

The Heritage of Jacob Promised

Key Verse: *“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.”*
—Isaiah 58:14

Selected Scripture:
Isaiah 58:1-14

OUR KEY VERSE BEGINS

with the word “then,” which indicates that what is subsequently written is conditional—dependent upon the fulfillment of a previously stated requirement. This prerequisite is given in verse 13: “If thou turn away thy foot from the sabbath, from doing thy pleasure on my holy day; and call the sabbath a delight, ... not doing thine own ways, nor finding thine own pleasure, nor speaking thine own words.”

One of the commandments Jehovah gave to Israel was: “Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy.” (Exod. 20:8-11) The Lord also instructed them: “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.” It is a “sabbath of rest, holy to the LORD.”—Exod. 31:12-15

Why did God repeat the giving of the Sabbath requirement to Israel through the Prophet Isaiah, seeing as he had already given it to Israel at the time of Moses? The answer is found in Isaiah 58:13, previously quoted.

Evidently, Israel was doing their “own ways,” finding their “own pleasure,” and speaking their “own words” on the Sabbath, rather than the Lord’s.

God desired that Israel would obey his commandments willingly, from their heart. In principle he was telling them, “My son, give me thine heart, and let thine eyes observe my ways.” (Prov. 23:26) Through the Prophet Ezekiel, Jehovah said concerning Israel, “I instituted my Sabbath for them as a sign between me and them, so they would know that I am the LORD, who has set them apart. ... They didn’t live life consistent with my statutes, they profaned my Sabbaths.”—Ezek. 20:12,16, *International Standard Version*

The psalmist emphasizes the importance of following God’s will, stating, “Delight yourself in the LORD, and he will give you the desires of your heart. Commit your way to the LORD; Trust him, and he will act.” (Ps. 37:4,5, *ISV*) To delight ourselves in the Lord is to have our affections centered upon him. If our heart is continually looking for divine direction, we will always be in a prayerful attitude.

As followers of Christ, we might wonder what was illustrated by natural Israel’s Sabbath day of rest. Paul answers this question in Hebrews chapter 4, pointing out that all who have accepted Jesus, resting and trusting in him, are thus enjoying the greater Sabbath rest at the present time—the rest of faith. Furthermore, the apostle points out that to maintain this rest, it is necessary to continually exercise faith in God and obey him.—Heb. 4:1-11

All who have received the Holy Spirit are given the privilege of entering into this rest. Instead of keeping a literal seventh day of physical rest, they now keep a perpetual rest of heart, mind, and faith in the Son of God. Maintaining such a rest will require not only obedience, to the extent of our ability, in all our thoughts, words, and deeds, but also requires daily trust in the Lord. Then, as our Key Verse states, we shall “delight ... in the LORD.” ■