

65. REASONS FOR SABBATH-KEEPING

1. What is the one great feature by which the true God is distinguished from all false gods?

"The Lord is the true God, He is the living God, and an everlasting King. . . . The gods that have not made the heavens and the earth, even they shall perish from the earth, and from under these heavens. He hath made the earth by His power, He hath established the world by His wisdom, and hath stretched out the heavens by His discretion." Jer. 10: 10-12.

2. When Paul wished to preach the true God to the idolatrous Athenians, how did he describe Him?

"Whom therefore you ignorantly worship, Him declare I unto you. God that made the world and all things therein." Acts 17: 23, 24.

3. What did the apostles say to the idolaters at Lystra?

"We . . . preach unto you that you should turn from these vanities unto the living God, which made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and all things that are therein." Acts 14: 15. See also Rev. 10: 6; 14: 6, 7.

4. What reason is given in the fourth commandment for keeping the Sabbath day holy?

"For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day." Ex. 20: 11.

NOTES - The Sabbath is the great memorial of creation and of God's creative power, a constant reminder of the true and living God. God's design in making the Sabbath, and in commanding that it be kept holy, was that man might never forget Him, the creator of all things.

"The original Sabbath being a perpetual memorial of God, the Creator calling man to imitate God in the observance of the same, man could not keep the original Sabbath and forget God.' - Professor E. W. Thomas, M.A., in Herald of Gospel Liberty, June 19, 1890.

When we remember that two-thirds of the world's inhabitants today are idolaters, and that since the fall, idolatry, with its train of associated and resultant evils, has ever been a prevailing sin, and then think that the observance of the Sabbath, as God ordained it, would have prevented all this, we can better appreciate the value of the Sabbath institution, and the importance of Sabbath-keeping.

5. What does God say the Sabbath will be to those who hallow it, or keep it holy?

"And hallow My Sabbaths; and they shall be a sign between Me and you, that you may know that I am the Lord your God." Eze. 20: 20.

6. How important is it that we know God?

"And this is life eternal, that they might know Thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom Thou has sent." John 17: 3.

7. Is there any danger of God's chosen people forgetting Him?

"Beware that thou forget not the Lord thy God, in not keeping His commandments, and His judgments, and His statutes." Deut. 8: 11.

8. What other reason is given for keeping the Sabbath?

"Verily My Sabbaths you shall keep: for it is a sign between Me and you throughout your generations; that you may know that I am the Lord that does SANCTIFY you." Ex. 31: 13.

NOTE - To sanctify is to make holy, or to set apart for a holy use. The sanctification, or making holy, of sinful beings can be wrought only by the creative power of God through Christ by the Holy Spirit. In 1 Cor. 1:30 we are told that Christ is made unto us "sanctification"; and in Eph. 2:10 it is said that "we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works." The Sabbath, therefore, is a sign of sanctification, and thus of what Christ is to the believer, because it is a reminder of the creative power of God as manifested in the work of regeneration. It is the sign of the power of God, therefore, in both creation and redemption. To the believer, it is the evidence, or sign, that he knows the true God, who, through Christ, created all things, and who, through Christ, redeems the sinner and makes him whole.

9. What special reason did the Israelites have for keeping the Sabbath?

"And remember that thou was a servant in the land of Egypt, and that the Lord thy God brought thee out thence through a mighty hand and by a stretched-out arm: therefore the Lord thy God commanded thee to keep the Sabbath day." Deut. 5: 15.

