

LESSON 27  
(1964, 1967, 1969)

AMBASSADOR COLLEGE  
BIBLE CORRESPONDENCE COURSE

Is This Sabbath Keeping?

About Our Cover ...

Israelis on the beach at Tel Aviv, Israel, during the Sabbath. Many who claim to keep God's Sabbath today break His command which says: "Turn away thy foot ... from doing thy pleasure on my holy day; and call the sabbath a delight, the holy of the Lord" (Isa. 58:13).

WHICH day is the true Sabbath of God? WHY does God command man to rest on His holy Sabbath today? And HOW do we make it a "delight"? Learn the wonderful truth in this revealing lesson!

WHY REST ON GOD'S SABBATH DAY?

Do YOU know that God has a "sign" by which He RECOGNIZES His spiritual children? And do you know that only those having this SIGN will be born into His ruling Family?

That vital, OVERWHELMINGLY IMPORTANT "sign" is God's SABBATH DAY!

Yes -- GOD'S Sabbath!

Not a "Sabbath of the Jews," or any "day" that seems more or less important to any man, or group of men -- but THE Sabbath of Almighty God Himself!

Does it Make Any Difference?

"But," you might ask, "what does any 'day' have to do with entering into the happy, glorious world tomorrow and the very Kingdom of God?"

IT HAS A GREAT DEAL TO DO WITH IT!

To human beings using only fallible HUMAN reasoning, it may seem "strange" indeed that God would place stress and importance on a SPECIFIC "DAY" OF THE WEEK! "WHY," some might REASON, "would God want me to rest on ONE day of the week more than any other?" "What real DIFFERENCE does it make anyhow?" ask others.

It makes a TREMENDOUS DIFFERENCE -- TO ALMIGHTY GOD!

You are going to learn the surprising and truly satisfying PLAIN truth about God's SABBATH DAY!

God Blesses the Obedient

Noah "walked" with GOD (Gen. 6:9). They were that friendly! And because Noah "walked" in OBEDIENCE to God, He saved Noah and his family from the great flood that destroyed sinful mankind (Gen. 6:11-14). That was REAL FRIENDSHIP!

And after the flood we know that Abraham also became an OBEDIENT friend of God (James 2:23, 21). Abraham and Christ (Melchizedek) were very CLOSE friends (Gen. 14:18-20; Heb. 7:1-3) -- right here on this earth -- at the present site of the city of Jerusalem.

And what was the RESULT of this close friendship?

Because Abraham continued in this OBEDIENT relationship with

God (Gen. 26:5), God promised him the greatest and most abundant blessings imaginable -- this WHOLE EARTH for an inheritance, SONSHIP IN GOD'S FAMILY, and ETERNAL LIFE with which to enjoy it!

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 PHOTO CAPTION: SABBATH IN TEL AVIV -- Though business stops on the Sabbath, most are away seeking their own pleasures.  
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PHOTO CAPTION: Aerial view of Jerusalem gives good perspective of city. It was here that Melchizedek (Christ) and Abraham talked together. At right is enlargement showing Dome of the Rock (see above center) built on the very site of ancient temples of God.  
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But God blessed Abraham EVEN MORE because of his loving obedience and mutual friendship! God placed before Abraham's spiritual offspring -- we who become his "seed" through Christ -- the SAME OPPORTUNITY to receive these SAME GREAT BLESSINGS!

God is always the close, loving friend of those who obey Him. He says, "Ye are my FRIENDS, if ye DO whatsoever I COMMAND YOU" (John 15:14)

It is within God's plan to become a very close friend of all who lovingly obey His wishes. And God shows great love in return by doing WONDERFUL THINGS for them!

God is going to shower those of us who now learn our lessons of loving obedience with far GREATER blessings than we can imagine! He says, "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that LOVE Him" (I Cor. 2:9).

God's PURPOSE for Mankind

God is LOVE (I John 4:8). And the way of God's love is GIVING and SHARING. As our loving Friend and Father, God wants to SHARE with us the glory and riches of His Kingdom -- His Divine Family!

And so, God reveals His great PURPOSE for mankind to His obedient friends: "Let Us make man in OUR image, after Our likeness ..." (Gen. 1:26). And, "Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us; that we should be called the (SPIRIT-BEGOTTEN) SONS OF GOD ... we know that, when He (Christ) shall appear, we shall be LIKE HIM ..."! (I John 3:1-2.)

God's plan is to create GODS out of mortal mankind -- very Sons of GOD'S DIVINE FAMILY!

Notice Christ's earnest desire to make friends of humanity so they may become God's spirit born Sons: "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his LIFE for his FRIENDS," Christ said (John 15:13).

Then Christ proceeded to show the extent of His great love for mankind by laying down His OWN LIFE for the world -- laying down His precious life for all who would become His OBEDIENT friends -- FOR YOU AND FOR ME!

Christ is overjoyed to be the close Friend of us all and will do GREAT THINGS for us if we become His obedient friends. "SUBMIT yourselves therefore to God (OBEY HIM) ... Draw nigh (NEAR) unto God (as His OBEDIENT friend)," James was inspired to write, "and He will draw nigh unto you (as YOUR loving Friend and Father)" (James 4: 7-8).

