

The title of today's sermon is *The 7<sup>th</sup> Day Sabbath - Part 2*.

The purpose of this sermon series is to answer questions relating to the 7<sup>th</sup> day, the Sabbath day. In part 1 we established that God created the 7<sup>th</sup> day Sabbath. After 6 days of refashioning the earth, then He rested and that's how the 7<sup>th</sup> day was created for mankind, because God set the example of resting, and the word 'Sabbath' means 'rest'.

We saw that the Sabbath was created *for* man and not man for the Sabbath. It was created to benefit mankind physically, but more importantly spiritually.

We established in God's word that the Sabbath is a sign for His people, those He has called into a relationship with Him. If someone does not keep the Sabbath, the 7<sup>th</sup> day Sabbath, they do not and cannot know God or Jesus Christ.

We saw that the 7<sup>th</sup> day Sabbath is important to God and to mankind as it is a day that God established to teach mankind His ways.

We established that the 7<sup>th</sup> day Sabbath is a perpetual covenant/agreement between God and mankind. *Man cannot change this date*, this appointment, this day. It's impossible! What God has established no man can just come along and change it. We saw that the 7<sup>th</sup> day Sabbath is a commandment of God, a commandment *from* God.

God is going to begin to open the minds of all mankind as He humbles this world soon through a time of tribulation. This end-time tribulation will be brought to a close by the return of Jesus Christ as King of kings over all nations.

Repentance starts when an individual turns from his own ways and begins to obey God. That process of repentance, that process of change, the process of thinking differently begins with repentance and it leads to, of course, the keeping of the 7<sup>th</sup> day Sabbath. We begin to think differently about the 7<sup>th</sup> day. Whether now or later a person must begin a relationship with God by keeping the Sabbath. If anyone is unwilling to receive this basic truth from God then they are unwilling to humble themselves and admit that they have been deceived and that they have been wrong.

The weekly Sabbath is on the 7<sup>th</sup> day of the week as God established it in Genesis 1. It has been the 7<sup>th</sup> day since the days of Adam and Eve. Even as the week was established at creation, so God's plan for mankind was set to encompass 7,000 years. The first 6,000 years was set aside for man to do his own work, his own thing under an influence of Satan and spirit beings, so that man would have choice without God being involved directly in his life. But God set aside the 7<sup>th</sup> day, the Sabbath, as a time that pointed to a rest, a 1,000 year period where man would be given rest from Satan and the demons. This 1,000 year period we know as the Millennium. It is God's time.

It should be very clear to anyone who reads Genesis 1 and 2 that God set aside the 7<sup>th</sup> day by personally sanctifying it, personally setting it aside. God did not do that with any other day of the week. To be sanctified simply means 'to be set aside for holy use and purpose'. God's purpose from the beginning of

the creation of time was to set aside the 7<sup>th</sup> day for all time, while man existed, as a Sabbath rest for him, to benefit him.

From the very beginning of the creation week God established set times that He would personally set aside for mankind as appointments. They're appointed times that *we* should keep with *Him*. The Sabbath is simply a time that God says He will provide more for us on a spiritual level. The weekly Sabbath is one such appointment that *never changes*.

It's incredible what man has done to change the 7<sup>th</sup> day from a rest to now a day, modern society, it's possibly the busiest day of the week, the 7<sup>th</sup> day. Where God said it was a time to rest I know in retail businesses that basically anywhere between 25 and 30 percent of all the turnover of a business is done on the 7<sup>th</sup> day, the Sabbath, which includes, of course, the Friday evening and also all of the daylight portion of the Saturday. Man has turned it into possibly the busiest time. And in today's society people make you work. If you turn around and say, "I can't work on a Friday evening or a Saturday," they almost go into shock! To acquire employment in today's society really does require a great blessing from God and an intervention from God because man's natural carnal mind can't accept that you won't work on the busiest day of the week for them, that you put it aside for God.

Every 7<sup>th</sup> day mankind should keep this appointment with God. Traditional Christianity has tried to do away with this command concerning the 7<sup>th</sup> day Sabbath. They find no fault with the other nine Commandments. They normally will not argue with you about whether you should kill somebody or whether you should steal from someone or whether you should openly lie to somebody, or whether or not you should have an idol, put it up and worship that idol. They'd say, "Oh no, that's wrong." Whether you should use God's name in vain...although today's society does often knowingly but often unknowingly, a changing of words. They don't really argue about that, but the moment you mention the 7<sup>th</sup> day Sabbath, that it is required and it is one of the Commandments they soon jump up and say to you, "Oh no! It's done away!" Yet the 4<sup>th</sup> Commandment as we saw in **Exodus 20:8** simply says, **Remember the Sabbath Day to keep it holy**, to set it aside for holy use and purpose.

God will begin to introduce *His* truth, the truth about the Sabbath, His plan and purpose for mankind to a small percentage on this earth's population that will come through this end-time tribulation. As God establishes His Kingdom on this earth His truth will no longer remain a mystery to man. It is only by the grace and mercy of God that *we* understand the Sabbath day. It's only through God's mercy that He did call us and give us this opportunity to understand this knowledge, because without God we cannot understand the full intent and the beauty of the Sabbath.

Man has been deceived by Satan for 6,000 years. That is about to come to an end, thankfully. The framework of God's plan is revealed through the basic truth of the Sabbath. That truth is about God's Sabbath and the purpose of the Sabbath. The overview of that plan is contained in the weekly Sabbath but the set specifics of that plan are contained in the annual Sabbaths.

