

“The Blessing of Restoration”

Pastor Bentley's New Year Resolutions

1. I resolve to gain 65 pounds.
2. I resolve to sleep less.
3. I resolve to work more hours.
4. I resolve to spend less time with my family.
5. I resolve to grow less spiritually.

Could it be that we are defiant when it comes to following Christ completely?

Could it be that we miss out on knowing God as we could because we refuse to take a stand for Him in a world of compromise?

Ezekiel 12:11

“Say, 'I am a sign to you. As I have done, so shall it be done to them; they shall be carried away into captivity.'”

Jeremiah 17:27^b NKJV

“...I will kindle a fire in its gates, and it shall devour the palaces of Jerusalem, and it shall not be quenched.”

But why? What had they done that caused God to respond in such a way as to allow Jerusalem to be destroyed by invading heathens?



What was happening here?

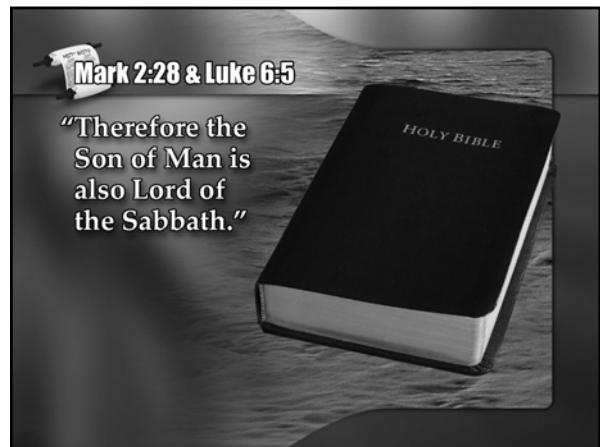
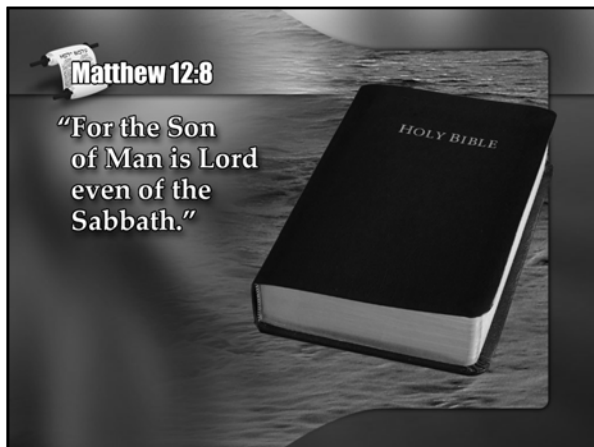
1. The nation had forgotten how they became captives in the first place.
2. No doubt they had allowed standards to fade or drop off all together while in captivity.
3. Without Biblical standards they simply followed the ways of the world around them.
4. This led to a trampling or profaning of the Lord’s Sabbath.
5. As is always the case, the Lord had a faithful remnant in Israel.
6. Nehemiah stepped up and took a very strong stance.

How did buying and selling profane the Sabbath?

1. Because buying and selling violates the three principles God put within the Sabbath (Genesis 2:1-3).
 - 1) He Rested-ceased from His creative work.
 - 2) He Blessed-placed a special blessing for those who rest.
 - 3) He Sanctified-set it apart for holy purposes.
2. When the Israelites allowed the Sabbath to become a day of normal commerce they violated each of these divine principles.
3. Nehemiah recognized this and did what was necessary to restore honor to God’s holy day.

We know Jesus and the Disciples kept the Sabbath.

1. Jesus went into the synagogue each Sabbath as it was His custom to do so (Luke 4:16).
2. The disciples went each week to not only reach Jews but Gentiles also (Acts 13:14, 42, 44).
3. The disciples did not worship on Sabbath only to reach the Jews and then worship on Sunday in honor of the resurrection. We see this because they called the Gentiles to come back on Sabbath and the next week nearly the entire city came (Acts 13:42, 44).
4. The Sabbath is the only day upon which Jesus had placed His Lordship (Matthew 12:8; Mark 2:28; Luke 6:5).

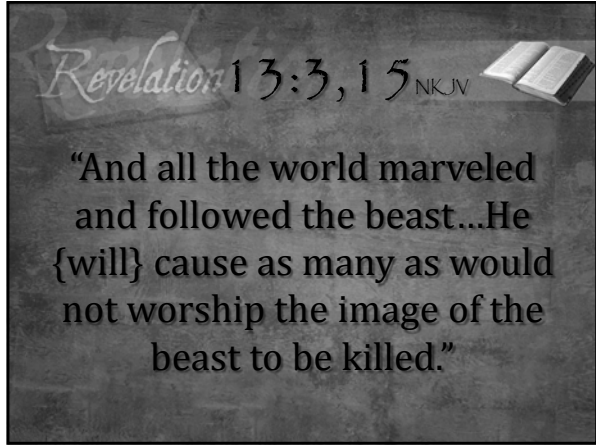


The question for SDAs is not whether the seventh day is the Sabbath or not, but whether or not we are going to honor the Sabbath.

1. Some SDAs have no issue with the Sabbath and fully submit to God in this area and enjoy His blessings.
2. Others are like the believers in Nehemiah's time; they have spent too much time in Babylon.
3. As a result, they have forgotten what God wants them to do and they miss out on God's special rest, blessing, and of partaking in God's holy purposes.
4. Some SDAs are simply cultural Adventists and they only go to church on Sabbath because that is when all their friends and family go. They are not concerned about honoring the Sabbath which in turn honors the Lord of it.

Is keeping the Sabbath what we do to be saved?

1. On the contrary, we keep the Sabbath because we are saved!
2. We keep the Sabbath like God has asked us to do because we love Jesus more than we love ourselves. It is a love response to Christ (John 14:15)!
3. Some say that Jesus came to do away with the law, but we as last-day, Bible-believing, Adventist Christians know better. We know that Jesus came to fulfill and to affirm the law and the prophets (Matthew 5:17).
4. The Bible also tells us that if we are to be counted among God's faithful in the last days then too must be like Nehemiah. We must be willing to stand when others cease to care. God's faithful in the last days will keep the Sabbath when all the world is marveling after the beast and his day.



The issue with the Sabbath is about loyalty.

- We will either be loyal to God or we will be loyal to Satan.
- There are no middle ground choices.
- If we fail to chose God then we choose Satan by default.
- Satan does not care if he gets you by choice or by lack of you choosing. Just as long as he gets you.

Who will you choose today?

- Will it be God and His way of happiness and love?
- or
- Will it be your way which leads to a path of destruction?

How does the Sabbath show us God's character?

1. I believe the Sabbath shows us that God is One who cares about how we spend our lives.
2. He desires that we have special time with Him as Creator.
3. He wants us to receive His wonderful gifts and blessings.
4. God earnestly desires to set us apart from this sinful world.
5. It is a terrible slap in the face to God when we trade His love and benevolence for fleeting moments of personal satisfaction and selfishness.
6. Only a God of love would have given the beautiful gift of the Sabbath to His people.
7. A blessing came to God's people through restoration in Nehemiah's time and that same blessing can be ours as we restore the Sabbath to its rightful place among God's people today.