Sabbath Pictures Eternal "Rest"

In addition to Christ's great sacrifice for us, what else did He say He would do? Notice:

Jesus said, "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden (be my OBEDIENT friends), and I will give you REST"! (Mat. 11:28.) A GIFT! And what kind of rest is this? -- "GLORIOUS REST"!! (Isa. 11:10.)

As our loving Friend and Father, God wants to give each of us His greatest gift of all -- ETERNAL LIFE -- glorious, eternal "rest" in the KINGDOM OF GOD!

In the fourth chapter of Hebrews, the apostle Paul plainly shows us that RESTING from our daily labors on God's Holy Sabbath Day PICTURES our glorious future as spirit-born Sons in God's Family! He shows that Sabbath keeping actually pictures "REST" FROM OUR STRUGGLES AGAINST SIN which God promises to give His obedient children (Heb. 4:1-11).

When born of God's Spirit, we will no longer suffer the DOWNWARD PULLS of our carnal flesh and SINFUL human nature. We will then possess the MIND OF GOD in full. We will have the ability to remain PERFECTLY OBEDIENT to God's will FOREVER! (I John 3:9.)

And when born into God's Kingdom -- when we become very Gods -- we will also possess the same kind of gloriously radiant and POWERFUL spirit body that Christ and the Father now have! We will no longer be LIMITED by our weak mortal bodies. For it is then that we will possess the powerful capacity for infinite accomplishment with our supremely efficient SPIRIT BODIES! Bodies that will be, by comparison to our weak mortal bodies, GLORIOUSLY EFFICIENT AND EFFORTLESS!

God promises to give us all of this when we become His spirit-born Sons! Isn't it astonishing what God will do for us if we now become His OBEDIENT friends and SPIRIT-BEGOTTEN children?

Eternal Life Offered to ALL Mankind

God promises His gift of eternal life to all peoples of the earth who become, SPIRITUALLY speaking, "Abraham's seed" -- those who surrender themselves to the will of Christ and are SPIRITUALLY BEGOTTEN by the Holy Spirit. "If ye be Christ's, then are ye ABRAHAM'S SEED and HEIRS according to the promise" (Gal. 3:28-29).

As Abraham's "seed," we become heirs of the same promise made to Abraham -- the promise of eternal life and sonship in the Kingdom of God. But only if we obey God and REST from all our labors on God's weekly Sabbath Days which PICTURE this glorious future.

God reveals this great SPIRITUAL truth to those who have become sick of the pagan ways of this world and have begun to OBEY Him. He reveals it as a Friend to a friend.

But only those who CONTINUE TO OBEY God's command to keep the Sabbath will finally enter the glorious "rest" of God's Kingdom and receive the gift of eternal, spiritual life!

No Sabbath Keeping -- No Holy Spirit

God, who is the loving Friend of mankind, offers us the priceless gift of His Holy Spirit. A gift which imparts all the peace and joy the human heart really longs for. Yes, and ultimately ETERNAL LIFE -- eternal "rest" from this carnal, mundane life!

But to WHOM will God give the precious gift of His Holy Spirit? What does God expect of those who are recipients of His Spirit? Notice the answer in Acts 5:32: "the Holy Spirit ... God hath given to them that OBEY HIM" -- OBEY His TEN COMMANDMENTS, which includes SABBATH KEEPING!

To carnal man, there is SEEMINGLY no earthly reason whatever to keep a sequence of Sabbath Days. Man, so he reasons, could rest as well on other days he would choose for himself.

But KEEPING, or NOT keeping God's Sabbath Days REVEALS AN ATTITUDE! Keeping them shows a WILLINGNESS to forsake our OWN thoughts for periods of time specified by God. It shows a WILLINGNESS to learn -- to study, to think and to meditate on the really important matters of the universe -- and an ATTITUDE TOWARD DEVELOPMENT OF GOD-LIKE CHARACTER!

And keeping God's Sabbath reveals an attitude of SIMPLE OBEDIENCE just because GOD says so! -- although all carnal HUMAN REASONING says "no." To the carnal, unrepentant mind, Sabbath keeping seems so unfathomable, unnecessary, and sometimes ANNOYING! (Although to the REPENTANT, spirit-begotten mind, the Sabbath is eagerly looked forward to every week.)

Sabbath keeping plainly is a TEST of our ATTITUDE to reveal whether we REALLY want to OBEY and DEPEND on God and RECEIVE His Holy Spirit!

So now let's understand exactly how God created the weekly Sabbath, HOW it is to be kept holy, and WHY it is so valuable to us today.

#### LESSON 27

#### Origin of God's Weekly Sabbath

1. Who created everything that exists? John 1:1-3; Eph. 3:9 and Col. 1:16.

COMMENT: JESUS CHRIST is called the "Word" -- the "SPOKESMAN," as the original Greek in John 1:1 may be translated. Jesus has been with the Father from the beginning of the earth, and ALL THINGS were made by Him -- by Jesus Christ!