God said that observing the 7<sup>th</sup> day Sabbath is a perpetual covenant, an everlasting agreement with Him.

So now let's pick up where we left off in **Exodus 31:15** - we'll pick it up there where we left off in part 1 - **Work shall be done for six days, but the seventh is a Sabbath of rest, holy to the Eternal: whoever does any work, and that's their own work or their own interests, on the Sabbath day, he shall surely be put to death.** God is saying here God must be first. Our priority in our way of living, our life, our thinking, must be that God is first in all things.

**Verse 16 - Therefore the children of Israel shall keep the Sabbath,** and that is, today the Church of course is Israel, the children of Israel. We are the called out ones, we are the Church of God, we belong to God, we are the children of Israel. **...shall keep the Sabbath; to observe the Sabbath throughout their generations as a perpetual/everlasting agreement.**

**Verse 17 - Why? Why is this so? It is a sign/mark between Me and the children of Israel,** it's a sign between God's people and Him **forever: for in six days the Eternal made the heavens and the earth, and on the seventh day He rested and was refreshed.**

Let's look at **Exodus 34:9** - And here Moses has made new tablets and a covenant agreement was renewed with conditions applied to that agreement. **And he said, Moses said, If now I, Moses, have found grace in Your sight, O Eternal, let my Lord, I pray, go among us even though we are a stiff-necked people;** because the natural carnal mind is motivated by pride and it is stubborn, it wants its own way and it reacts and twinges if it doesn't get its own way; **and pardon/forgive our iniquity and our sin, and take us as Your inheritance.** So this is an agreement that we made when we are called by God. We enter an agreement with God at baptism and the laying of hands; we become inheritors in the sense of heirs of a promise, because we become begotten sons and sons inherit what the Father leaves. And God the Father has made promises to us.

Israel in the Old Testament were to be an example nation, yet God has called us to an inheritance. They were called to a *physical* inheritance, which was the promised land. God has called us to His inheritance, which is into His Family. We're now begotten sons and one day we have that opportunity through God living and dwelling in us and working with us over a lifetime to inherit eternal life *in Elohim*, which is an unbelievable promise! When you look at the creation of mankind and what we really are, here is an Eternal God that in His love and mercy creates something from nothing - something from nothing, which is us - and gives it the potential to live forever with Him. We're not worthy of *any* of that. We do *nothing* to *deserve* any of that, it's all through God's love and mercy and His great love to us that that is even possible. And when we dwell on and think about that it is just absolutely incredible.

And that's why we should never take *anything* to ourselves in the way we think we are, any credit to ourselves, because we're not worthy of anything. We, we're nothing! We came from nothing! God made us from the dust of the ground, from elements. We never existed before, and yet God is promising us something that is eternal - and we don't deserve anything. And there is nothing that we can do in and of and by ourselves that would *earn* what God is giving us, and that's why eternal life is a gift from God. We can't earn it, we can't continue to do certain things and say, "Oh look, I've earned it. I *deserve* it because of my behaviour." No, it is a gift from God.

We are to be an example nation. The Church of God is to be an example nation to this world, because it is God living in us that lives out to the benefit of others and therefore we are to inherit His mind and His life for eternity.

So this is the promise of God, **Exodus 34:10 - And He said, Behold, I will make a covenant/an agreement/an alliance: before all the people I will do marvels,** which is wonderful acts **such as have not been done in all the earth, nor in any nation: and all the people among you shall see the works of the Eternal: for it is an awesome thing that I do with you.** Well, *we* are that awesome thing! Because if you look at what we are and our base nature, it is an *incredible* work that God is doing. He is taking something that is hostile against Him, our natural mind, and is changing it over time! What a marvelous work that He would do that! God has worked a marvel *in us* before all the nations.

The Church of God - PKG exists because God is in it, and here is a work that He is doing. He is transforming a small group of people, transforming their minds. How is He doing that? How is He transforming these minds? He is developing *His* mind, *His* truth, *His* word in a people, transforming their thinking by the power of His holy spirit. What an awesome thing! This is a marvelous wonder! Compared to a physical creation, what God is doing *in* and through His Church is an *awesome* thing that God is doing in us, and we should be thankful that we have an aspect of God dwelling in us.

Why our calling? How beautiful is our calling, how wonderful the truth that's been revealed to us, things that people have desired to know throughout 6,000 years, yet God in His mercy revealed it to *us*! We didn't do anything to *earn* it or *deserve* it, it's just simply God and His mercy.

**Verse 11** - This is the condition of the promise... **Observe what I command you this day: behold, I am driving out before you the Amorite, and the Canaanite, and the Hittite, and the Perizzite, and the Hivite, and the Jebusite.** Here it is, it's talking about something that is foreign to God, that doesn't fit with God's people. Well, we're to drive out our old ways in our thinking. So when certain thoughts come in we are to drive them out through the power of God's spirit and God will remove from us those things that would inhibit us, those sins that are in our lives. God says He will drive them out through the power of His spirit *if* we desire it to take place - hence the battle.

