

of Israel, saying, 'You shall surely observe my sabbaths; for this is a sign between Me and you throughout your generations, that you may know that I am the Lord who sanctifies you.'" God chose Israel to be a holy nation. He set Israel apart from all other nations and consecrated her. He called upon Israel to set herself apart from moral evil and to moral righteousness. And He established the Sabbath as a sign, so that Israel might always be reminded of the truth that God was her sanctifier.

The godly Israelite who ceased from occupational work on the seventh day, joined in holy convocation with other Israelites seeking to obey the Lord, and reflected upon God's great and wonderful works of creation, redemption, and sanctification could not help but view the Sabbath as a day of blessing, not only of God, but also to himself.

b. The Importance of the Sabbath

(1) There are cursings and punishments connected with Sabbath violation

Ezekiel 20:12-13 -- "Moreover also I gave them my sabbaths, to be a sign between me and them, that they might know that I am the Lord that sanctify them. But the house of Israel rebelled against me in the wilderness: they walked not in my statutes, and they despised my judgments which if a man do, he shall even live in them; and my sabbaths they greatly polluted; then I said, I would pour out my fury upon them in the wilderness, to consume them."

Exodus 31:12-15 -- "And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, Speak thou also unto the children of Israel, saying, Verily my sabbaths ye shall keep: for it is a sign between me and you throughout your generations; that ye may know that I am the Lord that doth sanctify you. Ye shall keep the sabbath therefore; for it is holy unto you; every one that defileth it shall surely be put to death: for whosoever doeth any work therein, that soul shall be cut off from among his people. Six days may work be done; but in the seventh is the sabbath of rest, holy to the Lord; whosoever doeth any work in the sabbath day, he shall surely be put to death."

(2) There are also blessings and benefits associated with Sabbath observance

Isaiah 58:13-14 -- "If thou turn away thy foot from the sabbath, from doing thy pleasure on my holy day; and call the sabbath a delight, the holy of the Lord, honorable; and shalt honor him, not doing thine own ways, nor finding thine own pleasure, nor speaking thine own words: Then shalt thou delight thyself in the Lord; and I will cause thee to ride upon the high places of the earth, and feed thee with the heritage of Jacob thy father: for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it."

c. The Question of Permanence vs. Impermanence of the Sabbath, and of Its Present Relevance

(1) Arguments for Impermanence

Three major arguments are urged against the permanence and present relevance of the Sabbath