

DAY BY DAY

Bible Texts and Topics, With Comments,
For Personal Study and Use at Family Worship.

2.13: ISREAL AND THE SABBATH

1. ISRAEL'S DISOBEDIENCE

“It came to pass, that there went out some of the people on the seventh day for to gather, and they found none. And the Lord said unto Moses, How long refuse you to keep My commandments and My laws? See, for that the Lord hath given you the Sabbath, therefore He gives you on the sixth day the bread of two days; abide you every man in his place, let no man go out of his place on the seventh day. So the people rested on the seventh day.” Exodus 16:27-30.

“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 reprovved them, saying, “How long refuse you to keep My commandments and My laws?” . . .

“As the Jews departed from God, and failed to make the righteousness of Christ their own by faith, the Sabbath lost its significance to them. Satan was seeking to exalt himself and to draw men away from Christ, and he worked to pervert the Sabbath, because it is the sign of the power of Christ.

“The Jewish leaders accomplished the will of Satan by surrounding God's rest day with burdensome requirements. In the days of Christ the Sabbath had become so perverted that its observance reflected the character of selfish and arbitrary men, rather than the character of the loving heavenly Father. The rabbis virtually represented God as giving laws which it was impossible for men to obey. They led the people to look upon God as a tyrant, and to think that the observance of the Sabbath, as He required it, made men hardhearted and cruel.” The Desire of Ages, 283, 284.

“The Sabbath is a golden clasp that unites God and His people. But the Sabbath command has been broken. God's holy day has been desecrated. The Sabbath has been torn from its place by the man of sin, and a common working day has been exalted in its stead. A breach has been made in the law, and this breach is to be repaired. The true Sabbath is to be exalted to its rightful position as God's rest day.

“In the fifty-eighth chapter of Isaiah is outlined the work which God's people are to do. They are to magnify the law, and make it honorable, to build up the old waste places, and to raise up the foundations of many generations. To those who do this work God says: “Thou shall be called, The repairer of the breach, The restorer of paths to dwell in. 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, honorable; and shall honor Him, not doing your own ways, nor finding your own pleasure, nor speaking your own words. Then shall 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.” Verses 12-14.” Testimonies 6, 351, 352.

2. THE PROMISE REGARDING JERUSALEM

“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 ye the Sabbath day, as I commanded your fathers. But they obeyed not, neither

inclined their ear, but made their neck stiff, that they might not hear, nor receive instruction. And it shall come to pass, if ye diligently hearken unto Me, says the Lord, to bring in no burden through the gates of this city on the Sabbath day, but hallow the Sabbath day, to do no work therein. Then shall there enter into the gates of this city kings and princes sitting upon the throne of David, riding in chariots and on horses, they, and their princes, the men of Judah, and the inhabitants of Jerusalem. And this city shall remain forever." Jeremiah 17:21-25.

"And they burnt the house of God, and brake down the wall of Jerusalem, and burnt all the palaces thereof with fire, and destroyed all the goodly vessels thereof. And them that had escaped from the sword carried he away to Babylon. Where they were servants to him and his sons until the reign of the kingdom of Persia: to fulfill the word of the Lord by the mouth of Jeremiah, until the land had enjoyed her Sabbaths. For as long as she lay desolate she kept Sabbath, to fulfill threescore and ten years." 2 Chronicles 36:19-21.

Had Israel kept the Sabbath, Jerusalem would have stood forever.

Had Israel as a nation preserved her allegiance to Heaven, Jerusalem would have stood forever, the elect of God. But the history of that favored people was a record of backsliding and rebellion. They had resisted Heaven's grace, abused their privileges, and slighted their opportunities. Although Israel had "mocked the messengers of God, and despised His words, and misused His prophets" (2 Chronicles 36:16), He had still manifested Himself to them, as "the Lord God, merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth" (Exodus 34:6). Notwithstanding repeated rejections, His mercy had continued its pleadings. With more than a father's pitying love for the son of his care, God had "sent to them by His messengers, rising up betimes, and sending; because He had compassion on His people, and on His dwelling place." 2 Chronicles 36:15. When remonstrance, entreaty, and rebuke had failed, He sent to them the best gift of heaven; nay, He poured out all heaven in that one Gift." The Great Controversy, 19.

"He brought us out.... that He might bring us in." He called us hence, that He might take us home! Why should we longer in the desert roam? Are we not wearied with this world of sin?