2. What did God do on the FIRST day of what we call Creation Week? Gen. 1:3-5.

COMMENT: God the Father and God the Son constitute the present God Family. It was the God who later became the SON who is spoken of here. He did the actual creating, with the sanction of the God who became the FATHER.

3. And what was done on the SECOND day? Gen. 1:6-8. And did God use a THIRD day on which to do something else? Verses 9-13. And a FOURTH day to make still other things? Verses 14-19. And a FIFTH day for creating another class of things? Verses 20-23. Then did God create animals and MAN on the SIXTH day? Verses 24-26, 31.

COMMENT: We see by the foregoing verses that God made and created all these things in just the first SIX DAYS of CREATION WEEK.

4. What did the Divine Person -- who later became the human Jesus Christ -- do on the day IMMEDIATELY FOLLOWING His creation of man? Gen. 2:2-3. Christ did not rest because He was tired and weary from His work of creating, did He? Isa. 40:28. Then He obviously did it for ANOTHER REASON! Did this final ACT of Christ on the SEVENTH day COMPLETE the works of God's creation? Refer to Genesis 2:2 again, and write down Hebrews 4:3-4.

COMMENT: The Sabbath had never existed prior to this time. Therefore, God had to bring it into existence. He did so by

RESTING on the SEVENTH day. This act of resting therefore MADE the Sabbath Day A PART OF GOD'S CREATION! Notice: "... On the SEVENTH DAY (not before or after it) God ended His work (of creation) which He had MADE ..." (Gen. 2:2).

The scriptures plainly show us that the Sabbath was made during the SAME seven-day period of time that man was made. And it was made by the Divine Person who later became Jesus Christ. It was made on the LAST of SEVEN LITERAL 24-HOUR DAYS, and was made an intrinsic PART of man's environment!

5. What else did God do to the seventh day? Gen. 2:3.

COMMENT: Notice that God "BLESSED" the seventh day and "SANCTIFIED" it. SUCH AN HONOR WAS NOT CONFERRED UPON ANY OF THE PRECEDING SIX DAYS. When God BLESSES SOMETHING, He bestows His divine favor upon, and His DIVINE PRESENCE in that thing. He is especially near at that time.

The very word "sanctify" means TO SET APART FOR A HOLY USE OR PURPOSE! By RESTING on the seventh day, God "sanctified" it -- set it apart -- from the other six days of the week. In so doing He made the SEVENTH day HOLY!

Thus we see that by the very act of resting on the seventh day, Almighty God put His divine favor upon and set apart for holy use and purpose the most ENDURING thing there is -- a certain space of time which comes around REGULARLY EVERY SEVEN DAYS!

And by setting aside the first Sabbath in this way, God also made EVERY FUTURE SABBATH -- EVERY SEVENTH DAY OF THE WEEK -- HOLY ALSO!

(NOTE: To view a chart showing "The First Seven-Day Week", see the file BCC2707.TIF in the Images\BCC directory.)

Made for MAN

1. Was God's resting on the seventh day an EXAMPLE to show Adam -- the first man -- and all mankind that WE SHOULD REST from our work on this day? Ex. 20:11.

2. Did God make the Sabbath for Adam only, or just for the Jews, or for ALL of MANKIND? Mark 2:27-28. Is the whole human race COMMANDED to keep God's Sabbath? Ex. 20:8-10.

COMMENT: Christ said that at creation the Sabbath was made for MAN -- FOR ALL MANKIND! Adam was the first man, therefore he stood as the REPRESENTATIVE OF THE WHOLE HUMAN RACE which has descended from him.

It is RIDICULOUS to think that the Sabbath was made only for the Jews, since the first Jew was not born until over 2,000 years LATER! Judah, a son of Jacob, was the father of the Jewish family and nation (Gen. 29:35).

3. WHY was the Sabbath made for man? HOW did God intend it to serve man's needs? Ex. 20:8 and Deut. 5:12-14.

COMMENT: Notice that God made the seventh day of the week HOLY -- and on His authority as our Creator He commands us TO KEEP IT that way! The Sabbath, then, is HOLY time. Yet it was made for man -- for ALL mankind -- to be a GREAT BLESSING for ALL humanity!

Our Creator knew that we MORTALS would need a period of rest from our physical labors and for the WORSHIP OF GOD every seventh day. This is the BASIC PURPOSE for which the Sabbath was created.

Each of us tends to become overly absorbed in our daily cares, our work and our pleasures during the week. Our Creator foresaw that we would need a time set apart -- His Sabbath Day --

as a consecrated time when we can completely forget our daily routine and DRAW CLOSER to the Creator God in study, meditation and prayer.

Modern man DESPERATELY NEEDS this period of time in which to have real communion with God Who is creating him to become His glorified Son! Time in which to think upon God, to worship Him, to pray, to study and meditate upon the PURPOSE of his human existence and upon GOD'S REVEALED LAWS OF LIFE. God knew that all of this would add great strength and meaning to man's life during the next SIX days of each week.

The Sabbath is truly one of the greatest BLESSINGS God has bestowed upon the human family!

