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The Superiority of Christ

"Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path."

PSALM 119:105



JOHN WEAVER

WEAVER BIBLE COLLEGE



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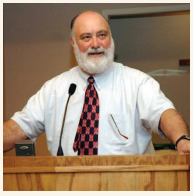
That in all things he might have the preeminence.

COLOSSIANS 1:18, EXCERPT

The superiority of Christ directs attention to His person, work, and sufficiency. John Weaver examines the claims of Scripture across these messages, considering how Christ's authority should shape faith and obedience. The series invites readers to test competing sources of confidence by the testimony of God's Word.

“To enter into God's rest requires faith and obedience.”

JOHN WEAVER



John Weaver

John Weaver's sermons form the teaching collection presented by Weaver Bible College. This volume gathers his teaching from that collection.

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CHAPTER 1

The Superiority of Christ

Part One of Four

SCRIPTURE READING - Hebrews 4:1-10 (KJV)

Introduction to the Sabbath Issue

Let us therefore fear, lest, a promise being left us of entering into his rest, any of you should seem to come short of it. For unto us was the gospel preached, as well as unto them: but the word preached did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in them that heard it. For we which have believed do enter into rest, as he said, As I have sworn in my wrath, if they shall enter into my rest: although the works were finished from the foundation of the world. For he spake in a certain place of the seventh day on this wise, And God did rest the seventh day from all his works. And in this place again, If they shall enter into my rest. Seeing therefore it remaineth that some must enter therein, and they to whom it was first preached entered not in because of unbelief: Again, he limiteth a certain day, saying in David, To day, after so long a time; as it is said, To day if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts. For if Jesus had given

> them rest, then would he not afterward have spoken of another day. There remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God. For he that is entered into his rest, he also hath ceased from his own works, as God did from his.
>
> The message is on the superiority of Christ. By the grace of God, and Him willing, for the next four Sundays I am going to deal with what is known as the Sabbath issue. We will consider three points from Scripture: the creation Sabbath, the Canaan Sabbath, and then the Christian Sabbath.
>
> The issue of the Sabbath has plagued many people. Many have reached various and sundry conclusions concerning the Sabbath day or Sabbath days. I am sure that, with the brief study I am going to undertake in four messages, I will not convince anyone who does not want to be convinced, whose mind is already made up, or who has simply drawn his own conclusions and is unwilling to listen or change. The problem that you have in discussing the Sabbath is simply this.

There are many different views among individuals who regard different days and times, and they even differ as to when a Sabbath begins and ends. Yet some who hold certain opinions condemn all others who disagree with them. Some hold their positions so dogmatically that they believe and teach anyone who worships on Sunday is lost and of the devil. If you are traveling north on I-75, after 475 and 75 come together, you will see a big billboard on the left condemning all Sunday worship and saying that anyone who worships on Sunday is of the devil. It is just that plainly stated.

On the other hand, some are more gracious and give a little leeway, saying, "You may be saved if you worship on Sunday." But they too usually have gone into Phariseeism and legalism in their interpretation and application of the Sabbath. Basically, they demand that you worship in their way on their day. If you do not, there is no way you could possibly be right with God; you are simply under the judgment of God.

You must remember that man is always a creature of extremes. It is difficult to go down the middle of the road—that is, to avoid the ditches and pitfalls on each side. We always have a tendency to

swing from one extreme to the other. There has to be a cautious concern when you begin to study the issue of the Sabbath, just as there must be whenever you begin a study of any doctrine in the Bible, especially doctrines on which good men disagree.

I have preached for 44 years, and there are still many things I do not know. The man under whom I learned a great deal had personally taught the Bible for over 50 years. That did not include his personal study or education. You are going to find areas where good men disagree because the Bible is not necessarily clear dogmatically on certain issues.

Warning Against Pharisaical Mentality

For instance, take eschatology. Why do you have amillennialism, postmillennialism, historic premillennialism, and dispensational premillennialism? The answer is that men disagree on when Christ is returning. The interesting thing is that all four positions believe and teach that Jesus Christ is coming back literally, visibly, and bodily. They disagree only as to when and how He is returning. Yet there are people who will fight you tooth and toenail if you do not agree with them on their eschatological position. I have been in churches where, if you held to a different eschatological position, they would never allow you to teach or preach in their church.

You have to avoid at all cost a Pharisaic mentality. It was Saint Augustine who came up with this interesting, gracious wisdom: "In essentials, unity. In non-essentials, liberty. In all things, charity." It is hard sometimes to be charitable, gracious, and kind to people who disagree with you, especially when you are very dogmatic on a particular issue.

I am not talking about areas where the Bible is plain. I am not going to be gracious and kind to someone who denies the deity of Jesus Christ, or someone who denies the infallibility of the Scripture. I will tell them very plainly, you are wrong. But there are areas in which good men disagree. What do I mean when I say you have to be cautious that you do not develop a pharisaical mentality? Let me show you.

In Matthew chapter 12, beginning with verse 1: "At that time Jesus went on the sabbath day through the corn; and his disciples were an hungred, and began to pluck the ears of corn, and to eat. But when the Pharisees saw it, they said unto him, Behold, thy disciples do that which is not lawful to do upon the sabbath day."

"But he said unto them, Have ye not read what David did, when he was an hungred, and they that were with him; How he entered into the house of God, and did eat the shewbread, which was not lawful for him to eat, neither for them which were with him, but only for the priests? Or have ye not read in the law, how that on the sabbath days the priests in the temple profane the sabbath, and are blameless? But I say unto you, That in this place is one greater than the temple."

"But if ye had known what this meaneth, I will have mercy, and not sacrifice, ye would not have condemned the guiltless. For the Son of man is Lord even of the sabbath day."

The Pharisees were so Pharisaical that they even condemned Jesus Christ because He did not follow their interpretation and application of the Sabbath laws. In fact, Matthew 15 shows that their interpretation and application were contrary to the law of God. "Then came to Jesus scribes and Pharisees, which were of Jerusalem, saying, Why do thy disciples transgress the tradition of the elders?"

"For they wash not their hands when they eat bread." This was not a sanitation issue, but a ceremony in which the Jews were involved. "Why do thy disciples wash not their hands before they eat bread? But he answered and said unto them, Why do ye also transgress the commandment of God by your tradition? For God commanded, saying, Honour thy father and mother: and, He that curseth father or mother, let him die the death. But ye say, Whosoever shall say to his father or his mother, It is a gift, by whatsoever thou mightest be profited by me; And honour not his father or his mother, he shall be free. Thus have ye made the commandment of God of none effect by your tradition."

"Ye hypocrites, well did Esaias prophesy of you, saying, This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoureth me

with their lips; but their heart is far from me. But in vain they do worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men."

The Pharisees held their own interpretation of the Sabbath to such an extent that they were willing to condemn Christ and His disciples and to maintain their interpretation and application even when it contradicted the plain law of God. That is what I mean when I say you must beware of a pharisaical misinterpretation and misapplication of scriptures.

We are going to make a cursory study of the Sabbaths, not spending fifteen weeks on the issue, but about four. I will show you numerous principles from the Word of God, and I hope that through these principles and the multitude of scriptures, you will be able to draw for yourself the biblical conclusion and see what the Bible genuinely teaches concerning the Sabbath.

The Superiority of Christ in Hebrews

Hebrews chapter 4 is going to be our main text. I will not be expounding this text today. I am going to take a verse, go back to the Old Testament, and show you how that verse is to be interpreted and applied. But first, let me give you an overall understanding of the book of Hebrews.

The title of this message is “The Superiority of Christ.” The book of Hebrews was written to demonstrate that Jesus Christ is superior in every way. Without reading these verses, you can jot them down and look at them later. Hebrews 1:1-3 teaches the superiority of Jesus Christ over the prophets. It does not matter how great the prophets were in the Old Testament or the New Testament. The Bible says plainly that God has spoken fully, finally, totally, and completely in these last days by His Son, Jesus Christ. Therefore, Jesus Christ is superior to all the prophets.

Hebrews 1:4 through 2:18 teaches the superiority of Jesus Christ over the angels: “For unto which of the angels said he at any time, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee?” To none of them. Jesus Christ is not only superior to the prophets; He is superior to the angels.

Hebrews 3 teaches the superiority of Jesus Christ over Moses. Hebrews 4 teaches His superiority over Joshua, and Hebrews 5 teaches the superiority of Christ over Aaron, the high priest.

There is no man nor any group of men superior to Jesus Christ. He is superior to all the prophets, all the angels, Moses, Joshua, and Aaron. There is no ordinance, ceremony, festival, or day over which Jesus Christ is not superior. Jesus Christ is superior in every way and in every detail. That is why Colossians 1:18 says this concerning Christ:

"And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the preeminence." In all things He might have the preeminence. Thus Jesus Christ is presented in the book of Hebrews as better than anyone and anything. In fact, one of the key words in the book of Hebrews is "better," showing that Jesus Christ is better. For instance, Hebrews 1:4 says, "Being made so much better than the angels, as he hath by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they." Christ is better than the angels. Hebrews 6:9 speaks of those who have truly, savingly believed in Jesus Christ: "But, beloved, we are persuaded better things of you, and things that accompany salvation, though we thus speak." Why?

Why are God's people supposed to be better than the Old Testament saints? Because they had the types, the emblems, and the pictures. We have the reality.

In Hebrews chapter 7, verse 7, the Bible says, "And without all contradiction the less is blessed of the better." In verse 19: "For the law made nothing perfect, but the bringing in of a better hope did; by the which we draw nigh unto God." Jesus Christ is the better hope. We do not draw nigh unto God through the law; we draw nigh unto God through Jesus Christ.

Verse 22 says, "By so much was Jesus made a surety of a better testament." Or a better covenant. Hebrews 8:6 says, "But now hath he obtained a more excellent ministry, by how much also he is the mediator of a better covenant, which was established upon better promises." Jesus Christ is the better mediator, better than Moses. He has a better covenant, which has better promises.

Hebrews 9:23 says, "It was therefore necessary that the patterns of things in the heavens should be purified with these;" that is, with the animal sacrifices, "but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these." Jesus Christ was far superior to all of those sacrifices in the Old Testament.

Hebrews 10:34 says, "For ye had compassion of me in my bonds, and took joyfully the spoiling of your goods, knowing in yourselves that ye have in heaven a better and an enduring substance."

Had you rather spend seventy years in Canaan land or eternity with our Lord in heaven? I would say that tends to be a little better. Hebrews 11:16 says, “But now they desire a better country, that is, an heavenly: wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God: for he hath prepared for them a city.” Hebrews 11:35 speaks of “a better resurrection”: “Women received their dead raised to life again: and others were tortured, not accepting deliverance; that they might obtain a better resurrection.” Hebrews 12:24 says, “And to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel.”

As you read through the book of Hebrews and underline the word better, you should be getting the idea that everything we have in Jesus Christ, and everything about Christ, is better than what they had in the Old Testament.

The Glory of the New Covenant

Jesus Christ is superior. The Old Covenant was glorious. How do we know that? Because the Bible says it was. But the New Covenant, the New Testament, is more glorious. How do we know that? Because of the Bible. Second Corinthians 3 compares the Old Covenant and the New Covenant. I have preached seven or eight messages on the superiority of the New Covenant to the Old Covenant. Notice verses 7 and 8: “But if the ministration of death, written and engraven in stones, was glorious,” referring to when God gave the Ten Commandments to Moses, “so that the children of Israel could not stedfastly behold the face of Moses for the glory of his countenance; which glory was to be done away: How shall not the ministration of the spirit be rather glorious?” Remember when God gave Moses the Ten Commandments.

He came down off the mount. His face shone so much that the children of Israel could not look upon it, and Moses had to put a veil upon his face as he spoke to them. But when he went back into the tabernacle to talk with God, he took the veil off.

The apostle says, “But if the ministration of death, written and engraven in stones, was glorious,” and it was, “so that the children of Israel could not stedfastly behold the face of Moses for the glory of his countenance;” then he adds, “which glory was to be done away.” The glory of the Old Testament is to fade away. Does that mean the Old Testament is not the word of God? No. Does that mean we do not preach from the Old Testament? No. Does that mean there are no applications from the Old Testament? No.

How, then, was its glory to be done away? He says, “How shall not the ministration of the spirit,” that is, that of the Holy Spirit in the New Testament, “be rather glorious?” He continues: “For even that which was made glorious had no glory in this respect, by reason of the glory that excelleth. For if that which is done away was glorious, much more that which remaineth is glorious.”

The Old Testament glory is done away because it is absorbed and excelled by the glory that we now have. In other words, the glory of the Old Testament is nothing compared to the glory of the New Testament. The prophets, ceremonies, rituals, festivals, and days cannot equal the glory that we have in Jesus Christ. The glory of the old faded away because it was so excelled by that which we have in the new.

Christ's Superiority Over Moses

To understand the argument in chapter 4, you must understand chapter 3, because chapter 3 is where the author begins his argument. Hebrews 3:1 says, “Wherefore, holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, consider the Apostle and High Priest of our profession, Christ Jesus; Who was faithful to him that appointed him, as also Moses was faithful in all his house. For this man was counted worthy of more glory than Moses, inasmuch as he who hath builded the house hath more honour than the house. For every house is builded by some man; but he that built all things is God. And Moses verily was faithful in all his house, as a servant, for a

testimony of those things which were to be spoken after; But Christ as a son over his own house; whose house are we, if we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end. Wherefore (as the Holy Ghost saith, To day if ye will hear his voice, Harden not your hearts, as in the provocation, in the day of temptation in the wilderness)."

He is talking to us: "Wherefore, holy brethren," partakers of the heavenly calling, "consider the Apostle and High Priest of our profession, Christ Jesus." He did not say, "Consider Moses." He did not say, "Consider Aaron." He did not say, "Consider the Old Testament prophets." He said, "Consider the Apostle and High Priest of our confession, Jesus Christ." Remember Colossians 1:18: "That in all things he might have the preeminence." Jesus Christ far exceeds the superiority of Moses. Moses was superior in the Old Testament.

There is no two ways about that. But in the New Testament, Christ so far excels and exceeds Moses that Moses is properly buried. A. W. Pink, commenting on Hebrews chapter 3, verses 1 through 6, writes:

"But Christ as a son over his own house." Here is the final proof that Christ is counted worthy of more glory than Moses. The proofs presented in this passage of our Lord's immeasurable superiority are seven in number: Moses was an apostle, Christ the Apostle. Moses was a member of a house, Christ was the builder of one. Moses was connected with a single house, but Christ built all things, being the creator of the universe. Moses was a man, Jesus Christ is God. Moses was but a servant, Christ is the Son. Moses was a testimony of things to be spoken after, Christ supplied the substance and fulfillment of what Moses witnessed to. Moses was but a servant in the house of Jehovah. Christ was a son over his own house.

John Owen, the Puritan, said, "Here the apostle taketh leave of Moses, but treats not about him any more, and therefore he gives him, as it were, an honorable burial. He puts this glorious epitaph on His grave: Moses, a faithful servant of the Lord in His whole house." After Hebrews chapter 3, the rest of the book is about Christ and His superiority.

