

The Christian Life Lesson 8 2Q 2009

Rest

Read memory text – thoughts – what does it mean?

Read first paragraph – did God give Adam and Eve the Sabbath for this reason?

If Sabbath was made for man was there a Sabbath before man? Why was the Sabbath made? Why was it needed? What was the context? Why did mankind need it even before Adam sinned?

One of the founders of our church and proponents of the Sabbath said (it is found in Sunday's lesson bottom section):

God saw that a Sabbath was essential for man, even in Paradise. He needed to lay aside his own interests and pursuits for one day of the seven, that he might more fully contemplate the works of God and meditate upon His power and goodness. 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. {PP 48.2}

God designs that the Sabbath shall direct the minds of men to the contemplation of His created works. Nature speaks to their senses, declaring that there is a living God, the Creator, the Supreme Ruler of all. "The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament showeth His handiwork. Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night showeth knowledge." Psalm 19:1, 2. The beauty that clothes the earth is token of God's love. We may behold it in the everlasting hills, in the lofty trees, in the opening buds and the delicate flowers. All speak to us of God. The Sabbath, ever pointing to Him who made them all, bids men open the great book of nature and trace therein the wisdom, the power, and the love of the Creator. {PP 48.3}

What purposes are outlined for the Sabbath in Eden?

- Lay aside his own interests
- Contemplate the works of God
- Meditate upon His power and goodness
- Remind man of God and awaken gratitude to Him
- Contemplate God's created works
- Trace God's wisdom, power and love

He needed to lay aside his own interests, why was this needed?

- What was happening in the universe when the Sabbath was created?
- What is the root to Satan's rebellion?
 - How you have fallen from heaven, O morning star, son of the dawn! You have been cast down to the earth, you who once laid low the nations! You said in your heart, "I will ascend to heaven; I will raise my throne above the stars of God; I will sit enthroned on the mount of assembly, on the utmost heights of the sacred mountain. I will ascend above the tops of the clouds; I will make myself like the Most High." Isaiah 14:12-14
 - But turning from all lesser representations, we behold God in Jesus. Looking unto Jesus we see that it is the glory of our God to give. "I do nothing of Myself," said Christ; "the living Father hath sent Me, and I live by the Father." "I seek not Mine own glory," but the glory of Him that sent Me. John 8:28; 6:57; 8:50; 7:18. In these words is set forth the great principle which is the law of life for the universe. All things Christ received from God, but He took to give. So in the heavenly courts, in His ministry for all created beings: through the beloved Son, the Father's life flows out to all; through the Son it returns, in praise and joyous service, a tide of

love, to the great Source of all. And thus through Christ the circuit of beneficence is complete, representing the character of the great Giver, the law of life. {DA 21.2}

In heaven itself this law was broken. **Sin originated in self-seeking.** Lucifer, the covering cherub, desired to be first in heaven. He sought to gain control of heavenly beings, to draw them away from their Creator, and to win their homage to himself. Therefore **he misrepresented God, attributing to Him the desire for self-exaltation.** With his own evil characteristics he sought to invest the loving Creator. Thus he deceived angels. Thus he deceived men. He led them to doubt the word of God, and to distrust His goodness. Because God is a God of justice and terrible majesty, Satan caused them to look upon Him as severe and unforgiving. Thus he drew men to join him in rebellion against God, and the night of woe settled down upon the world. {DA 21.3}

- Sin originated in self seeking – Does the Sabbath have benefit to protect Adam and Eve? How So?
 - What did Satan allege of God? That God was self-exalting – what does the Sabbath reveal about God’s character?
 - If the purpose of the Sabbath was to contemplate God’s character, wisdom etc. would it have helped protect Adam and Eve from deception
 - What about today, has God’s purpose for the Sabbath changed or is it still to be evidence to us of God’s character and protect us from Satanic deception?
- Contemplate the works of God – what benefit, why would this be necessary – what do we learn about God from contemplating His works?

