time preceding the captivity of the ten tribes of Israel was one of similar disobedience and of similar wickedness. God’s law was counted as a thing of naught, and this opened the floodgates of iniquity upon Israel.” - PK 297.

“Had Israel heeded the messages of the prophets, they would have been spared the humiliation that followed. It was because they persisted in turning aside from His law, that God was compelled to let them go into captivity.” - PK 297.

#### **2. Obeyed, and the result. Isaiah 58:13,14; Nehemiah 9:13-17; 13:15-22; Jeremiah 17:24,25.**

“The Israelites had learned a much-needed lesson from the Babylonian captivity, learned it so fully that they determined once for all that if it was obedience to God’s law and God’s Sabbath upon which their national existence depended, they would so safeguard that Sabbath that it could never again be broken. And so they ‘entered into a curse, and into an oath’ [Nehemiah 10:29] to keep the Sabbath. Thus they hoped forever to preserve and maintain their freedom, and retain their standing as God’s peculiar people.”-C. B. Haynes, in “The Christian Sabbath,” page 41.

Jewish rabbis at Washington, protesting against the proposed calendar reform, recently asserted:

“Throughout the ages the Sabbath has been the palladium—the protecting institution of the Jewish people. It has been a day not only of physical rest, but of spiritual recreation. . . . The Sabbath is the strength of the Jewish people. . . . Do you think that our race, which has suffered so much through the centuries for the doctrines it held, suffered even to the point of death—for the blood of our people has flowed in the streets, times without number—do you think that we will quietly allow our most vital, our most important, doctrine, the Sabbath, to be attacked without making the most vigorous protest? . . . Destroy the Sabbath, and you destroy the Jewish race!”--Quoted in Review and Herald, Feb. 14, 1929, page 5.

**KEY TEXTS**

Genesis 2:2, 3

Mark 2:27, 28

Isaiah 58:13,14

Exodus 20:8-11

Ezekiel 20:12,20

Isaiah 66:23

**THOUGHT QUESTIONS**

1. What is the relation of the Sabbath to the moral code?
2. Why is Satan most intent on destroying the Sabbath?
3. Why is not any one of the seven days acceptable?
4. What facts of its origin preclude the possibility of a change of the day of the Sabbath?
5. Does the same necessity for a Sabbath exist now as existed in Eden before the fall?

**TEST QUESTIONS**

Answer With Ample Bible Proof

1. By what acts, and why, did God originate the Sabbath day?
2. What principal reasons have we for believing that we are keeping the original weekly Sabbath day, no time having been lost?
3. Why is it important to observe the seventh day?
4. Was not the Sabbath intended for the Jews only?
5. Is the seventh day a common day now, in God’s sight, since many people have chosen to make it so; or is it still the only holy day?