Christ did indeed build His house. Ephesians 2:10 says that we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus. Ephesians 2:20–22 tells us that we are built a holy temple unto the Lord, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief cornerstone. Hebrews 3:6 says, “But Christ as a son over his own house; whose house are we.” So Christ is indeed building His house.

When you come to verse 7, particularly through verse 9, the author of Hebrews quotes Psalm 95:7–11. Hold Hebrews 3 and turn back to Psalm 95. Psalm 95 will not be developed today, but it will be mentioned.

The Rest of God in Psalm 95 and Hebrews 3-4

It will be developed and applied later in this brief series. Notice Psalm 95, beginning with verse 7: “For he is our God; and we are the people of his pasture, and the sheep of his hand. To day if ye will hear his voice, Harden not your heart, as in the provocation, and as in the day of temptation in the wilderness: When your fathers tempted me, proved me, and saw my work. Forty years long was I grieved with this generation, and said, It is a people that do err in their heart, and they have not known my ways: Unto whom I sware in my wrath that they should not enter into my rest.”

Now go back to Hebrews chapter 3, verse 7: “Wherefore (as the Holy Ghost saith, To day if ye will hear his voice, Harden not your hearts, as in the provocation, in the day of temptation in the wilderness: When your fathers tempted me, proved me, and saw my works forty years. Wherefore I was grieved with that generation, and said, They do alway err in their heart. They have not known my ways. So I sware in my wrath, They shall not enter into my rest.”

What rest was God talking about? It had to be the Canaan rest, or the Canaan Sabbath, because He is talking about bringing these people out of Egypt. The promised land in Deuteronomy 12:9, 1 Chronicles 23:25, and Psalm 132:14 is indeed called a rest. Was the promised land to which David is referring the true rest, or was it merely a picture of that which was to come?

The Hebrew word for rest literally refers here to a rest or a resting place, a place of ease and quietness. In Hebrews chapter 3, verse 11,

the Greek word once again simply refers to a resting place. It is true that metaphorically the word is sometimes used to refer to the blessedness in which God dwells, but in the context he is talking about the promised land. The Canaan rest will be considered next week. Look in your Bibles to Hebrews chapter 4, verse 4: “For he spake in a certain place of the seventh day on this wise, And God did rest the seventh day from all his works. And in this place again, If they shall enter into my rest.”

There is a combination here of the Canaan rest and the creation rest. I am going to separate them so we can deal with them one at a time. Verse 4 primarily deals with what you and I would call the creation Sabbath: "For he spake in a certain place of the seventh day on this wise, And God did rest the seventh day from all his works." Everyone knows that is the creation Sabbath.

The Creation Sabbath in Genesis 2

Now consider the creation Sabbath in Genesis chapter 2. "Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host of them. And on the seventh day God ended his work which he had made; and he rested on the seventh day from all his work which he had made. And God blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it: because that in it he had rested from all his work which God created and made."

Note that this seventh day is a celebration of God's creation. You may say, "But now brother Weaver, in this passage, it is called the seventh day and not the Sabbath." I understand. But if you look in Exodus chapter 20 and verse 11, you will see that it is also called the Sabbath day.

Exodus 20:11 says, “For in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day: wherefore the LORD blessed the sabbath day, and hallowed it.”

Genesis 2 begins with these words: “Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host of them.” The very next thing we read about is the institution of Sabbath rest. In other words, instituting the Sabbath rest was God's first act after He had created the world and made it fit for human habitation.

There are a number of truths that have to be pointed out. Mark this down: the primal, or original, Sabbath was a rest day. That is emphasized in this verse by repetition. Verse 2 says, “And on the seventh day God ended his work which he had made; and he rested on the seventh day from all his work which he had made.” He rested on the seventh day; He ended His work. Therefore, the prime element in the Sabbath is rest. Whether you study the creation Sabbath, the Canaan Sabbath, or the Christian Sabbath, you will still find that the basic principle is rest. It is not worship. It is rest.

Stronger language is used in Exodus 31:17: “It is a sign between me and the children of Israel for ever: for in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, and on the seventh day he rested, and was refreshed.”

Now, what in the world does Scripture mean when it says that God rested? Another question intimately connected with the first is, what are we to learn and apply from the fact that God rested?

When Scripture says that God rested, obviously the word does not imply inertia. Inertia means, basically, lifelessness, dullness, drowsiness, or the inability to function—much like teenagers when they stay out too late or do not get enough sleep: “I don't feel like getting up. I don't feel like eating.” Very obviously, that cannot be applied to God. God did not shut down, so to speak, after He created the world. Moreover, you cannot say that God was tired, weary, or exhausted.

Isaiah 40:28 tells us that the everlasting God, the LORD, the Creator of the ends of the earth, “fainteth not, neither is weary,” and that “there is no searching of his understanding.” Therefore, when the Bible says that God rested, it does not mean inertia. It does not mean that God was tired, worn out, weary, overworked, exhausted, or tired out. God was not tired, God was not weary, and God was not exhausted.

Psalm 121:3 says, “He will not suffer thy foot to be moved: he that keepeth thee will not slumber.” God does not need sleep, and God does not sleep. So when the Bible says that God rested, we can plainly state that it does not mean inactivity caused by exhaustion or inertia.

How, then, do we interpret this? What does it mean when it says that God rested? I believe there are several answers to that question. First, we could say that His rest was initially a rest of complacency. I am not using complacency in the way we use the word today. If we say that someone is complacent today, we mean that he is apathetic and unwilling to do anything. He is, as the sermon puts it, "sorry." But that is not the meaning here, and that is not how the word is used. The word complacent means satisfied.

When we speak of the rest of complacency, we are talking about the rest of satisfaction. Genesis 1:31 says, "And God saw every thing that he had made, and, behold, it was very good. And the evening and the morning were the sixth day. Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host of them. And on the seventh day God ended his work which he had made." What does it mean when it says that God rested? God was absolutely and totally satisfied and delighted in everything that He created.

It was just the way He ordained it. It was perfect, and it was made for His honor and His glory. Revelation 4:11 spells this out plainly: "Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power: for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created."

What does it mean when it says that God rested? First, it means that it was a rest of complacency and satisfaction. God was pleased with what He had done.

Secondly, when God ended His work and rested, it indicated that His accomplishment was finished. God finished what He ordained to do. His work ended; therefore, He rested. This implies that God's working in creation was reasonable. It was not aimless or pointless. For instance, if I endeavor to build a barn, say, twenty by forty, I have my plans drawn up and build it according to those plans. When I finish the barn, do I keep working on it? No. I worked reasonably. I had an aim and a purpose, and it was accomplished. I sit back and rest in it.

God's Rest as Satisfaction and Completion

When God created the world, He had a specific end, purpose, and aim. Seeing it accomplished, He withheld His creative energy. He did not create anymore; He rested. There are no new worlds being created today. God created everything in six days. There was no need to keep building or creating.

Rest does not necessarily imply that God did nothing. Verse 2 says, “And on the seventh day God ended his work which he had made; and he rested on the seventh day from all his work which he had made.” The Bible is simply saying that God ceased His creation. It does not say that He did not do a work of any other kind. He did work.

How do we know that? If God had ceased totally, absolutely, and completely, what would have happened to His creation? It would have been gone. We know that He continued to work providentially because the Bible says in Hebrews that He upholds all things by the word of His power. Have you not read Psalm 104? The Bible says that all creatures wait upon Him. If God withholds His hands, they have nothing; they die. God continued His providential dealings, upholding all things by the word of His power and supplying the needs of His creatures.

Do you remember what our Lord said in John 5 in verse 17? He said it like this: “My Father worketh hitherto, and I work.” In other words, the Bible clearly teaches—and I’m not getting into this right now—that there is indeed lawful work to be done on Sabbath days. Our Lord said Himself, “Wherefore it is lawful to do well on the sabbath days,” Matthew 12 and verse 12. You know the story of how our Lord said you can lead your ox away to water. You can supply food for it. That’s work. You can heal on the Sabbath days. That’s work.

So, when the Bible says that God rested, that does not mean that He did not function in other spheres as well. Secondly, as you look back in your Bibles to Genesis chapter 2, the primal, or original, Sabbath was blessed by God. Look in verse 3: “And God blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it: because that in it he had rested from all his work which God created and made.”

Now I want you to understand this. The reason why God blessed the Sabbath day was not because it was the Sabbath day. There's nothing special about the Sabbath day. God blessed the Sabbath day because in it He rested. Therefore, when the Sabbath law was written upon the tables of stone, it said, "Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy." How did God hallow the Sabbath day? The Sabbath was hallowed by God by resting in it and blessing it.

Man's Need for Rest and the Purpose of Sabbath

Undoubtedly, there is indeed an application of this truth for our benefit. There is nothing wrong with each of us taking a day of rest. We have to understand that a Sabbath rest is not to be a hindrance, but a help. It is not to be a burden, but a blessing. And I'm going to tell you something: Believe me or not, but the older you get, the more you find out you are not God, the more you find out you are flesh and blood, and you need to rest.

Young people think they can go forever and live forever. It does not work like that when you get older, I can assure you. There is nothing wrong with that. Patrick Fairbairn, who wrote extensively on the Old Testament, said this concerning the Sabbath:

"Having appointed it to a distinctive end, he conferred on it a distinctive character that its creature man might from time to time be doing in his line of things what the creator had already done in his own might after six successive days of work. Take one to reinvigorate his frame, to reflect calmly upon his past, and view the part he has taken and the relations he occupies on the outward visible theater of this world in light of the spiritual and the eternal. It was to be his calling and his destiny on earth not simply to work, but to work as a reasonable and moral being after the example of his maker for specific ends. For this, he needed seasons of quiet and repose and thoughtful considerations, not less than time and opportunity for active labor as otherwise, he could neither properly enjoy the work of his hands nor obtain the higher part of his nature that nobler good which is required to satisfy it."

Man is to work like God: purposefully and deliberately. Then he is to stop and rest in what he has done, consider what he has done, and consider his time as compared to eternity. All of his labor here is

basically for his own mouth, and then he is going to die and be gone. If he only makes preparation for this life, he is in trouble.

Our Lord said explicitly in Mark 2:27, "The sabbath was made for man, and not man for the sabbath." The Sabbath was made for man, so that we could rest and repose after our labor.

We are talking about the creation Sabbath. We cannot force or make God's creation Sabbath commensurate, or equal, to our Saturday, the seventh day of our week. In order to grasp the significance of the creation Sabbath, we need to understand first and foremost that it was God's rest. In it, God rested. Why did God rest and bless the Sabbath day, calling it a Sabbath? Because in it He rested. It was God's rest in celebration of creation. There is absolutely no way to determine from the Bible on which day God rested. You say, "Well, the Bible says He rested on the Sabbath day."

The Impossibility of Identifying the Original Seventh Day

Yes, He did. But which day did He start work on? You've got to remember back then, there were no days of the week. Yes, there was a day one, day two, day three, day four, day five, day six. Yes, there were six days. But God didn't start Sunday, Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, and then rest on... The Bible doesn't say that. Now, if you want to say that that's what you believe, that's one thing. But when you try to bind my conscience to what you believe, that's quite another thing. There is no way absolutely to know which day the seventh day was. It is impossible to derive and make the seventh day here Saturday. There were no names for the days at creation with the exception of numbers. Now, I want to give you a quote from Fairbairn again, then I want to point something out from the Bible. Listen to what Fairbairn said: "God, therefore, when he had finished the work of creation by making man, sanctified the seventh day, his own seventh, but man's first."

“For man had not first to work and then to reap, but as God's vicegerent, nature's king, and high priest, with the Sabbath begins the sacred history of man, the day on which he stood forth to bless God, and in company with Eve, entered into his divine calling on earth.”

What day was man created on? The sixth day. What was the next day? The seventh day that God blessed.

How was Adam to start his week? By resting and worshipping God the first day of his week. He started with the Sabbath. Now whether or not Adam kept that Sabbath, I don't know. Arthur W. Pink gives a very vivid argument that Adam was created on the sixth day and, before the seventh was over, he was a sinner. His main point is that, in Colossians 1:18, in all things Christ must have the preeminence. That means Christ is the only one who ever kept the Sabbath perfectly.

But I am simply pointing out that it is God's rest. Adam was to begin his week, his time on earth, in God's rest. Man then began his week with a day of rest. God's Sabbath was man's first day.

The Scripture begins and ends with the rest of God. Adam failed to keep God's rest, and he was driven from the garden. He was unable to abide in God's rest because of his unbelief. Why did Adam not stay in the garden? He did not believe God; he believed the serpent. They disobeyed God, and God drove them out of the garden.

Unbelief Prevents Entering God's Rest

When the children of Israel came out of Egypt, did they enter into the promised land? No. Notice what the Bible says in 1 Corinthians chapter 10, beginning at verse 1:

“Moreover, brethren, I would not that ye should be ignorant, how that all our fathers were under the cloud, and all passed through the sea; And were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea; And did all eat the same spiritual meat; And did all drink the same spiritual drink: for they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them: and that Rock was Christ. But with many of them God was not well pleased.”

For they were overthrown in the wilderness. Now these things were our examples, to the intent we should not lust after evil things, as they also lusted. Neither be ye idolaters, as were some of them; as it is written, The people sat down to eat and drink, and rose up to play. Neither let us commit fornication, as some of them committed, and fell in one day three and twenty thousand. Neither let us tempt

Christ, as some of them also tempted, and were destroyed of serpents. Neither murmur ye, as some of them also murmured, and were destroyed of the destroyer. Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples: and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come.

Verse 5, talking about these men that came out of Egypt: “But with many of them God was not well pleased: for they were overthrown in the wilderness.” With many of them God was not well pleased? Would you care to tell me how many of the original men that came out of Egypt got into the Promised Land? Two: Joshua and Caleb. But with many of them—all of them with the exception of two—God overthrew them in the wilderness. Now why did God overthrow them in the wilderness?

Hebrews chapter 4 says, “Let us therefore fear, lest, a promise being left us of entering into his rest, any of you should seem to come short of it. For unto us was the gospel preached, as well as unto them: but the word preached did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in them that heard it. For we which have believed do enter into rest, as he said, As I have sworn in my wrath, if they shall enter into my rest: although the works were finished from the foundation of the world.”

Did you hear what I read? The reason these people did not enter into God's rest was because of unbelief. The rest, the works, were finished from the foundation of the world; therefore, the rest was already there. The rest was there when Adam was created, but Adam did not abide in that rest. God then gave a Canaan rest, and the people did not enter into that because of their unbelief, their sins, and their rebellion. The few that did get into Canaan land, after a few short years, God cast them out too. Why? Because of their unbelief, their sin, and their rebellion.

To enter into God's rest requires faith and obedience. To enter into God's rest is not an observance of ceremonies, rituals, days, and months. People did that in the Old Testament, and God condemned them.

You see, folks, you can observe days and months and years. You can observe ceremonies and rituals down the line. It does not mean a

thing if there is no real, genuine faith and obedience. Look what God says to Israel in Amos 5:21: “I hate, I despise your feast days, and I will not smell in your solemn assemblies. Though ye offer me burnt offerings and your meat offerings, I will not accept them: neither will I regard the peace offerings of your fat beasts. Take thou away from me the noise of thy songs; for I will not hear the melody of thy viols.”