**Verse 12 - Take heed to yourself,** watch your spiritual condition, **lest, why? ...you make an agreement with the inhabitants of the land,** in other words, we go *back* and start to have desires of the world, the things that are in this world, the system, that we go back and make agreements with it in our thinking, we start to align ourselves in agreement with the world and it's ways. ...**where you are going, lest it be a snare in your midst:** Yes, brethren, it can be a stumbling block to us because we start to think negatively about God's Church and all about God's people; it can be a snare to us, it can be a trap to us. We don't give into those desires and those thoughts, those lusts of the flesh, those desires of the mind. We don't get drawn back into the world's system and the world's way of operating, politics, or trying to do things to be liked by others. All our motivation and desire should be to please God. We put God first in *all* things, irrespective of what anybody thinks about us or believes about us - it's actually irrelevant because it's more important to be concerned about what *God* thinks and about the way *God* states things should be done in the way we behave ourselves. To this world it should be an example that God is living and dwelling in us through the power of His holy spirit out to the benefit of others...hence we need to be careful of the choice of attitudes.

Now, we all fail in that on a regular basis, but it's more about the battle, that we identify it, we see it. Sometimes we can't stop it because it's just so powerful within us that it overrules us, and then we start to realize we shouldn't have said that, we shouldn't have reacted that way, we shouldn't have said certain things or done certain things and our attitude stinks. But we still can grab a hold of it and go before the throne of God - because what a blessing *that* is - and we can lay it before God and say, "I was wrong! I've done it again! My personality, my nature, I've reacted, I know I shouldn't have thought like that, I shouldn't have said those things and I was wrong and I regret it, I *hate* saying those things and doing those things! God forgive me for the sin...forgive me." Because we have access to God through the power of Jesus Christ's sacrifice. What a wonderful, wonderful blessing that is, to be able to go before God's throne at any time to admit we are wrong. And we should be doing that on a regular basis, every day in our life, because every day in our life we do something that is not in accordance with God's way.

Now, we may not see it all the time but we do. We do. And as God works with us we begin to see more of ourselves to the point where we can say, "Oh wretched man/woman that I am," because of the way

we think and the way we respond. We don't *want* to do it that way but our nature boils up because we want to defend ourselves or justify ourselves and believe that things are unjust toward us and therefore we want to revile back when we shouldn't. Here is God saying don't be drawn back into the world, be really careful, take heed to yourself, you've got to watch yourself because things are going to come up in your life. And it's a guarantee, absolute guaranteed that things are going to come up in your life and in my life that will press the button and we will react. But God says, take heed lest you get drawn back into this system and run with the world under Satan and the demons influence on this world.

**Verse 13 - But you shall destroy their altars**, and this is talking about something physical in false religion, **break their sacred pillars, and cut down their wooden images**: We are to destroy or pull down, break, cast down, throw down, destroy, pull down wrong thinking, those things that are wrong or sin within us, those thoughts. We need to get a hold of them.

They were to destroy false religious rituals and customs from their way of life. We can do the same. Now, when we're first called we do enter those things, we start to pull down the wrong things - and they're reasonably basic in some ways, which we can prove very easily through scripture, that Christmas...we can pull it down and say, "Well, we're not going to be involved in it." And over time we mature more and more in the way we handle those things, but we destroy that image or the falseness of it out of our life. Same with Easter. Now it's the same with Sunday worship, because we begin to put God first in our life and begin to keep the Sabbath and we *reject* sun-worship, Sunday worship, worship of Baal. We don't raise up other things as idols, we simply turn our thoughts to wanting to please God.

We are to battle against the carnal mind by the power of God's spirit. As God convicts us to see the sin that is in our life we can begin to fight, we desire to fight and we don't give up that fight. And that is the secret of life; no matter how trodden down we become, no matter what the thoughts are we have that potential to repent, to realize that we're the problem. Other people aren't the problem, it's the way we *respond* to others and it's the way we respond to God. God is not the problem! We're the problem because of the way we think. Now, we all go through it and we all go through various battles to different degrees, but it's the desire to *not* want to sin, the desire to *not* want to go down that path, the desire to want to please God. And yes, it's a horrible thing when we do those sins, but the beauty of it is that we can repent and we can take the next few steps forward believing God and desiring to please God. Yes, we will fail again, but the point is to continue to battle no matter what environment, no matter what situation.

**Verse 14 - For you shall worship no other god**, no other 'el': **for the Eternal**, which is Yahweh Elohim, **whose name is 'Jealous'**, that word is 'like a protective God', He is a **jealous God**, He is 'El'! So we are not to worship or bow down or give reverence to anything else. We're not to give our time, devote all our time to something that is false. We're not to give our respect to anything else other than God and His way, His way of living. God must be first in all matters of our life.

**Verse 15 - Lest you make a covenant/an alliance with the inhabitants of the land**, in other words our minds go back into the world, **and they play the harlot**, we enter into an unlawful relationship. Harlotry, or adultery, is an unlawful relationship. God is saying here **lest they play the harlot with their gods**, in other words get back involved with false gods, false gods of Satan's system, Satan's world, like sun worship, **and make sacrifice to their gods, and then invite you to eat with their sacrifices**, in other words get involved or partake of religious worship or religious customs. There are so many things in the world today that are false.

