LESSON 13

CORNERSTONECONNECTIONS

DECEMBER28 2024

Scripture Story: Isaiah 58; 60:1-3.
Commentary: *Prophets and Kings*, chapter 59.

light rising in the darkness



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flashlight

"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. Of that law of which the fourth commandment forms a part, Christ declares, 'Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in nowise pass from the law.' So long as the heavens and the earth endure, the Sabbath will continue as a sign of the Creator's power. And when Eden shall bloom on earth again, God's holy rest day will be honored by all beneath the sun" (see Matthew 5:18; Isaiah 66:23) (*The Desire of Ages*, p. 283).

keytext

"Keep my Sabbaths holy, that they may be a sign between us. Then you will know that I am the LORD your God."

(Ezekiel 20:20, NIV)

what do you think?

Circle all the correct answers:

1. The Sabbath is the memorial of Creation. (Genesis 2:1-3; Exodus 20:11, 12)
2. The Sabbath is a symbol of deliverance from bondage and sin. (Deuteronomy 5:15)
3. The Sabbath is a sign of our relationship with God who sanctifies us. (Exodus 31:13; Ezekiel 20:12, 20)
4. The Sabbath is the sign of our faithfulness to God and obedience to His law. (Revelation 14:12)
5. The Sabbath is a day of delightful communion with God and one another. (Leviticus 23:3)
6. The Sabbath is the symbol of resting in Christ. (Hebrews 4:9)
7. The Sabbath will be God's day of worship for eternity in the new earth. (Isaiah 66:23)

How is the seventh-day Sabbath an important part of your relationship with Jesus?

did you know?

In Isaiah 56 and 58 God calls Israel to a Sabbath reform. . . . He associates the success of this mission of salvation with keeping the Sabbath holy (Isaiah 56:1, 2, 6, 7)." "God intended the Sabbath for humanity's spiritual enrichment. Activities that enhance communication with God are proper; those which distract from that purpose and turn the Sabbath into a holiday are improper. The Lord of the Sabbath invites all to follow His example. Those who accept His call experience the Sabbath as a delight and spiritual feast—a foretaste of heaven" (*Seventh-day Adventists Believe*, pp. 295, 297).

INTO THE STORY

"This is what the LORD says:

'Maintain justice and do what is right,
for my salvation is close at hand
and my righteousness will soon be revealed.
Blessed is the one who does this—
the person who holds it fast,
who keeps the Sabbath without desecrating it, and keeps their hands from doing any evil.' "

"And foreigners who bind themselves to the LORD to minister to him,
to love the name of the LORD,
and to be his servants,
all who keep the Sabbath without desecrating it and who hold fast to my covenant—
these I will bring to my holy mountain and give them joy in my house of prayer.
Their burnt offerings and sacrifices will be accepted on my altar;
for my house will be called a house of prayer for all nations."

"Your people will rebuild the ancient ruins and will raise up the age-old foundations;
you will be called Repairer of Broken Walls, Restorer of Streets with Dwellings.

" 'If you keep your feet from breaking the Sabbath and from doing as you please on my holy day,
if you call the Sabbath a delight and the LORD's holy day honorable,
and if you honor it by not going your own way and not doing as you please or speaking idle words,
then you will find your joy in the LORD, and I will cause you to ride in triumph on the heights of the land and to feast on the inheritance of your father Jacob.'
For the mouth of the LORD has spoken."

"Arise, shine, for your light has come, and the glory of the LORD rises upon you.
See, darkness covers the earth and thick darkness is over the peoples,
but the LORD rises upon you and his glory appears over you.
Nations will come to your light, and kings to the brightness of your dawn."

" 'As the new heavens and the new earth that I make will endure before me,' declares the LORD, 'so will your name and descendants endure. From one New Moon to another and from one Sabbath to another, all mankind will come and bow down before me,' says the LORD."

(Isaiah 56:1, 2, 6, 7; 58:12-14; 60:1-3; 66:22, 23, NIV)

OUT OF THE STORY

1. According to Isaiah 56:1 and 2, how does God honor the person who maintains justice, does what is right, and observes the Sabbath?

2. What is God's promise to the foreigners who choose to follow Him and observe the Sabbath as God's holy day of rest?

3. How does Isaiah summarize the work of reform that God's people have to accomplish? (Isaiah 58:12)

4. What are the secrets of finding delight and joy in our relationship with God on His Sabbath? (Isaiah 58:13, 14)

5. Compare Isaiah 60:1-3 with Matthew 5:14-17. What is the mission of the church in harmony within these Bible passages? Are you willing to accept Jesus' invitation to be a light bearer?

6. What are some practical examples of being a light bearer? How do you live out and share with others the light of God's truth?

7. What are ways we can learn to delight in God on the Sabbath, knowing that we will continue to worship Him for eternity in the new earth? (Isaiah 66:22, 23)

punch lines

"Thus the heavens and the earth were completed in all their vast array. By the seventh day God had finished the work he had been doing; so on the seventh day he rested from all his work. Then God blessed the seventh day and made it holy, because on it he rested from all the work of creating that he had done" **(Genesis 2:1-3, NIV).**

"Also I gave them my Sabbaths as a sign between us, so they would know that I the LORD made them holy" **(Ezekiel 20:12, NIV).**

"Jesus returned to Galilee in the power of the Spirit, and news about him spread through the whole countryside. He was teaching in their synagogues, and everyone praised him. He went to Nazareth, where he had been brought up, and on the Sabbath day he went into the synagogue, as was his custom. He stood up to read" **(Luke 4:14-16, NIV).**

"Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever" **(Hebrews 13:8, NIV).**

further insight

"To all who receive the Sabbath as a sign of Christ's creative and redeeming power, it will be a delight. Seeing Christ in it, they delight themselves in Him. The Sabbath points them to the works of creation as an evidence of His mighty power in redemption."—Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages*, p. 289

Sabbath

Read Isaiah 58:12-14; Matthew 12:1-13; Luke 14:1-6; John 5:1-15; and John 9:1-12.

The gracious Creator, after the six days of Creation, rested on the seventh day and instituted the Sabbath for all people as a memorial of Creation. The fourth commandment of God's unchangeable law requires the observance of this seventh-day Sabbath as the day of rest, worship, and ministry in harmony with the teaching and practice of Jesus, the Lord of the Sabbath. . . . Joyful observance of this holy time from evening to evening, sunset to sunset, is a celebration of God's creative and redemptive acts" (Fundamental Belief 20, The Sabbath).

The prophet Isaiah reminds God's people of their high calling to be "repairers of broken walls," that is, restorers of God's truth, including the truth about the Sabbath. He calls us to repair the breach in His law by living justly and keeping His Sabbath holy. Isaiah 58:6-14 lists the character traits and actions that God wants to see reflected in His followers. Look at a few passages that illustrate how Jesus exemplified in His ministry the principles of doing good on the Sabbath: Matthew 12:1-13; Luke 14:1-6; John 5:1-15; John 9:1-12. In what ways can you follow Jesus' example?

Sunday

Read Genesis 2:1-3.

What three words describe what the Creator did on the first Sabbath of Creation week (verse 3)? Why did God set apart the Sabbath at Creation? How do you feel knowing that God wants to spend an entire day with you? How are you making time for Him?

Monday

Read Exodus 20:8-11.

How does the first word of the fourth commandment explain that the seventh-day Sabbath was given to all humanity and not only to the Jews? When did God institute the Sabbath?

God gave the Sabbath as a gift to the entire human race some 2,500 years before the Jewish nation came into existence at the Exodus.

Tuesday

Read Ezekiel 20:12, 20.

How does the weekly time of worship and communion with God on Sabbath help you to develop an intimate relationship with God? According to verse 20, based on what condition can we come to know God as our Lord who sanctifies us?

The *Flashlight* paragraph on the introductory page is a quote from Ellen White's book *The Desire of Ages*, and it tells of the permanence of God's Sabbath day throughout history. God established the seventh-day Sabbath at the creation of our world and His people will worship Him every Sabbath in the new earth throughout eternity.

Wednesday

Read Leviticus 23:3.

The Sabbath day is a time of communion with Jesus, our Creator, as well as with one another. What a privilege that the King of the universe has given us the Sabbath that we may rest in Him, communicate with our Creator, and be a light to the world! How does spending time with Jesus each Sabbath in worship, Bible study, prayer, and mission help redirect your focus?

Thursday

Read Mark 2:27, 28.

How does this passage illustrate that God created the Sabbath for the benefit of the entire human race? As Jesus has exemplified, the Sabbath is not to be a day full of rituals and ceremonies and void of meaning. Rather He showed us that the Sabbath is God's gift of rest and fellowship to the human race. It is the day that He gives us to forget about the cares of everyday life and find joy in His gift of rest.

Friday

Read Luke 4:14-16, 31; Hebrews 13:8; Acts 16:12, 13; and Acts 17:1, 2.

What example did Jesus and His followers leave for us with regard to keeping the Sabbath? What are practical ways you find the Sabbath to be a delight?

this week's reading*

Prophets and Kings, chapter 59.

**Royalty and Ruin* is a special adaptation of *Prophets and Kings*, created for you by the Ellen G. White Estate and Pacific Press®. Get more information about it by going to www.cornerstoneconnections.net and clicking on "Conflict of the Ages series." By following the weekly reading plan, you will read at least one book of the Conflict of the Ages series each year.