"His mighty arm, outstretched, has led us on, His voice is heard in accents clear and loud; His presence in the fiery pillar-cloud, Ever guides at fall of night and break of dawn.

"Let us not turn to Egypt back again, Or worship calves of gold along the way. Not time is this to eat, to drink, to play; We have a goal to reach, a heaven to gain!

"He brought us out.... that He might bring us in." Prepare, O Israel, to meet your God! Stay not your course, nor halt on earth's low sod, Fair Canaan waits, make haste to enter in!" Bertha Unruh

3. THE PARTICULAR DAY OF THE WEEK DESIGNATED

"This is the thing which the Lord hath commanded, Gather of it [manna] every man according to his eating, an omer for every man, according to the number of your persons; take you every man for them which are in his tents. And the children of Israel did so, and gathered, some more, some less. And when they did mete it with an omer, he that gathered much had nothing over, and he that gathered little had no lack; they gathered every man according to his eating.

"And Moses said, Let no man leave of it till the morning. Notwithstanding they hearkened not unto Moses: but some of them left of it until the morning, and it bred worms, and stank: and Moses was wroth with them. And they gathered it every morning, every man according to his eating: and when the sun waxed hot it melted. And it came to pass, that on the sixth day they gathered twice as much bread, two omers for one man: and all the rulers of the congregation came and told Moses.

“And he said unto them, This is that which the Lord hath said, Tomorrow is the rest of the holy Sabbath unto the Lord. Bake that which you will bake today, and seethe that you will seethe; and that which remains over lay up for you to be kept until the morning. And they laid it up till the morning, as Moses bade. And it did not stink, neither was there any worm therein. And Moses said, Eat that today; for today is a Sabbath unto the Lord: today you shall not find it in the field. Six days you shall gather it; but on the seventh day, which is the Sabbath, in it there shall be none.” Exodus 16:16-26.

“God requires that His holy day be as sacredly observed now as in the time of Israel. The command given to the Hebrews should be regarded by all Christians as an injunction from Jehovah to them. The day before the Sabbath should be made a day of preparation, that everything may be in readiness for its sacred hours. In no case should our own business be allowed to encroach upon holy time. God has directed that the sick and suffering be cared for; the labor required to make them comfortable is a work of mercy, and no violation of the Sabbath; but all unnecessary work should be avoided. Many carelessly put off till the beginning of the Sabbath little things that might have been done on the day of preparation. This should not be....

“Every week during their long sojourn in the wilderness, the Israelites witnessed a threefold miracle, designed to impress their minds with the sacredness of the Sabbath. A double quantity of manna fell on the sixth day, none on the seventh, and the portion needed for the Sabbath was preserved sweet and pure, when if any were kept over at any other time it became unfit for use.

“In the circumstances connected with the giving of the manna, we have conclusive evidence that the Sabbath was not instituted, as many claim, when the law was given at Sinai. Before the Israelites came to Sinai they understood the Sabbath to be obligatory upon them. In being obliged to gather every Friday a double portion of manna in preparation for the Sabbath, when none would fall, the sacred nature of the day of rest was continually impressed upon them. And when some of the people went out on the Sabbath to gather manna, the Lord asked, “How long refuse you to keep My commandments and My laws?” Patriarchs and Prophets, 296, 297.

4. TRUE SPIRIT OF SABBATH KEEPING

“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, honorable; and shall honor Him, not doing your own ways, nor finding your own pleasure, nor speaking your own words. Then shall 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 58:13, 14.

“All heaven was represented to me as beholding and watching upon the Sabbath those who acknowledge the claims of the fourth commandment and are observing the Sabbath. Angels were marking their interest in, and high regard for, this divine institution. Those who sanctified the Lord God in their hearts by a strictly devotional frame of mind, and who sought to improve the sacred hours in keeping the Sabbath to the best of their ability, and to honor God by calling the Sabbath a delight--these the angels were specially blessing with light and health, and special strength was given them. But, on the other hand, the angels were turning from those who failed to appreciate the sacredness of God's sanctified day, and were removing from them their light and their strength. I saw them overshadowed with a cloud, desponding, and frequently sad. They felt a lack of the Spirit of God.” Testimonies 2, 704, 705.

