The Sabbath

"Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days shall thou labor, and do all thy work: but the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God;...wherefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day, and hallowed it" (Exodus 20:8-11).

Three brothers, playing together in the stream, tried to build a dam. Dad helped them when he wasn't watching a bird through his binoculars. Mother, relaxing on the grass, was enjoying the beauty of the woods and the joy of being with her family. Suddenly, the youngest boy smiled at her and said, "I wish every day was the Sabbath. That's when you and Daddy belong to us."

Such spontaneous joy resulted because that family chose to make the Sabbath the sweetest, the most blessed, day of the whole week. They planned all week for these delightful Sabbath activities. The boys looked forward to it. In winter they donned heavy clothes and followed animal and bird tracks in the snow. In spring they hunted for the first flowers and examined delicate leaf buds. In summer they took their lunch and hiked on the hillsides, collecting nature treasures.

Back in Eden God gave humankind both the family and the Sabbath. Soon after God created the family, He presented them with this glorious gift of the Sabbath. He simply couldn't wait. Like a loving Father, He wanted them to enjoy this special gift of time. The Sabbath provides the blessed opportunity to commune with God, with nature, and with one another.

Preview

1. What three divine acts made the seventh day different from all the other days? (Genesis 2:2, 3)

First, God " _____ on the seventh day from all His _____." No, God wasn't tired. He set an example for all human beings to follow.

Second, God " _____ the seventh day." God's blessing makes the day special because of His divine favor. Following God's example will bring blessings to all those who keep this day special.

Third, God " _____ it." To sanctify something means to make it holy.

2. Why did God plan six days for work and one for rest?

Consider the human heart. In twelve hours it does enough work to lift a sixty-five-ton railroad tank car one foot off the ground. In about sixty seconds it pumps five quarts of blood through your body. In a year that's more than one million gallons of blood through 100,000 miles of blood vessels—a distance equal to four trips around the world.

How is this possible? Through God's plan of regular relaxation and rest. Though your heart beats 4,200 times an hour, much of that time it's resting—fifteen hours out of twenty-four. It beats about four seconds out of every ten and rests six.

When God made this world in six days, He followed it with a day of rest. He knew that this gift of time would give humans both health and happiness. The relaxation, change, and rest that come from true Sabbath-keeping make us healthier and happier mentally, physically, spiritually, and socially.

Points to Ponder

1. Some say that the Sabbath was given only to the Jews—the nation of Israel.
   Sabbath originated at creation, long before there ever was a Jew. Even before Jews became a nation, while they were camped in the wilderness, God told them to observe the Sabbath.
   The fourth commandment says that "the alien resident in your towns." (Exodus 20:10, NRSV) shall also observe the Sabbath. Does this not show that the Sabbath is not just for Jews?

2. What evidence is there that Sabbath was observed as God's commandment even before the giving of the Ten Commandments on Mount Sinai?
   Genesis 16:13:21: _____

3. How often did God send the manna? _____
   God performed the miracle of providing manna for forty years (that included more than 2,000 successive weekly Sabbaths). All through this time, God considered Sabbath as a holy day of rest for Israel.

4. What word in the fourth commandment indicates that the Israelites had known of the Sabbath before? _____ (Exodus 20:8).

5. God wanted all humanity to remember that He is their Creator.
   Honoring their Creator would keep people from worshiping idols and from believing in evolution. The Sabbath is also a sign that God is also the One who redeems us from our sins and sanctifies us (Ezekiel 20:12, 20).
6. In Revelation 7:3, the Bible states that the servants of God will be sealed in their foreheads.
   An official seal must contain three elements. Read Exodus 20:8-12 and complete these elements that show that the Sabbath contains the seal of God.
   a. Name of the owner of the seal. _____
   b. His title. _____
   c. His jurisdiction (extent or range of His authority). _____
   _____

7. How did Christ regard the Sabbath?
   "The Sabbath was made for _____, and not _____ for the Sabbath: Therefore the _____ of _____ is _____ also of the _____" (Mark 2:27, 28).

8. Since the only day the Lord calls His own is the seventh day (Mark 2:27, 28; Isaiah 58:13), what day is John referring to when he says he was in the spirit on the Lord's day? (Revelation 1:10)
   _____

Nuts & Bolts

The Sabbath is filled with deep, spiritual truths. Let's review its importance and broad meaning to us.

1. Memorial of creation.
   The Sabbath reminds us every week that God is the Creator (Exodus 20:11, 12).

2. Symbol of redemption.
   When God delivered Israel from slavery in Egypt (Deuteronomy 5:15) and when Jesus died on the cross to redeem us from sin, Sabbath became a symbol of redemption (see Ezekiel 20:12, 20).

3. Sign of sanctification.
   The Sabbath is also a sign of God's transforming power in our lives. It is a promise that God is able to sanctify us (Ezekiel 20:12, 20; Exodus 31:13). Spending time with God leads us to depend on His power and not our own. We receive His character and want to obey.

4. Sign of loyalty.
   Before Jesus comes, the whole world will be divided into two classes. The first (Revelation 14:12) are those who choose to _____ the _____ of _____ and the _____ of _____. The second (Revelation 14:9) are those who will worship the _____ and his _____. Revelation 13:15, 16 clearly indicates that the final test of loyalty for all the world will be, who will we worship?

5. A time of fellowship.
   The Sabbath provides time for parents to bind their children to their hearts and to the heart of God. If God hadn't set limits to the demands of work, we'd never take time to experience the presence of God through worship, praise, service, and fellowship.