Now, wait a minute. Did not God ordain the feast days? Yes, He did. Did He not ordain the Sabbaths? Yes, He did. Did He not ordain the sacrifices? Yes, He did. But now God is looking at these people and says, “I hate them. I won't have them. They turn my stomach.”

Why? Verse 24 says: “But let judgment run down as waters, and righteousness as a mighty stream. Have ye offered unto me sacrifices and offerings in the wilderness forty years, O house of Israel? But ye have borne the tabernacle of your Moloch and Chiun your images, the star of your god, which ye made to yourselves. Therefore will I cause you to go into captivity beyond Damascus, saith the LORD, whose name is The God of hosts.” Here is what they did. They kept all the days, all the rituals; they did it ceremonially. But at the same time, they were worshiping false gods. There was no faith. There was no obedience. Days, ceremonies, and rituals are worthless without faith.

Now, I told you, and I am going to prove it before I finish this brief series: the Bible starts and ends with rest. But in order to rest in the sovereign God of heaven and earth, there must be faith and there must be obedience. One last passage: Isaiah 57:20–21.

Rest Only in Christ

"But the wicked are like the troubled sea, when it cannot rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt. There is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked." What are the wicked like? They are like the troubled sea, which cannot rest. The only true rest is found in God, who has revealed Himself in Jesus Christ. If you rest in Him, you rest in His works, not yours; His obedience, not yours.

It is true that we must be obedient. It is true that we must have faith. But my partial obedience to the law of God could never, under any circumstances, save me. Why? Because if you violate the law on

one point, you are guilty of all. I have to have a perfect obedience, and that perfect obedience can only be found in Jesus Christ.

Even in the Old Testament, there was no Israelite, no Old Testament Hebrew, who kept God's law perfectly. They did not keep God's Sabbaths perfectly, nor did they keep God's festivals perfectly, and God judged them because of it. The only rest is the rest of God, which we find in Jesus Christ, who is superior to the prophets, the angels, Moses, Joshua, Aaron, anyone, and anything, because Jesus Christ is God in the flesh. It was Christ who said, "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." And you shall find peace for your souls.

Father, in the name of Jesus Christ, we ask and pray that You would help us to understand. Open our eyes and our intellect; grasp us, Lord, by Your power and by Your Spirit, and give us the ability to perceive, see, and comprehend the truths of Thy word. Teach us and build us up in the most holy faith. In Christ's name we ask and pray. Amen.

CHAPTER 2

The Superiority of Christ

Part Two of Four

Introduction and Review

Hebrews chapter 4, verse 1: “Let us therefore fear, lest, a promise being left us of entering into his rest, any of you should seem to come short of it.”

“For unto us was the gospel preached, as well as unto them: but the word preached did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in them that heard it. For we which have believed do enter into rest, as he said, As I have sworn in my wrath, if they shall enter into my rest: although the works were finished from the foundation of the world. For he spake in a certain place of the seventh day on this wise, And God did rest the seventh day from all his works. And in this place again, If they shall enter into my rest. Seeing therefore it remaineth that some must enter therein, and they to whom it was first preached entered not in because of unbelief: Again, he limiteth a certain day, saying in David, To day, after so long a time; as it is said, To day if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts. For if Jesus had given them rest, then would he not afterward have spoken of another day.

There remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God. For he that is entered into his rest, he also hath ceased from his own works, as God did from his."

Jesus Christ is superior to anyone or anything. Some of the information is very plain in Scripture, but it could be technical in the sense that we are not used to thinking and listening like this.

The theme of the book of Hebrews is the superiority of Christ, and the word "better" is one of its key words. In Hebrews chapter 1, verses 1 through 3, Christ is superior to the prophets. In Hebrews 1, verse 4, through chapter 2, verse 18, Christ is superior to the angels. In Hebrews chapter 3, we see the superiority of Christ over Moses. In Hebrews chapter 4, the superiority of Christ over Joshua. And in Hebrews chapter 5, the superiority of Christ over Aaron. So there is no man, no group of men, no ordinance, and no group of ordinances over which Jesus Christ is not superior.

The Bible says that God has spoken fully and finally and totally and completely in His Son, Jesus Christ. You will find that in Hebrews chapter 1, verses 1 through 3. Because Jesus Christ is the express image of His person, He is God incarnate, and He upholds all things by the word of His power.

Last week we looked primarily at the creation Sabbath. I showed you that the creation Sabbath was God's rest in particular. I pointed out that there was a creation Sabbath, a Canaan Sabbath, and a Christian Sabbath. But first and foremost, when you refer to the creation Sabbath, it was God's rest. There is no way in the world that we could know what day was the seventh day, because the Bible does not say that He began on Sunday or Monday. It simply says first day, second day, third day, fourth day, fifth day, sixth day, and the seventh He rested. Man was created on the sixth day, so he began his life by entering into God's rest.

The Sabbath Principle: Rest, Not Worship

Today we are talking about the Canaan Sabbath. The pattern of the Canaan Sabbath rest was God's creation Sabbath rest. The goal of the Sabbath is man's redemption rest, or that which I will probably

deal with in the next two weeks, the Christian Sabbath, which is rest in our Redeemer, the Lord Jesus Christ.

The Sabbath principle asserts freedom under God. It asserts liberty under God's law. Whether we are dealing with the creation Sabbath, the Canaan Sabbath, or the Christian Sabbath, the principle of the Sabbath summons man to obedience to the ordinance of rest in order to free man from himself as well as his work. It draws man away from himself and everything else. Please remember this: the essence of humanism is man's ability to save himself. It is man's ability to involve himself, to control himself, to control his society, his world, and all things.

There is no rest in humanism. The only rest that exists is rest in God, and the Sabbath demonstrates our need for rest and our need of a Redeemer. Man cannot rest apart from God. You look at the world, and, as our God said, “There is no rest, saith my God, to the wicked.” They are like the troubled sea that casteth up its dirt and mire. Humanism deals mainly with man, man's ability, and man's work. Christianity deals with God's full and final work in Jesus Christ.

When you examine the Sabbath day that the Hebrews were to keep, it is evident that it was not primarily a day of worship, but rather a day of rest. A pattern of weekly worship did not exist in the Old Testament. Yes, they worshipped daily, but their worship was family oriented and was in the warp and woof of everyday life. There was not a weekly day of worship in the Old Testament.

I am going to present many Scriptures. If you have time to write them down, you will be blessed, but I will ask you to turn to some so that you can see the general principle. I have enunciated the simple fact that the essence of the Sabbath was rest. It was not worship; it was rest. Consequently, no work was to be done on the Sabbath.

SCRIPTURE READING - Exodus 20:8-11; Exodus 23:9-12 (KJV)

General Law: No Work on the Sabbath

Scripture is exceedingly specific on this issue. The general law is that no work is to be done on the Sabbath day. We are talking about the Canaan Sabbath, the Hebrew Sabbath of the Old

Testament. If I fail to say that each time today that I am talking about the Sabbath, remember I am talking about the Canaan Sabbath, or the Hebrew Sabbath in the Old Testament.

Exodus 20:8-11: "Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days shalt thou labour, and do all thy work: But the seventh day is the sabbath of the LORD thy God: in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy manservant, nor thy maidservant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates: For in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day: wherefore the LORD blessed the sabbath day, and hallowed it."

Note that God says no work was to be done. Turn to Exodus 23:9-12: "Also thou shalt not oppress a stranger: for ye know the heart of a stranger, seeing ye were strangers in the land of Egypt. And six years thou shalt sow thy land, and shalt gather in the fruits thereof: But the seventh year thou shalt let it rest and lie still; that the poor of thy people may eat: and what they leave the beasts of the field shall eat. In like manner thou shalt deal with thy vineyard, and with thy oliveyard. Six days thou shalt do thy work, and on the seventh day thou shalt rest: that thine ox and thine ass may rest, and the son of thy handmaid, and the stranger, may be refreshed."

Look in Exodus chapter 34 and verse 21.

God gives this general principle in Exodus 34:21: “Six days thou shalt work, but on the seventh day thou shalt rest: in earing time and in harvest thou shalt rest.”

Leviticus 23:3 states it distinctly: “Six days shall work be done: but the seventh day is the sabbath of rest, an holy convocation; ye shall do no work therein: it is the sabbath of the LORD in all your dwellings.”

Deuteronomy 5:12-14 says, “Keep the sabbath day to sanctify it, as the LORD thy God hath commanded thee. Six days thou shalt labour, and do all thy work: But the seventh day is the sabbath of the LORD thy God: in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, nor thy manservant, nor thy maidservant, nor

thine ox, nor thine ass, nor any of thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates; that thy manservant and thy maidservant may rest as well as thou."

The passage continues: "And remember that thou wast a servant in the land of Egypt, and that the LORD thy God brought thee out thence through a mighty hand and by a stretched out arm: therefore the LORD thy God commanded thee to keep the sabbath day."

The general principle is that no work must be done by anyone or any animal. Jeremiah 17:22 says, "Neither carry forth a burden out of your houses on the sabbath day, neither do ye any work, but hallow ye the sabbath day, as I commanded your fathers." No work was to be done on the Sabbath days.

Specific Prohibitions and Death Penalty

Several other instructions make the principle specific: the gates should be shut on the Sabbath day (Nehemiah 13:19); every man should abide in his place, and no man should go out of his place on the Sabbath day (Exodus 16:29); asses should not be laden on the Sabbath day (Nehemiah 13:15); and no burdens should be borne on the Sabbath day.

Jeremiah 17, 21 and 22 says no fires were to be kindled on the Sabbath day. Exodus 35 verse 3 says no sheaves were to be brought in on the Sabbath day. Nehemiah 13 verse 15 says no sticks could be gathered on the Sabbath day, according to Numbers 15, 32 through 35. No victuals could be bought or sold, according to Nehemiah 13, 15 and 31. Nor could wine presses be traded on the Sabbath day, Nehemiah 13 verse 15.

I hope you get the idea that God says no work was to be done on the Sabbath. It was not necessarily a day of worship. It was a day of rest.

Now ask yourself this question: What if someone did work on the Sabbath day? What was the penalty? The penalty was death. Exodus 31, verse 13, says, "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."

Exodus 35, beginning with verse 1, says, "And Moses gathered all the congregation of the children of Israel together, and said unto them, These are the words which the LORD hath commanded, that ye should do them. Six days shall work be done, but on the seventh day there shall be to you an holy day, a sabbath of rest to the LORD: whosoever doeth work therein shall be put to death. Ye shall kindle no fire throughout your habitations upon the sabbath day."

“And while the children of Israel were in the wilderness, they found a man that gathered sticks upon the sabbath day.” Wow. You remember Exodus says there's to be no sticks gathered on the Sabbath day. He just went out and he's going to build him a fire. He got some sticks together, and they that found him gathering sticks brought him unto Moses and Aaron, and unto all the congregation. And they put him in ward, because it was not declared what should be done to him. And the LORD said unto Moses, “The man shall be surely put to death: all the congregation shall stone him with stones without the camp.” And all the congregation brought him without the camp, and stoned him with stones, and he died; as the LORD commanded Moses.

Questions should be arising in your mind. One of them should be this: Why did working on the Sabbath merit the death penalty? Why did God demand death for anyone who violated the Sabbath? The answer to that question I am going to give you in the next two weeks. But the pressing question right now is this: Is there a death penalty today for the violation of the Hebrew or Canaan weekly Sabbath?

The Canaan Sabbath as a Sign for Israel

If not, when did it cease? Why did it cease? Obviously, the legal status of the Hebrew Sabbath was altered, because there have not been such penalties applied to Sabbath violations in the New Testament. Why was the legal status altered? Let me make two

points that should be exceedingly clear concerning the Hebrew Sabbath. First of all, the Hebrew, or the Canaan, Sabbath was a sign between God and the Old Testament children of Israel.

Exodus 31:13 says, "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." God said that the Hebrew, or Canaan, Sabbath was a sign between Him and those people. In Ezekiel 20:12, God says, "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." In Ezekiel 20:20, God said, "And hallow my sabbaths; and they shall be a sign between me and you, that ye may know that I am the LORD your God."

If you take the time when you get home to reread Exodus 31:13, Ezekiel 20:12, and Ezekiel 20:20, you will find that in each passage, when God says, "Verily, my sabbaths are a sign between me and you," the word "sabbath" is plural. Why is the word plural? Here is the answer: because there was more than one Sabbath. There was a weekly Sabbath, yes, but there was also the new moon Sabbath.

There was the sabbatical year and the year of Jubilee. There were all those feasts, and each of those feasts is regarded as a Sabbath. God specifically said that these Sabbaths were a sign. Biblically, if you endeavor to keep one Sabbath, you are obligated to keep all the Sabbaths. In Leviticus 19:3, He commanded the children of Israel to keep His Sabbaths, plural. In Leviticus 26:2, He said, "Ye shall keep my sabbaths, and reverence my sanctuary: I am the LORD." In Leviticus 18:4–5, He said, "Ye shall do my judgments, and keep mine ordinances, to walk therein: I am the LORD your God. Ye shall therefore keep my statutes, and my judgments: which if a man do, he shall live in them: I am the LORD."

Now, here is the question: If you want to keep a Sabbath, how many of them are you going to keep? You cannot just keep one, because there is more than one.

The very first thing that we have found is this: the Canaan or Hebrew Sabbath in the Old Testament was a sign between God and the Old Testament children of Israel. God said that. But here is the

second thing we must understand: if the Hebrew or Canaan Sabbath was a sign between God and the children of Israel—and we know it was, because He said so—what does the sign represent? What does the sign teach? What is commemorated? What is communicated by observing the Canaan Sabbaths?

You say, "I'm going to keep a weekly Sabbath." Are you going to keep the new moon Sabbath? Are you going to keep the sabbatical year, a whole year of Sabbath? Are you going to keep the year of Jubilee, which would be a sabbatical year and the year of Jubilee—two years of rest? What are these Sabbaths a sign about, concerning, or commemorating?

If you look in your Bibles to Deuteronomy chapter 5, here it is spelled out in black and white. Deuteronomy 5:15 tells us what the Hebrew or Canaan Sabbath commemorated. God's creation Sabbath commemorated creation; the Hebrew or Canaan Sabbath commemorated deliverance from Egypt. In fact, verse 12 says, "Keep the sabbath day to sanctify it, as the LORD thy God hath commanded thee. Six days thou shalt labour, and do all thy work: But the seventh day is the sabbath of the LORD thy God: in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, nor thy manservant, nor thy maidservant, nor thine ox, nor thine ass, nor any of thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates; that thy manservant and thy maidservant may rest as well as thou." Then verse 15 says, "And remember that thou wast a servant in the land of Egypt, and that the LORD thy God brought thee out thence through a mighty hand and by a stretched out arm. Therefore the LORD thy God commanded thee to keep the sabbath day."

Why did God command the Old Testament Israelites to keep the Sabbath day? Because it commemorated their deliverance from physical Egypt. The Hebrew or Canaan Sabbath was a commemoration of their deliverance from Egypt. It was God who redeemed them. It was God who separated them. It was God who chose them. The Passover is intimately connected with the Sabbaths, and it too celebrated the deliverance of the children of Israel from Egypt. How then did God become their Lord? By redeeming them and delivering them from the land of Egypt. What did the Hebrew or

Canaan Sabbath commemorate? The deliverance of the children of Israel from Egypt.

