



My Bible School Lessons

Exploring the Word of God

Lesson #13: "Your Special Day with God"

SCRIPTURE READING: EZEKIEL 20:1-24

Memory Verse: "Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me."

Revelation 3:20

1: WHAT IS THE BIBLE TEACHING ABOUT CREATION?

Psalm 33:6, 9: "By the word of the Lord were the heavens made; and all the host of them by the breath of His mouth. . For He spake, and it was done; He commanded, and it stood fast."

Psalm 104:5: He "laid the foundations of the earth, that it should not be removed for ever."

This is the teaching of the Scriptures. And it sounds glorious, doesn't it? Let us now open our Bibles for further light on this subject. The complete Godhead was involved in creation. This is made clear in the following passages.

Genesis 1:1-2: "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth. And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters."

Ephesians 3:9: "To make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ" (Genesis 1:26; John 1:1-3).

The Bible account of creation, in which the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit participated, is the only safeguard against erroneous concepts of the beginning of human life on our planet. And this must be accepted by faith. Listen to these words:

Hebrews 11:3: "Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the Word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear."

Psalm 33:9: "For He spake, and it was done; He commanded, and it stood fast."

Faith in the Creator and the fact of the creation solves many knotty problems of life's origin and human destiny.

2: WHAT IS THE BASIS OF GOD'S RIGHT TO RULE?

Revelation 4:11: "Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power: for Thou hast created all things, and for Thy pleasure they are and were created" (Psalm

95:6).

Since God created all things from nothing (*Hebrews 11:3*), He hung the earth upon nothing (*Job 26:7*), upholds all things (*Hebrews 1:3*), and sustains life (*Acts 17:28*). He therefore has undisputed final and absolute right to ownership and rulership.

3: WHAT IS THE SIGN OF GOD'S CREATORSHIP?

Exodus 31:16-17: "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 for ever: for in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, and on the seventh day He rested, and was refreshed,"

This statement about the Sabbath is clear. God is the speaker in this text. The Sabbath is God's sign because God is the Creator. And He created the world and the different forms of life upon it in six days and rested on the seventh day. This is God's own stated reason for making the Sabbath a sign. And He intended that all men should observe the Sabbath and recognize Him, on the seventh day in particular, as the Creator. All the inhabitants of the world, and all their church councils, cannot not erase these facts.

On God's part, the Sabbath is the sign of His creatorship, with all the obligations toward us that devolve upon Him because of this fact of creation. It is the sign of His right to rule over us, the symbol of His gracious and timeless sovereignty. On our part, it is the sign that we gratefully acknowledge Him as our Creator and accept His right of title to, and rulership over, us and all things. It is a sign that, as His creatures, we assume the obligations that naturally come to us in this relationship. The Sabbath is a matter of holy duty and a thing of infinite beauty.

4: WAS THE SABBATH MADE BEFORE MAN SINNED?

We should remember, first of all, that the Sabbath was made. It was not an institution springing from an idea merely. The Sabbath was made on the seventh day and out of the seventh day of creation week. Notice the following facts:

1. The Sabbath was made on the seventh day, out of the seventh day.

Genesis 2:2-3: "On the seventh day God ended His work which He had made; and He rested on the seventh day from all His work which He had made, And God blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it: because that in it He had rested from all His work which God created and made."

2. The seventh day is therefore God's blessed, sanctified rest day.

Exodus 20:10:-"The seventh day is the sabbath of the Lord thy God."

God rested. He was not weary because "the Creator of the ends of the earth fainteth not, neither is weary" (*Isaiah 40:28*). But He was refreshed. "On the seventh day He rested and was refreshed" (*Exodus 31:17*). God rested because He was creating a day of rest thereby and was setting us an example. He was refreshed because He "saw everything that He had made, and, behold, it was very good" (*Genesis 1:31*). It gave Him pleasure (*Revelation 4: 11*).

God blessed and sanctified the seventh day. He rested on the seventh day and made it His rest day: then "God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it: because that in it He had rested," Since the seventh day is the day on which He rested, and since He blessed and sanctified it, it follows that upon no other day except the one on which He rested has He placed His blessing and sanctification, making it "the Sabbath of

the Lord thy God."

It is this unchangeable fact of God's resting on the seventh day, and then blessing and sanctifying it, that settles for time and eternity God's holy Sabbath day.

The six-day creation of our planet would have to be done all over a second time-in order to change the Sabbath day!

Exodus 20:11: "In six days the Lord made heaven and earth, and rested the seventh day: wherefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day, and hallowed it."

