

## CHAPTER 8.

### THE SABBATH FROM DAVID TO NEHEMIAH

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*Silence of six successive books of the Bible relative to the Sabbath - This silence compared to that of the book of Genesis - The siege of Jericho - The standing still of the sun - David's act of eating the shew-bread - The Sabbath of the Lord, how connected with and how distinguished from the annual sabbaths - Earliest reference to the Sabbath after the days of Moses - Incidental allusions to the Sabbath - Testimony of Amos - Of Isaiah - The Sabbath a blessing to MANKIND - The condition of being gathered to the holy land - Not a local institution - Commentary on the fourth commandment - Testimony of Jeremiah - Jerusalem to be saved if she would keep the Sabbath - This gracious offer despised - The Sabbath distinguished from the other days of the week - The Sabbath after the Babylonish captivity - Time for the commencing of the Sabbath - The violation of the Sabbath caused the destruction of Jerusalem.*

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When we leave the books of Moses there is a long-continued break in the history of the Sabbath.<sup>1</sup> No mention of it is found in the book of Joshua, nor in that of Judges, nor in the book of Ruth, nor in that of first Samuel, nor in the book of second Samuel, nor in that of first Kings. It is not until we reach the book of second Kings<sup>1</sup> that the Sabbath is even mentioned. In the book of first Chronicles, however, which as a narrative is parallel to the two books of Samuel, the Sabbath is mentioned<sup>2</sup> with reference to the events of David's life. Yet this leaves a period of five hundred years, which the Bible passes in silence respecting the Sabbath.

During this period we have a circumstantial history of the Hebrew people from their entrance into the promised land forward to the establishment of David as their king, embracing many particulars in the life of Joshua, of the elders and judges of Israel, of Gideon, of Barak, of Jephthah, of Samson, of Eli, of Naomi and Ruth, of Hannah and Samuel, of Saul, of Jonathan and of David. Yet in all this minute record we have no direct mention of the Sabbath.

It is a favorite argument with anti-Sabbatarians in proof of the total neglect of the Sabbath in the patriarchal age, that the book of Genesis, which does give a distinct view of the origin of the Sabbath in Paradise, at the close of the first week of time, does not in recording the lives of the patriarchs, say anything relative to its observance. Yet in that one book are crowded the events of two thousand three hundred and seventy years. What then should they say of the fact that six successive books of the Bible, relating with comparative minuteness the events of five hundred years, and involving many circumstances that would call out a mention of the Sabbath, do not mention it at all? Does the silence of one book, which nevertheless does give the institution of the Sabbath at its very commencement, and which brings into its record almost twenty-four hundred years, prove that there were no Sabbath-keepers prior to Moses? What then is proved by the fact that six successive books of the Bible, confining themselves to the events of five hundred years, an average of less than one hundred years apiece, the whole period covered by them being about one-fifth that embraced in the book of Genesis, do nevertheless preserve total silence respecting the Sabbath?

No one will adduce this silence as evidence of total neglect of the Sabbath during this period; yet why should they not? Is it because that when the narrative after this long silence brings in the Sabbath again, it does this

incidentally and not as a new institution? Precisely such is the case with the second mention of the Sabbath in the Mosaic record, that is, with its mention after the silence in Genesis.<sup>3</sup> Is it because the fourth commandment had been given to the Hebrews whereas no such precept had previously been given to mankind? This answer cannot be admitted, for we have seen that the substance of the fourth commandment was given to the head of the human family; and it is certain that when the Hebrews came out of Egypt they were under obligation to keep the Sabbath in consequence of existing law.<sup>4</sup> The argument therefore is certainly more conclusive that there were no Sabbath-keepers from Moses to David, than that there were none from Adam to Moses; yet no one will attempt to maintain the first position, however many there will be to affirm the latter.