- Why did Adam and Eve in Eden need to contemplate the works of God?
- Adam and Eve were created in God's image, with the ability to create beings in their image, given dominion to rule and govern – were they at risk of becoming proud with all these abilities? Would a weekly Sabbath be beneficial to protect them? How?
- The law of love seen in nature
- Meditate upon God's power and goodness – what is the ultimate power of God?
 - Certainly God has the power to create everything with a thought – but is that what is the true power of God?
 - “What is the deepest in God? His Power? No, for power could not make him what we mean when we say God. A being whose essence was only power would be such a negation of the divine that no righteous worship could be offered him; his service would be only fear.” MacDonald, George, *Discovering the Character of God*, Minneapolis: Bethany House, 1989, p. 29.
 - I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes: first for the Jew, then for the Gentil. Romans 1:16
 - Does the Sabbath have anything to say about the Good News? Was this necessary in Eden? Is it necessary today?

SUNDAY

First question asks “Why did God Himself rest on the seventh day after the creation of the world?” – thoughts? Was God tired? Is there some other kind of rest? Did the universe need time to consider what was transpiring? Did God's creation on this earth reveal things to the angels?

- For it seems to me that God has put us apostles on display at the end of the procession, like men condemned to die in the arena. We have been made a spectacle to the whole universe, to angels as well as to men. 1Cor 4:9

Did earth become a spectacle to angels only after mankind fell, or were they keenly interested in what God was creating here before Adam fell?

“Where were you when I laid the earth’s foundation?
 Tell me, if you understand.
 Who marked off its dimensions? Surely you know!
 Who stretched a measuring line across it?
 On what were its footings set,
 or who laid its cornerstone—
 while the morning stars sang together
 and all the angels shouted for joy? Job 38:4-7

Who was watching when the earth was created? What did the Sabbath reveal about God to the angelic host?

By coming to dwell with us, Jesus was to reveal God both to men and to angels. He was the Word of God,-- God's thought made audible. In His prayer for His disciples He says, "I have declared unto them Thy name,"--"merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth,"--"that the love wherewith Thou hast loved Me may be in them, and I in them." But not alone for His earthborn children was this revelation given. Our little world is the lesson book of the universe. God's wonderful purpose of grace, the mystery of redeeming love, is the theme into which "angels desire to look," and it will be their study throughout endless ages. Both the redeemed and the unfallen beings will find in the cross of Christ their science and their song. It will be seen that the glory shining in the face of Jesus is the glory of self-sacrificing love. In the light from Calvary it will be seen that the **law of self-renouncing love is the law of life for earth and heaven; that the love which**

"seeketh not her own" has its source in the heart of God; and that in the meek and lowly One is manifested the character of Him who dwelleth in the light which no man can approach unto. {DA 19.2}

In the beginning, God was revealed in all the works of creation. It was Christ that spread the heavens, and laid the foundations of the earth. It was His hand that hung the worlds in space, and fashioned the flowers of the field. "His strength setteth fast the mountains." "The sea is His, and He made it." Ps. 65:6; 95:5. It was He that filled the earth with beauty, and the air with song. And upon all things in earth, and air, and sky, He wrote the message of the Father's love. {DA 20.1}

In the beginning, during creation week of this planet who was watching? What law is the law of life? The law of love, and from where does it originate? Would this law be revealed in God's creation? If this law is revealed in creation and it originates in the heart of God, then what were the angels supposed to see when God created this world and the Sabbath? The heart of God! How is the Sabbath especially designed to do this?

What do we learn about God on day one of creation week? He has power, day 2-6 He has power! On day seven what do we learn?

Read second paragraph "After resting..." thoughts? Was this an arbitrary act or was there a reason given, inherent in the Sabbath? What reason?

MONDAY

Read first paragraph – thoughts? Is God holy? Is God set apart for a specific use? What do you think about the definition of holy supplied by the quarterly?

Remember to keep the Sabbath holy – what makes it holy? Is something holy merely by an arbitrary declaration by God or is

there something inherent in Sabbath that cannot be changed that makes it holy?

Read second paragraph – “The Sabbath is a powerful...” Does this author sound like he believes that God can give a mandate to change the holiness of Sabbath to another day? Can God by mandate change the holiness? What is the problem with this thinking?