NOTE-In their bondage the Israelites had to some extent lost the knowledge of God, and departed from His precepts. The Sabbath came to be greatly disregarded by them; and in consequence of the oppression of the Pharaohs, especially the Pharaoh of the exodus, as witnessed by the rigorous exactions made upon them by this latter king through their taskmasters, its observance was made apparently impossible. See Ex. 5:1-19. The special point, both of reform and of conflict, just preceding their deliverance from bondage, was over the matter of Sabbath observance. Moses and Aaron had shown them that obedience to God was the first condition of deliverance. Their efforts to restore the observance of the Sabbath among the Israelites had come to the notice of Pharaoh; hence his accusation against them, "Wherefore do you, Moses and Aaron, let [hinder] the people from their works? get you unto your burdens. . . . Behold, the people of the land are many, and you make them rest [Heb., Shabbath] from their burdens." Ex. 5: 4,5. Deliverance from this oppression was indeed, therefore, an additional and special reason for their keeping the Sabbath. But Egypt and Egyptian bondage simply represent sin and the bondage of sin. See Rev. 11:8; Hosea 11:1; Matt. 2:15; Zech. 10:10. Everyone, therefore, who has been delivered from sin has the same reason for keeping the Sabbath as had the Israelites who were released from Egyptian bondage.

10. What does the Psalmist say was the reason why God brought His people out of Egypt, and placed them in Canaan?

"And He brought forth His people with joy, and His chosen with gladness: and gave them the lands of the heathen: . . . that they might observe His statutes, and keep, His laws." Ps. 105: 43-45.

NOTE-Their deliverance from Egyptian bondage was a reason for the keeping not only of the fourth commandment, but of every precept of God's law. This is indicated by the preface or preamble to the law as given on Sinai: "I am the Lord thy God, which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. Thou shalt have no other gods before Me," etc. Ex. 20: 2, 3. See also Lev. 19: 35-37; Deut. 10:19; 15:12-15; 24:17,18. Likewise, everyone who, through Christ, has been delivered from the bondage of sin, God calls to obedience, not only in the matter of Sabbath-keeping, but to every precept of His holy law. "Blessed is the man that does this, and the son of man that lays hold on it; that keeps the Sabbath from polluting it, and keeps his hand from doing any evil." Isa. 56: 2.

11. What is the meaning of the word "Sabbath"?

Rest.

NOTE - Previous to the fall, God designed that man's time should be occupied with pleasant, invigorating, but not wearisome labor. Gen. 2:15. Laborious, wearisome toll came in consequence of sin. Gen. 3:17-19. While under the fall the Sabbath, therefore, may bring physical rest to both man and the beasts of burden (Ex. 23:12) in a way not originally intended, physical rest was not its original and primary design or purpose. Cessation from the ordinary labors and occupations of the week was ordained, not because these are wrong or sinful in themselves, but that man might have an appointed time and a frequently recurring period for the contemplation of the Creator and His works. Under the gospel, the Sabbath is a sign of spiritual rest and freedom from sin. So we read, "For he that is entered into His rest, he also hath ceased from his own works, as God did from His." Heb. 4:10.

12. Who gives this rest from sin?

"Come unto Me, all you that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you, and learn of Me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and you shall find rest unto your souls." Matt. 11: 28, 29.

NOTE-The Sabbath, then, is the sign of the soul-rest which Christ gives to the weary and laden with sin.

13. Was the Sabbath intended as a day for public worship?

"Six days shall work be done: but the seventh day is the Sabbath of rest, an holy convocation." Lev. 23:3.

NOTE-A convocation is an assembly of people.

14. Does the New Testament teach the same duty?

"Let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works: not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as you see the day approaching!" Heb. 10:24,25.

15. What does Malachi say of those that fear the Lord?

"Then they that feared the Lord spoke often one to another: and the Lord hearkened, and heard it, and a book of remembrance was written before Him for them that feared the Lord, and that thought upon His name. And they shall be Mine, says the Lord of hosts, in that day when I make up My jewels; and I will spare them, as a man spared his own son that serves him." Mal. 3: 16,17.

16. Will the Sabbath be observed as a day of worship in the new earth?

"For as the new heavens and the new earth, which I will make, shall remain before Me, says the Lord, so shall your seed and your name remain. And it shall come to pass, that from one new moon to another, and from one Sabbath to another, shall all flesh come to worship before Me, says the Lord." Isa. 66: 22,23.

NOTE –"Thou has made us for Thyself, and our heart is restless till it find its rest in Thee." - St. Augustine.