

43. THE SABBATH IN THE OLD TESTAMENT

The Origin of the Sabbath.

Mark 2: 27. The Sabbath was made for man, i.e., for mankind. It is not a national institution.

Genesis 2: 1-3. It was made at the close of the creation week, by three distinct acts of God—resting, blessing, and sanctifying.

God's acts of blessing and sanctifying the seventh day distinguished it from all other days as it day set apart and designed for a holy use.

The institution Of the Sabbath was not a mere arbitrary act of God, but a gracious provision for man, a gift for his personal benefit. The making of the Sabbath for man even before we had sinned shows that all men need a Sabbath for their spiritual welfare. This was undoubtedly its primary purpose.

The Sabbath was not a type, for it was made before the fall and given to man in his perfect state.

2. The Sabbath from Creation to Sinai.

Exodus 16: 22-26. The Israelites were observers of the Sabbath before the Ten Commandments were proclaimed from Sinai.

Notice from verse 22 that the people showed their regard for the Sabbath on their own volition, and not because of any command from Moses, which shows that the observance of the Sabbath was a custom with them.

Exodus 20: 8-11. A commandment to reverence the Sabbath was placed in the heart of the Ten Commandments when Israel was established as God's nation. Notice that the Sabbath is not introduced as something new at Sinai, but men are called upon to "remember." it as an institution with which they are already acquainted. The reason given for Sabbath observance goes back to creation. It was a memorial of the creation of the world.

3. The Sabbath and the Nation of Israel.

Deuteronomy 5: 12. Israel was commanded in the law to keep the Sabbath as God had commanded them in the Ten Commandments.

Deuteronomy 5: 13-15. An additional reason for Israel's observance of the Sabbath was their deliverance from Egypt.

Ezekiel 20:13 The breaking of the Sabbath in the wilderness journeys of Israel brought God's displeasure.

Ezekiel 20: 8, 16. Israel forgot God's Sabbath when they went into apostasy.

Jeremiah 17: 21-27. Had Israel been true to the Sabbath, Jerusalem would have stood forever.

Nehemiah 13: 17, 18. One of the causes for Israel's captivity was the profanation of the Sabbath.

Nehemiah 13: 15-22. After the restoration from captivity, the Jews again profaned the Sabbath. Nehemiah instituted a reform.

Isaiah 56: 1, 2. A special blessing was pronounced upon those who kept the Sabbath holy.

Isaiah 58: 13, 14. The Sabbath was God's holy day, and was not to be used for selfish purposes.

Isaiah 66: 22-24. The Sabbath would be observed by God's Israel in the new earth.

4. Important Truths Taught by the Sabbath.

Exodus 20: 8-11. The Sabbath was a reminder of God's creation of the world.

Exodus 31: 13. It served as a constant sign of the sanctifying power of God. It reminded Israel that they were to be a holy people.

Ezekiel 20: 20. The Sabbath was the sign to Israel that Jehovah was God.

The keeping of the Sabbath distinguished Israel from all other people as servants of the true God.

MEMORIZE: Exodus 20: 8-11.

Questions on the Lesson

1. When was the Sabbath made? How? For whom?

Bible Doctrines

2. How is the Sabbath day distinct from all other days?
3. Show that the Sabbath is not a type.
4. Show that the observance of the Sabbath did not originate at Sinai with the proclamation of the Ten Commandments.
5. How does the fourth commandment show that the Sabbath was not a new institution?
6. Of what was the Sabbath a memorial?
7. In the fourth commandment, what reason is given for the observance of the Sabbath?
What additional reason for its observance by Israel was given later by Moses?
8. Sketch the history of Israel's attitude to the Sabbath.
9. How was the question of Sabbath observance related to Israel's destiny as a nation?
10. What special blessings did Isaiah pronounce on faithful Sabbath-keeping?
How did he describe proper Sabbath-keeping?
11. Give three primary truths taught by the Sabbath.

For Further Study

1. Show that the Sabbath is the Lord's day.
2. The Sabbath as a memorial? A symbol? A type?
3. Will man need a Sabbath in the new earth?
4. What was the penalty for Sabbath-breaking under the law of Moses?
Exodus 31: 12-17; Numbers 15: 32-36.

44. THE SABBATH IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

1. Christ and the Sabbath.

Luke 4: 16. It was Christ's custom to observe the Sabbath.

Mark 2: 28. He called Himself the Lord of the Sabbath.

Christ did or said nothing to lessen the importance of the Sabbath. He gave no indication to His followers that He had any intention of changing the observance to another day. He did, however, take issue with the Jews over the method of its observance. He lifted the Sabbath from the legalism in which the Jews had bound it to its true original design for the spiritual good of man.

The Jews had invented numerous rules and regulations to guard the sacredness of the Sabbath. It was declared unlawful on the Sabbath to travel more than 2,000 cubits, to kill an insect, carry a needle, wear certain types of clothes, do anything that would contribute to healing, tie, or untie a knot, light, or extinguish a fire, pluck even a blade of grass, carry a dead body, eat an egg laid on the Sabbath, eat any food not expressly prepared for the Sabbath, clap the hands, climb a tree, ride, swim, drag one's foot along the ground.

Christ taught men how to keep the Sabbath in a proper spirit showing that works of mercy were right and proper. Read the following incidents in connection with Christ and the Sabbath, and write a summary of His teachings:

John 5: 5-18. Healing of the infirm man at Bethesda.

Luke 4: 33-37. Healing of the man with the unclean spirit at Capernaum.

Luke 4: 38, 39. Healing of Peter's wife's mother. (Mark 1:29-32.)

Matthew 12: 1-8. Plucking the corn on the Sabbath.

Matthew 12:9-14. Healing the man with the withered hand.

John 9: 1-16. Giving sight to a man born blind.

Luke 11:1 -6. Healing a man with dropsy.

John 7:21-24. Christ accused the Jews of strict legalism, but absence of consideration for human good.

Matthew 21: 20. Christ taught His followers to keep the Sabbath in mind after His death.

Luke 23: 50-56. In harmony with the nature of the Sabbath as a day of rest Christ's body rested in the tomb on the Sabbath day. He rested from His completed work for man's redemption as God rested from His completed work at creation.