Can God give a mandate to make things holy? Can God give a mandate which would make Satan holy? Can God give a mandate that would make molesting a child holy? Can God give a mandate that makes pornographic videos holy? Are things made holy by mandates from God? Or is holiness conferred by something other than a mandate?

What is the problem with positions that make the holiness of the Sabbath dependent upon a mandate from God? It puts God in the position of being an arbitrary God, it removes the reasons attached for the Sabbath and it sets believers up for deception by any being who convinces them they are God.

What would you do if Jesus appeared on earth and commended Sabbath keepers for remembering the day He made holy and then said, but today, I by my divine authority, am changing the day. Here is my divine mandate! What would you do? Why?

Can God change His law? Why or why not?

The law of God is the law of love, it emanates from His personhood and it is the design template for life. This law cannot change without the destruction of the entire universe and all living things. This is not a mandate, therefore Christ/God cannot change His law without destroying the universe and also becoming a being other than love.

The idea that God can change the Sabbath by a mandate is another subtle attack on the character of God changing Him

from a Being of love to an authoritarian power monger. This is Satan's goal, when we worship a being of power we become like him, love is damaged and we practice coercive and controlling methods. Thus, just like the Jews in Christ's day, who worshipped on the Sabbath, those who hold to this twisted concept of God will not experience transformation of character.

The quarterly asks, "How does the weekly holy seventh-day Sabbath impact those who choose to obey the command to keep the Sabbath according to God's appointed day of holy time?"

Did the Jews in Christ's day keep it according to God's appointed day of holy time? And what kind of people did they become? Why?

- The earth was dark through misapprehension of God. That the gloomy shadows might be lightened, that the world might be brought back to God, Satan's deceptive power was to be broken. **This could not be done by force. The exercise of force is contrary to the principles of God's government; He desires only the service of love; and love cannot be commanded; it cannot be won by force or authority. Only by love is love awakened.** To know God is to love Him; His character must be manifested in contrast to the character of Satan. This work only one Being in all the universe could do. Only He who knew the height and depth of the love of God could make it known. Upon the world's dark night the Sun of Righteousness must rise, "with healing in His wings." Mal. 4:2. {DA 22.1}
- In the work of redemption there is **no compulsion. No external force is employed.** Under the influence of the Spirit of God, man is left free to choose whom he will serve. In the change that takes place when the soul surrenders to Christ, there is the highest sense of freedom. The expulsion of sin is the act of the soul itself.

True, we have no power to free ourselves from Satan's control; but when we desire to be set free from sin, and in our great need cry out for a power out of and above ourselves, the powers of the soul are imbued with the divine energy of the Holy Spirit, and they obey the dictates of the will in fulfilling the will of God. {DA 466.4}

- The man who attempts to keep the commandments of God from a sense of obligation merely--because he is required to do so--will never enter into the joy of obedience. He does not obey. When the requirements of God are accounted a burden because they cut across human inclination, we may know that the life is not a Christian life. **True obedience is the outworking of a principle within. It springs from the love of righteousness, the love of the law of God.** The essence of all righteousness is loyalty to our Redeemer. This will lead us to do right because it is right--because right doing is pleasing to God. {COL 97.3}
- A sullen submission to the will of the Father will develop the character of a rebel. By such a one service is looked upon as drudgery. It is not rendered cheerfully, and in the love of God. It is a mere mechanical performance. If he dared, such a one would disobey. His rebellion is smothered, ready to break out at any time in bitter murmurings and complaints. Such service brings no peace or quietude to the soul. {ST, July 22, 1897}

Love cannot be commanded, coerced, forced, and when such methods are applied it actually creates Satanic character in people. Thus Satan infects the church to follow Bible teaching, but by applying methods of force coercion etc, people actually become like Satan and not like Christ! This happens to people who obey the Sabbath for the wrong reasons, just like the Jews in Christ's day who crucified the Creator.

TUESDAY

Read second paragraph – “The Sabbath is a sign...” Thoughts?