1 Chronicles 17:27: "Thou blessest, O Lord, and it shall be blessed for ever."

Numbers 23:19-20: "God is not a man, that He should lie; neither the son of man, that He should repent. . He hath blessed; and I cannot reverse it."

5: WAS THE SABBATH SIGN TO BE FOR ALL MEN FOR ALL TIME?

One writer has said, "God saw that a Sabbath was essential for man, even in Paradise. . He needed a Sabbath to remind Him more vividly of God and to awaken gratitude because all that he enjoyed and possessed came from the beneficent hand of the Creator." Here are ten facts, most of them historical, about the true Sabbath:

1. The Sabbath was made for man—all men.

Mark 2:27: "The Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath."

This does not mean for Jews only. Woman was created for man (1 *Corinthians* 11:9). Gentile men would not agree that women were made only for Jews. Neither would Jewish women agree to that. The Sabbath is universal.

2. Noah had a knowledge of a week of seven days.

Genesis 8:12: "And he stayed yet other seven days; and sent forth the dove; which returned not again unto him any more" (Read also verses 8-11).

Why is the Sabbath not spoken of or hundreds of years after it is mentioned in Genesis 2:1-3? Consider this:

Genesis 3 gives us the story of the temptation and the Fall. The fourth chapter tells of Cain and Abel. Chapter five gives genealogy. And - think of it!- chapter six brings us to Noah's time, more than 1,500 years after creation. In an ordinary Bible, you need to turn but one leaf to cover this period of 1,500 years. Naturally the Sabbath would not be repeatedly mentioned. In Exodus, the second book of the Bible, the Sabbath is set forth in its primeval and everlasting importance (*Exodus 20:8-11*).

3. Abraham knew and obeyed God's laws.

Genesis 26:5: "Abraham obeyed My voice, and kept My charge, My commandments, My statutes, and My laws,"

Abraham, though he had not the written law, knew God's laws and sought to obey them.

4. In Moses' time, the Sabbath was known and observed.

God delivered Israel from Egypt that they might obey Him and keep His laws.

Psalm 105:43-45: "He brought forth His people with joy and His chosen with gladness. . that they might observe His statutes, and keep His laws."

God spoke and wrote His holy law, with the Sabbath commandment in the very heart of it.

Deuteronomy 5:22: "These words the Lord spake unto all your assembly in the mount out of the midst of the fire, of the cloud, and of the thick darkness, with a great voice: and He added no more. And He wrote them in two tables of stone, and delivered them unto me" (verses 7-21),

The sanctuary was the center of Israel's worship and life (*Exodus 25:40*). The most holy place was the heart of the sanctuary. The Ten Commandments were in the ark, the objective to which the whole sanctuary service points to. The Sabbath was in the center of the law as the sign of the Creator God, from whom goes forth light and glory to the limitless reaches of infinity.

5. The Sabbath was for men in Isaiah's time.

Isaiah 58:13-14: "If thou turn away thy foot from the Sabbath, from doing thy pleasure on My holy day; and call the Sabbath a delight, the holy of the Lord, honourable; and shalt honour Him, not doing thine own ways, nor finding thine own pleasure, nor speaking thine own words: then shalt thou delight thyself in the Lord; and I will cause thee to ride upon the high places of the earth, and feed thee with the heritage of Jacob thy father: for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it" (Isaiah 56:1-7).

Isaiah is sometimes called the gospel prophet. His beautiful and stirring passages on the universal place of Sabbathkeeping qualify him to be called the Sabbath prophet as well.

6. It was for men in Jeremiah's time.

Jeremiah 17:21-22: "Thus saith the Lord; Take heed to yourselves, and bear no burden on the Sabbath day, nor bring it in by the gates of Jerusalem; neither carry forth a burden out of your houses on the Sabbath day, neither do ye any work, but hallow the Sabbath day, as I commanded your fathers" (Jeremiah 17:23-27; 52:12-14; Nehemiah 13:15-18).

Jeremiah's words need no comment.

7. It was for Jesus, the Son of man, and for men in His time.

Since Jesus was the Creator, He made the world and the Sabbath too (*John 1:1-3,14*). It was His custom while in this world to keep it.

Luke 4:16: "He came to Nazareth, where He had been brought up: and as His custom was, He went into the synagogue on the Sabbath day, and stood up for to read."

Jesus kept all His Father's commandments. He did not come to destroy them, but to show how they should be kept.

John 15:10: "If ye keep My commandments, ye shall abide in My love; even as I have kept My Father's commandments, and abide in His love."

He rested in the tomb on the Sabbath. Read Luke 23:52-54. His followers sacredly observed the same day.