Obligation to Keep All Sabbaths

Listen carefully to this question. How many of you were delivered from Egypt? It is true that Egypt is a type of the world and often represents sin in Scripture. But I did not ask how many of you were delivered from the antitype; I asked how many of you were delivered from physical Egypt. The sign of the Canaan Sabbath or Hebrew Sabbath was a sign between God and the Old Testament children of Israel that He had delivered them from Egypt, from their slavery and bondage. Therefore He commanded them to rest in His deliverance and celebrate and commemorate their deliverance from Egypt. So, were you delivered from physical Egypt?

And the answer is no. Another question that you have to answer in light of a Sabbath day is this: How long was a Sabbath? The word Sabbath simply means cessation or rest. The word Sabbath is used in the Bible to refer to different lengths of time. The word Sabbath can describe a rest one day long. You will find that in Exodus 20, verses 8 through 11, and Deuteronomy 5, verses 12 through 15. It can refer to a rest two days long, as in Leviticus 23:15, 16, and 21. It can refer to a rest one year long, Leviticus 25, verses 4 through 8; a rest two years long, Leviticus 25, verses 8 through 12; and a rest 70 years long, 2 Chronicles 36:21.

When you say, “I’m going to keep a Sabbath,” how long are you going to keep it—one day, two days, one year, two years, or 70 years? Here is the question, and the Bible will answer it: If you are going to keep one Sabbath, you are obligated to keep all the Sabbaths. How do I know that? Scripture teaches that if you are going to keep one part of the law, you are obligated to keep all of the law.

Look in your Bibles to Galatians chapter 5, beginning with verse 1: “Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage.” What yoke of bondage is he talking about? He is talking about the ceremonies, rituals, festivals, and holy days. “Behold, I Paul say unto you, that if ye be circumcised, Christ shall profit you nothing.” Verse

3 says, “For I testify again to every man that is circumcised, that he is a debtor to do the whole law.”

Here is what Paul clearly meant: He is not condemning what you and I would call the moral law, but he is referring to the ceremonial law. He is saying that if you are going to bring yourself under any of the ceremonial ordinances, then you are now obligated to keep all of those ordinances.

Look at Acts 15 and verse 10, where the council at Jerusalem says, "Now therefore why tempt ye God, to put a yoke upon the neck of the disciples, which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear?" This was even in reference to circumcision. He is talking about the ceremonies, the ordinances, and circumcision. Here were these Hebrew apostles saying to the Judaizers, Why in the world do you want to put a yoke upon these other folks over here that neither we nor our fathers were able to bear? We cannot keep all of those ceremonies and all those ordinances. We simply cannot do it.

Albert Barnes commented very correctly on this passage: "Circumcision was the distinguishing badge of the Jews as baptism is of Christians. A man therefore who became circumcised, became a professor of the Jewish religion, and bound himself to obey all its peculiar laws."

When Barnes said that, he was commenting on Acts 15 and verse 10. He was not commenting, and I do not believe that he was necessarily referring, to the Hebrew covenant in the Old Testament. Rather, he was referring primarily to the perversion of that covenant by the Judaizers. Who were the Judaizers in the New Testament?

The Judaizers were the men who followed Paul around, who gave Paul so much heartache. They would always say this: "It's alright to trust in Christ, and it's alright to believe in Christ, but if you really want to be saved, if you really want to be holy, then you have to observe all these ceremonies and you have to be circumcised." They were teaching that trusting in Christ and believing in Christ were not enough, but that a person had to submit to these ceremonies and circumcision as well.

Here is what they were teaching: "And certain men which came down from Judaea taught the brethren, and said, Except ye be circumcised after the manner of Moses, ye cannot be saved."

If circumcision was a distinguishing badge of the Jews or Judaism, then certainly all of their ceremonies were also marks of their religion. I think most of you know the Scripture well enough to know that I do not care what ceremony you choose from the Old Testament or what ritual you pick. All of the ceremonies, rituals, and ordinances were fulfilled in Jesus Christ. Thus, those ceremonies, rituals, and ordinances are no longer binding upon Christians. Period.

That is what the book of Hebrews is all about. I want to endeavor to show you from Scripture that Saturday is not the Sabbath, nor can it possibly be the Sabbath day. Many who sincerely think that they are observing a weekly Canaan or Hebrew Sabbath by resting from Friday evening until Saturday evening would be correct only once every seven years.

Saturday Cannot Be the Sabbath

Saturday is not the Sabbath, nor could it possibly be the Sabbath. How can I make that statement? Let me explain. The Hebrew calendar began its dating from the deliverance from Egypt. The Hebrew calendar consisted of twelve months of thirty days. Instead of adding the additional five days at the end of the year, they added three days to the sixth month and two days at the end of the twelfth month.

Why did they do that? The answer is very simple: the fifteenth of Abib had to be a Sabbath every year. I am going to show you that from Scripture. The fifteenth of Abib had to be a Sabbath every year. That means the first and eighth of Abib had to be Sabbaths as well. From the fifteenth of Abib, they had to number seven Sabbaths.

That would be 49 days, and the 50th day would be Pentecost. Look in your Bibles at Leviticus 23, verses 15 and 16. Here is what God says: “And ye shall count unto you from the morrow after the sabbath, from the day that ye brought the sheaf of the wave offering; seven sabbaths shall be complete: Even unto the morrow after the

seventh sabbath shall ye number fifty days; and ye shall offer a new meat offering unto the LORD."

The 50th day had to be Pentecost. That is what the word Pentecost means: 50. Of course, we know what that picture is in the New Testament.

Listen carefully. If Abib the 15th was a Sabbath every year, do not get bent out of shape over the term Abib and the number 15th, because I am going to show it to you from the Bible. If Abib the 15th was a Sabbath every year, it follows that the seven succeeding Sabbaths were on fixed dates as well. God says you have to number seven Sabbaths. Abib 15 had to be a Sabbath every year. That means the first and the eighth had to be Sabbaths every year. You would have Abib 22, Abib 29, Iyar 6, Iyar 13, Iyar 20, Iyar 27, and Sivan 4 as the seven Sabbaths. The only way you could have seven Sabbaths complete from Abib 15 to Sivan 4 each year is if those Sabbaths were on fixed dates. They were fixed.

Now, let me tell you what this means. Since the date was fixed and could not change, the days changed just like your birthday. My birthday is September 3rd. Do not forget that, Jane. My birthday is September 3rd. Let us suppose, though I have not looked, that my birthday is on Tuesday this year. You know what day my birthday will be next year? Wednesday. The year after that, Thursday; the year after that, Friday; the year after that, Saturday. In other words, since the date is fixed, the day changes.

Let us look at Scripture and pick out the month and the date. Turn to Exodus chapter 12, because the Hebrew Sabbath celebrated the deliverance of the children of Israel from Egypt. Exodus 12:1-2 says, "And the LORD spake unto Moses and Aaron in the land of Egypt, saying, This month shall be unto you the beginning of months: it shall be the first month of the year to you." This month shall be the beginning of months; it shall be the first month of the year to you.

Whatever month God was talking about would be like our January. January is the first month of our year, so whatever month He was talking about, He says, "This is it." Exodus 12 deals with the exodus, the deliverance of the children of Israel from Egypt.

Therefore, God specifically says that this month is going to be the first month of the Hebrew year.

The first month of the Hebrew year was the month Abib. How do I know that? Look in Exodus 13:4: “This day came ye out in the month Abib.” That should be plain enough. If you look in Exodus 23:15, it says, “Thou shalt keep the feast of unleavened bread: (thou shalt eat unleavened bread seven days, as I commanded thee, in the time appointed of the month Abib; for in it thou camest out from Egypt: and none shall appear before me empty:).”

Look in Exodus 34:18: “The feast of unleavened bread shalt thou keep. Seven days thou shalt eat unleavened bread, as I commanded thee, in the time of the month Abib: for in the month Abib thou camest out from Egypt.” You cannot argue with that. Deuteronomy 16:1 says, “Observe the month of Abib, and keep the passover unto the LORD thy God: for in the month of Abib the LORD thy God brought thee forth out of Egypt by night.”

How many times does God have to say something to make it true? Once. But four or five times He says that the month in which Israel came out was Abib, and He says, “This month shall be the beginning of your months.” So we know that the first month is Abib. You cannot argue with that.

Now that we have the month settled, let us find the date. In Exodus chapter 12, as God tells the children of Israel about the Passover, He commands them to select their lamb: "Your lamb shall be without blemish, a male of the first year: ye shall take it out from the sheep, or from the goats: And ye shall keep it up until the fourteenth day of the same month: and the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel shall kill it in the evening." The Passover, then, was to be killed on the fourteenth day of the month. Why? Because the Lord passed over the houses of the Israelites in Egypt that had the blood applied at midnight.

When did they leave Egypt? On the morning of the fifteenth. Exodus 12:29 says, "And it came to pass, that at midnight the LORD smote all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, from the firstborn of Pharaoh that sat on his throne unto the firstborn of the captive that was in the dungeon; and all the firstborn of cattle." Notice that it

came to pass at midnight. God says in Exodus 12:14, "And this day shall be unto you for a memorial; and ye shall keep it a feast to the LORD throughout your generations; ye shall keep it a feast by an ordinance for ever." God says it is the month Abib. On the fourteenth, at midnight, the blood is applied. We know that the next morning God led them out.

That would be on the fifteenth. Leviticus 23:5-6 says, “In the fourteenth day of the first month at even is the LORD's passover. And on the fifteenth day of the same month is the feast of unleavened bread unto the LORD: seven days ye must eat unleavened bread.” The fifteenth. If that is not clear enough, Numbers 33:3 says, “And they departed from Rameses in the first month, on the fifteenth day of the first month; on the morrow after the passover the children of Israel went out with an high hand in the sight of all the Egyptians.” Now we know the month was Abib, and the date was the fifteenth. The fifteenth was the first day of their religious year, so to speak. If that fifteenth was a Sabbath—and it had to be a Sabbath—that means the first and the eighth had to be Sabbaths as well.

Now let me show you why these dates were fixed. When the children of Israel celebrated the Passover, before Passover night and the fifteenth, there had to be real work done. Exodus 12:3 says, “Speak ye unto all the congregation of Israel, saying, In the tenth day of this month they shall take to them every man a lamb, according to the house of their fathers, a lamb for an house.” Could the tenth be a Sabbath? Why could the tenth not be a Sabbath? Because they had to work in it. They had to take the lamb, get the lamb, and butcher the lamb. Verses 5 and 6 say, “Your lamb shall be without blemish, a male of the first year: ye shall take it out from the sheep, or from the goats: And ye shall keep it up until the fourteenth day of the same month.” That is, you had to take care of that lamb. You had to feed it, watch it, and do whatever was necessary to it.

Exodus 12:24 says, “And ye shall observe this thing for an ordinance to thee and to thy sons for ever.” Notice also Leviticus 23:15: “And ye shall count unto you from the morrow after the sabbath, from the day that ye brought the sheaf of the wave offering; seven sabbaths shall be complete.”

The 10th, 14th, and 16th could not possibly be Sabbaths, because real work had to be done on those days. If the date were not fixed, it would vary every year, and people would be cleaning houses, butchering animals, and reaping fields. If it changed like your birthday, one of those dates would eventually fall on a Sabbath. Then there would be a command to work on the one hand and a command to rest on the other, producing total confusion and chaos. These dates could never be Sabbaths. The date was absolutely fixed.

Everything began from Abib the 15th. Abib is essentially our March and April, sometime in that period. Because the date was fixed, it would have been impossible for Saturday to have been the Sabbath every year. It may have been a Sabbath once every seven years, but it was not a Sabbath every year. Because the date is fixed, the day changes. There are 365 days in a year. Dividing 365 by 7 gives 52 weeks with one day left over. What happens to that extra day?

The Extra Day and Two-Day Sabbath

Leviticus 23, verses 15 and 16, says, “And ye shall count unto you from the morrow after the sabbath, from the day that ye brought the sheaf of the wave offering; seven sabbaths shall be complete: Even unto the morrow after the seventh sabbath shall ye number fifty days; and ye shall offer a new meat offering unto the LORD.” Verse 21 adds, “And ye shall proclaim on the selfsame day, that it may be an holy convocation unto you: ye shall do no servile work therein: it shall be a statute for ever in all your dwellings throughout your generations.” That extra day was absorbed into a two-day Sabbath according to Leviticus 23:15–16. That is why a Sabbath rest could be one day, two days, one year, two years, or even 70 years.

Let us suppose that we could positively identify all the Old Testament Sabbaths: the weekly Sabbath, the new moon Sabbaths, the sabbatical year, and the year of Jubilee. Here is the question: If we could positively identify each of these Sabbaths, should we be observing them?

Christ: The Fulfillment of the Sabbath

The Hebrew or Canaan Sabbath did not commemorate creation. It commemorated the deliverance of the children of Israel from Egypt. If we could identify these Sabbaths, should we be observing them? Before answering that we are either physical Israel or spiritual Israel, consider this: Was not the deliverance of the children of Israel from Egypt a type? Were not the lambs slain in that first Passover a type? Is there not a greater deliverance than that of the children of Israel from Egypt? Did not the Passover and the death of all those lambs picture the one true Lamb of God, who is the perfect, total, and complete Passover? First Corinthians 5:7 says, "Purge out therefore the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump, as ye are unleavened. For even Christ our passover is sacrificed for us." Every lamb slain in Egypt in Exodus 12, and every lamb slain throughout the rest of the time Israel was in Canaan land, pointed to the one true Lamb of God, Jesus Christ.

That is why, in John 1:29, when John the Baptist saw Jesus Christ, he said, "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world." Is there not a greater deliverance to commemorate than the deliverance of Israel out of Egypt? Was not the sacrifice of Jesus Christ greater than all the lambs and all the oxen put together? Is not our deliverance from the bondage of sin and Satan greater than deliverance from Egypt and Pharaoh? Is not what we have in Christ in the New Testament far greater than all the Old Testament types and shadows? Why would we try to celebrate a type and a shadow when we have reality before us?

Would you not think it extremely silly of me if I had a picture of Alice—and I do have some, one particularly that I like from her high school years—and I took that picture, put it to my lips, and started kissing and caressing it when she was standing right there in front of me? Why would I kiss her picture when I could kiss her?

The point I am making is very simple: Why would you go back and celebrate a type, a shadow, an emblem, or a symbol that pointed to Christ when you have Christ present with you? He is the fulfillment of everything in the Old Testament. Do you remember what the Bible says in John 1:17? "For the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ." Was there no grace in the

Old Testament? Sure there was. Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord. Was there no truth in the Old Testament? Sure there was. Everything in the Old Testament is truth. But the fulfillment, the reality, the apex, the epitome of grace and truth is in Jesus Christ.