When we keep the Sabbath Day as God intends, we are showing our FAITH, our belief, in God's promise of a FUTURE eternal "rest" -- glorious SPIRIT LIFE in the Kingdom of God -- just as we illustrate in the act of baptism our faith in the PAST death, burial, and resurrection of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ!

By resting on the Sabbath, we are, in a sense, "ACTING OUT" the KINGDOM OF GOD -- our future as the Spirit-born Sons of God's glorious Family!

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 PHOTO CAPTION: Times Square, New York City, epitomizes man's daily cares, work and pleasures. We desperately need God's Sabbath each week to get our minds off this world's glitter and on God!  
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The Sabbath Is God's "Sign"

God reveals that Sabbath keeping is a special "sign" of IDENTIFICATION between Him and His people. Let's learn how it is a "sign."

1. What great blessing did God promise to give Abraham? Rom. 4:13.

COMMENT: We know that at the resurrection God will give Abraham this entire earth as an eternal inheritance, because of his outstandingly WILLING ATTITUDE and great OBEDIENCE to God.

But God blessed Abraham even more by offering his descendants the SAME BLESSING, if they would also conduct themselves obediently.

2. Later Abraham's descendants, the Israelites, because of famine in their own land, went down into Egypt -- a land which God considers as a TYPE of SIN (Heb. 11:24-26). Israel gradually became enslaved in Egypt.

But because of Abraham's obedience and God's promise to him and his descendants, did God raise up a deliverer to bring the Israelites out of Egypt -- out of "sin"? Ex. 3:10-12.

3. After delivering them out of Egypt, did God give the Israelites a SPECIAL "SIGN"? Ex. 31:13. WHAT was this "sign"? Was it a space of TIME -- GOD'S SABBATH? Same verse. Who was this SIGN between? Same verse. HOW were they to be able to have this sign -- by RESTING? Verse 15. How were the Israelites to benefit by RESTING on God's Sabbaths -- would they be KEPT IN REMEMBRANCE, AS LONG AS THEY KEPT THEM, that God is the TRUE Lord? Verse 13.

COMMENT: In order that Israel -- the descendants of Abraham, Abraham's "SEED" -- would never forget that God is Creator, Sustainer, and Supreme Ruler over all His creation, God revealed the one great "SIGN" BY WHICH THEY COULD ALWAYS REMEMBER WHO HE

IS!

That SIGN is a constantly recurring space of time -- the SEVENTH day of the week, the Sabbath.

4. How long was Israel to keep the SABBATH -- forever? Ex. 31:16, last four words. The word "perpetual" means FOREVER. Did God make a special, SEPARATE Sabbath "Covenant" with His people? Same verse.

COMMENT: The Sabbath was, and is, so IMPORTANT for mankind, God DOUBLY COMMANDED Sabbath Day keeping by making this special and SEPARATE COVENANT with His people Israel! (The Sabbath was ALREADY commanded in the Ten Commandments which God had given them EARLIER -- Ex. 20:8.) Here is an EVERLASTING covenant to identify the true Creator God of Israel!

All other nations had forgotten God because they had forgotten the keeping of His Sabbath Day. Israel ALONE had the "sign" to prove that God -- the Lord of Heaven and earth -- was their God and Creator.

5. But now notice something additional. Was resting on the Sabbath Day to also be a "sign" to Abraham's descendants of something ELSE? Ex. 31:13, the last five words. Doesn't this verse show that they would have always known -- if they had CONTINUED to rest on the Sabbath Day -- that the Creator God was setting them apart for a PARTICULAR HOLY USE?

COMMENT: The word "sanctify" means to SET APART or MAKE HOLY.

6. Were the Israelites to be a "HOLY nation" and a "kingdom of PRIESTS"? Ex. 19:6.

COMMENT: Israel was to be SANCTIFIED -- be set apart and made holy -- as a kingdom of priests and a holy nation. They were to LEAD OTHERS to the SAME CONDITION OF HOLINESS!

Abraham's descendants were thus to be SET APART for this SPECIAL HOLY MISSION AND DUTY. Resting on God's Sabbaths also was to be a "sign" that they were God's CHOSEN people, selected for this purpose.

God called Abraham's "seed" out of Egyptian bondage -- the sin of this "world" -- to perform a special mission. It was the most important calling any nation has ever been given in all the history of mankind. God called them so that THROUGH THEM He could REVEAL HIMSELF TO THE WORLD -- to show that HE is the Creator and Ruler of the universe, and reveal His laws, commandments, blessings and great plan for mankind!

7. But NOTICE! Were the called "seed" of Abraham already holy, or were they to BECOME a holy people? Deut. 7:6-9.

COMMENT: The ITALICIZED word "art" in verse 6 has been wrongly added by the translators. These Old Covenant Israelites were NOT HOLY -- they were supposed to BECOME HOLY!

8. Did the Old Covenant fleshly "seed" of Abraham FAIL to become holy? Ezek. 20:13. Notice the word "REBELLED." And what did they do regarding RESTING on God's Sabbaths? Same verse.