What about those who say that Sunday commemorates the resurrection and it is the sign of our salvation?

What is the Bible commemoration of the resurrection?

- Or don't you know that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life. Romans 6:3,4

What did Jesus do immediately after His work of creation? Rested, for what purpose? To leave intelligences free to consider for themselves the meaning of what God had just done, to think freely and come to their own conclusion. What does it say about God that He provides such time?

What did Jesus do immediately after His work of redemption? Rested over the Sabbath, why? What would the angels and the intelligences in the universe have done if Jesus would have resurrected immediately and gone to heaven? Would there have been celebration? But maybe there wouldn't have been as much learning and appreciation of what Christ had accomplished?

- It was in order that the heavenly universe might see the conditions of the covenant of redemption that Christ bore the penalty in behalf of the human race. The throne of Justice must be eternally and forever made secure, even tho the race be wiped out, and another creation populate the earth. By the sacrifice Christ was about to make, all doubts would be forever settled, and the human race would be saved if they would return to their allegiance. Christ alone could restore honor to God's government.

The cross of Calvary would be looked upon by the unfallen worlds, by the heavenly universe, by Satanic agencies, by the fallen race, and every mouth would be stopped. In making His infinite sacrifice Christ would exalt and honor the law. He would make known the exalted character of God's government, which could not in any way be changed to meet man in his sinful condition.

Who is able to describe the last scenes of Christ's life on earth, His trial in the judgment hall, His crucifixion? Who witnessed these scenes?--The heavenly universe, God the Father, Satan and his angels. {ST, July 12, 1899 par. 2}

- That which alone can effectually restrain from sin in this world of darkness, will prevent sin in heaven. The significance of the death of Christ will be seen by saints and angels. Fallen men could not have a home in the paradise of God without the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world. Shall we not then exalt the cross of Christ? The angels ascribe honor and glory to Christ, for even they are not secure except by looking to the sufferings of the Son of God. It is through the efficacy of the cross that the angels of heaven are guarded from apostasy. Without the cross they would be no more secure against evil than were the angels before the fall of Satan. Angelic perfection failed in heaven. Human perfection failed in Eden, the paradise of bliss. All who wish for security in earth or heaven must look to the Lamb of God.

The plan of salvation, making manifest the justice and love of God, provides an eternal safeguard against defection in unfallen worlds, as well as among those who shall be redeemed by the blood of the Lamb. {5BC 1132.8}

Remember we already read that the earth is a lesson book to angels and to men 1Cor 4:9.

What makes the Sabbath holy? It is an expression of the divine character – truth, presented in love, leaving beings free to think for themselves, no coercion, no pressure, no intimidation. The Sabbath is evidence of God’s character of love and true Sabbath keeping entails more than avoiding work Friday sunset to Saturday sunset, it involves more than going to church on Saturday, it involves more than acknowledging God as Creator, one can do all of this and still crucify Christ. True Sabbath keeping involves having the law of love written on the heart so we live like Christ, we present the truth in love and leave others free!

WEDNESDAY

Read middle two paragraphs “It is an extremely...” thoughts? Why does this happen? How can we enjoy the Sabbath?

THURSDAY

Read third paragraph – “Now, a simple question...” thoughts? Because we have made the Sabbath into an arbitrary test of obedience to God, something we must do, obey, observe in order to have the “seal” of God. Thus, those who promote the Sabbath as an arbitrary test are actually destroying the very purpose of the Sabbath and rather than being a blessing that God provides to assist in our development it becomes a tool to harden the heart, just like what happened in Christ’s day.

Read fifth paragraph “From the pre-fall world...” thoughts? The Sabbath can only be truly kept by those who have had the law of God written on the heart, Heb 8:10 and the evidence it is written on the heart is not which day we keep, for those who crucified Christ kept the right day but didn’t have the law written on the heart. The evidence that the law is written on the heart entails more than which day we keep, it entails presenting the truth, in love and leaving others free – having character like Jesus, loving others more than self!

FRIDAY Question 2 and 3 read and discuss