Christ as Lord of the Sabbath

Let me ask you a question. I read this passage last week from Matthew 12, verses 1 through 8. You remember where the Pharisees got on to Christ and His disciples because they went out and plucked grains of corn in the fields during the Sabbath? The Pharisees said, "It's not lawful for you to do what you're doing." In verse 8, Jesus Christ said, "For the Son of man is Lord even of the sabbath day." You remember how Jesus Christ said the priest worked during the Sabbath, and they were blameless? Do you remember what David did, and those men with him?

How they ate the hallowed bread which none but priests were to eat, and He held them blameless. When the Bible tells us that Jesus Christ is Lord of the Sabbath, it simply means this: He can do as He pleases with the Sabbath. He is the one who created the world and ordained the Sabbath. He can dispense with it, rearrange it, or do whatever He pleases.

Listen to what John Gill said on Matthew 12:8: "Is not Christ the Son of Man Lord of the Sabbath?" John Gill said, "And since Christ is greater than the temple, and has all the perfections of the divine nature in Him, is equal to the Father in power and glory, and even as Mediator has all power in heaven and earth given to Him, so as He is Lord of all other things, He is Lord of the Sabbath and has a power of dispensing with it or even abolishing it," which I'll get with next week.

He says, see Colossians 2. Since the Lord of the Sabbath had power to dispense with it, and made use of that power in the cases of David and his men and the priests in the temple formerly, the Pharisees ought not to think it strange that the Son of Man, who is equally Lord of the Sabbath, dispensed with it in His disciples' case. Matthew Poole says, "Christ, affirming himself Lord of the Sabbath, spake properly enough to the Pharisees' quarrel. For it must needs then follow that he had power to dispense with the observation of it

at particular times, and much more to give a true and right interpretation of the law concerning it."

He is Lord of the Sabbath. John Calvin said, "He declared that He's received authority to exempt His followers from the necessity of observing the Sabbath. The Son of Man, He says, in the exercise of His authority, can relax the Sabbath in the same manner as other legal ceremonies."

When the Bible says that the Son of Man, that is Jesus Christ, is Lord of the Sabbath, the truth is that He may relax it, dispense with it, change it, or do whatever He pleases. He is Lord, and whatever He does is right. Whether you agree with it or believe it is immaterial. Whatever He does is right. He is Lord. Now think about this: What did the Old Testament Hebrew Canaan Sabbath celebrate?

The answer is the deliverance of the children of Israel from Egypt. Was that Old Testament deliverance, and their entrance into the land of Canaan, the real, genuine, true rest of God? No. Hebrews 4 refers to God's creation rest in verse 4 as a type that the Canaan rest was really to represent. It speaks of those who did not enter into that rest.

In verse 7, it says, "Again, he limiteth a certain day, saying in David, To day, after so long a time; as it is said, To day if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts." David wrote this in Psalm 95. The children of Israel had already come out of Egypt and were already in the land of Canaan. David was on the throne, reigning for forty years, and he said that the Old Testament Canaan rest, or Canaan Sabbath, was not the true rest of God. There was another rest. How much plainer could it be in verse 8? "For if Jesus had given them rest, then would he not afterward have spoken of another day."

We know, then, that the Old Testament Canaan rest, or Hebrew rest, was not the true rest, because He spoke of another day. Therefore, verse 9 says, "There remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God." The word "rest" in the Greek in verse 9 is sabbatismos. Here is what verse 9 says: "There remaineth therefore a keeping of a sabbath to the people of God." God's creation rest was God's rest.

It was that which man should have entered into, but man sinned and failed. The Canaan rest was a type; man should have entered into it, but he did not. There is only one rest into which man can enter without failing, and that is the rest purchased for us by the person and work of Jesus Christ. Salvation is not based upon what we do. Salvation is based upon what He has accomplished and who He is.

Our Lord said in Matthew 11, "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." The true rest is in Jesus Christ. The point we need to learn is this: We need to look thoroughly at Scripture and not assume that everything we hear and everything we are told is correct.

Conclusion and Call to Search Scripture

One of our problems in this day and age is that we, like the Pharisees, have fallen into traditions, just like the Judaizers and the Pharisees in the New Testament. We must search the Scriptures and pay close attention to them. Let me tell you, dear friend, what the Scripture says is right, true, and correct, whether you agree with it or believe it or not.

Truth is found, first of all, in Jesus Christ and, secondly, in His revealed Word. Why is Saturday not the Sabbath day and cannot be? Because the date was fixed: Abib the 15th. Seven Sabbaths were fixed after that, which means that the day of the week changed, just like your birthday. We today are to celebrate the redemption that we have in Jesus Christ—not the deliverance from Egypt, because that was merely a type, a shadow, and an emblem. We are to rest only in the work of Christ.

In the name of Jesus Christ, we do ask that You help us, teach us, and build us up in the most holy faith. Give us grace, Lord, that we may serve Thee acceptably with reverence and godly fear. Above all, Father, help us to honor Thee and to rest in Jesus Christ, our Lord, in whose name we pray. Amen.

CHAPTER 3

The Superiority of Christ

Part Three of Four

Introduction and Review

Christ is superior to anything and everything, particularly to all the Old Testament ceremonies, festivals, and holy days. Hebrews chapter 4, beginning with verse 1, says: “Let us therefore fear, lest, a promise being left us of entering into his rest, any of you should seem to come short of it. For unto us was the gospel preached, as well as unto them: but the word preached did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in them that heard it. For we which have believed do enter into rest, as he said, As I have sworn in my wrath, if they shall enter into my rest: although the works were finished from the foundation of the world. For he spake in a certain place of the seventh day on this wise, And God did rest the seventh day from all his works. And in this place again, If they shall enter into my rest. Seeing therefore it remaineth that some must enter therein, and they to whom it was first preached entered not in because of unbelief: Again, he limiteth a certain day, saying in David, To day, after so long a time; as it is said, To day if ye will hear his voice, harden not

your hearts. For if Jesus had given them rest, then would he not afterward have spoken of another day. There remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God. For he that is entered into his rest, he also hath ceased from his own works, as God did from his." The theme of this brief series is the superiority of Jesus Christ over anyone or anything. The theme of Hebrews specifically points this out, and one of its main words is "better." Hebrews 1:1-3 teaches Christ's superiority over the prophets; Hebrews 1:4 through chapter 2, verse 18, over angels; Hebrews 3, over Moses; Hebrews 4, over Joshua; and Hebrews 5, over Aaron. According to Hebrews 1:1-3, God has spoken fully, finally, totally, and completely in His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ. We have looked first at the creation Sabbath and then, secondly, at

The Canaan Sabbath was the subject last week and continues this week; next week, Lord willing, we will look at the Christian Sabbath. I told you that the pattern of the Canaan Sabbath was, of course, God's creation rest. The goal of the Sabbath is man's redemption rest, or the Christian Sabbath, which is rest in the Redeemer, who is, of course, none other than the Lord Jesus Christ.

I pointed out that the Sabbath asserts the principle of freedom under God, of liberty under God's law. The principle of the Sabbath summons man from himself and from his work. It frees man from himself and draws him totally and completely to God the Father through Jesus Christ. I also pointed out that the essence of humanism is man's ability to save himself, to evolve himself, and basically to control his society, to control everything. In humanism there is no rest. Period. The only rest that exists is rest in God through our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

Now, also last week, and let me just re-emphasize this, I pointed out that there was not primarily a day of worship in the Hebrew culture in the Old Testament. The Sabbath was a day of rest, and I went through Scripture and showed you how no fires could be kindled, no wood could be gathered, and nothing could be done. It was primarily a day of rest. Now, did they worship? Yes, but their worship was family-oriented, and they were to worship every day. But there was not primarily a day of worship; it was a day of rest.

And then I went to great pains to show you, and I hope conclusively, that Saturday is not the Sabbath, nor could it possibly be the Sabbath. Why? Because the Hebrew calendar began on Abib 15, which meant that was a fixed Sabbath every year. The first and the eighth were fixed Sabbaths as well. Seven Sabbaths following that were fixed as well. So when the date is fixed, the day changes. So even the weekly Sabbath was not always on Saturday. The day changed.

And by the way, I didn't point this out last week, but it's possible to have two Sabbaths in one week because there were also new moon Sabbaths. If the new moon Sabbath happened in the same week as the weekly Sabbath, then there were two Sabbaths in one week. So very obviously, the Sabbath date was primarily fixed. I showed you the month from Scripture, I showed you the date from Scripture, and there should actually be no question about it. If you have not followed all of this, I would encourage you to get the tape or the CD from last week, because we looked at Scripture after Scripture to show you that conclusively.

Old Testament Ceremonies as Shadows

All of those Old Testament Canaan Sabbaths, all of those Old Testament ceremonies, and all of those Old Testament rituals were nothing more than mere shadow. They were not real. They were types and emblems.

If you and I were alive in Old Testament days and went to the tabernacle or the temple, seeing Aaron or one of the Aaronic priests there in all of his paraphernalia and garments; if we could smell the sacrifice on the altar and the incense, hear the bells as they rang while he walked, and see all of those things—the beautiful temple—we would be tempted to say, "Man, this is real. I can taste it. I can touch it. I can smell it. I can hear it."

But God said that all those things were shadows. Where does the Bible say that? It says so in the book of Hebrews, in chapter 8, beginning with verse 1:

"Now of the things which we have spoken this is the sum: We have such an high priest, who is set on the right hand of the throne of the

Majesty in the heavens; A minister of the sanctuary, and of the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, and not man."

Man's tabernacle and man's temple were not the true ones. The true one was pitched by God Himself. Verse 3 says, "For every high priest is ordained to offer gifts and sacrifices: wherefore it is of necessity that this man have somewhat also to offer." Now look what the Bible says about Christ: "For if he were on earth, he should not be a priest, seeing that there are priests that offer gifts according to the law: Who serve unto the example and shadow of heavenly things, as Moses was admonished of God when he was about to make the tabernacle: for, See, saith he, that thou make all things according to the pattern shewed to thee in the mount."

What is the Scripture saying? That Old Testament tabernacle and temple, with all the rituals and ceremonies, were nothing more than mere shadows. We have the reality in Jesus Christ. Reality only came with the fulfillment of all those types and shadows, and that fulfillment is Jesus Christ.

Now what I want to do today is very specific. I want to show you from the New Testament where Christians are not obligated to keep those Old Testament days, years, months, rituals, and ceremonies. I'm also going to do something else and I will tell you why just momentarily. I'm going to give you a number of quotes today. In fact, I will quote more today from different authors, different teachers and preachers. But I'm going to do so for a reason. One of the reasons is to show you the consistency of interpretation. And I'll tell you the main reason just a little bit later. But I do want you to turn in your Bibles to begin to the book of Galatians chapter 4.

Freedom from Observance of Days

And let's read verses 9 through 11. The apostle Paul is writing the Galatians and he says this in Galatians chapter 4, beginning there with verse 9. Galatians 4, verse 9. He writes to the Galatian Christians and he says, "But now, after that ye have known God, or rather are known of God, how turn ye again to the weak and beggarly elements,

whereunto ye desire again to be in bondage? Ye observe days, and months, and times, and years. I am afraid of you, lest I have bestowed upon you labour in vain."

Now I want you to note, if you would please, in verse 9, he says, "after ye have been known of God," and that you profess to know God, look at this question, "how turn ye again to the weak and beggarly elements, whereunto ye desire again to be in bondage?" Now, if you want to know what the weak and beggarly elements are, look in verse 10. "Ye observe days, and months, and times, and years."

Now, I want you to note and listen carefully as I give you just a brief quote by Albert Barnes. He's explaining the term "weak and beggarly elements." He says, quote, "It refers to the rites and ceremonies of the Jewish law imposing a servitude really no less severe than the customs of pagans. They are called weak because they have no power to save the soul, no power to justify the sinner before God. They are called beggarly, that is poor, because they could not impart spiritual riches. They really could confer few benefits upon man." Now, let me just quote to you Ephesians 1:3. I want you to note what he says in verse 9, "how turn ye again to the weak and beggarly elements." In Ephesians 1:3, the Bible says, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ." My question is this, where do we have all spiritual riches? Where do we have all spiritual blessings?

The answer is in Christ. Not in ceremonies, not in days, not in times, not in years, not in rituals, but all in Christ.

Look back in Galatians 4, verse 9. I want to be very specific and for you to understand what he is saying: “But now, after that ye have known God, or rather are known of God, how turn ye again to the weak and beggarly elements, whereunto ye desire again to be in bondage?”

The word “bondage” here is used in relation to days, times, months, and years. The Greek word for bondage is the word for slavery. Notice: “whereunto ye desire again to be in slavery?” What kind of slavery is he talking about? Being a slave to the observation

of days, months, times, and years. What is one of the main themes of the book of Galatians? Look at chapter 5 and verse 1. Here is what the Apostle Paul says: “Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage.” Stand fast in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free. Be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage. What bondage is he talking about? The bondage he refers to back in verses 9 and 10 of Galatians chapter 4, and the bondage from Mount Sinai and Hagar in the rest of chapter 4.

The Danger of Ritualism

To show you the context, look at chapter 5, verse 1 again: “Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage.” Now look at what he is saying: “Behold, I Paul say unto you, that if ye be circumcised, Christ shall profit you nothing. For I testify again to every man that is circumcised, that he is a debtor to do the whole law.” If you want to be in bondage, you go back to the ceremonies; you go back to the rituals.

I do not care if you are talking about the ritual of circumcision. I am not teaching about circumcision, but if I were asked whether I believe there are advantages to being circumcised, my answer would be yes: medical advantages and physical advantages, but no spiritual advantages. The Apostle Paul said that if you be circumcised—that is, if you are depending upon this act religiously—then Christ shall profit you nothing. The Apostle Paul said circumcision is not anything, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature in Christ. That is what counts.

The whole context in Galatians chapters 4 and 5 is liberty and freedom from all ceremonies and rituals. Matthew Poole said concerning Galatians 4:9-10: “How turn ye again to the weak and beggarly elements? Whereunto ye desire to be in bondage? Or how turn ye back again to the legal services of the ceremonial law, which he calleth elements or rudiments, because they were God's first instructions given to his church for his worship, to which he intended afterwards a more perfect way of worship. He calls them weak because they brought nothing to perfection, and the

observance of them was impotent as to the justification of the soul as all the law is. He calls them beggarly in comparison of the more rational spiritual way of worship under the gospel. He said that they desire to be in bondage under these because they would not see nor make use of the liberty from them which Christ had purchased."

Matthew Poole has said what Scripture says: Christ has redeemed us from all of these ceremonies and rituals. Therefore, they are called weak and beggarly elements, or rudiments. Let me explain it like this. What would you think of a college graduate—let us go further, a college graduate who had earned a PhD—who wanted to return to kindergarten and recite the ABCs all day long?

You would say, "Now wait a minute, something is wrong with that fellow." Here is someone wanting to trade the knowledge of accomplished reality for some immature, elementary, rudimentary knowledge. He would be exchanging what he had learned and accomplished for the first lessons of childhood.

Just as you would think something was wrong with someone who wanted to do that, the Apostle Paul thought there was something wrong with someone who wanted to return to days, times, years, ceremonies, and rituals. For look at what he said in verse 11. After saying in verse 10, "Ye observe days, and months, and times, and years," Paul said to these Galatians, "I am afraid of you, lest I have bestowed upon you labour in vain."