COMMENT: Had Old Covenant Israel kept the Sabbath Day as God commanded them, He would have established a Priesthood of Holiness -- ministers of True Holiness who would have instructed the Israelites IN THE WAYS OF GOD as they rested on His Sabbath Days. And they would have become, thereby, a holy nation fit and able to teach others. But the Old Covenant Israelites would NOT keep the Sabbath, and therefore did NOT BECOME HOLY.

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 PHOTO CAPTION: RESULT OF DISOBEDIENCE -- God sometimes punished His people very severely for rebelling against Him. Sabbath

breaking was prominent among ancient Israel's disobedience.  
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God therefore set up another type of priesthood -- the Levitical Priesthood -- which ministered things of NO LASTING VALUE -- ministered a rigmarole of sacrificial rituals which led the people to nothing they REALLY wanted then and there!

Since the Old Covenant Israelites failed to REST on the Sabbath, they failed to remember the true Creator God, and that they were to become a holy people -- a kingdom of priests who were to reveal to the world the Creator God, His blessings and His plan.

They failed because they did NOT have the HOLY SPIRIT to empower them. And for this reason they could NOT HAVE THE PROMISE OF SALVATION AT THAT TIME EITHER, "for the Holy Spirit was NOT YET GIVEN" (John 7:38-39).

God's "Sign" Necessary for Salvation Today

What has resting on the Sabbath -- having God's Sabbath "Sign" -- to do with salvation today? It is vital that we understand. Let's see what the Bible says.

1. Doesn't the Bible plainly reveal that to be a true Christian today one must become a SPIRITUAL Israelite -- become Abraham's "seed" through Christ -- in order to inherit the SAME covenant promise of eternal life that was made to Abraham and "his seed"? Rom. 4:16; 9:4 and Gal. 3:28-29.

2. So today must a spiritual Israelite (a Holy SPIRIT-BEGOTTEN Christian) have to possess God's "sign" (KEEP GOD'S SABBATH) in order to be "sanctified" -- be set apart to be MADE HOLY? Ex. 31:13.

COMMENT: God made the Sabbath Covenant with the ancient Israelites -- Abraham's physical "seed." It was to be obeyed "THROUGHOUT" their generations. Today, all true Christians are Abraham's SPIRITUAL "seed" through Christ.

So today every true Christian MUST ALSO KEEP THE SABBATH! He must keep it in order to remember it is the Creator GOD who MAKES man holy. He must have the Sabbath "Sign" in order to be MADE HOLY HIMSELF. For after we are spiritually begotten we are to GROW in God's holy character, THROUGH THE HELP OF HIS POWERFUL HOLY SPIRIT, until we are born of God! Yes, GOD ALONE can make man holy!

3. Today, to what PURPOSE are such true Christians -- spirit-begotten Israelites, that is, Abraham's "seed" -- especially "set apart" from this present evil world and USED in God's service?

COMMENT: THE TRUTH IS ASTONISHING! The Old Covenant Israelites FAILED to respond to their calling because they would NOT REST on the Sabbath and receive instruction in God's Holiness. They did not have the Holy Spirit to help them RECOGNIZE or UNDERSTAND this call and CARRY IT OUT!

But WE, if we become spirit-begotten New Covenant Israelites, DO HAVE THE HOLY SPIRIT to help us recognize this call and obey God. We have the SPIRITUAL PERCEPTION to UNDERSTAND God's calling and the SPIRITUAL POWER TO CARRY IT OUT.

Old Covenant Israel NEVER became "a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation." But WE can now become a relatively holy and competent "nation" by the POWER of the Holy Spirit! And it is we who can become the COMPLETELY HOLY "nation" of "kings and priests" that God vowed to make of Abraham's "seed" (Ex. 19:6).



We will become this "nation" when we're BORN into the great KINGDOM OF GOD at Christ's soon coming. Christ will then have made us "kings and priests" unto Himself and His Father (Rev. 1:6). Then God's purpose will be COMPLETELY FULFILLED in us!

Yes, we -- if we are spirit-begotten New Covenant Israelites -- DO have the POWER of the Holy Spirit to save us. And we are receiving instruction in God's Holiness as we REST on His Sabbath Days.

We show by our KEEPING of God's ordained Sabbath Day that we KNOW our God, that He is our Creator, and that we KNOW our MISSION and our GOAL. We know that we are, at Christ's SOON coming, to be CHANGED into immortal spirit beings and as such are to be made kings and priests (Rev. 1:5-6; 5:10; 20:6) to serve the world throughout the Millennium as members of the Kingdom of God!

So it is God's True Church -- composed of spirit-begotten Christians -- which is NOW spreading the GOSPEL, the GOOD NEWS, to all the world -- telling of God our Creator, His divinely just laws, His blessings, and His plan for mankind -- just before Christ's imminent return! And God's Church is SPIRITUALLY NOURISHING those He has called to become His glorified Sons in the Kingdom of God.

This is YOUR GOAL, ISN'T IT? Then keep the DAY on which you may RECEIVE INSTRUCTION IN GOD'S HOLINESS -- KEEP SATURDAY, THE SEVENTH-DAY SABBATH OF ALMIGHTY GOD!