Luke 23:55-56: "The women also, which came with Him from Galilee, followed after, and beheld the sepulchre, and how His body was laid. And they returned, and prepared spices and ointments; and rested the Sabbath day according to the commandment"

His followers honored the Sabbath forty years after His death.

Matthew 24:20: "Pray ye that your flight be not in the winter, neither on the Sabbath day."

Looking forward about forty years into the future, Jesus admonished His followers to pray that their flight from the besieged city of Jerusalem, in A.D. 70, might not be on the Sabbath day. Jesus, as a carpenter, closed shop and went to the synagogue on the Sabbath day as a regular custom. He found that the church had heaped up a great stack of traditional rules about Sabbath observance, laws not found in the Bible. These Jesus ignored or deliberately disobeyed, but He kept and honored the Sabbath which He had made at creation. Sin is "the transgression of the law" (1 John 3:4), and Jesus did not sin (1 Peter 2:22).

8. It was for Paul and men of his time.

Sabbath observance was an accepted custom in Paul's time (Acts 17: 12; 18:1-4, 11). The apostle spoke to both Jews and Gentiles on the Sabbath.

Acts 13:14, 42, 44: "When they departed from Perga, they came to Antioch in Pisidia, and went into the synagogue on the Sabbath day, and sat down. . And when the Jews were gone out of the synagogue, the Gentiles besought that these words might be preached to them the next Sabbath. . And the next Sabbath day came almost the whole city together to hear the Word of God."

Paul, a servant of God, would have no more right than you or I to dishonor God and His sign of creatorship. He was a loyal observer of the Bible Sabbath. Said he:

Acts 24:14: "This I confess unto thee, that after the way which they call heresy, so worship I the God of my fathers, believing all things which are written in the law and in the prophets" (Acts 25:8).

9. Thank the Lord! The true Sabbath will also be for the saved in the new earth.

Isaiah 66:22-23: "As the new heavens and the new earth, which I will make, shall remain before Me, saith 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, saith the Lord" (Revelation 22: 14).

In the new earth, the Sabbath will be forever honored.

6: HOW IS THE SABBATH RELATED TO THE WORK OF REDEMPTION?

1. Redemption involves a work of creation.

Since it takes creative power to redeem, God used the Sabbath as a sign of sanctification, or redemption. When He creates the new earth, the Sabbath will continue on its eternal way-the sign of God's peace and power. Throughout all eternity, it will carry the double significance of a sign of power to create and to redeem.

2 Corinthians 5:17: "If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new."

Psalms 51:10: "Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me."

2. The Sabbath is a sign of this sanctifying power.

Exodus 31:13: "Verily My Sabbaths ye shall keep: for it is a sign between Me and you throughout your generations; that ye may know that I am the Lord that doth sanctify you" (Ezekiel 20: 12, 20).

The Sabbath is God's flag, the symbol of His sovereignty, woven in the loom of heaven out of that intangible and precious something we call time, and raised over His fair earthly dominion in the freshness of creation's morning. And today, after the passing of the long years, it still remains the symbol of His right to rule as Creator and Redeemer.

Dear friend, do you wish to recognize your Creator and serve Him under the gentle folds of His flag? Indeed, you do! You would not for all the world lower it to earth and trample it under your feet, miss the benign blessings it vouchsafes to you, or deny the God who made you.

But now, there is more to this vital Sabbath question than we can encompass in one lesson, so watch for more interesting facts on the subject in a coming lesson. One thing-remember, please, Christ is supreme in the Christian life, and His Sabbath is a sign of loyalty to Him as Lord and Saviour.

YOUR SPECIAL DAY WITH GOD SUPPLEMENTARY MATERIAL

"The Sabbath was hallowed at the creation. As ordained for man, it had its origin when 'the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy' (Job 38:7). Peace brooded over the world; for earth was in harmony with heaven. 'God saw everything that He had made, and, behold, it was very good'; and He rested in the joy of His completed work (Genesis 1:31).

"Because He had rested upon the Sabbath, 'God blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it,'-set it apart to a holy use. He gave it to Adam as a day of rest. It was a memorial of the work of creation, and thus a sign of God's power and His love. The Scripture says, "He hath made His wonderful works to be remembered: 'The things that are made,' declare 'the invisible things of Him since the creation of the world,' 'even His everlasting power and divinity' (Genesis 2:3; Psalm 111:4; Romans 1:20, R. V.)

"All things were created by the Son of God. 'In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God. . . All things were made by Him; and without Him was not anything made that was made' (John 1: 1-3). And since the Sabbath is a memorial of the work of creation, it is a token of the love and power of Christ.