What did Paul mean when he told the Galatians, "I am afraid of you"? Paul was expressing his fear that they were probably not genuine Christians. Why? Because they did not comprehend the person and work of Jesus Christ. Rather, they wanted the types, emblems, symbols, ceremonies, and rituals. In verse 20, Paul expresses the same doubt: "I desire to be present with you now, and to change my voice; for I stand in doubt of you." What is Paul doing? He makes it very clear that those who want to return to days, times, emblems, rituals, and ceremonies have a questionable salvation. John is saying exactly the same thing in 1 John chapter 2, verse 19, only more specifically: "They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us: but they went out, that they might be made manifest that they were not all of us."

Based upon 1 John 2:19, what is the proof that you are a genuine Christian? The answer is that you continue in the things of Christ, in His Word, in faith, repentance, and obedience. If someone leaves Christ and leaves the faith, John says it is evident that they were never genuinely with us to begin with. For had they been of us—that is, genuinely converted—he says they would have continued with us. It is a serious action to turn from Christ and the reality that He has brought, and the fulfillment that He has accomplished.

Now go back to Galatians 4:11, where Paul said to these Galatians, "I am afraid of you, lest I have bestowed upon you labour in vain." John Calvin expounds that statement like this: "The expression is harsh and must have filled the Galatians with alarm. For what hope was left to them if Paul's labor had been in vain? Some have expressed astonishment that Paul should be so powerfully affected by the observance of days as almost to designate it as a subversion of the whole gospel. But if we weigh carefully the whole, we shall see that there was just reason and that the false apostles not only attempted to lay the yoke of Jewish bondage on the neck of the church, but fill their minds with wicked superstitions. To bring back Christianity to Judaism was in itself no light evil, but far more serious mischief was done when, in opposition to the grace of Christ, they set up holy days as meritorious performance and pretended that this mode of worship would propitiate the divine favor. When such doctrines were received, the worship of God was corrupted, the grace of Christ made void, and the freedom of conscience oppressed."

What is Calvin saying? There are people even today who will say, "If we do not want to be under God's judgment, then we need to observe this ceremony. We need to observe this day. We need to do this ritual." That is totally and completely contrary to the Word of God. Ceremonies, rituals, and observance of days today have nothing to do with the judgment of God. Disobedience does, but not disobedience to types, symbols, and emblems that have now been fulfilled by the person and work of Jesus Christ.

Look back to Galatians 4, verses 9 and 10: “But now, after that ye have known God, or rather are known of God, how turn ye again to the weak and beggarly elements, whereunto ye desire again to be in bondage? Ye observe days, and months, and times, and years. I am

afraid of you," said Paul, "lest I have bestowed upon you labour in vain."

If you do not understand the observation of days, months, times, and years, turn to Colossians chapter 2. We will spend the rest of our time here before returning to Hebrews chapter 4. Begin with verse 14, concerning the person and work of Christ: "Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross; And having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a shew of them openly, triumphing over them in it."

Colossians 2:16-17 and the End of Ceremonial Law

Then Paul says, "Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holyday, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath days: Which are a shadow of things to come; but the body is of Christ." The Apostle Paul speaks of meat and drink, holy days, new moon days, and Sabbath days, which he says are a shadow. But the body, he says, is Christ.

"Let no man therefore judge you." The word "judge" is used in the sense of pronouncing a sentence. If you are in a court of law, we refer to him as the judge because he pronounces a sentence. To judge means here to hold someone guilty of a crime or to impose a scruple of conscience upon someone so that he is no longer free.

When the Apostle Paul writes, "Let no man judge you," he is saying that no man has the power to subject us to ordinances, ceremonies, rituals, or the observance of days, times, and years, which have been abolished by the person and work of Christ. It does not matter what men say in relation to ceremonies, days, times, and years. Since you have been delivered by Christ from the evils that surround you and from the observances of the ceremonial law, let no one sit in judgment on you or claim the right to bind your conscience to what he thinks. We are not to be in subjection to man, but to Jesus Christ. Only Jesus Christ has the right to bind our consciences.

I could come to you and say, "I think you ought to do such and such, on this day, and just as I do." You might answer, "Pastor, I do not think that is right." If I replied, "But wait a minute, I am your

pastor," would I have the power to bind your conscience to something unbiblical merely because I think it wise? No. The only power I have to bind your conscience to anything is to show it to you in Scripture. Then you are bound to Scripture, and therefore to Christ, not to me.

The apostle is saying, "Let no man judge you." In verse 16 he says, "Let no man pass a sentence upon you." Let no man impose upon you a scruple of conscience, making you think that you have to do this, and that you have to do it his way. "Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink." No one is to judge us in eating and drinking. Here, eating and drinking refers to various articles of food and drink; in this context, it refers to special things used in observing the feasts and festivals.

To understand what Paul is saying, consider the Easter season, while using that term simply for clarity. The Jewish people have just observed Passover. How many of you ate unleavened bread during Easter season? How many ate your meat with bitter herbs? Nobody. No one is saying you must eat those things in a particular way. But when somebody comes along and says, "You've got to eat this roll, and you've got to eat it this way; you've got to eat this herb and this meat, and you've got to eat it fixed," Paul says, "Let no man judge you in respect to meat and drink." Why?

Do you not remember John chapter 6? Our Lord says, "My body is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed." The person and work of Jesus Christ fulfilled all those things. Now we feast upon Christ and derive our nourishment and sustenance from Christ. He is the bread of life. He said He was the bread of life in John 6, and He said He was the water of life in John 7. Therefore, when someone tells me that I must have a special bread or a special drink in observance of something, I say, "No, I do not. Jesus Christ is my meat and my drink. He is the fulfillment of all of that."

Albert Barnes comments on Colossians 2: "Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holyday, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath days." He explains: "The meaning is, in part, or the particulars of a holy day; that is, in respect to it. The word rendered 'holy day' is heorte in the Greek, which literally means a feast or a festival. And there were plenty of them in the Old

Testament. And the allusion here is to the festivals of the Jews. The sense is that no one had a right to impose their observance on Christians or to condemn them if they did not keep them. They had been delivered from that obligation by the death of Christ, blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and He took it out of the way, nailing it to His cross."

What did Christ do in His death? He was "Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross."

Some have misinterpreted this passage to the nth degree, saying that the whole law was nailed to the cross. That is not true. God's law is holy, just, and good. What Christ nailed to the cross were the ceremonies and ordinances—not "thou shalt not kill," and not "thou shalt not commit adultery." He took all these ceremonies, rituals, and special days out of the way, nailing them to the cross.

How did He do that? He fulfilled every one of them. There was no Israelite in the Old Testament who could keep all the ceremonies and special days perfectly. None. Not one. Why do you think God sent them away into captivity for seventy years? He rightly says they were against us.

Then he says, "Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holyday," that is, a feast or festival, "or of the new moon." The appearance of the new moon required additional sacrifices as well as the daily sacrifice, and there was a new moon each month. Thus he says, "These new moon sabbaths, they're gone." Then he says, "or of the sabbath days." Literally, let no man judge you in respect of the sabbaths. The word "sabbath" in the Old Testament is, of course, applied to the sabbath days.

This applies not only to the Sabbath day, but also to all of those Old Testament feasts and festivals. The Passover was considered a Sabbath, and the Feast of Ingathering was considered a Sabbath. Thus it is used in the plural, "or of the sabbath days." There was more than one. Does that mean that we cannot have a day of rest if we so choose? No. We may rest one day out of each week.

The Substance is Christ

There is no problem with that. The problem comes when you say, "This is the Sabbath day, and you will observe it the way I am telling you to observe it, or else you are not right with God, you are not a Christian, or you are under the judgment of God." As far as the ceremonies are concerned, they have all been done away with. They have been fulfilled in Jesus Christ. After speaking of the new moon, the holy days, and the Sabbath days, Matthew Henry wrote concerning verse 17: "Which are a shadow of things to come; but the body is of Christ." He explained: "And this the rather, because these things," everything mentioned in verse 16, "were shadows of things to come, intimating that they had no intrinsic worth in them, and that they are now done away. But the body is of Christ. The body of which they were shadows has come, and to continue the ceremonial observances, which were only types and shadows of Christ in the gospel, carries an intimation that Christ has not yet come and the gospel state has not yet commenced."

Observe the advantages we have under the gospel above what they had under the law. They had the shadows; we have the substance. If you want to observe all these types, shadows, and emblems, you are saying in essence, "Christ has not come yet. We do not have the gospel of grace yet." What good is a type and a shadow if you have reality? The answer is nothing. When that reality has come, which the type or shadow prefigured, the type or shadow no longer has any value. When reality is standing before you, that which prefigured Him, that which typed Him, no longer has any binding value.

Calvin said it very plainly on verse 17: "For Christ is now manifested to us, and hence we enjoy him as being present. The body, says he, is of Christ, that is, in Christ. For the substance of those things which the ceremonies anciently prefigured is now presented before our eyes in Christ, inasmuch as he contains in himself everything that they had marked out as future. Hence the man that calls back the ceremonies into use either buries the manifestation of Christ or robs Christ of his excellence and makes him in a manner void."

Consistency with Historic Christianity

I have given you a number of quotations today for a reason: to demonstrate that the interpretation of these passages is in line with historic Christianity. You may ask, "Brother Weaver, do you believe the Reformers and those men were right in everything?" Absolutely not. No man is right in everything. But when you come up with an interpretation contrary to historic Christianity, contrary to what God's choice men have taught down through the years, you had better be exceedingly careful. Otherwise, you will end up saying, "I am right and everyone else is wrong."

You must remember what 2 Peter 1:20 says: "Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation." We cannot make Scripture mean what we want it to mean. We must make Scripture say what it actually says.

There is no such thing as new truth. If it is new, it is not truth. It is true that we do not have understanding on everything, but when Martin Luther during the Reformation in 1500 began preaching justification by faith alone, he was not preaching a new truth. It was an old truth. Nobody had been reading their Bibles, teaching it, or preaching it, but it was not new truth. If it is truth, it is not new.

Ecclesiastes 1:9 says, "The thing that hath been, it is that which shall be; and that which is done is that which shall be done: and there is no new thing under the sun."

When you can take an interpretation from the first century, bring it down to the twentieth century, and show how it has been interpreted all those centuries—and I have not quoted from the church fathers and all this kind of stuff, which I could do. I checked it out. I have all those quotes. I am just saying that to go contrary to that, you had better be mighty slow and do a lot of thinking.

There are so many Scriptures that contradict going back to the ceremonies, the types, the rituals, and the days. For instance, Hebrews 13:10 gives us the conclusion of the author of the book of Hebrews: "We have an altar, whereof they have no right to eat which serve the tabernacle." Remember, these Hebrews wanted to go back. That is why the book of Hebrews was written. They wanted to go back to the types, emblems, and shadows.

If I were to ask you who is our altar, I hope you would respond, “Jesus Christ.” If that is not clear enough, look in verse 11: “For the bodies of those beasts,” that is, those oxen, those lambs, and those sheep, “whose blood is brought into the sanctuary by the high priest for sin, are burned without the camp. Wherefore Jesus also, that he might sanctify the people with his own blood, suffered without the gate.” Now go back to verse 10: “We have an altar.” Who is our altar? Jesus Christ. “We have an altar, whereof they have no right to eat which serve the tabernacle.” The Christian altar is the sacrifice of Jesus Christ.

We who benefit from His passion, His death, His resurrection, and His life—what is he saying? If you want to go back to these Old Testament ceremonies, rituals, sacrifices, and all of these things, you have no right to Jesus Christ.

That is a scary truth, because Jesus Christ is the full, final, ultimate revelation of God. There is no other revelation. That is why the Bible says in Colossians 1:18, “that in all things he might have the preeminence.” How can Christ have the preeminence if you go back to the types and shadows that represent Him? How can Christ have the preeminence if you go back to the observation of days and times and years which prefigure Him?

The answer is you can't. And He can't have the preeminence. If He has the preeminence, we have to exalt Him in every area of our lives. We have to understand that He is the fulfillment, the final and complete and absolute and total revelation of God. No man has seen the Father at any time, but He that is in the bosom of the Father, He has declared Him. Thomas said to Christ in John 14, "Lord, shew us the Father, and it sufficeth us." And our Lord said, "Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip? he that hath seen me hath seen the Father." Then he said, "I and my Father are one" in John 10. Jesus Christ is the fulfillment of everything in the Old Testament.

The True Rest is by Faith

Now go back to Hebrews chapter 4. I want to show you this. I am going to close in just a moment, but I want you to watch this. I am going to work my way through this to prepare you for the message

that is coming next Lord's Day. In Hebrews chapter 4, we are first given a warning. Look in verse 1: "Let us therefore fear, lest, a promise being left us of entering into his rest, any of you should seem to come short of it." Why in the world does it begin with a warning? "Let us fear."

Did Adam and Eve continue in His rest? No. Did the children of Israel who came out of Egypt continue in His rest? No. Did the children of Israel who got the Canaan land continue in His rest? No.

So He says, "Alright folks, wake up, smell the coffee, here's some warnings that we need to take very seriously." He tells us exactly why they did not abide in His rest. Hebrews 3:18-19 says, "And to whom sware he that they should not enter into his rest, but to them that believed not? So we see that they could not enter in because of unbelief." Who did not get into His rest? Those who did not believe.

Now look in chapter 4 and verse 2: "For unto us was the gospel preached, as well as unto them: but the word preached did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in them that heard it." Now look in verse 6: "Seeing therefore it remaineth that some must enter therein, and they to whom it was first preached entered not in because of unbelief."

Why were Adam and Eve kicked out of the garden? Unbelief. Why did the children of Israel, as they came out of Egypt, not enter into the land? Unbelief. Why did those in the land not stay in the land? Unbelief. What is he saying? We had better fear lest we fall after the same example. To enter into God's rest requires faith—not observance of days, times, years, ceremonies, and rituals, but faith. Did they have those days, times, years, ceremonies, and rituals in the Old Testament? Yes. Did they keep them? No. Did they enter in? No. God's real rest is not based upon ceremonies or days; it is based upon faith.

Albert Barnes says that God Himself had spoken of His own rest from His works, the work of creation, and had instituted a rest characterized by the peace, beauty, and order of the first Sabbath, when all was new, lovely, and pure. This is called the rest of God, a beautiful emblem of those who dwell around His throne in heaven. The Bible spoke early of a rest that appertained to God Himself. The

prospect of entering this rest was spoken of as a possible thing, but some were excluded. Why? Because of unbelief.

In other words, to enter into God's rest requires faith. Hebrews 4:6 says, "Seeing therefore it remaineth that some must enter therein, and they to whom it was first preached entered not in because of unbelief."

This is what the apostle is doing in chapter 4. He begins with a warning, then tells us that they did not enter because of unbelief, and that God swore they would not enter in. He then speaks of God's rest in creation. God's rest is the archetype and prototype. Canaan was supposed to be a type of that rest, but they failed.