Several facts are narrated in the history of this period of five centuries that have a claim to our notice. The first of these is found in the record of the siege of Jericho.<sup>5</sup> By the command of God the city was encompassed by the Hebrews each day for seven days; on the last day of the seven they encompassed it seven times, when by divine interposition the walls were thrown down before them and the city taken by assault. One day of this seven must have been the Sabbath of the Lord. Did not the people of God therefore violate the Sabbath in their acting thus? Let the following facts answer: 1. That which they did in this case was by direct command of God. 2. That which is forbidden in the fourth commandment is OUR OWN work: "Six days shalt thou labor, and do ALL THY WORK; but the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God." He who reserved the seventh day unto himself, had the right to require its appropriation to his service as he saw fit. 3. The act of encompassing the city was strictly as a religious procession. The ark of the covenant of the Lord was borne before the people; and before the ark went seven priests blowing with trumpets of rams' horns. 4. Nor could the city have been very extensive, else the going round it seven times on the last day, and their having time left for its complete destruction, would have been impossible. 5. Nor can it be believed that the Hebrews, by God's command carrying the ark before them, which contained simply the ten words of the Most High, were violating the fourth of those words, "Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy." It is certain that one of those seven days on which they encompassed Jericho was the Sabbath; but there is no necessity for supposing this to have been the day in which the city was taken. Nor is this a reasonable conjecture when all the facts in the case are considered. On this incident Dr. Clarke remarks as follows:

"It does not appear that there could be any breach in the Sabbath by the people simply going round the city, the ark in company, and the priests sounding the sacred trumpets. This was a mere religious procession, performed at the command of God, in which no servile work was done."<sup>6</sup>

At the word of Joshua it pleased God to arrest the earth in its revolution, and thus to cause the sun to remain stationary for a season, that the Canaanites might be overthrown before Israel.<sup>7</sup> Did not this great miracle derange the Sabbath? Not at all; for the lengthening of one of the six days by God's intervention could not prevent the actual arrival of the seventh day, though it would delay it; nor could it destroy its identity. The case involves a difficulty for those who hold the theory that God sanctified the seventh part of time, and not the seventh day; for in this case the seventh part of time was not allotted to the Sabbath; but there is no difficulty involved for those who believe that God set apart the seventh day to be kept as it arrives, in memory of his own rest. One of the six days was allotted a greater length than ever before or since; yet this did not in the slightest degree conflict with the seventh day, which nevertheless did come. Moreover all this was while inspired men were upon the stage of action; and it was by the direct providence of God; and what is also to be particularly remembered, it was at a time when no one will deny that the fourth commandment was in full force.

The case of David's eating the shew-bread is worthy of notice, as it probably took place upon the Sabbath, and because it is cited by our Lord in a memorable conversation with the Pharisees.<sup>8</sup> The law of the shew-bread

enjoined the setting forth of twelve loaves in the sanctuary upon the pure table before the Lord EVERY Sabbath.<sup>9</sup> When new bread was thus placed before the Lord each Sabbath, the old was taken away to be eaten by the priests.<sup>10</sup> It appears that the shew-bread which was given to David had that day been taken from before the Lord to put hot bread in its place, and consequently that day was the Sabbath. Thus, when David asked bread, the priest said, "There is no common bread under mine hand, but there is hallowed bread." And David said, "The bread is in a manner common, especially [as the margin has it] when THIS DAY there is other sanctified in the vessel." And so the sacred writer adds: "The priest gave him hallowed bread; for there was no bread there but the shew-bread, that was taken from before the Lord, to put hot bread in the day when it was taken away." The circumstances of this case all favor the view that this was upon the Sabbath. 1. There was NO COMMON bread with the priest. This is not strange when it is remembered that the shew-bread was to be taken from before the Lord each Sabbath and eaten by the priests. 2. That the priest did not offer to prepare other bread is not singular if it be understood that this was the Sabbath. 3. The surprise of the priest in meeting David may have been in part owing to the fact that it was the Sabbath. 4. This also may account for the detention of Doeg that day before the Lord. 5. When our Lord was called upon to pronounce upon the conduct of his disciples who had plucked and eaten the ears of corn upon the Sabbath to satisfy their hunger, he cited this case of David, and that of the priests offering sacrifices in the temple upon the Sabbath as justifying the disciples. There is a wonderful propriety and fitness in this citation, if it be understood that this act of David's took place upon the Sabbath. It will be found to present the matter in a very different light from that in which anti-Sabbatarians present it.<sup>11</sup>