I know one of the ones that have come up sometimes in God's people is that of a ritual, Catholics mainly I think do it, is that of christening a baby, where it's blasphemy against God because of God's purpose of baptism. Where God says that as an adult, where you have a matter of choice and you become an adult where your thinking is maturing and you begin to see the lies of the world and you start to come into repentance at an adult age, that you are to be baptized, full immersion in water as an outward sign that you're burying the old man. Yet of course Satan inspires his religions to turn around and to take a child that has no ability to think in any way or reason in any way and sprinkle water on them so that if they did die they now can enter into wherever they're meant to go. People say, "Well, would you get involved in things like that?" Well, would you get involved in a lie? The answer is simple really. We don't partake of a satanic ritual because that's basically what it is.

Dropping down to **verse 18 - And the Feast of Unleavened Bread you shall keep, you shall observe, Seven days you shall eat unleavened bread**, so we're to take a small piece of unleavened bread and partake of that small piece of bread for the seven days, **as I command you, in the appointed time of the month Abib, the 15th: for in the month Abib you came out of Egypt**. And that, of course, is symbolic of us coming out of sin. The day we're called we begin to come out of sin, to remove ourselves from sin. We now desire a sinless life as a piece of unleavened bread symbolizes.

**Verse 21 - Six days you shall work, but on the seventh day you shall rest**, you shall Sabbath! When?... **in plowing time and in harvest time you shall rest**. In other words you will keep it every week for your total life. The 7<sup>th</sup> day Sabbath needs to be kept every week no matter what is happening in a person's personal life.

Let's look at **Leviticus 23:1** - here God outlines the Holy Days, the appointed times that He desires us to meet with Him so that He can pour out His spirit to teach us His ways - **And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, Speak to the children of Israel and say to them, The feasts/the appointed times of the Eternal, which you shall proclaim to be holy convocations, assemblies, these are My appointed times**. These are *God's* appointed times for mankind. They are *not* Jewish days! Oftentimes people say the Sabbath is Jewish - that's a lie! They do not understand the history of Israel and the 12 tribes of Israel, they've lost that whole knowledge therefore they turn around and appoint it to one tribe, the tribe of Judah, and call it Jewish days. God says, no, they're *His* days, they are *His* appointed times.

**Verse 3 - Six days work shall be done: but the seventh day is the Sabbath of solemn rest, the Sabbath observance, it's Sabbath, a rest day, a holy convocation, a dedicated assembly; you shall do no work on it: it is the Sabbath of the Eternal in all your dwellings**. Brethren, when we look back at our calling, do you remember *your* calling? Do you remember back when *you* were called? And the very first thing to understand with regards to a calling is the need to keep a Sabbath.

I recall the very first time that I knew that I had to keep a Sabbath to please God, to enter into a relationship with Him, and I remember the house we were in and that Chris and myself realized that we were not to work on that day. I had told my work that I wasn't going to be involved in going to a retail outlet on a Friday and Saturday - they went into shock, of course, about this sudden change within this person who had always worked Friday nights and Saturdays and now he wasn't. At home we thought, well, we're not to work, so we didn't do any work, and I mean nothing! We basically sat around all day and ate. And as the dishes built up we in the end were looking forward to the end of the Sabbath so we could clean the house up and do the dishes. Well, we soon learned that that wasn't right, that wasn't balanced, that wasn't normal, so we thought, well, how would we keep the Sabbath? Because, see, we didn't fully understand then about the true purpose or the beauty of the Sabbath, about God teaching

us on that day through sermons. We didn't have a tape program. We'd do a little bit of reading and everything, well it was almost like 'killing time', which is a dangerous thing for God's people, to think that on a Sabbath you've got to 'kill time', in other words, get rid of it. Well, our second Sabbath we realized that sitting around all day wasn't... well, that was hard work, sitting around all day, so we thought we'd go for a walk, and I remember we over did it and we went for such a long walk that by the time we got home we were exhausted. Then we learned then that well, that's not balanced either, that's not normal, that's not how you keep a 7<sup>th</sup> day Sabbath. And over time we learned more and more, and now we treat the Sabbath totally differently than when we were first called.

Well, that's how you learn, is through experience, and God revealed to us over time the beauty of the Sabbath and how we should keep it, in the spirit and truth. And now we've kept over 1,600 Sabbaths and it's beautiful, and we look forward to more Sabbaths, we look forward to each Sabbath day, mainly often to fellowship with God but also to fellowship with God's people. It is a beautiful thing. Where you are able to, you get together, and if you can't you can still fellowship with God.

There is an excellent example in the book of Nehemiah if you'd like to be turning to Nehemiah 13 and we'll pick it up in verse 15. The background is that Nehemiah has come back and he is now contending with the rulers saying, "Why is the house of God forsaken? Why is it in ruin? So we're going to have to look at rebuilding the temple and we need to look at how we can protect God's house and not neglect it the way we have."

So we'll pick up the story in **Nehemiah 13:15 - In those days I saw the people of Judah treading the wine press on the Sabbath**, here the people have lost the knowledge of keeping the 7<sup>th</sup> day holy, or separate for holy use and purpose, and here they are working... **and bringing in sheaves, and loading donkeys with wine, grapes, figs and all kinds of burdens which they brought into Jerusalem on the Sabbath day: and I 'warned' them**, and that word is 'testified' or I 'protested' or I 'witnessed' or I 'charged' them. In other words he told them **about the day on which they were selling provisions**. Here they are trading on the Sabbath and Nehemiah is going to remind them here that that is not what God has said, that they need to stop working and rest on the Sabbath day. And I'm sure he would have reminded them that that's one of the reasons that they were taken into captivity in the first place - was because of the pollution of the Sabbath and they had neglected the Sabbath and God punished them. Because it is a test commandment and they were taken into captivity. And the Jewish nation, of course, remembers today, that they believe strongly that the reason they went into captivity is because they polluted the Sabbath, hence they now worship the day and they brought out all these rules and regulations because you don't want to be seen to be even looking like you're breaking the Sabbath day because you're going to be punished by God.

To avoid the punishment of God they made all these rules and regulations so that there can be no way that anyone could be polluting the Sabbath. You blow the siren two hours before the Sabbath starts and ½ hour or an hour after it finishes as a real safeguard just in case...just in case we might be even looking like we're breaking the Sabbath. And of course, that's not balanced, that's not what God talks about the Sabbath. The Sabbath is a delight because of it's beautiful purpose.

**Verse 16 - Men of Tyre dwelt there also, who brought in fish and all kinds of goods**, so they have all this type of merchandise, **and they sold them on the Sabbath day to the children of Judah, and in Jerusalem. Then I 'contended'**, this word is 'plead, strive, contend, chide, debate' **with the nobles of Judah and said to them, What evil/What wicked thing is this that you do, by which you profane/you pollute/you desecrate/you defile the Sabbath day?** So we can *pollute* the Sabbath day through the way

we do things, like trading, opening retail businesses on the Sabbath day, by going out and doing our shopping on a Sabbath day. Those things would be polluting the Sabbath.

**Verse 18 - Did not your father's do thus, and did not our God bring all this disaster on us and on the city?** So in other words, "Don't you remember why we went captive? ...because of what you were doing? ...breaking of God's Sabbath, the day He set aside that is for holy use and purpose?" **Yet you bring added/increased wrath/anger on Israel by profaning the Sabbath.** Brethren, for us we need to be keeping the Sabbath as a day separate from the things we would normally do on the other six days, therefore guarding our thoughts on that day and not filling them full of entertainment like watching movies for two hours, three hours, or four hours, not playing a video game for long periods of time where we're just occupying, killing time. Because that's often what it is, it's killing time, it's not meditating or praying or worshipping God on that day, it's not doing quiet reading, is it? There are things that God requires, that we dedicate our *minds* to God not just our physical bodies.

**Verse 19 - So it was at the gates of Jerusalem as it began to be dark before the Sabbath,** so here we're looking at a Friday evening, **that I commanded that the gates should be shut, and charged that they must not be opened until after the Sabbath:** so here is Nehemiah closing the gates so nobody can come in and out. **...then I posted some of my servants at the gates so that no burdens could be brought in on the Sabbath day.** This is an example, and there are other examples in the Bible, that you could turn around and say, "Well, are not the guards working?" Well, yes, they are in a sense, because you see, within the ministry, the ministry work on a Sabbath day because that's their job. If you look back at the Levites, they used to do sacrifices on the Sabbath and it was hard work, it was actually work, they did that because God required it. So when a leader, the high priest, allocated responsibilities on the Sabbath day to somebody they carried it out, and it's not a physical labor for work, it's doing something for God. Here Nehemiah had instructed them and said, "You are to guard the gates," so they're not working. There are times when God's people are asked to support God's work, support God's way in ways that other people could say, "Well, aren't you working?" And now, an example of course is the priesthood and sacrifices, with the ministry it's giving sermons.

I can remember back when we were a larger group based in Western Australia at that time, that we were allocated duties, because a thousand people could turn up on a Holy Day and the car park wasn't able to necessarily hold a thousand people in the sense of 400-500 cars and there would be overflow, so we were appointed parking duties where we were able to overflow, traffic had to go park in certain areas and we were allocated those roles. I remember often people were allocated guard duty outside because of security. Because when you have a thousand people come together on a Holy Day offerings would often be taken up on the day in the venue, and of course there was large sums of money. The ministry would appoint certain men to be outside of the hall, just to make sure there was a level of security because we were moving large amounts of money.

All of those things, whether they are necessary or they are not is not the issue, the issue comes back to that if the ministry asks for a certain role to be fulfilled on that day it is not working, because the ministry, like the Levites, the priesthood, had to carry out certain jobs on the Sabbath day because that was a function into the work and the glory of God. It was done for God on that day.

**Verse 20 - Now the merchants and the sellers of all kinds of wares lodged outside Jerusalem once or twice.** They turned up once or twice, the doors are locked. Well, human nature is once you do it once here, well, they might open the next day, and of course once you've done it twice and you're there with



your wares and you can't sell them you soon learn the lesson that every Sabbath - you do it for a couple of weeks and afterwards realize, "Well, I'm not coming back here anymore because there is no point."

**Then I warned them and said to them, Why do you spend the night around the wall? If you do so again, I will lay hands on you.** In other words, he's saying, "Well, if you continue to break God's law I will actually do something about it, if you continue to behave this way." **And from that time they came no more on the Sabbath.**

**Verse 22 - And I commanded the Levites that they should cleanse themselves, and that they should go and guard the gates, Why? ...to sanctify the Sabbath day.** To set the Sabbath day aside as holy, so no one could come in and out. So they're working on behalf of God, they're doing it for the glory of God. **Remember me,** and here is a prayer, **Remember me, O my God, concerning this also, and spare me according to the greatness of Your mercy.** We should guard our minds on the Sabbath day. It's not just a physical rest and about going to a Sabbath service where others are; this is a time to guard our minds and guard it from things that would enter it during the other six days of the week where we entertain ourselves in lots of different ways and get involved in other things to do with the world, which are perfectly all right, some of them are, but we, on this day, we need to guard our minds. Because this is the day that *God* wants to talk to us, to communicate to us by the power of His holy spirit, He wants to educate us in something so that we can take it on board and begin to apply it in our life.

It's interesting that God uses the Sabbath as one of the main matters in fasting. A lot of people wouldn't connect, necessarily, Sabbath keeping and fasting, but they're very much linked.

If you'd like to turn to Isaiah 58 we'll just cover a little bit of Isaiah 58. So it's fasting, repentance, and the connection about Sabbath keeping [that] are very important to God.

**Isaiah 58:1 - Cry aloud/Call out, spare not,** do not withhold, restrain or hold back, **lift up your voice like a trumpet,** like a ram's horn; **tell My people their transgression,** their rebellion, **and the house of Jacob,** which is a 'type' of the Church, **their sins.** God is saying, "Hear, I'm going to cry out to the people and tell them what they're doing wrong, what they need to repent of."

God goes on and says in **verse 2 - Yet they seek Me daily, and delight to know My ways,** in other words the way God thinks about a matter, **a nation that did righteousness and did not forsake/leave the ordinances/judgments of their God: they ask/inquire of Me the ordinances of justice,** they want justice, they want to do what is right; **they take delight in approaching/drawing near to God.** So here it is that God is saying, "Well, here is a people and they do these things," they're not still doing what God requires.

**Verse 3 - Why have we fasted,** here is an attitude that's coming out from the people. **Why have we fasted, they say, and You have not seen?** In other words, "You're not considering the fact that I'm punishing myself here!" **Why have we afflicted our lives and You take no notice? Why have we afflicted our souls, our lives, and You've taken no notice?** God's saying, "Well, here is a people complaining, saying, 'I'm doing all this, God, and You're not taking any notice of me!'" And then God states, **In fact, in the day of your fast you find pleasure and exploits of all your laborers.** God's saying, "Well, there is no real change going on here - you're actually fasting for a wrong motive. The reason you are fasting is to get something from Me! That's why!"

From that point we'll just drop down and in **verse 6** we'll take it up, because we know that people are fasting for the wrong motive. And this now, God is going to clarify the purpose of fasting, what needs to happen - **Is this not the fast that I have chosen/appointed? To loose the bonds of wickedness, and to undo the heavy burdens, to let the oppressed go free, and that you break every yoke?** So the focus on an individual must be that of repentance from personal sin, not looking out at others and blaming others, of what they're not doing, or what you think they *should* be doing - in other words, judging them. It's about a focus on what the oppressions *we* have on others in our own lives, how we hold people captive in our minds by the way we think towards them, how judgmental.... and opinions about others and what they should be doing but we're not looking at ourselves, the fact that *we* could be wrong, our attitudes could be wrong, the attitudes we choose toward others could be wrong. We should let others be free from our controlling attitudes. And as much as we think we don't control or like to control things in life, that's not true. Deep down the inner man likes control. Within marriage, the husband or the wife deep down, there are controlling things going on, we want things *our way*, we really do. Deep down we want things to go *our way*, the way *we* see it, the way *we* want to do it. We should free others from our demands and judgmental attitudes. We should set our minds free from high expectation of others.

I know we've had this conversation in different times within the Church about how we can set standards for others that we don't even do ourselves, and yet those standards are based on a false precept. No, God provides His spirit at different levels for different people for different purposes. Why would we go about trying to pull or judge or condemn anybody else because of another behavior. We don't know what God's doing in that person's life. And *certainly* we should never hold anything against another person because we just don't know that they could have repented and here we are continuing holding something against them. We have no right! We don't know all the time what God is doing in a person, how He's working with them. They can repent of matters very quickly and yet we go our way thinking in judgmental ways and condemning ways, that oh yes, they're guilty and yet God's moved on and the person's moved on and we haven't. How arrogant is that that we could hold those things and yet God forgives and we won't! It's the height of arrogance, really. We should free others from our oppression, from our opinions and judgmental attitudes.

**Verse 7 - Is it not to share/divide our bread**, the truth of course, we live the way we live to others, the mercy we live to others, because the truth is we're not to be judgmental and condemning, we're to be generous about living God's way toward others to benefit others. ...**and that you bring to your house the poor who are cast out.** We shouldn't be mistreating others because of our attitudes. It's not actually often a physical action, it can be just the way we think toward others. **When you see the naked, that you cover him; and not hide yourself from your own flesh?** In other words, we should be involved, and lovingly, toward our own physical and spiritual family. We are to help others by living the truth towards them, living God's way towards them. We can help others by having God's spirit dwelling in us so that God can do good works to benefit them.

**Verse 8** - If we're willing to repent of those wrong attitudes in thinking God says, **Then your light shall break forth like the morning, your healing**, or spiritual healing of the mind, **shall spring forth speedily**, in other words, we'll change our thinking, we'll be transforming our thinking: **and your righteousness**, which is God in us, **shall go before you**, because God, the glory of God will be shining out to the benefit of others; **the glory of the Eternal**, God's way and thinking, **shall be your rear guard.** In other words, God is doing the works in and through us, we're coming into unity of thinking with God and it's God that does the works.

And if we repent of our wrong attitudes and thinking, **Then you shall call** in prayer, **and the Eternal will answer**, God will respond by pouring out His spirit in us; **you shall cry and He shall say, Here I am. If you take away the yolk, take away the oppression from your midst**, remove our attitude of condemnation and judgmental opinions towards others, **the pointing of the finger**, in other words looking down and blaming others for things, finding fault in others, which is simply motivated by pride, that's all it is, **and speaking wickedness**, pulling down, the gossip, pulling down others reputations to destroy them so that we can lift ourselves up; **if we are to do these things** God's says, **if you extend**, which is to promote, to issue or to produce, **your life to the hungry**, in other words, we're to extend our life to the hungry, we're to support those that need supporting on a spiritual level. It's not just all physical. On a spiritual level we can give to people, we can change our attitude toward people and that is giving to a person. We're to reflect an attitude of sacrifice for others on a spiritual level, not just on a physical level - on a spiritual level as well... **and satisfy the afflicted soul**, the oppressed; **then your light shall dawn in the darkness, and your darkness shall be as the noon day**: It'll be bright.

We're going to drop down to verse 13 because now it goes into the Sabbath, because of how important the Sabbath is, about this repentance and living God's way. **Verse 13 - If you turn away your foot**, your actions, **from the Sabbath, stop doing your own pleasure**, your own interests, your own desires, **on My holy day; and call the Sabbath a delight**, something that is delicate, something that is dainty, something that is pleasurable. If we understand the intent of the Sabbath we will delight in the Sabbath. More in **verse 13...and call the Sabbath a delight, a holy day of the Eternal, honorable**; in other words, we will give the glory to God, we will glorify God on that day by the way we live, **and honor Him**, give Him the glory. How? **...by not doing your own ways**, your own ways is your own journey, your own direction, **nor finding your own pleasure**, not satisfying yourself through hours of TV or video games or mindlessness, killing time, **nor speaking your own words**: in other words, not going out and just being carnal. Stop and think about *how* we can benefit others, what we can do to benefit others in our thoughts and words; not doing our own ways, pleasing our self, not working, not talking about the self all the time but matters that show respect and glory to God on His holy day.

**Verse 14 - Then you shall delight yourself in the Eternal; and I will cause you to ride on the high hills of the earth, and feed you**, spiritually, **with the inheritance of Jacob your father: the mouth of the Eternal has spoken it**. This is a promise. If we are to set the 7<sup>th</sup> day aside as holy, correct our thinking, dedicate it to God in thought, word and action, God says that He will raise us up, He will feed us spiritually on that day because we've set our minds out to please and obey Him. He has promised here that He will pour out His spirit on that day and we will grow spiritually, we will take on the mind of God. Isn't that an incredible, incredible promise!

A question that sometimes comes up about what is the way that we would handle people when they ask questions with regards to a nuclear explosion going off and then people ringing up (phone call) and asking questions? And I can only take an example through the thought process of what God desires of us through the commandments. For example, my son and daughter who are not currently called into the Body of Christ to have a relationship with Him, when they first see the 2<sup>nd</sup> Trumpet go off I know that I'm going to get a phone call from them, and many other people, so what is it that I could say to them that would help them?

So when God begins to draw people from the world, what is the first thing that *you* would say or what you would discuss with them? Where do you start? It would be the 7<sup>th</sup> day Sabbath. Because everything else you can talk about, about God's way of life, you can say, "Oh, you're to love one another." They can't understand any of that because it's God's spirit that is required. So all you can do is start with

repentance, it's time to change. I know the answer to my children and to others will simply be, for those that are first called into a relationship with God, it's going to begin with the Sabbath because that's what God says is the beginning. No one can begin a relationship with God *or* with His people until they start to obey the 7<sup>th</sup> day Sabbath, and the way that they do it is set it aside as holy. Stop working is the beginning! That's the very beginning! So my answer will be...they'll say, "What do I do?" It's not about food and how much food you've got stored or whether you can pay the rent or you've got a job or any of those things, it's simply, "It's time to turn to God and you must start by keeping the 7<sup>th</sup> day Sabbath, and that starts from sunset on a Friday. So when the sun goes down on a Friday evening it's for a 24 hour period until the sun is down on the Saturday night. So it's Friday night to Saturday night. And that you keep it by resting." And if they ask more questions I would say, "Well, it's not about watching TV all day. This is a time to now open your Bible, if you have one, and do some quiet reading." That's what you can do." Because if electricity is gone there may be no listening to sermons about what God has taught in His Church over a long period of time; that won't be available.

And if you look at the New Testament Church, the way that they kept the Sabbath, if they could they went to a synagogue, but if there was no Sabbath synagogue to go to what did they do? They met in people's homes; that's what they did. Because what else do you do? You meet in people's homes. If there is no transcripts, in other words, there was no writings, what would you do? You can stop working, you can meet together and talk about God and God's ways from somebody who *knows* about God's ways. But if there is nothing to read, there is nothing to listen to, there is no internet and there is no radio, they can still keep the Sabbath holy by setting aside so that God can work with them, and if there is somebody there they can have access to from God's true Church they can talk about matters that are important, spiritual matters that are important. And the things that are important is obedience to God and God's commandments. That's the starting point. And it all starts with the Sabbath.