Sabbath Keeping Specifically Commanded Today!

1. Does one of God's great Ten Commandments specifically COMMAND US to keep the Sabbath today? Ex. 20:8.

COMMENT: We learned in Lesson 17 that God's great spiritual law has been in full force and effect FROM Adam until TODAY!

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 PHOTO CAPTION: SABBATH BREAKING TODAY -- Department store business continues as usual on the Sabbath. Below, nearly 100,000 people watch football game in Pasadena's famed Rose Bowl on God's Sabbath Day.

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 PHOTO CAPTION: Incidence of "natural disasters" continues to rise sharply. God promises PROTECTION for those who hallow His Sabbaths!

2. Are we to be obedient to God's commands and keep His Sabbath -- NOT being rebellious as were the Old Covenant Israelites who would not DO what God commanded, or keep His Sabbaths? Heb. 3:8-10. Did God, for this reason, prevent them from entering His "rest"? Verse 11 and Ezek. 20:13, 15.

COMMENT: We know that Old Covenant Israel was rebellious and that God never allowed those of that rebellious generation to enter the land of Palestine -- the land God uses as a TYPE of the Millennium and the Kingdom of God.

3. Was it primarily because they wouldn't BELIEVE, and therefore wouldn't DO the Sabbath command that Israel didn't enter God's "rest" -- the land of Palestine? Heb. 4:1-2. But if WE BELIEVE, and OBEY this and God's other commandments, will we ENTER God's eternal "rest" -- the Kingdom of God? Verse 3 -- first nine words. Will we be following the EXAMPLE Christ set for us when He rested on the seventh day of Creation Week? Verse 4.

COMMENT: How clear it is that WE MUST keep the Sabbath Day if we are to enter the Kingdom of God.

4. If we are REALLY God's people, will we CONTINUALLY keep God's "rest" -- His weekly Sabbath Day? Heb. 4:9-10.

COMMENT: The word appearing as "rest" in verse 9 is not translated properly. In the original Greek it is "Sabbatismos," which means that there still REMAINS A KEEPING OF THE SABBATH FOR GOD'S PEOPLE TODAY! Those NOT keeping the Sabbath will NOT be bearing God's Sabbath "sign" which identifies His people, and therefore will NOT BE BORN OF GOD AT CHRIST'S COMING!

Yes, the SABBATH is God's "sign" showing that He is the One who is separating us from this present evil world and making us into His Holy people. And the only way we can keep the Sabbath as Holy time is by DOING what He commands on that day -- by RESTING FROM OUR PHYSICAL LABORS!

The evidence that we are to keep the Sabbath today is overwhelming. The word "Sabbath," which means REST, appears SIXTY TIMES alone in the New Covenant part -- the "New Testament" -- of your Bible!

#### Creation Week the Pattern for God's Plan

God has ordained an overall period of time in which He is accomplishing His spiritual creation of mankind. The PATTERN for God's little-understood plan is given in the first two chapters of Genesis. It is the WEEK of SEVEN days.

God's plan is patterned after the six LITERAL twenty-four-hour work days and one twenty-four-hour Sabbath Day of "Creation Week." It's very important that we understand this vital truth!

1. Was God's work of creation accomplished in SEVEN LITERAL DAYS? Gen. 2:2.

2. And does the weekly Sabbath also FORESHADOW God's one-thousand-year Millennium of rest and peace for the physical people of this earth? II Pet. 3:8 and Rev. 20:1-5.

COMMENT: A day in God's PLAN is as "a thousand years," and "a thousand years" of human civilization is as ONE day in His planned WEEK of SEVEN 1,000-YEAR "DAYS"!

God also planned the weekly Sabbath Day to foreshadow, or be a TYPE of, the 1,000-year millennial period when He is going to bring the world to repentance so man can be begotten and born into His Family. This 1,000-year millennial period will become a time of REST and PEACE for the physical inhabitants of the world -- a veritable 1,000-year "SABBATH" OF REST FROM WARS AND SATAN'S TEMPTATIONS!

And the total of the OTHER SIX DAYS of Creation Week clearly corresponds to the 6,000 year period of human civilization in which we NOW find ourselves. This, then, constitutes God's six-thousand-year and one-thousand-year PLAN -- a great "WEEK" OF 7,000 YEARS!

(NOTE: To view a chart titled "God's Time Plan", see the file BCC2713.TIF in the Images\BCC directory.)

It's LATER Than You Think!

God made an astounding statement within the seven literal days of Creation Week -- in the very first chapter of the Bible.

1. What was the astounding statement God made in Genesis

1:26?

COMMENT: God reveals that it is His purpose to create man in the very Spiritual character and composition of the God Family! And God said, IN EFFECT, that He would create man spiritually within a "week" -- within a period of SEVEN THOUSAND YEARS.

God has allotted carnal mankind the first 6,000 years of His 7,000-year Plan to EXPERIENCE the "fruits" of his own labors.

