

Ex. 16:1-7, 22-30 "Preparation Day"

For the Children: Most people like to prepare for the things that are important to them. If you are going on a holiday, you prepare for it. If you want to pass your exams, you prepare. In some ways, Sunday should be the most important day of the week for us. For on that day, we are free to worship the Lord together in church, as well as at home – without having other activities get in the way. If these things are important to us, we should prepare ahead of time. **Questions:** How can you prepare for Sunday? How does this “test” our attitude? Why do we still need a Sabbath-Day?

Introduction:

First Point: Preparation Then

- 1) A Gracious Provision: Israel grumbled against Moses, Aaron and the Lord, because they feared that they were running out of food – just as they had when they ran out of water. The Lord graciously promised abundant food – quails and manna.
- 2) The Test: The Lord tested Israel's trust in Him, their obedience and their humility. They could gather only what each family needed for one day. Anything above that would spoil. See Dt. 8:2,3,16. They were tested as to whether they would realize that man does not live by bread alone, but by the Word (promise and command) of the Lord (Dt. 8:3, Mt. 4:4). The test of obedience concerned the 4th commandment. Would they prepare for it (collect double on the 6th day? Would they rest on the 7th? If they wouldn't obey this, how would they obey the other commandments given in Ex. 20?
- 3) The Preparation: The preparation involved collecting double on the 6th day, then trusting that it would not spoil as it did on the other nights. The manna points to Christ as the Bread of Life; the Sabbath points to Him as the One who gives us rest from enemies, and re-creation. To prepare for the Sabbath thus showed how highly Israel regarded and trusted God's Word, His Son, His creation and providence.
- 4) The Sabbath: The Sabbath is linked to the creation-week in v.26 and 30. See also Ex. 20:11. Remembering His creation helps us to trust in His ongoing providence. The Sabbath provides rest from weekly distractions, so we can re-focus on the Lord (v. 25) and enjoy His creation and providence, as well as His salvation. This is a gift for our benefit (v. 29, Mk. 2:27). There is still room for meeting daily needs on this day (v. 25). It is a day to celebrate freedom from slavery, not to endure a new bondage of legalism. In fact, this is a matter of how much we love the Lord and want to be His covenant-people.

Second Point: Preparation Now

- 1) A Changed Situation: The OT Sabbath is replaced by the 1st day of the week, the Lord's Day. It has fewer detailed laws around it. It is fulfilled by Christ. The Sabbath worship no longer centres around the temple and priests and ceremonies. However, we still need to be re-focused on the Lord, His promises, His Son, His creation and providence, and the eternal Sabbath to come. Therefore, we still need a Sabbath day and we should prepare to get the most out of this gift.
- 2) Freed from Distraction: Re-focusing requires us to put effort into keeping the day free from weekly toil, study and entertainment, for these will distract us. That preparation should not just involve the day before, but other days as well.
- 3) Spiritual Distractions: Preparing for the Lord's Day also means seeking to deal with spiritual distractions, such as besetting sins and personal conflicts. See Mt. 5:24. On the positive side, we should prepare in such a way that we and our children may find the Sabbath a delight.
- 4) The Test Is Still There: Preparing for the Lord's Day still tests our obedience, humility and trust. It still tests our heart for the Lord: Do we want to be resting from the week's “idols”? Do we want to re-focus on the Lord more than anything? On His promises, creation, providence, and the Lord Jesus whose work is pointed to by the Sabbath?

Conclusion:

