

WHY THE SABBATH?

In our last three studies, several truths have been repeating themselves. As God is eternal (Psalm 90:2), so His ten commandment law which reveals His character is eternal (Psalm 119:142-144). The fourth commandment, the seventh-day Sabbath, was given by God in Eden to Adam and Eve (Genesis 2:1-3), and will be forever kept in the eternal new earth where God will be King (Isaiah 66:22,23; Revelation 21:3). The Bible is just as clear that the ten commandments show people where they are out of harmony with God (Romans 3:20), and it thus points to the one and only way to come into harmony with God – through acceptance of Jesus as Saviour and Lord (Acts 4:12; Philippians 4:13). Jesus forgives, and Jesus enables.

The Bible clearly says that the seventh day of the week is the Sabbath (Genesis 2:1-3; Matthew 28:1), and that Christ is the Lord of the Sabbath (Matthew 12:8). The purpose of this lesson is to discover why the Lord gave man the Sabbath, how God intends it to be used, and what results He designed it to bring to the people who keep it. What can we find about these questions in the Bible?

1. A significant beginning point is that the Sabbath was originally given to man before sin was known on this earth, and will be kept by the saved of all ages after sin is forever destroyed. Open the Bible and review Genesis 2:1-3. What do the following three points suggest in connection with the clarification of the real purpose of the Sabbath?

- (a) "rested" _____
- (b) "blessed" _____
- (c) "sanctified" _____

(For Adam and Eve, the Sabbath was a day set apart from the other six days, a weekly reminder of the Creator and the creation week, a special time with God, a time of gratefulness to Him, a time to learn more about Him. It seems clear that the eternal new earth Sabbath would be for these same purposes. Someone has said that no true Sabbathkeeper could be an atheist. How true!)

2. Now, let us come to sinners and the Sabbath. That is where we are. Do we need it? Can't we be Christians without it? What purpose can it serve for us? In a God-denying world, it can, first of all, aid us in accomplishing what Solomon admonished sinners in Ecclesiastes 12:1. (See also Revelation 14:7.) Summarize Solomon's statement.

(One good way to use the Sabbath to accomplish this would be to spend some time out in God's nature. See Isaiah 40:26.)

3. Even as converted sinners, we are in constant need of learning more and more from God. How can we make each Sabbath a real day of spiritual learning?

- (a) John 17:17; Acts 17:11 _____
- (b) Luke 4:16-19 _____

4. The text we just read suggests the real mission of Christ, to spread the good news of salvation to everyone. Read Matthew 24:14. Here He commissions us to join Him in this

work. We learn as we help others to learn. Suggest a way in which we could use part of the Sabbath to do this. _____

5. According to Leviticus 23:32 and Mark 1:32, when does the Sabbath begin and end? _____. This is the way in which God has always marked off days. (See Genesis 1:5; Luke 23:50-56.) It is interesting to note that God begins and ends the Sabbath when man is awake. How could we begin and end the Sabbath in such a way that our Creator is acknowledged and praised, and in a way that additional spiritual knowledge is gained?

6. What does the Bible teach us about other ways to rightly use His "set apart," holy day? Summarize these helpful passages:
 - (a) Matthew 12:10-13 _____
 - (b) Matthew 25:35,36 _____
 - (c) Acts 16:12,13; 17:1,2 _____
7. From every Sabbath day we can gain satisfying rest from our daily labors. By knowing Christ better, we can better experience the blessedness of God's approval, and further sanctification – spiritual growth and maturity into Christ's likeness. Read Ezekiel 20:12,20. Can we see more clearly what it means, in light of what we have been studying?
8. God makes wonderful promises to the true Sabbath keeper. Carefully read Isaiah 56:1-7 and Isaiah 58:13,14. The true emphasis of the Lord's Sabbath must always be God's emphasis – the use of a "set apart" day to spiritually mature "set apart" people. The Lord wants our decision in relation to the keeping of His weekly, seventh-day Sabbath. How vital it is for us as Christians to take this step with Him.

SABBATH given PERFECT MAN	SABBATH given SINFUL MAN	+	SABBATH kept in NEW EARTH
<u>GOD</u> 1a. _____ 1b. _____ 1c. _____	2. _____ 3a. _____ 3b. _____	+	8. _____ _____ 7. _____ (_____)
<u>MAN</u> 1. _____ _____ _____ _____	4. _____ 5. _____ 6a. _____ 6b. _____		