

SERMON JUNE 10 2023

WHY WE KEEP THE SABBATH

God Commands our Obedience:

Gen 2:2-3 God created the Sabbath at Creation week; 1. to provide rest for the body & mind; 2. To give opportunity for closer contact with God through study & prayer. The English word "Sabbath" from Hebrew word "Shabbath" Strong's #7676 meaning rest or repose. This Hebrew noun is related to the verb "to stop, rest or cease" "Shabath" Strong's 7673. In the Hebrew, Gen 2:2 literally says that God "sabbathed" – "ceased" or "rested" – on the seventh day from all His work.

Lev 23:2-3 By definition, the Sabbath is a weekly holy day, a solemn rest, an appointed feast, a holy convocation. As such it is a period of approximately 24 hours reckoned from sunset Friday evening until sunset Saturday evening. The period of observation is borne out both by the repeated phrase "And the evening and the morning were the ... day" in Genesis 1 and by direct statements in such passages as Lev 23:32 on observing an annual Sabbath "from evening to evening".

Ex 16 shows the great importance God places on a specific period of time for the Sabbath. God caused special miracles to ratify the holiness of the Sabbath – double the normal amount of manna was found on the sixth day, and the extra manna did not spoil when left until morning as it would have on any other day. And when some Israelites went looking for manna on the Sabbath, God told Moses, "How long refuse ye to keep My commandments and My laws?" (v.28). This statement is especially relevant since it took place BEFORE the covenant at Sinai, proving both the Sabbath predated that covenant and it is included as one of God's commandments and laws.

Ex 20:8-11 Under the Sinai covenant, the Sabbath had national significance; its observance involved the entire community. God showed this by adding to the original Genesis command a communal responsibility of Sabbath-keeping which involved children, male and female servants, and even animals and strangers within Israel's boundaries (Ex 20:10).

Ex 31:12-17 God gave the Sabbath law as a separate covenant with special significance. It is referred to as a “sign” of the special relationship between God and Israel. No other nation kept the Sabbath day. It was the one law of God that would make Israel stand out. It would act as a sign to show Israel was the nation of God.

Ex 31:17 forever=Hebrew “olam” Strong’s 5769: continuousness, continually. This sign remains continually between God and Israel.

Ex 20:12 shows God gave Israel His Sabbaths as a sign between Me and them, that they might know that I am the Lord who sanctifies them. This means that the Sabbath is one means by which God sanctifies – a method God has chosen of consecration by setting apart for a holy purpose.

God’s Warning for our Disobedience

Jer 17:19-27 God told Jeremiah to warn Judah and Jerusalem that if they would not heed God to hallow the Sabbath day, then God will destroy Jerusalem.

Ezek 20:10-26 is a scorching indictment of the continual disobedience of the nation. Ezekiel speaks quite strongly against breaking the Sabbath and considers it one of the main reasons why Israel went into captivity.

Conclusion

We keep God’s holy Sabbath because God commands us to. The above references are helpful in explaining our commitment to keeping God’s Sabbath to anyone who asks us.