A distinction may be here pointed out, which should never be lost sight of. The presentation of the shew-bread and the offering of burnt sacrifices upon the Sabbath as ordained in the ceremonial law, formed no part of the original Sabbatic institution. For the Sabbath was made before the fall of man; while burnt-offerings and ceremonial rites in the sanctuary were introduced in consequence of the fall. While these rites were in force they necessarily, to some extent, connected the Sabbath with the festivals of the Jews in which the like offerings were made. This is seen only in those scriptures which record the provision made for these offerings.<sup>12</sup> When the ceremonial law was nailed to the cross, all the Jewish festivals ceased to exist; for they were ordained by it;<sup>13</sup> but the abrogation of that law could only take away those rites which it had appended to the Sabbath, leaving the original institution precisely as it came at first from its author.

The earliest reference to the Sabbath after the days of Moses is found in what David and Samuel ordained respecting the offices of the priests and Levites at the house of God. It is as follows:

"And other of their brethren, of the sons of the Kohathites, were over the shew-bread, to prepare it every Sabbath."<sup>14</sup>

It will be observed that this is only an incidental mention of the Sabbath. Such an allusion, occurring after so long a silence, is decisive proof that the Sabbath had not been forgotten or lost during the five centuries in which it had not been mentioned by the sacred historians. After this no direct mention of the Sabbath is found from the days of David to those of Elisha the prophet, a period of about one hundred and fifty years. Perhaps the ninety-second psalm is an exception to this statement, as its title, both in Hebrew and English, declares that it was written for the Sabbath day,<sup>15</sup> and it is not improbable that it was composed by David, the sweet singer of Israel.

The son of the Shunammite woman being dead, she sought the prophet Elisha. Her husband not knowing that the child was dead said to her:

"Wherefore wilt thou go to him to-day? It is neither new moon, nor Sabbath. And she said, It shall be well."[16](#)

It is probable that the Sabbath of the Lord is here intended, as it is thrice used in a like connection.[17](#) If this be correct, it shows that the Hebrews were accustomed to visit the prophets of God upon that day for divine instruction; a very good commentary upon the words used relative to gathering the manna: "Let no man go out of his place on the seventh day."[18](#) Incidental allusion is made to the Sabbath at the accession of Jehoash to the throne of Judah,[19](#) about B.C. 778. In the reign of Uzziah, the grandson of Jehoash, the prophet Amos, B.C. 787, uses the following language:

"Hear this, O ye that swallow up the needy, even to make the poor of the land to fail, saying, When will the new moon be gone, that we may sell corn? and the Sabbath, that we may set forth wheat, making the ephah small, and the shekel great, and falsifying the balances by deceit? that we may buy the poor for silver, and the needy for a pair of shoes; yea, and sell the refuse of the wheat?"[20](#)

These words were spoken more directly concerning the ten tribes, and indicate the sad state of apostasy which soon after resulted in their overthrow as a people. About fifty years after this, at the close of the reign of Ahaz, another allusion to the Sabbath is found.[21](#) In the days of Hezekiah, about B.C. 712, the prophet Isaiah uses the following language in enforcing the Sabbath:

"Thus saith the Lord, Keep ye judgment and do justice; for my salvation is near to come, and my righteousness to be revealed. Blessed is the man that doeth this, and the son of man that layeth hold on it; that keepeth the Sabbath from polluting it, and keepeth his hand from doing any evil. Neither let the son of the stranger, that hath joined himself to the Lord, speak, saying, The Lord hath utterly separated me from his people; neither let the eunuch say, Behold I am a dry tree. For thus saith the Lord unto the eunuchs that keep my Sabbaths, and choose the things that please me, and take hold of my covenant, even unto them will I give in mine house and within my walls, a place and a name better than of sons and of daughters; I will give them an everlasting name that shall not be cut off. Also the sons of the stranger, that join themselves to the Lord, to serve him, and to love the name of the Lord, to be his servants, every one that keepeth the Sabbath from polluting it, and taketh hold of my covenant; even them will I bring to my holy mountain, and make them joyful in my house of prayer; their burnt-offerings and their sacrifices shall be accepted upon mine altar; for mine house shall be called a house of prayer for all people. The Lord God which gathereth the outcasts of Israel saith, Yet will I gather others to him, beside those that are gathered unto him."[22](#)

This prophecy presents several features of peculiar interest. 1. It pertains to a time when the salvation of God is near at hand.[23](#) 2. It most distinctly shows that the Sabbath is not a Jewish institution; for it pronounces a blessing upon that man without respect of nationality who shall keep the Sabbath; and it then particularizes the son of the stranger, that is, the Gentile,[24](#) and makes a peculiar promise to him if he will keep the Sabbath. 3. And this prophecy relates to Israel when they are outcasts, that is, when they are in their dispersion, promising to gather them, and others, that is, the Gentiles, with them. Of course the condition of being gathered to God's holy mountain must be complied with, namely, to love the name of the Lord, to be his servants, and to keep the Sabbath from polluting it. 4. And hence it follows that the Sabbath is not a local institution, susceptible of being observed in the promised land alone, like the annual sabbaths,[25](#) but one made for mankind and capable of being observed by the outcasts of Israel when scattered in every land under heaven.[26](#)

Isaiah again presents the Sabbath; and this he does in language most emphatically distinguishing it from all

ceremonial institutions. Thus he says:

"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."[27](#)

This language is an evangelical commentary upon the fourth commandment. It appends to it an exceeding great and precious promise that takes hold upon the land promised to Jacob, even the new earth.[28](#)

In the year B. C. 601, thirteen years before the destruction of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar, God made to the Jewish people through Jeremiah the gracious offer, that if they would keep his Sabbath, their city should stand forever. At the same time he testified unto them that if they would not do this, their city should be utterly destroyed. Thus said the prophet:

"Hear ye the word of the Lord, ye kings of Judah, and all Judah, and all the inhabitants of Jerusalem, that enter in by these gates: Thus saith the Lord: Take heed to yourselves, and bear no burden on the Sabbath day, nor bring it in by the gates of Jerusalem;[29](#) neither carry forth a burden[30](#) out of your houses on the Sabbath day, neither do ye any work, but hallow ye the Sabbath day, as I commanded your fathers. But they obeyed not, neither inclined their ears, but made their necks stiff, that they might not hear, nor receive instruction.[31](#) And it shall come to pass, if ye diligently hearken unto me, saith the Lord, to bring in no burden through the gates of this city on the Sabbath day, but hallow the Sabbath day, to do no work therein; then shall there enter into the gates of this city kings and princes sitting upon the throne of David, riding in chariots and on horses, they, and their princes, the men of Judah, and the inhabitants of Jerusalem; and this city shall \*REMAIN FOREVER.\* And they shall come from the cities of Judah, and from the places about Jerusalem, and from the land of Benjamin, and from the plain, and from the mountains, and from the south, bringing burnt-offerings, and sacrifices, and meat-offerings, and incense, and bringing sacrifices of praise, unto the house of the Lord. But if ye will not hearken unto me to hallow the Sabbath day, and not to bear a burden, even entering in at the gates of Jerusalem on the Sabbath day; then will I kindle a fire in the gates thereof, and it shall devour the palaces of Jerusalem, and it shall not be quenched."[32](#)

This gracious offer of the Most High to his rebellious people was not regarded by them; for eight years after this Ezekiel testifies thus:

"In thee have they set light by father and mother: in the midst of thee have they dealt by oppression with the stranger: in thee have they vexed the fatherless and the widow. Thou hast despised mine holy things, and hast profaned my Sabbaths. . . . Her priests have violated my law, and have profaned mine holy things: they have put no difference between the holy and profane, neither have they showed difference between the unclean and the clean, and have hid their eyes from my Sabbaths, and I am profaned among them. . . . Moreover this they have done unto me: they have defiled my sanctuary in the same day, and have profaned my Sabbaths. For when they had slain their children to their idols, then they came the same day into my sanctuary to profane it; and, lo, thus have they done in the midst of mine house."[33](#)

Idolatry and Sabbath-breaking, which were besetting sins with the Hebrews in the wilderness, and which there laid the foundation for their dispersion from their own land,[34](#) had ever cleaved unto them. And now when their destruction was impending from the overwhelming power of the king of Babylon, they were so deeply attached to these and kindred sins, that they would not regard the voice of warning. Before entering the sanctuary of God upon his Sabbath, they first slew their own children in sacrifice to their idols![35](#) Thus iniquity came to its height, and wrath came upon them to the uttermost.

"They mocked the messengers of God, and despised his words, and misused his prophets, until the wrath of the Lord arose against his people, till there was no remedy. Therefore he brought upon them the king of the Chaldees, who slew their young men with the sword in the house of their sanctuary, and had no compassion upon young man or maiden, old man, or him that stooped for age: he gave them all into his hand. And all the vessels of the house of God, great and small, and the treasures of the house of the Lord, and the treasures of the king, and of his princes; all these he brought to Babylon, and they burnt the house of God, and brake down the wall of Jerusalem, and burnt all the palaces thereof with fire, and destroyed all the goodly vessels thereof. And them that had escaped from the sword carried he away to Babylon; where they were servants to him and his sons until the reign of the king of Persia."[36](#)

While the Hebrews were in captivity at Babylon, God made to them an offer of restoring them to their own land and giving them again a city and a temple under circumstances of wonderful glory.[37](#) The condition of that offer being disregarded,[38](#) the offered glory was never inherited by them. In this offer were several allusions to the Sabbath of the Lord, and also to the festivals of the Hebrews.[39](#) One of these allusions is worthy of particular notice for the distinctness with which it discriminates between the Sabbath and the other days of the week:

"Thus saith the Lord God: The gate of the inner court that looketh toward the east, shall be shut THE SIX WORKING DAYS; but on the Sabbath it shall be opened, and in the day of the new moon it shall be opened."[40](#)

Six days of the week are by divine inspiration called "the six working days;" the seventh is called the Sabbath of the Lord. Who shall dare confound this marked distinction?

After the Jews had returned from their captivity in Babylon, and had restored their temple and city, in a solemn assembly of the whole people they recount in an address to the Most High all the great events of God's providence in their past history. Thus they testify respecting the Sabbath:

"Thou camest down also upon Mount Sinai, and spakest with them from heaven, and gavest them right judgments, and true laws, good statutes and commandments: and madest known unto them thy holy Sabbath, and commandest them precepts, statutes, and laws, by the hand of Moses thy servant."[41](#)

Thus were all the people reminded of the great events of Mount Sinai - the giving of the ten words of the law of God, and the making known of his holy Sabbath. So deeply impressed was the whole congregation with the effect of their former disobedience, that they entered into a solemn covenant to obey God.[42](#) They pledged themselves to each other thus:

"And if the people of the land bring ware or any victuals on the Sabbath day to sell, that we would not buy it of them on the Sabbath, or on the holy day; and that we would leave the seventh year,

and the exaction of every debt."[43](#)

In the absence of Nehemiah at the Persian court, this covenant was in part, at least, forgotten. Eleven years having elapsed, Nehemiah thus testifies concerning things at his return about B.C. 434:

"In those days saw I in Judah some treading winepresses on the Sabbath, and bringing in sheaves, and lading asses; as also wine, grapes, and figs, and all manner of burdens, which they brought into Jerusalem on the Sabbath day; and I testified against them in the day wherein they sold victuals. There dwelt men of Tyre also therein, which brought fish, and all manner of ware, and sold on the Sabbath unto the children of Judah, and in Jerusalem. Then I contended with the nobles of Judah, and said unto them, What evil thing is this that ye do, and profane the Sabbath day? Did not your fathers thus, and did not our God bring all this evil upon us, and upon this city? yet ye bring more wrath upon Israel by profaning the Sabbath. And it came to pass, that, when the gates of Jerusalem began to be dark before the Sabbath,[44](#) I commanded that the gates should be shut, and charged that they should not be opened till after the Sabbath: and some of my servants set I at the gates, that there should no burden be brought in on the Sabbath day. So the merchants and sellers of all kind of ware lodged without Jerusalem once or twice. Then I testified against them, and said unto them, Why lodge ye about the wall? if ye do so again, I will lay hands on you. From that time forth came they no more on the Sabbath. And I commanded the Levites that they should cleanse themselves, and that they should come and keep the gates, to sanctify the Sabbath day. Remember me, O my God, concerning this also, and spare me according to the greatness of thy mercy."[45](#)

This scripture is an explicit testimony that the destruction of Jerusalem and the captivity of the Jews at Babylon were in consequence of their profanation of the Sabbath. It is a striking confirmation of the language of Jeremiah, already noticed, in which he testified to the Jews that if they would hallow the Sabbath their city should stand forever; but that it should be utterly destroyed if they persisted in its profanation. Nehemiah bears testimony to the accomplishment of Jeremiah's prediction concerning the violation of the Sabbath; and with his solemn appeal in its behalf ends the history of the Sabbath in the Old Testament.

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1 2Kings 4:23. <[Return](#)>

2 1Chron.9:32. It is true that this text relates to the order of things after the return from Babylon; yet we learn from verse 22, that this order was originally ordained by David and Samuel. See verses 1-32. <[Return](#)>

3 Compare these two cases; Ex.16:23: 1Chron.9:32. <[Return](#)>

4 See chapters ii and iii. <[Return](#)>

5 Josh.6. <[Return](#)>

6 See Dr. A. Clarke's commentary on Josh.6:15. <[Return](#)>

7 Josh.10:12-14. <[Return](#)>

8 1Sam.21:1-6; Matt.12:3,4; Mark 2:25,26; Luke 6:3,4. <[Return](#)>

9 Lev.24:5-9; 1Chron.9:32. <[Return](#)>

10 1Sam.21:5,6; Matt.12:4. <[Return](#)>

11 See the tenth chapter of this work. <[Return](#)>

12 1Chron.23:31; 2Chron.2:4; 8:13; 31:3; Neh.10:31, 33; Eze.45:17. <[Return](#)>

13 See chapter vii. of this work. <[Return](#)>

14 1Chron.9:32. <[Return](#)>

15 Cotton Mather says: "There is a psalm in the Bible whereof the title is, 'A Psalm or Song for the Sabbath day.' Now 'tis a clause in that psalm, 'O Lord, how great are thy works! thy thoughts are very deep.' Ps.92:5. That clause intimates what we should make the subject of our meditations on the Sabbath day. Our thoughts are to be on God's works." - Discourse on the Lord's Day, p 30, A.D. 1703. And Hengstenberg says: "This psalm is according to the heading, 'A Song for the Sabbath day.' The proper positive employment of the Sabbath appears here to be a thankful contemplation of the works of God, a devotional absorption in them which could only exist when ordinary occupations are laid aside." - The Lord's Day, pp. 36,37. <[Return](#)>

16 2Kings 4:23. <[Return](#)>

17 Isa.66:23; Eze.46:1; Amos 8:5. <[Return](#)>

18 Ex.16:29. <[Return](#)>

19 2Kings 11:5-9; 2Chron.23 4-8. <[Return](#)>

20 Amos 8:4-6. <[Return](#)>

21 2Kings 16:18. <[Return](#)>

22 Isa.56.1-8. <[Return](#)>

23 For the coming of this salvation see Heb.9:28; 1Pet.1:9. <[Return](#)>

24 Ex.12:48,49; Isa.14:1; Eph.2:12. <[Return](#)>

25 See chapter vii. <[Return](#)>

26 Deut.28:64; Luke 21:24. <[Return](#)>

27 Isa.58:13,14. <[Return](#)>

28 Matt.8:11; Heb.11:8-16; Rev.21. <[Return](#)>

29 On this text Dr. A. Clarke comments thus: "From this and the following verses we find the ruin of the Jews attributed to the breach of the Sabbath: as this led to a neglect of sacrifice, the ordinances of religion, and all public worship; so it necessarily brought with it all immorality. The breach of the Sabbath was that which let in

upon them all the waters of God's wrath." <[Return](#)>

30 For an inspired commentary on this language, see Neh.13:15-18. <[Return](#)>

31 This language strongly implies that the violation of the Sabbath had ever been general with the Hebrews. See Jer.7:23-28. <[Return](#)>

32 Jer.17:20-27 <[Return](#)>

33 Eze.22:7,8,26; 23:38,39. <[Return](#)>

34 Eze.20:23,24; Deut.32:16-35. <[Return](#)>

35 Eze.23:38,39. <[Return](#)>

36 2Chron.36:16-20. <[Return](#)>

37 Eze., chapters 40-43. <[Return](#)>

38 Eze.43:7-11. <[Return](#)>

39 Eze.44:24; 45:17; 46:1,3,4,12. <[Return](#)>

40 Eze.46:1. <[Return](#)>

41 Neh.9:13,14. <[Return](#)>

42 Neh.9:38; 10:1-31. <[Return](#)>

43 Neh.10:31. <[Return](#)>

44 A few words relative to the time of beginning the Sabbath are here demanded. 1. The reckoning of the first week of time necessarily determines that of all succeeding weeks. The first division of the first day was night; and each day of the first week began with evening; the evening and the morning, an expression equivalent to the night and the day, constituted the day of twenty-four hours. Gen.1. Hence, the first Sabbath began and ended with evening. 2. That the night is in the Scriptures reckoned a part of the day of twenty-four hours, is proved by many texts. Ex.12:41,42; 1Sam.26:7,8; Luke 2:8-11; Mark 14:30; Luke 22:34, and many other testimonies. 3. The 2300 days, symbolizing 2300 years are each constituted like the days of the first week of time. Dan.8:14. The margin, which gives the literal Hebrew, calls each of these days an "evening morning." 4. The statute defining the great day of atonement is absolutely decisive that the day begins with evening, and that the night is a part of the day. Lev.23:32. "It shall be unto you a Sabbath of rest, and ye shall afflict your souls: in the ninth day of the month at even, from even unto even shall ye celebrate your Sabbath" 5. That evening is at sunset is abundantly proved by the following scriptures: Deut.16:6; Lev.22:6,7; Deut.23:2; 24:13,15; Josh.8:29; 10:26,27; Judges 14:18; 2Sam.3:35; 2Chron.18:34; Matt.8:16; Mark 1:32; Luke 4:40. But does not Neh.13:19. conflict with this testimony, and indicate that the Sabbath did not begin until after dark? I think not. The text does not say, "When it began to be dark at Jerusalem before the Sabbath," but it says, "When the gates of Jerusalem began to be dark." If it be remembered that the gates of Jerusalem were placed under wide and high walls, it will not be found difficult to harmonize this text with the many here adduced, which prove that the day begins with sunset.

Calmet, in his Bible Dictionary, article, Sabbath, thus states the ancient Jewish method of beginning the Sabbath: "About half an hour before the sunset all work is quitted and the Sabbath is supposed to be begun." He speaks thus of the close of the Sabbath; "When night comes, and they can discern in the heaven three stars of moderate magnitude, then the Sabbath is ended, and they may return to their ordinary employments." <[Return](#)>

45 Neh.13:15-22. <[Return](#)>

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