

**THE BOUNDARY LEST THE SABBATH BE PROFANED**

**Intro:** -.Nehemiah was shocked when he returned from Persia, how quickly the redeemed people had fallen from God's laws.  
 -It was especially their worship in "God's house, and that affects all the rest of their actions and lives."  
 -Today our forefathers would be shocked how far the Reformed church has fallen in their Sabbath observance and lives.

**I. THE PRINCIPLE OF THE SABBATH**

- A. God is a covenant God.
  - 1. Each commandment is built upon a principle.
  - 2. Sabbath is not idleness, but it is an entering into and enjoying rest in God and his work.
- B. God takes up his people in covenant fellowship.
  - 1. The origin of the Sabbath is God's rest from all his labors in the work of creation (Ex. 20)
  - 2. When God created the Sabbath, it was that his people could enter into his rest with him and enjoy him.
  - 3. Sabbath keeping in the OT was not a matter of cold legalism but intended to be a delight, a great blessing to God's people
- C. The development and different phases of the Sabbath:
  - 1. There was the Sabbath of creation.
  - 2. There was the Sabbath of Sinai.
  - 3. There was the Sabbath of Canaan.
  - 4. There is the Sabbath in Christ.
  - 5. That Sabbath will be perfected in the new heavens and new earth.

**II. THE CHARGE OF FORSAKING AND PROFANING THE SABBATH**

- A. The charge in Nehemiah's day
  - 1. The storerooms were empty and rented out to the heathen.
  - 2. The house of God was forsaken.
  - 3. The people were busy buying and selling or preparing to do so.
- B. The charge of the Seventh Day Adventists
  - 1. Their position: "You have the wrong day. Saturday is properly the Sabbath."
  - 2. Their defense.
  - 3. They fail to understand and appreciate the development of the Sabbath rest and the work of Jesus Christ.
- C. A charge that needs to be made of Reformed Christians.
  - 1. There is increasingly a view that holds that there is no special day any more.
  - 2. Their intent is not to destroy the day of rest, but to say that it is not required by God but a matter of Christian liberty.
  - 3. We need to see the threat of materialism and pleasure.

**III. THE RESOLUTE ACTION REQUIRED**

- A. Nehemiah not only taught the people, but he acted decisively.
  - 1. Instruction was necessary. The people had to know the law of God in order to vow to walk in it (Neh. 10:29).
  - 2. Specific steps were taken to enforce the keeping of the Sabbath by refraining from some activities and doing others.
  - 3. Probably most important is the cleansing of the chambers of the temple itself!
- B. We need to act decisively also.
  - 1. Not just look around at other churches and shake our heads with sadness. We must teach our children the truth.
  - 2. We need to clean the chambers of the temple: make sure that our worship is NOT formalism, legalism, or hypocrisy.
- C. Not idle!
  - 1. Not idle on the Sabbath, but busy in the things of the Lord.
  - 2. Thus prepared by our Sabbath worship, we are not idle during the week, but fighting the good fight, living holy lives.