“When the Sabbath commences we should place a guard upon ourselves, upon our acts and our words, lest we rob God by appropriating to our own use that time which is strictly the Lord's. We should not do ourselves, nor suffer our children to do, any manner of our own work for a livelihood, or anything which

could have been done on the six working days. Friday is the day of preparation. Time can then be devoted to making the necessary preparation for the Sabbath, and to thinking and conversing about it. Nothing which will in the sight of Heaven be regarded as a violation of the holy Sabbath should be left unsaid or undone, to be said or done upon the Sabbath.

“God requires not only that we refrain from physical labor upon the Sabbath, but that the mind be disciplined to dwell upon sacred themes. The fourth commandment is virtually transgressed by conversing upon worldly things, or by engaging in light and trifling conversation. Talking upon anything or everything which may come into the mind, is speaking our own words. Every deviation from right brings us into bondage and condemnation. . . . Those who are not fully converted to the truth, frequently let their minds run freely upon worldly business, and although they may rest from physical toil upon the Sabbath, their tongues speak out what is in their minds; hence these words concerning cattle, crops, losses, and gains. All this is Sabbath breaking. If the mind is running upon worldly matters, the tongue will reveal it; for out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks.” Testimonies 2, 702, 703.

5. THE SEAL OF GOD

“He cried also in mine ears with a loud voice, saying, Cause them that have charge over the city to draw near, even every man with his destroying weapon in his hand. And, behold, six men came from the way of the higher gate, which lieth toward the north, and every man a slaughter weapon in his hand; and one man among them was clothed with linen, with a writer's inkhorn by his side: and they went in, and stood beside the brasen altar.

“And the glory of the God of Israel was gone up from the cherub, whereupon he was, to the threshold of the house. And he called to the man clothed with linen, which had the writer's inkhorn by his side; And the LORD said unto him, Go through the midst of the city, through the midst of Jerusalem, and set a mark upon the foreheads of the men that sigh and that cry for all the abominations that be done in the midst thereof.

“And to the others he said in mine hearing, Go ye after him through the city, and smite: let not your eye spare, neither have ye pity: Slay utterly old and young, both maids, and little children, and women: but come not near any man upon whom is the mark; and begin at my sanctuary. Then they began at the ancient men which were before the house. And he said unto them, Defile the house, and fill the courts with the slain: go ye forth. And they went forth, and slew in the city.

“And it came to pass, while they were slaying them, and I was left, that I fell upon my face, and cried, and said, Ah Lord GOD! wilt thou destroy all the residue of Israel in thy pouring out of thy fury upon Jerusalem? Then said he unto me, The iniquity of the house of Israel and Judah is exceeding great, and the land is full of blood, and the city full of perverseness: for they say, The LORD hath forsaken the earth, and the LORD seeth not. And as for me also, mine eye shall not spare, neither will I have pity, but I will recompense their way upon their head.

“And, behold, the man clothed with linen, which had the inkhorn by his side, reported the matter, saying, I have done as thou hast commanded me.” Ezekiel 9:1-11.

“For six thousand years the great controversy has been in progress; the Son of God and His heavenly messengers have been in conflict with the power of the evil one, to warn, enlighten, and save the children of men. Now all have made their decision; the wicked have fully united with Satan in his warfare against God. The time has come for God to vindicate the authority of His downtrodden law. Now the controversy is not alone with Satan, but with men. “The Lord hath a controversy with the nations.” “He will give them that are wicked to the sword.”

"The mark of deliverance has been set upon those that sigh and that cry for all the abominations that be done." Now the angel of death goes forth, represented in Ezekiel's vision by the men with the slaughtering weapons, to whom the command is given. "Slay utterly old and young, both maids, and little children, and women. But come not near any man upon whom is the mark; and begin at My sanctuary." Says the prophet, "They began at the ancient men which were before the house." The work of destruction begins among those who have professed to be the spiritual guardians of the people. The false watchmen are the first to fall. There are none to pity or to spare. Men, women, maidens, and little children perish together." The Great Controversy, 656.

6. THE SUPREME TEST

"Behold, one came and said unto him, Good Master, what good thing shall I do, that I may have eternal life? And He said unto him, Why call thou Me good? There is none good but one, that is, God: but if thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments. He saith unto Him, Which? Jesus said, Thou shalt do no murder, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not bear false witness, Honor thy father and thy mother: and, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. The young man saith unto Him, All these things have I kept from my youth up: what lack I yet? Jesus said unto him, If thou wilt be perfect, go and sell that thou has, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come and follow Me. But when the young man heard that saying, he went away sorrowful: for he had great possessions." Matthew 19:16-22.

"Similar to the call that came to Elisha was the answer given by Christ to the young ruler who asked Him the question, "What good thing shall I do, that I may have eternal life?" "If thou wilt be perfect," Christ replied, "go and sell that thou has, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come and follow Me." Matthew 19:16, 21.

"Elisha accepted the call to service, casting no backward glance at the pleasures and comforts he was leaving. The young ruler, when he heard the Savior's words, "went away sorrowful: for he had great possessions." Verse 22. He was not willing to make the sacrifice. His love for his possessions was greater than his love for God. By his refusal to renounce all for Christ, he proved himself unworthy of a place in the Master's service.

"The call to place all on the altar of service comes to each one. We are not all asked to serve as Elisha served, nor are we all bidden to sell everything we have; but God asks us to give His service the first place in our lives, to allow no day to pass without doing something to advance His work in the earth. He does not expect from all the same kind of service. One may be called to ministry in a foreign land; another may be asked to give of his means for the support of the gospel work. God accepts the offering of each. It is the consecration of the life and all its interests, that is necessary. Those who make this consecration, will hear and obey the call of Heaven.

"To every one who becomes a partaker of His grace, the Lord appoints a work for others. Individually we are to stand in our lot, saying, "Here am I; send me." Whether a man be a minister of the word or a physician, whether he be merchant or farmer, professional man or mechanic, the responsibility rests upon him. It is his work to reveal to others the gospel of their salvation. Every enterprise in which he engages should be a means to this end." Prophets and Kings, 221, 222.

7. THE BLESSING OF OBEDIENCE

"It shall come to pass, if thou shalt hearken diligently unto the voice of the Lord thy God, to observe and to do all His commandments which I command thee this day, that the Lord thy God will set thee on high

above all nations of the earth. And all these blessings shall come on thee, and overtake thee, if thou shalt hearken unto the voice of the Lord thy God.

“Blessed shall thou be in the city, and blessed shall thou be in the field. Blessed shall be the fruit of thy body, and the fruit of thy ground, and the fruit of thy cattle, the increase of thy kine, and the flocks of thy sheep. Blessed shall be thy basket and thy store. Blessed shall thou be when thou come in, and blessed shall thou be when thou goes out. The Lord shall cause your enemies that rise up against thee to be smitten before thy face: they shall come out against thee one way, and flee before thee seven ways. The Lord shall command the blessing upon thee in thy storehouses, and in all that thou sets your hand unto; and He shall bless thee in the land which the Lord thy God gives thee.

“The Lord shall establish thee a holy people unto Himself, as He hath sworn unto thee, if thou shall keep the commandments of the Lord thy God and walk in His ways. And all people of the earth shall see that thou art called by the name of the Lord; and they shall be afraid of thee. And the Lord shall make thee plenteous in goods, in the fruit of thy body, and in the fruit of thy cattle, and in the fruit of thy ground, in the land which the Lord swore unto thy fathers to give thee.

“The Lord shall open unto thee His good treasure, the heaven to give the rain unto thy land in his season, and to bless all the work of your hand: and thou shall lend unto many nations, and thou shall not borrow. And the Lord shall make thee the head, and not the tail; and thou shall be above only, and thou shall not be beneath; if that thou hearken unto the commandments of the Lord thy God, which I command thee this day, to observe and to do them.” Deuteronomy 28:1-13.

“God has pronounced a curse upon those who depart from His commandments, and put no difference between common and holy things.... Let no one deceive himself with the belief that a part of God's commandments are nonessential, or that He will accept a substitute for that which He has required. Said the prophet Jeremiah, “Who is he that says, and it comes to pass, when the Lord commanded it not?” Lam. 3:37. God has placed in His word no command which men may obey or disobey at will and not suffer the consequences. If men choose any other path than that of strict obedience, they will find that “the end thereof are the ways of death.” Proverbs 14:12. Patriarchs and Prophets, 360, 361.

“God especially charged His ancient people [Israel] to guard against idolatry, for if they should be led away from serving the living God, His curse would rest upon them, while if they would love Him with all their heart, with all their soul, and with all their might, He would abundantly bless them in basket and in store, and would remove sickness from the midst of them.

“A blessing or a curse is now before the people of God, a blessing if they come out from the world and are separate, and walk in the path of humble obedience; and a curse if they unite with the idolatrous, who trample upon the high claims of Heaven. The sins and iniquities of rebellious Israel are recorded and the picture presented before us as a warning.” Testimonies, Volume 1, page 609.