6. A sign of righteousness by faith.
   Satan makes us think we can earn salvation by our own efforts. That's legalism. Romans 3:20 proves we can't be saved by keeping the law, including the Sabbath, "By the deeds of the _____ there shall no flesh be _____ in His sight."
   How, then, are we saved? "The _____ shall live by _____" (Romans 1:17). The only one reason to keep the Sabbath is that we love God, that we are saved by Him, and that we trust Him.

7. A symbol of resting in Christ.
   All who enter into the Sabbath rest have "ceased from his _____ as _____ did from His" (Hebrews 4:10). God has promised us His spiritual rest of peace and joy in Him, forgiveness of sin, and saving grace. Hebrews 4:9: "There remaineth therefore a _____ to the _____ of God."

8. How did Sunday worship come into practice?

Satan hates Sabbath, because he knows that Sabbath-keeping provides a special time to develop a loving relationship with our Saviour. He knows He'll lose everyone who really loves God, so he's fighting an all-out war against the Sabbath. Daniel predicted that a religious power would attempt to "change _____ and _____." (Daniel 7:25). This powerful church boasts that they transferred worship from Sabbath to Sunday. Though this change happened gradually over the centuries, the real power behind the change is Satan.

9. God's challenge to you.

God has called you to restore the Sabbath to it rightful place—to be the "repairer of the breach" in His holy law. He has told you how to do it. Fill in the blanks from Isaiah 58:13 and then ask God for power to do as He commands.

"If thou turn away thy _____ from the Sabbath, from doing thy _____ on my holy day; and call the Sabbath a _____, the _____ the Lord, _____, and shalt _____ Him, not doing thine own _____, nor finding thine own _____, nor speaking thine own _____."

10. God's precious promise.

Then follows a fabulous promise from God. Isaiah 58:14: "Then shalt thou _____ thyself in the LORD; and I will cause thee to _____ upon the _____ _____ of the earth, and feed thee with the _____: for the _____ of the Lord hath spoken it."

11. God's Sabbath throughout eternity.

God's people will keep the Sabbath throughout all eternity. Isaiah 66:23: "From one Sabbath to _____, shall all _____ come to worship before me, saith the Lord."

Words to Remember

Sanctify: Make holy, set apart for holy use.

Holy days: Special feast days that the Jews observed, in addition to the Sabbath. These were not the weekly seventh-day Sabbaths.

High days: Weekly Sabbath day on which the feast day also fell.

The Difference Between

Annual sabbaths and weekly Sabbath: The Jews had seven annual sabbaths connected with various feasts, spread through the year. These occurred on any day of the week. These sabbaths were done away at the cross, but the weekly Sabbath continues forever.

Perpetual memorial: Continuing, enduring forever.

"Even to even": According to Genesis 1, the day begins with the evening and then comes the morning. This implies that the biblical reckoning of the day is from sunset to sunset. Thus, the Sabbath begins Friday

evening. Hence, the Bible calls Friday the preparation day—the day to prepare for the Sabbath (Mark 15:32). Thus, the Sabbath is to be kept from Friday evening to Saturday evening.

I Truly Believe

Pray earnestly about the following promises you may wish to make to your Lord. Then check the ones to which you want to commit yourself.

[ ] Because Jesus and the apostles regularly worshiped on the seventh-day Sabbath, I want to show my love and loyalty to God's command by following their example.

[ ] Because I know that the final test of love and loyalty to God just before the end of time will have to do with worship, I choose to accept the seal of God (the Sabbath).

[ ] I desire to keep the Sabbath because I love the Lord of the Sabbath, and not to earn salvation by observing it.

My Prayer

Dear Father,

I thank You for the gift of the weekly Sabbath and the blessings and the joy that come from observing it. Give me the power to express my love to You by obeying You in all things. May I keep the Sabbath with You throughout all eternity. I pray in the name of Jesus. Amen.

The Sabbath

Read the following Bible texts and with the help from the lesson above, answer the following questions by circling "T" if the statement is true or "F" if the statement is false. (Hint: there are 6 true and 4 false)

KEY TEXTS				
	Gen 2:1-3	Ex 20:8-11; 31:13-17	Lev. 23:32	Deut. 5:12-15
	Ezek. 20:12, 20	Mark 1:32	Luke 4:16	Isa. 56:5, 6; 58:13, 14
	Matt. 12:1-12	Heb. 4:1-11		

1 **t** *or* **f** The Sabbath was given to the human family sinned as a reminder of how far it had fallen from grace (see pg. 282)

2 **t** *or* **f** The Sabbath is a sign that we acknowledge God's sovereignty as Creator and King (see pg. 282).

3 **t** *or* **f** In the Bible, "the Lord's day" refers to Sunday, the first day of the week (see pg. 287).

4 **t** *or* **f** The Sabbath is a memorial of creation and a symbol of redemption (see pg. 287, 288).

5 **t** *or* **f** Only through abiding in Christ can we render heartfelt obedience to God's law (see pg. 284).

6 **t** *or* **f** Nowhere does the Bible command us to observe any weekly day other than the seventh-day Sabbath nor does the New Testament indicate that God has changed the Sabbath to any other day of the week (see pg. 287).

7 **t** *or* **f** The Sabbath is central to our worship of God (see pg. 286).

8 **t** *or* **f** While Christ worshiped on the seventh-day Sabbath his disciples did not (see pg. 292).

9 **t** *or* **f** Because Christ was resurrected on the first day, there is scriptural evidence for worshipping on Sunday as the Sabbath (see pg. 291-297).

10 **t** *or* **f** The Lord calls upon His people to make the Sabbath a day of delight and a celebration of God's redemptive work through Jesus Christ (see pg. 297).