

Sabbath School Lesson #10 – Sabbath Rest – 28 August-3 September 2021

Christ would have us remember that sanctity of the Sabbath. The Lord says, “Six days shall work be done: but the seventh day is the sabbath of rest, an holy convocation; ye shall do no work therein: it is the sabbath of the Lord in all your dwellings” (Leviticus 23:3). To remember the Sabbath is to remember God. If we forget the Sabbath, we also forget God. The violation of the Sabbath is always accompanied by forgetfulness of the true God. But it is the keeping of *the Sabbath* that makes people know the true God.

Sunday: Sabbath and Creation – “The seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God.” This is the day which commemorates creation. No other day calls attention to the power of God. Changing the day of rest is the first step toward complete loss of knowledge of God. When we read that the heathen became what they are because “when they knew God they glorified Him not as God,” and remember that the glory of God is His creative power, and that keeping the Sabbath is the means by which we recognise that power, we do not see how the conclusion can be avoided that the first step toward the degradation revealed in Romans 1:23-31 was the refusal to keep the Sabbath which God had sanctified. The “man of sin” became such by thinking to change the times and the laws of God. The attempted change of the Sabbath from the seventh to the first day of the week is the boast of the Catholic Church. To this she points as the badge of her authority. And this fact marks the Papacy as essentially heathen. Thus: By the act of changing the Sabbath it claimed the place and authority of God. Paul says of the Papacy: “Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God” (2 Thessalonians 2:4). One power can usurp the place of another only by changing, or attempting to change, its laws. But if the Papacy puts itself in the place of God, showing itself to be God, it must necessarily ignore the existence of the only true God; and thus it is that by changing the Sabbath the Papacy becomes essentially heathen. It matters not that the Papacy makes great pretensions to godliness. Profession counts for nothing unless the action corresponds. Paul says of certain ones. “They profess that they know God; but in works they deny him” (Titus 1:16). It is the rejection of the truth that is going to land the mass of the people of the last days in the worst kind of infidelity (see 2 Thessalonians 2:9-12). The Sabbath of Jehovah was, so far as we have any record, the first truth revealed to man (see Genesis 2:1-3), and it is the primary and most essential truth, since it pre-eminently teaches the existence and power of God. It is this truth which the Papacy has sought to overthrow, thus putting itself in the place of God; it is against this truth that Satan, the arch-enemy of God, exerts all his hellish arts, that he may lure men from allegiance to God; and it is the rejection of this truth which will make men an easy prey to Satan's strong delusion, and bring them under the wrath of God. Let us then keep the Sabbath of the Lord in spirit and in truth. Let us not substitute a way of our own choosing, thus exalting ourselves to the place of God. If by the faith of Christ we earnestly strive to keep the commandments of God, we shall “follow on to know the Lord;” and in the earth made new, where all shall know the Lord, from the least to the greatest, we shall be permitted every Sabbath (Isaiah 66:23) to see God and to worship before His throne, acknowledging His goodness and power, in that He hath made all things new.

Monday: Celebrating Freedom – Let us do a short question and answer analysis here. After the Israelites had been delivered, what exhortation was given to them, based on their hard usage in Egypt? “But the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God; in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, nor thy manservant, nor thy maidservant, nor thine ox, nor thine ass, nor any of thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates; that thy manservant and thy maidservant may rest as well as thou. And remember that thou wast 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” (Deuteronomy 5:14-15). What were they told to remember in order that they might not be led to require their servants to work on the Sabbath? Read again verse 15. For what purpose did God deliver them from bondage? “And I say unto thee, Let My son go, that he may serve Me; and if thou refuse to let him go,

behold, I will slay thy son, even thy firstborn” (Exodus 4:23). “And He brought forth His people with joy, and His chosen with gladness; and gave them the lands of the heathen; and they inherited the labour of the people; that they might observe His statutes, and keep His laws. Praise ye the Lord” (Psalm 105:43-45). What does this indicate? – *That they could not properly serve Him in Egypt.* So we learn that the children of Israel could not serve the Lord in Egypt. They could not sabbat – “rest from their burdens” (Exodus 5:5), and were delivered that they might observe the statutes of the Lord, including the Sabbath, and this place upon them an obligation to keep the Sabbath strictly as well as to keep all the commandments.

Tuesday: The Stranger in Your Gates – The Sabbath is addressed to every man. Reference to “gates” is to each man’s premise. Each man is to keep the Sabbath; his son and his daughter must likewise keep it; his man-servant and his maid-servant must also keep it; and also the stranger within his gates. That is, all who are upon the man’s premises must keep the Sabbath, because if they worked, it would be the same as if he worked. We are not to take advantage of strangers – the non-Adventists – to work for us on Sabbath.

Wednesday: Serving Others Honors God’s Sabbath – The Creator, He who made the Sabbath for man, is the only one who can tell us what it is for, and how to keep it. All statements by men, to the effect that *this* thing must not be done on the Sabbath, are Pharisaical and Popish additions to God’s Word, which, inasmuch as they are mere human ordinances, are always sure to be wrong. The Word of God alone is to be the guide under all circumstances; whoever holds fast to the Word, and is taught of God cannot go wrong. “The Sabbath was made for man” (Mark 2:27), and is therefore not something that is against him, a hard requirement, – something to hold, him down, – but a thing calculated to help him in every way. But it is *for* man; that is, it is a blessing to a man only when he keeps it. When a man rejects that which is good, he has only the evil; so a blessing spurned leaves only a man helpless. Therefore when it is said that all human additions to the Sabbath, and interpretations of the commandment are of no value, it must not be understood that anybody, in the world has any license to break the Sabbath. “Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy,” is as valid a commandment as it was the day it was spoken from Sinai. In these words, “It is lawful to do well on the Sabbath days,” and, “The Sabbath was made for man,” we have the explanation of many of the acts of Christ. The first of these statements is found in Matthew’s account of the healing the man with a withered hand (Matthew 12), which occurs in immediate connection with that of the disciples eating the corn. Indeed, they went from the corn-field direct to the synagogue, where Jesus performed this miracle. The Pharisees knowing how ready and anxious Jesus was to relieve the afflicted, watched Him to see if He would heal the man on the Sabbath. He asked them, “Is it lawful to do good on the Sabbath days, or, to do evil? to save life, or to kill?” But they held their peace (Mark 3:4). “But when He had looked round about, on them with anger, being grieved for the hardness of their hearts, He saith unto the man, Stretch forth thine hand. And he stretched it out; and his hand was restored whole as the other” (Mark 3:5). The Sabbath, therefore, is connected with well-doing, and stands for well- doing, since it was made *for* man, for his benefit. The Scribes and Pharisees had made the keeping of the Sabbath a burden for the people; and it was to show its real nature, that Jesus performed so many miracles on the Sabbath day.

Thursday: The Sign That We Belong to God – “Wherefore the children of Israel shall keep the Sabbath, to observe the Sabbath throughout their generations, for a perpetual covenant. It is a sign between me and the children of Israel forever; for in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, and on the seventh day he rested, and was refreshed” (Exodus 31:16-17). One thing this text certainly proves is that so long as there are generations of Israelites, they must observe the Sabbath. Now since Christians are those who are Christ’s, and all who are Christ’s are Abraham’s seed, it follows that all Christians are Israelites, for the promise to Abraham was through Isaac and Jacob. And since the children of Israel are commanded to keep the Sabbath “throughout their generations,” it follows that the keeping of the seventh-day Sabbath is especially enjoined on Christians. Since Israel is to be saved with an everlasting salvation, it follows that their generations are to continue throughout eternity; and so “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, saith the Lord” (Isaiah 66:23).