He says, “Again, he limiteth a certain day, saying in David, To day, after so long a time; as it is said, To day if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts.” Even David, the man after God’s own heart, said that Canaan was not the real rest of God. The observation of the days and ceremonies and rituals was not the rest of God. Then he says in verse 8, “For if Jesus had given them rest, then would he not afterward have spoken of another day.” We know, therefore, that the Canaan rest, that Old Testament rest, those Sabbath days and all their festivals were not the rest of God. He said so. Whatever Joshua accomplished, and whatever they accomplished, it was not the rest of God.

“Seeing therefore it remaineth that some must enter therein.” Some are going to get into that rest. “And they to whom it was first preached entered not in because of unbelief.”

Now skip down to verse 9: “There remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God.” If the Old Testament Sabbaths were the real rest, why does it yet speak of another rest? Why does he say, “There remaineth a rest for the people of God”? The word “rest,” as I told you before, is sabbatismos. What verse 9 actually says is this: “There remaineth therefore a keeping of a sabbath to the people of God.”

In other words, the conclusion the apostle comes to is this: None of the Old Testament Sabbaths were the real rest. They were pictures, types, and emblems, but they were not the real rest. The real Sabbath is yet to come. God's creation Sabbath was God's rest,

and initially man was to begin his week by entering into God's rest, but he failed.

If we are to continue to observe days, times, years, ceremonies, rituals, certain meats, and certain drinks in relation to those festivals, why does the Apostle Paul, inspired by the Holy Ghost, write, “Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holyday, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath days: which are a shadow of things to come; but the body is of Christ”? And if we are to keep these things, why did the Apostle Paul write unto the Galatians and condemn them for observing days, times, and years, saying, “I am in doubt of you”?

Conclusion and Application

Evidently, you do not understand the gospel; you do not understand Christ. If you understood Christ, you would not be keeping these days, times, and years. Anything that takes the emphasis away from Jesus Christ, His person, and His work is wrong. In all things, He is to have the preeminence. Anyone who wants to take away the preeminence from Jesus Christ, His person, and His work, is either demonstrating that he has an unbelieving heart, that he is not a real, genuine child of God; he is doing so through gross theological ignorance; or there is an attempt to pervert the gospel of Christ, as the Judaizers did. Paul fought against them constantly because they wanted to add ceremonies and rituals to the gospel and say, “If you really want to be saved, if you really want to be spiritual, then you need to do this, and you need to do it like this, in order to really, genuinely be saved.”

If you really and truly want rest, that rest can only be found in Jesus Christ. Our Lord said, “Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.”

There can be no rest to an unbelieving heart. If manna and miracles could not satisfy Israel, neither would they have been content with the land which flowed with milk and honey. Canaan was to be the typical resting place of God, where His ark should abide and the ordinances of religion should be established.

The Lord had for forty years borne with the ill manners of the generation which came out of Egypt. It was but right that He should resolve to have no more to do with them. Was it not enough that they had revolted all along that marvelous wilderness march? Should they be allowed to make new masses and marabouts in the promised land itself? Jehovah would not have it so.

He not only said, but swore, that unto His rest they should not come, and that His oath excluded every one of them. Their carcasses fell in the wilderness. Solemn warning was this to all who leave the way of faith or follow paths of petulant murmuring and mistrust. The rebels of old could not enter in because of unbelief. Let us therefore fear, lest, a promise being left us of entering into His rest, any of you should seem to come short of it.

One blessed inference from this psalm must not be forgotten. It is clear that there is a rest of God and that some must enter into it. But they to whom it was first preached entered not in because of unbelief. There therefore remaineth a rest to the people of God. The unbelievers could not enter in, but we who have believed do enter into His rest. Let us enjoy it and praise the Lord for it forever.

Ours is the true Sabbath rest. It is ours to rest from our own works as God did from His. While we do so, let us come before His presence with thanksgiving and make a joyful noise unto Him with praise. God has given us His true rest, and that rest is in Jesus Christ.

Father, we're so thankful today for Your love and Your grace. We're so thankful for Your Word. And Father, we're so thankful that we may rest solely, totally, and completely in the person and work of Jesus Christ. He is God. He has accomplished salvation. There is not one thing that we must do except, Lord, look to Thee and trust in Thee as Thou dost give us repentance and faith. It's done. It's finished.

CHAPTER 4

The Superiority of Christ

Part Four of Four

SCRIPTURE READING - Hebrews 4:1-11 (KJV)

Introduction and Review of Previous Messages

Hebrews chapter 4, verse 1: "Let us therefore fear, lest, a promise being left us of entering into his rest, any of you should seem to come short of it. For unto us was the gospel preached, as well as unto them: but the word preached did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in them that heard it. For we which have believed do enter into rest, as he said, As I have sworn in my wrath, if they shall enter into my rest: although the works were finished from the foundation of the world. And he spake in a certain place on the seventh day on this wise, And God did rest the seventh day from all his works. And in this place again, If they shall enter into my rest. Seeing therefore it remaineth that some must enter therein, and they to whom it was first preached entered not in because of unbelief: Again, he limiteth a certain day, saying in David, To day, after so long a time; as it is said, To day, if you will hear his voice, harden not

> your hearts. For if Jesus [or Joshua] had given them rest, then would he not afterwards have spoken of another day. There remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God. For he that has entered into his rest, he also has ceased from his own works, as God did from his. Let us labour therefore to enter into that rest, lest any man fall after the same example of unbelief."
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> The theme of the book of Hebrews is indeed the superiority of Jesus Christ. One of the key words in the book of Hebrews is the word "better." Everything is better with the Lord Jesus Christ. Hebrews chapter 1, verses 1 through 3, teaches the superiority of Jesus Christ over all of the prophets. Hebrews 1, verses 4 through chapter 2, verse 18, teaches the superiority of Jesus Christ over angels. Hebrews chapter 3 teaches the superiority of Christ over Moses. Hebrews chapter 4 teaches the superiority of Christ over Joshua. Hebrews chapter 5 teaches the superiority of Jesus Christ over Aaron. There is no man, there is no group of men, there is no ordinance, there is no group of ordinances that can be superior to Jesus Christ. The Bible says in the book of Colossians chapter 1 that in all things He, Christ, must have the preeminence.

In the first message, we looked at God's creation rest and saw that it was the archetype of the Canaan rest, which also was the archetype of the Christian rest. In other words, we were to enter into that rest by faith. Adam did not begin his life working. If man was created on the sixth day and God rested on the seventh day, then man was to rest and begin his work with a rest.

When looking at the Sabbath, we discovered a creation Sabbath, a Canaan Sabbath, and a Christian Sabbath. The creation Sabbath, or creation rest, was in celebration and commemoration of God's creation. The pattern of the Canaan rest was God's Sabbath rest. The goal of the Sabbath is man's redemption rest, or the Christian Sabbath, which is rest in the Redeemer, the Lord Jesus Christ.

When you examine the Sabbath that the Hebrews kept in the Old Testament, it was not primarily a day of worship, but a day of rest. There was no weekly day of worship in the Old Testament. Worship was family-oriented; it was in the warp and woof of the family. They

were to worship every day, but the Sabbath was primarily a day of rest.

Saturday was not the Sabbath, nor could it possibly be the Sabbath, because the dates were fixed. When the date is fixed, the day changes. God said in Exodus 12, "This day shall be the beginning of your year." He pointed out Abib fifteenth, named the month, and named the date. This meant Abib first and Abib eighth had to be Sabbaths, Abib fifteenth had to be a Sabbath, and there were seven specifically numbered Sabbaths after that. Certain days could not possibly ever be a Sabbath because they were designated as workdays; therefore, you could not work and rest at the same time.

The Sabbath day was set. The date was set, and therefore, like your birthday, the day changed every year for the weekly Sabbath. There were weekly Sabbaths, new-moon Sabbaths, sabbatical years, and a year of Jubilee. The feasts were also considered Sabbaths. A Sabbath could be one day long, two days long, one year long, two years long, and even seventy years long.

In the previous message, we looked specifically at Galatians chapter 4 and Colossians chapter 2, where the Apostle Paul said that all those Old Testament types, emblems, and ceremonies were nothing more than shadows and that they were fulfilled in Jesus Christ. Today I want to bring this fourth message and tie together those ends. I am going to speak about the Christian Sabbath. Some may object to that term, and some emphatically deny that such exists.

The Christian Sabbath Terminology

Upon reflection, however, the term can be easily understood. Some will say, “The term ‘the Christian Sabbath’ does not exist in Scripture.” And it does not. If you asked me to turn to a passage using that term, I could not do it. But neither could I turn to a specific passage that speaks of Christian baptism, divine incarnation, or substitutionary atonement. Is anyone going to deny those doctrines because the terminology does not exist in Scripture? The absence of such an expression proves absolutely nothing. If it is in the New Covenant, in the New Testament, it has to be specifically Christian. Therefore, if a Sabbath is mentioned in the New

Testament, it has to be a Christian Sabbath. It certainly would not be the Creation Sabbath, which was God's rest, nor would it be the Canaan or Hebrew Sabbath, because everything in the New Testament, just as everything in the Old Testament, relates to Jesus Christ.

Hebrews 4 and the Remaining Sabbath

Hebrews 4:8 says, "For if Jesus [or Joshua] had given them rest," that is, if the Canaan rest had been the genuine rest, "then would he not afterwards have spoken of another day." Joshua led the children of Israel into Canaan. The words Jesus and Joshua are interchangeable; Yahashua and Yeshua both mean Savior. Hebrews speaks of another day because the Old Testament Sabbath was not the real Sabbath, nor was the Old Testament Canaan rest the real rest. Verse 9 says, "There remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God." The Greek word for "rest" is sabbatismos: there remains therefore a keeping of the Sabbath to the people of God. If the creation rest is not our rest—it was God's rest—and the Canaan rest is not our rest, what is?

It is this rest, a Christian rest, which is mentioned in verse 9. The Christian rest may be based upon the creation rest, because it is indeed the rest of God, and the only way to enter into that rest is by faith.

Hebrews chapter 3 and Hebrews chapter 4 repeatedly tell us that those in the Old Testament did not genuinely enter into God's rest because of unbelief. In verse 1 of chapter 4 we read, "Let us therefore fear, lest, a promise being left us of entering into his rest, any of you should seem to come short of it. For unto us was the gospel preached, as well as unto them: but the word preached did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in them that heard it." God swore that they would not enter into His rest.

When we come to verse 7, the author of Hebrews quotes David in Psalm 95. David reigned well after the Canaan conquest. What is David saying in Psalm 95? He is saying that the Canaan conquest, or the Hebrew rest, or the Hebrew Sabbath, was not the real rest or the real Sabbath. That is why he says, "Again, he limiteth a certain day,

saying in David, To day, after so long a time; as it is said, To day if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts."

There is an emphasis on the word "today" and on the word "rest." John Calvin explains the use of these words in the middle of Hebrews chapter 4, remembering that the quotation is from Psalm 95: "We might stop a moment to compare what the apostle states in the third and fourth chapters of this epistle to the Hebrews with the passage now before us. That the apostle follows the Greek version"—the Septuagint—"need occasion us no surprise. Neither is he to be considered as undertaking professedly to treat this passage. He only insists upon the adverb 'today' and upon the word 'rest.'"

"At first he states that the expression 'today' is not to be confined to the time of the law when it was given, but properly applies to the gospel when God began to speak more openly. The fuller and more perfect declaration of doctrine demanded the greater share of attention. God has not ceased to speak. He has revealed His Son and He is daily inviting us to come to Him and undoubtedly it is our incumbent duty under such an opportunity to obey His voice."

The apostle next reasons from the rest to an extent which we are not to suppose that the words of the psalmist themselves warrant. He takes it up first as a proposition: since there was an implied promise in the punishment here denounced, there must have been some better rest promised to the people of God than the land of Canaan. For when the Jews had entered into the land, God held out to His people the prospect of another rest, which is defined by the apostle to consist in that renouncing of ourselves whereby we rest from our own works while God worketh in us.

Calvin says, “From this he takes occasion to compare the old Sabbath of rest under the law, which was figurative, with a newness of spiritual life.” Notice what Calvin is saying. There is an emphasis upon the word “rest.” There is an emphasis upon the word “today.” Why? Because he is saying that David said, as well as the author of the book of Hebrews, applies more fully and more applicable to the gospel of Jesus Christ. That Canaan rest, that Hebrew rest, was nothing more than a figure or a type or an emblem. It pointed beyond itself to the gospel of Jesus Christ and to the spiritual life found in Him.

The New Creation and the New Sabbath

Stop and think about this for a moment. We began our series with God's creation rest. When God created the world, on the seventh day He blessed it and hallowed it and rested therein. There is a correlation, a connection, between God's creation rest and the Christian rest. Let me say this another way: there is a correlation, a connection, between God's creation Sabbath and the Christian Sabbath. How can that be?

The answer is very simple: both celebrate a creation. In 2 Corinthians, chapter 5, verse 17, the apostle Paul writes, "Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new." There is something in this verse that we may not have considered. He says, "Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature."

Now look at Galatians, chapter 6, verse 15: "For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature."

What do these two verses have to do with creation? Here is what they have to do with it. The word "creature," in 2 Corinthians 5:17 and Galatians 6:15, happens to be the Greek word ktisis, K-T-I-S-I-S, which literally means "a creation." It means the act of founding or the act of creating, and this same Greek word is translated "creation" in our Bibles six times. So literally he is saying, "Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creation." The Apostle Paul says, "For in Christ neither circumcision or uncircumcision availeth in vain, but a new creation." That means that in salvation, we are a new creation.

We are something totally different than what we were before. Everyone can quote Ephesians 2:8-9: "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: not of works, lest any man should boast." But can you quote verse 10? After the Apostle Paul gets through saying, "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves," he says, "For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them."

The word “workmanship” is the Greek word poiema, which literally means “that which is made or created.” “For we are his workmanship,” and then he uses the word “created.” The word “created” is the verb ktizo, K-T-I-Z-O, which refers to the Creator making something. It is used not only in the creation of the world, but also in the creation of a new man in salvation in Christ Jesus.

The creation rest and the Christian rest both refer to a creation. Turn back in your Bibles to 2 Corinthians chapter 4, and let us look at verses 4, 5, and 6—specifically verses 5 and 6.

The Apostle Paul writes, “For we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord; and ourselves your servants for Jesus’ sake.” Then he says, “For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ Jesus.” When the Bible says, “For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness,” it directly refers to Genesis 1 and verse 3, when God said, “Let there be light: and there was light.” That was the physical creation. The same God who created physically also creates spiritually, because in the new creation God says, “Let there be light.” The light of the knowledge of Jesus Christ is shed abroad in our hearts.

In the New Testament, there are only three illustrations of salvation: the illustration of birth in John chapter 3, the illustration of resurrection in Ephesians 2 and verse 1, and the illustration of creation in 2 Corinthians 4 and 2 Corinthians 5. God sovereignly, powerfully, mercifully, and graciously created us anew in Christ Jesus. We are a new creation in Him.

Matthew Poole writes, “The Holy Ghost in the New Testament often compares the work of the new creation by Jesus Christ to the work of God in the old creation, intimating to us that the latter is as great a work of providence and divine power as the former.” He quotes Ephesians 4 and verse 4, where we are created a new man in Christ Jesus. He says, “For as that is a creation which is a making of something out of nothing, as God created the heaven and the earth, so the production of one thing out of another, which has no fitness or aptitude to receive such a form, is also a true creation, and requires an almighty power.”