Man has been learning, by hard experience, that the "fruits" of his own ways -- living by his OWN laws and under his OWN governments -- has produced nothing but SIN, SUFFERING and DEATH! God has allowed all this so that when He finally sets His hand to save the world, men will KNOW BEYOND THE SHADOW OF A DOUBT THAT GOD'S WAYS ARE BEST AFTER ALL!

Many Bibles give the DATE of Creation Week as 4004 B.C. There is abundant evidence showing that THIS DATE IS REASONABLY ACCURATE! That means it's MUCH LATER than you think!!

It means we are VERY NEAR the close of 6,000 years of human history and the beginning of God's 1,000-year Millennium!

The TIME LEFT FOR PREPARING to be born of God at Christ's coming IS BECOMING VERY SHORT!

2. What is to be the ultimate END of all those who will never obey God and keep His Sabbath Day? Rev. 21:8.

COMMENT: If we are NOT obeying God's Sabbath command because of "UNBELIEF" -- lack of FAITH in what God says in His Word -- if we PERSIST in REFUSING TO REST on the Sabbath Day, we will be showing God the WRONG ATTITUDE which points to a different type of eternal "rest" -- the rest of ETERNAL DEATH! And those who PERSIST in keeping any day of the week OTHER than God's ordained Holy Sabbath, are also showing this same WRONG ATTITUDE to God!

FAITH -- the Key

There are people today who have come to KNOW and UNDERSTAND the truth about God's Sabbath, but are hesitant to begin keeping it. They EXCUSE themselves by saying the PRESSURES of the world would absolutely prevent it -- pressures of business, pressures of friends, of children, of pleasures and pressures from other sources.

Their problem is a LACK OF FAITH TO STEP OUT IN OBEDIENCE TO GOD, TRUSTING HIM to work everything out for their good -- if they would only RESIST worldly pressures by RESTING from all their own pursuits on the --Sabbath!

Do you know that such people -- and this MAY include YOU -- are being put to God's SUPREME TEST in His challenge, His COMMAND TO rest on the Sabbath?

Nowhere does God promise that you will receive eternal life if you JUST rest on the Sabbath. But God does say, "If thou wilt enter into (eternal) life, KEEP THE COMMANDMENTS -- one of which is "keep the SABBATH"! (Mat. 19:17.)

Did you ever wonder WHY God singles out ONE of the Ten Commandments -- the FOURTH -- and insists again and again that we must keep it by resting on the seventh day of the week? The Sabbath is mentioned sixty times in the New Testament alone. And many more times in the Old Testament.

HERE IS THE REASON. GRASP IT FULLY!

Of all God's commandments, Sabbath keeping is the one that appeals the LEAST TO CARNAL-NATURED MAN. To the carnal, unrepentant mind, Sabbath keeping seems ridiculous and absolutely unnecessary. Carnal man just does NOT WANT TO KEEP IT!

No wonder God stresses Sabbath keeping so much in the Bible.

It is a TEST to ascertain our COMPLETE, TRUSTING, SURRENDER TO HIS WILL!!

If we do COMPLETELY SURRENDER to God in continuous TRUSTING FAITH and DO all He commands, He promises to shower us with the REALLY WORTHWHILE blessings of this life, and glorious spirit life FOR ETERNITY!

Let's study now the scriptures which exhort us to step out in FAITH and REST on God's Sabbath Day -- Saturday, the seventh day of the week -- whatever may be the SEEMING "odds" against us.

1. We know that a generation of Old Covenant Israel did not enter the land of Palestine, which God uses as a SYMBOL of the Kingdom of God. They DIED without entering. Was it because of "unbelief" -- LACK OF FAITH and resultant DISOBEDIENCE to God? Heb. 3:10-12, 18-19.

2. Must we have FAITH before God will give us eternal "rest" -- eternal life in His Kingdom? Heb. 4:1-3, 6.

COMMENT: Note the words "FAITH," in verse 2, and "BELIEVED," in verse 3.

3. Are we warned against showing a lack of FAITH BY "hardening our hearts"? Verse 7. And does verse 11 show that we must STEP OUT IN FAITH and rest on the Sabbath? Note the warning against "unbelief" -- lack of FAITH and OBEDIENCE to God.

COMMENT: How clear it becomes that we must EXERCISE FAITH IN KEEPING THE SABBATH.

4. Does Christ verify the fact that WE must take the FIRST STEP in obeying Him, if we are to receive Divine help to do His will? Mat. 11:28.

COMMENT: Notice carefully that Christ did NOT say He would take the FIRST STEP for us! Rather Christ said, " (You) COME to Me" -- come to Christ -- that is, OBEY and FOLLOW His examples and commandments as well as you humanly can, and seek the MANNER in which you may draw close to Him -- and THEN He promises: "I will give you REST"!

WE MUST TAKE THE FIRST STEP IN OBEYING GOD. Then God will give us His Holy Spirit which will impart the ADDITIONAL strength and faith we need to obey Him!

5. If we run into difficulty in being able to keep God's Sabbath -- think we will lose our job because of keeping it, or whatever -- how may we receive DIVINE help in keeping this day, and in doing what we are taught on it? Heb. 4:14, 16. Are we to come "boldly" to God in PRAYER and ASK FOR HIS GUIDANCE AND STRENGTH in overcoming all obstacles which SEEM TO prevent us? Verse 16.

COMMENT: The whole chapter of Hebrews 4 is about keeping the Sabbath! And it closes with HOW we may receive Divine help in keeping it, and doing the things which are taught on this Day.

Even the apostles who had the human faith to follow Christ, found they did not have ENOUGH faith for their needs -- "The apostles said unto the Lord, INCREASE OUR FAITH" (Luke 17:5). But Christ replied, "Serve Me (first step out on your OWN faith and OBEY me -- REST upon the Sabbath Day) ... and AFTERWARD thou shalt eat and drink (afterward you will be given DIVINE FAITH)" (verse 8).

You must keep the Sabbath through your OWN faith FIRST -- "FROM faith (of SELF) to FAITH" OF GOD -- "... from (your own) faith TO (the DIVINE POWERFUL) FAITH (which God will miraculously place within you to TRUST HIM): as it is written, the just shall live by (GOD'S) faith" (Rom. 1:17). You must make the FIRST MOVE, then God will help you.

How abundantly clear that we must make the initial move by

beginning to rest on the Sabbath. God exhorts us to step out in faith -- even though obstacles to our obeying Him may SEEM insurmountable -- and then CONTINUE TO OBEY GOD THROUGH THE DIVINE FAITH WHICH HE PROMISES TO SUPPLY!

What to Do

We are practically at the tip end of the SIXTH "day" in God's "week" of 7,000 years. Very soon the SEVENTH 1,000-year "day" will be ushered in by the appearance of Jesus Christ. The time is indeed VERY SHORT!

God has shown you in His Word that if you have TRULY REPENTED of your disobedience to His laws, you will want to zealously BEGIN keeping God's Sabbath Day. You will want to STEP OUT IN FAITH by RESTING on this day! And you'll want to QUIT OBSERVING ANY DAY OTHER THAN GOD'S SABBATH!

ONLY the keeping of God's SABBATH (as well as His other commandments) in the way HE ordains, will fit you for your goal of eternal life and sonship in God's glorious Family!

God will especially CONDITION YOU toward this marvelous future on the Sabbath. On this day you will be ESPECIALLY CLOSE to God, and you'll grow in His SPIRITUAL grace and knowledge through PRAYER and BIBLE STUDY.

But keeping the Sabbath as God commands does not mean that you must attend a church on this day. You may KEEP THE SABBATH RIGHT IN YOUR OWN HOME for the present.

WHY STAY AT HOME?

Because there are certain churches into which you might be MISLED. Churches which happen to observe the seventh-day Sabbath -- churches whose NAMES even bear, in part, the words "Seventh Day." BUT DON'T BE DECEIVED!

Just because these churches have a "FORM of Godliness" (II Tim. 3:5) -- have an OUTWARD appearance of "keeping" God's Sabbath -- does NOT mean you should attend their services! For in reality, these churches DISOBEY God in most points of His law -- which includes their IMPROPER observance of God's SABBATH!!

There also are several small religious sects which claim to keep the Sabbath. But they are NOT THE CHURCHES OF GOD EITHER -- even though they may recognize and APPROPRIATE the true Bible name "Church of God"!

You definitely should NOT meet with those who are BLINDED to the truth! The apostle Paul commanded Christians "BE YE NOT UNEQUALLY YOKED TOGETHER WITH UNBELIEVERS; for what FELLOWSHIP hath righteousness with unrighteousness and what communion hath light with darkness?" (II Cor. 6:14). You cannot afford to fellowship with Satan, (his ministers (II Cor. 11:13-15), or churches who REFUSE to obey all of God's commandments!

Already you have seen by the "FRUITS" that only The Worldwide Church of God, with headquarters in Pasadena, California, is FAITHFULLY KEEPING "the testimony of Jesus Christ" (Rev. 12:17) with the help of God's Holy Spirit. And only this church is carrying out God's great commission to preach the TRUE Gospel to the world as a "witness" (Matt. 24:14).

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 PHOTO CAPTION: Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong (right) and Mr. Garner Ted Armstrong (left) broadcast the dynamic WORLD TOMORROW program to the English-speaking world. Millions hear it every day!  
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GOD HAS ONLY ONE CHURCH -- NOT many differing denominations and sects!

You have seen by the "fruits" that this is the only Church God is using to continually feed you the true spiritual food of His Holy, inspired Word -- the Bible. This is the only way you may GROW SPIRITUALLY and overcome in this life, and be READY to be born into God's Family -- to receive glorious and joyous eternal life!

Remember, the "World Tomorrow" radio broadcast can be heard in most areas. You are, in a sense, attending the greatest church service on earth which is "attended" by MILLIONS of others when you listen!

(We are happy to announce that it is now possible for many more to ATTEND Worldwide Church of God Sabbath services in the U.S. and abroad. If you would like more information, write to the Editor in care of our office nearest you. See page 2 for the address. Be sure to mention you have completed lesson 27 of the Ambassador College Correspondence Course.)

(To Be Continued)