"The Sabbath calls our thoughts to nature, and brings us into communion with the Creator. In the song of the bird, the sighing of the trees, and the music of the sea, we still may hear His voice who talked with Adam in Eden in the cool of the day. And as we behold His power in nature we find comfort, for the Word that created all things is that which speaks life to the soul. He 'who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ' (2 Corinthians 4:6) . .

"The Sabbath was embodied in the law given from Sinai; but it was not then first made known as a day of rest. The people of Israel had a knowledge of it before they came to Sinai. On the way thither the Sabbath was kept. When some profaned it, the Lord reproved them, saying, 'How long refuse ye to keep My commandments and My laws' (Exodus 16:28)?

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"The Sabbath was not for Israel merely, but for the world. It had been made known to man in Eden, and, like the other precepts of the Decalogue, it is of imperishable obligation." -*Desire of Ages*, 281-283

THE WEEKLY CYCLE

The writings of historians, the records of chronographers, the languages of earth, the calendars of time, and the existence of the Jewish race—all testify to the fact that the weekly cycle on our calendars today is the same as in earlier centuries—going back to the time of Christ, to Moses, and beyond.

In the beginning, God gave us the weekly seven-day cycle, with the Sabbath as the last day. That pattern has never changed. The seventh day of the week today is the true Bible Sabbath. Our seventh day is the Sabbath which Jesus kept; it was the Sabbath in the time of Moses when the Ten Commandments were written down. Historians and scientists all agree that this is true.

If there had been any change in the weekly cycle, between the time of Creation and the time of Moses, a correction would have been made when the Ten Commandments were given to the Hebrews. From that time, on down to the present, there have always been Jews to testify as to the true Sabbath. It is the same seventh day of the week which is on our calendars. While all the other ancient races are now intermingled, the Jews have been kept separate so they could testify to the fact that our seventh day is the Bible Sabbath!

The yearly cycle has been changed. In 1582, the length of the year was changed to include the leap year. This changeover resulted in October 1582 having only 21 days! But each week remained the same seven days in length. Thursday, October 4, was followed by Friday, October 15. God has divinely protected the weekly cycle down through the ages. If He had not done this, it would be impossible to keep the Sabbath holy, as He has commanded. But, because He has, we have no excuse not to. The seventh day is a holy day, made holy by the command of God. All calendars agree: The seventh day is the Sabbath. Sunday is the first day; the day called "Saturday" in the English language is the Sabbath.

However, in 108 of the 160 languages of mankind, the seventh day is called "the Sabbath"! Did you know that? Dr. William Mead Jones of London prepared a chart proving this; "*The Chart of the Week*". English is one of the few major languages in which the seventh day is not called "the Sabbath."

Here are ten examples: Hebrew: Shabbath / Greek: Sabbaton / Latin: Sabbatum / Arabic: Assabit / Persian: Shambin / Russian: Subbota / Hindustani: Shamba / French: Samedi / Italian: Sabato / Spanish: Sabado.

"By calculating the eclipses, it can be proven that no time has been lost and the creation days were seven, divided into 24 hours each." *Dr. Hinkley, The Watchman, July 1926 [Hinkley was a well-known astronomer].*

"The human race never lost the septenary [seven day] sequence of week days and that the Sabbath of these latter times comes down to us from Adam, though the ages, without a single lapse."-*Dr. Totten, professor of astronomy at Yale University.*

"Seven has been the ancient and honored number among the nations of the earth. They have measured their time by weeks from the beginning. The origin of this was the Sabbath of God, as Moses has given the reasons for it in his writings."-*Dr. Lyman Coleman.*

"There has been no change in our calendar in past centuries that has affected in any way the cycle of the week."-James Robertson, Director American Ephemeris, Navy Department, U.S. Naval Observatory, Washington, D.C., March 12, 1932.

"It can be said with assurance that not a day has been lost since Creation, and all the calendar changes notwithstanding, there has been no break in the weekly cycle."-*Dr. Frank Jeffries, Fellow of the Royal*

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Astronomical Society and Research Director of the Royal Observatory, Greenwich, England.

It is remarkable how complete is the Biblical and historical evidence corroborating the fact that the Bible Sabbath was given to us by the God of heaven. Let us keep the Sabbath that Jesus kept! He worshiped on the Bible Sabbath, and never told us to stop keeping it. No one else in the Bible said to either. The seventh day is the Sabbath, for God never changed it.

How very thankful we can be that our God is so reliable. He does not change this way or that. He has a holy law which we must obey. But He sent His only begotten Son to die in order to enable us to do it. Soon we will be in heaven, and praise Him for His great Gift.