“God made the light to shine out of darkness, so saith the apostle. He hath made Christ, who is the light of the world, to shine in our hearts, to give us the true knowledge of God, and of his glory, and the glory of his grace.” The same almighty power that God used in the creation of the worlds is the power He uses in the creation of a new creature in Jesus Christ.

Is it not conceivable that if there is a new creation, there is also a new Sabbath that commemorates that creation? God's creation Sabbath commemorated the creation of the world. If there is now a new creation, and that's what the Apostle Paul said, does it not follow then that there should be a new Sabbath that would commemorate that creation?

Resurrection Day as the First of New Sabbaths

Some of you have Greek lexicons, and some of you have been studying a little Greek. I want to encourage that. There is certainly nothing wrong with learning, especially learning things that you can use. You are going to find that an awful lot of our English words come directly from the Greek. In fact, some of our English words are nothing more than transliterations; they are just translated letter from letter from the Greek to the English, like the word "deacon." Our English word "therapeutic" comes from the Greek word therapeuo, I heal. The cardiac unit in the hospital? Cardia is the Greek word for heart. Most of it, a lot of it, is just from Greek to English, just plain.

Matthew 28, verse 1: "In the end of the sabbath, as it began to dawn toward the first day of the week, came Mary Magdalene and the other Mary to see the sepulchre."

We live in a day and time of abysmal ignorance—not just biblical ignorance and historical ignorance. Our forefathers, even the men who translated the Bible, were brilliant men. The head man in the translation of our King James Bible wrote and spoke 21 different languages. Many of them were dead languages, even at that time. In the 16th, 17th, and 1800s, you could not even get into college unless you already could read, write, and speak Greek, Hebrew, and Latin.

When our King James Bible was written, most folks could read Greek, Hebrew, and Latin, so there was no problem. Matthew 28:1 says, “In the end of the sabbath, as it began to dawn toward the first day of the week, came Mary Magdalene and the other Mary to see the sepulchre.” Anyone who reads Scripture will recognize that the first day of the week is the day we meet to celebrate and commemorate the new creation in Jesus Christ. Our Lord was raised from the dead on the first day of the week. It is that salvation that we commemorate. We do not commemorate the deliverance of the children of Israel from Egypt, nor necessarily even the creation of the world. That was God's Sabbath. That was God's rest.

We are identifying with that and in it. I am going to explain that in just a moment, but first I want to read to you Matthew 28:1 as it reads in the Greek. Listen carefully. I am not reading Greek; I am reading English: “In the end of the sabbaths, as it began to dawn toward the first sabbaths.” What? Yes, that is exactly what the Greek says: “In the end of the sabbaths, as it began to dawn toward the first sabbaths.”

What is Matthew 28 telling us? It is telling us that a new day has dawned, a new sabbath has occurred because Christ is risen from the dead. The first day of the week became a new sabbath. It also became a series of sabbaths based upon the person and work of Jesus Christ. The word “end” in Matthew 28:1—“in the end of the sabbath”—is the little Greek word opse, which we would spell O-P-S-E. Adam Clarke, in his commentary, comments on that word.

Here is what he says: “In the end of the sabbath, after the end of the week,” this is the translation given by several eminent critics. But here is the way the Greek word is used by several eminent Greek writers, men like Plutarch and Philostratus. They use the word opse in expressions such as, “The day was ended,” “After the times of the king,” and “After the Trojan War had ended.” If you translate the word “end” the way the Greek historians translated it, then what you are reading is this: “After the end of the old sabbaths, as the day began to dawn toward the new sabbaths.”

Look in Mark 16 and verse 1. I am not trying to be too technical, but I am trying to point something out that will bolster exactly what I have been teaching you. “And when the sabbath was past, Mary

Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James, and Salome, had bought sweet spices, that they might come and anoint him. And very early in the morning the first day of the week, they came unto the sepulchre at the rising of the sun." Now note verse 2: "And very early in the morning, in the first sabbath," is what the word actually is. The Greek word translated "first" is mia. The word mia means one, number one, the first.

I never will forget that in our study in Greek we had to learn the masculine, the feminine, and the neuter of all these nouns. Mia and heis was number one, and the way we remembered it was by saying, "Heis, mia, hen." You cannot forget it like that. The word mia means number one. Therefore, what he is saying is, "In the number one sabbath, in the very first one." So when the sabbaths—that is, the old past, the old sabbaths—were passed in verse 1, verse 2 says, "Very early in the morning, the first, number 1 sabbath."

They came to the sepulchre. What happened in number 1? Christ was raised from the dead. Now skip down to verse 9. Look in verse 9, Mark 16.

"Now when Jesus was risen early the first day of the week, he appeared first to Mary Magdalene, out of whom he had cast seven devils." The interesting thing is this: when you get to verse 9, the word "first" is not the word mia. There is a different Greek word used. This time it is protos, which means first in a series or first in succession. We talk about a prototype. What is a prototype? It is the first from which a whole number follows. You have to have a prototype if something is going to succeed or follow. Let me show you how this word is used. This means there is a number-one Sabbath, a prototype Sabbath, and consequently from this prototype there is going to be a series of succeeding Sabbaths which follow.

Hold Mark 16 and turn to 1 Corinthians 15. I have gotten you away from that passage, and I want to ask you the question: Who was the first person to whom Jesus Christ appeared after He was raised from the dead? Mary Magdalene. Now look in 1 Corinthians chapter 15, beginning with verse 5. In fact, let us read verse 3. The Apostle Paul says, "For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; and that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to

the scriptures: and that he was seen of Cephas," or Peter, "then of the twelve. After that, he was seen of above five hundred brethren at once; of whom the greater part remain unto this present, but some are fallen asleep. After that, he was seen of James; then of all the apostles."

Now, who saw our Lord first? Mary Magdalene. Then who saw Him? Peter, then the twelve, then above five hundred brethren at once, then James, then all the apostles. Why am I saying that? Go back to Mark chapter 16, verse 9. Watch this.

“Now when Jesus was risen early in the prototype of the sabbath, He appeared protos to Mary Magdalene.” First in succession. Mary saw Him. Then Peter saw Him. Then five hundred saw Him. Then James saw Him. Then the twelve saw Him. The same exact word is used in relation to the first sabbath.

John 20:1 says, “The first day of the sabbath,” or “the first day of the week,” or “the first sabbath, cometh Mary Magdalene early, when it was yet dark, unto the sepulchre, and seeth the stone taken away from the sepulchre.” It is the first day of the week. Literally, it says, “Now on the first sabbath cometh Mary Magdalene.” There is a new sabbath. Why is there a new sabbath? Because there is a new creation. There is a new rest.

Colossians chapter 2 gives the same truth. I am not going to preach on this because I preached on it last week, but I want to read it again so that you can see it.

Christ as the Substance of the Shadow

In Colossians 2:16, the Apostle Paul writes: “Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holyday, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath days: which are a shadow of things to come; but the body is of Christ.” So all of these Old Testament things were shadows, but the body is Christ.

The Greek word for “shadow” is skia. How do you get a shadow? A shadow is caused by the interception of light. Christ is the light of the world. His reality, His substance simply cast a shadow in the Old Testament. Christ has always been light. He is light. He always will be light. He was always substance and always will be substance and

reality. Everything in the Old Testament was simply a shadow of reality.

What am I trying to tell you? Jesus Christ is our real Sabbath. If you study the book of Hebrews and the Bible, you will find that Jesus Christ is our real High Priest, our real Tabernacle, our real Temple, our real Passover, our real Showbread, and our real rest. He is our real Sabbath. He is our God.

What is the Scripture saying? The old has passed away. A new order has been established. The old way of worship in the old covenant has vanished. Everything now has become new in Jesus Christ, because that is what the Bible says. There are numerous last days, including the last days of the Old Covenant. Hebrews 8:13 declares: "In that he saith, A new covenant, he hath made the first old. Now that which decayeth and waxeth old is ready to vanish away." That old way of worship is gone.

Hebrews 10:8 says: "Above when he said, Sacrifice and offering and burnt offerings and offering for sin thou wouldest not, neither hadst pleasure therein; which are offered by the law." Then, speaking of Christ: "Lo, I come to do thy will, O God. He taketh away the first, that he may establish the second." What did He take away? He took away all of those sacrifices, ceremonies, rituals, and types, that He might establish the second. You cannot have both. What did Christ establish that is new?

Hebrews 10:19 says, "Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way, which he hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, his flesh; and having an high priest over the house of God; let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water." What did He say? Through Christ, through a new and living way, we may come boldly into the holiest of all.

How many in the Old Covenant could draw nigh to God? How many could rush boldly into the holiest of all? None. A high priest went into the holiest of all only once a year, and that not without blood. But now, through Christ, we may come boldly into the holiest of all.

They worshiped with physical sacrifices. We worship through Jesus Christ, the true sacrifice. They worshiped through type and shadow. We worship through reality and substance. John 4:24 says, “God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth,” and Jesus Christ is truth. Why would anyone trade light for shadow, truth for type, substance for symbol, and new covenant worship for old covenant worship?

Jesus Christ is our Sabbath. Jesus Christ is our rest. He gives us rest in salvation, rest in tribulation, rest in all the perplexities of life, and rest in eternity. Christ is our rest. As our Lord said in Matthew 11, “Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For he said, My yoke is easy, and my burden light.”

Ceasing from Our Own Works

Hebrews 4:8 says, “For if Joshua had given them rest,” if that had been the real rest, and those had been the real sabbaths in the Old Testament, “then would he not afterwards have spoken of another day. There remaineth therefore a keeping of the sabbath,” the sabbatismos, “to the people of God.” It continues: “For he that is entered into his rest, he also hath ceased from his own works, as God did from his.”

Adam Clarke wrote, “For he that has entered into his rest, the man who has believed in Christ Jesus has entered into his rest, the state of happiness which he has provided and which is the forerunner of eternal glory, has ceased from his own works, that is, he no longer depends upon the observance of mosaic rites and ceremonies for his justification and final happiness. He rests from all of these works of the law as fully as God had rested from His works in creation.”

Those of us who have been saved by the grace of God have been made a new creation in Christ Jesus. In Christ Jesus, as a new creation, we have ceased from our own works. I am not trying to be saved. I am saved. I am not working for my salvation; I am resting in the salvation that Jesus Christ has procured.

What can I do? Nothing. My whole life, my whole soul, and my whole eternity hang upon what Jesus Christ has done. Jesus Christ is salvation. Salvation is an accomplished fact. I have ceased from my own labor. If you are in Christ, you have ceased from your own labor. Do you remember what our Lord said as He hung on the cross before He died? He cried, “It is finished!” And it was. We have a finished redemption.

You may read the Old Testament, which is just as much the Word of God as the New Testament. Yet the promised rest in the Old Testament referred to the Messiah, the Lord Jesus Christ. You can read about it in Psalm 72, Isaiah 2, and Isaiah 9. That rest was in Christ. All of the promises were in Christ.

The Death Penalty for Violating God's Sabbath

Why was the violation of the Sabbath in the Old Testament considered a capital crime? You remember that I showed you several passages where the man who worked on the Sabbath was to be executed. He was to be put to death. Why was the death penalty demanded? We also have to ask another question: Is there a death penalty today for violating God's sabbaths?

The death penalty was demanded in the Old Covenant because the Canaan rest, or the Canaan sabbath, was to be a picture of God's creation sabbath, which was to be fulfilled in the redemption sabbath in Jesus Christ. When a man refused to rest in God's sabbath and went out and worked, what was he doing? He was refusing to rest in God's sabbath; he was adding his own works. You have to remember that the goal of the sabbath, whether you are talking about the Creation Sabbath or the Canaan Sabbath, was man's redemption rest, which is only found in the Christian Sabbath in Jesus Christ. The sabbath asserted the principle of rest under God and freedom under God. The sabbath asserted the principle of man being released from his own works and his own self.

The Canaan sabbath typified what God was going to do in and through Jesus Christ. Therefore, the man who refused to rest in the Old sabbath was refusing God's rest. It was a demonstration of rebellion and unbelief, and he was punished with death. Was that not exactly what happened to those who came out of Egypt, who

refused to rest? What happened to those Hebrews who got into the Canaan land but still refused to rest? What did God do? God killed them. God sent them into captivity.

Now here is the important question: Is there a death penalty today for violating God's Sabbath? Remember, God's Sabbath is not the Canaan Sabbath, the Hebrew Sabbath, or even the creation Sabbath. God's Sabbath is the Christian Sabbath, which is none other than Jesus Christ.

Second Thessalonians chapter 1 answers the question of whether there is a death penalty today for refusing to rest in God's Sabbath. Paul writes to these Thessalonian believers: "And to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power; when he shall come to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all them that believe."

Is there a death penalty for violating God's Sabbath? You better believe there is. What will happen to all those who refuse to rest and trust in Jesus Christ? They will be summarily executed.

Do you know what our Lord said in Proverbs 8, verses 35 and 36? "For whoso findeth me findeth life, and shall obtain favour of the LORD. But he that sinneth against me wrongeth his own soul: all they that hate me love death." You cannot violate God's Sabbath. You cannot violate the Lord Jesus Christ. You cannot violate His person and His work and refuse to rest in Him without being executed.

Practical Application: Resting Daily in Christ

Since Jesus Christ is our Sabbath, we do not observe the Sabbath one day a week. We observe the Sabbath seven days a week. We rest in Him every day—not just for salvation. If I had time to go back to Matthew chapter 6, remember when our Lord said, "Consider the lilies of the field, they toil not, neither do they spin. Consider the sparrows, they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns, yet your heavenly Father knoweth their need." What is He saying? We need

to learn to do our duty, do it in faith and obedience, and after we have done everything for which we are responsible, we are to rest.

Here we have children going off to college. Mom and dad, what in the world can you do? Can you go to college with them and babysit them? No. You train them. You teach them. They are driving on dangerous highways and sometimes living among ungodly people. What can you do? You can pray and teach. After you have done that, you rest.

Because it is not in your hands; it is in God's hands. The same is true of your work and your financial needs. You do what you can by God's grace. You fulfill your responsibility and do it to the best of your ability. Then you rest.

Jesus Christ is our Sabbath. We are to rest in Him every day of the week, but primarily for our salvation. It really comes down to this: If Jesus Christ is not God, if He is not who He says He is, then we are all lost. But He is God, He is who He says He is, and He has done what He says He has done. Therefore, there is nothing for us to do but rest and trust in Him completely. Jesus Christ is God. He is salvation. He is our Sabbath and our rest.

Father, we bow to Thee. We thank You for Your love, grace, and mercy. Above all, we thank You for Jesus Christ, for without Him, Lord, we are nothing; we are lost. We cannot save ourselves or work our way into heaven. Salvation is a finished work, finished before the foundation of the world, for Jesus Christ was the Lamb slain before the foundation of the world. By Your grace and mercy, through Your new creation, all we can do is rest and trust in Him. By Your grace, that is what we do. We give Thee praise, honor, and glory in Christ's name. Amen.

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