So when the 2<sup>nd</sup> Trumpet sounds and the phone calls come in to me and my family here, my wife and myself, I know what they're going to ask. They're going to ask, "What do I do? What *should* I do?" And my answer will be they need to start to obey God and keep the 7<sup>th</sup> day Sabbath from sunset Friday to sunset Saturday. They need to seek God diligently in prayer - if they don't have a Bible or anything to listen to they can meditate and pray to God. Because that is the answer, nothing else matters! Nothing else matters. Food doesn't matter; it's about a relationship with God and let God intervene into your life and work with you. My advice to them is simply you need to start keeping the Sabbath.

I'm going to say to them they need to start it by resting, stop doing what you're doing, spend time with God in prayer, reading if it's possible and listen to a sermon if it's possible. And if it's not, it doesn't matter, you start by resting on the 7<sup>th</sup> day Sabbath.

There are many other aspects that we could go into with regards to Sabbath keeping in the Old Testament; one of them to note is it's interesting that it's actually impossible to know the Day of Pentecost unless you know about the 7<sup>th</sup> day Sabbath because it's about counting *from* a Sabbath. If you don't know when a Sabbath is, if you think a Sabbath is on a Wednesday you'll never be able to calculate or know the true Day of Pentecost. The knowledge of the Sabbath is important and God made sure that the Sabbath was important to be known and has kept that truth - from the Israelites on it has never been lost - which day is the 7<sup>th</sup> day Sabbath. And based on that, a calculation can be done to find out when Pentecost is.

So the knowledge of the Sabbath is so important and those that do not know the Sabbath cannot keep the other Holy Days, it's just not possible, because they can't do the calculations to work out when Pentecost would be, for example.

So, now we're going to look at the time of Christ and His Sabbath keeping. Although the Jewish people have understood when the weekly Sabbath was to be kept, they have not understood it or kept it as God intends. Jesus Christ condemned their hypocrisy and foolish application of the law, telling them that they had made God's way a burden to others rather than a joy as God intended. The Jewish leaders continually found fault with Jesus Christ in matters pertaining to the 7<sup>th</sup> day Sabbath because they simply did not understand it. They still don't understand it today.

Christ entered a time when the Jews, because of the captivity, were now worshipping the Sabbath. They were making all these rules and regulations because they didn't want to go back into captivity. At this time, the tribe of Judah, the Jews, had established many man-made laws - and the word 'man-made', because they are man made. Many of the things that the Jews do on the Sabbath are all about man-made rules, it's not about the Torah, it's another book that they've written to (what they think) compliment the 4<sup>th</sup> Commandment, but it's just rituals and laws of rules, of things you can't do, what you're not allowed to do - for example, push buttons in lifts [elevators] and things. They're not in the Bible and it's the wrong spirit of the law.

So at the time that Jesus Christ was around here you have the Jewish, and mainly the priesthood, that were making all these rules, these man-made rules to try and ensure that they would not be punished by God and taken captive for breaking the Sabbath. They had made the Sabbath a burden.

So here we have Christ with the very mind of God having to deal with man's interpretation from a carnal mind of how they believe the Sabbath should be kept. Now, Christ *knew* how the Sabbath should be kept in spirit and in truth, but of course He's run into these people, mainly a religious group, that are turning around and have made all this burden and all the things you can and can't do based on man's thinking.

Matthew 12:1 - we're not going to go through all the examples of Sabbath keeping because in the New Testament you'll find that Christ ran into the same thinking, they were basically trying to have the day set aside and you're not to do this, you're not to do that, and Christ was living the Sabbath the way that it should be.

**Matthew 12:1 - At that time Jesus went through the grain fields on the Sabbath; and His disciples were hungry, so that's the important part here, they were hungry, and began to pluck heads of grain, and to eat.** And they rubbed their hands together and would get the grain so that they could eat it. **And when the Pharisees saw it, they said to Him, Look! Your disciples are doing what is not lawful to do on the Sabbath!** Here they are, they're judging right away because they made all these laws about what you weren't allowed to do and what you were allowed to do. They were man-made rules about picking grain on the Sabbath. Here they're in indignation, "AH HA! You're wrong! We're condemning You!"

**Verse 3 - But He said to them, Have you not read what David did when he was hungry, he and those who were with him?** Christ was now looking at the *intent of the action* because that's what it's about, it's about the intent of the action. **How he/David entered the house of God and ate the showbread which was not lawful for him to eat, nor for those who were with him, but only the priests.** And of course David was not a Levite. **Or have you not read in the law that on the Sabbath days the priests in**

**the temple profane/desecrate/break/pollute the Sabbath, and are blameless?** And of course, we've covered that before, because God had allocated certain duties to be done on a Sabbath. They're appointed by God to be done so they were blameless, they're innocent. They worked *hard* on the Sabbath but it was because God had appointed it, therefore they're not polluting the Sabbath.

**Verse 6 - Yet I say to you, That in this place there is *one* greater than the temple.** The word 'one' there of course is not there in scripture, so it really reads, **Yet I say to you that in this place there is greater than the temple.** The principle is spiritual and is greater and more important than the physical. Spiritual matters, intent is much more important than a physical matter. Now, if we understand that principle and there is another reading of it that says, **There is far more at stake here than religion.** Because see, they had made a religion out of obedience to the Sabbath, it was a religion for them. But a far more important principle is a spiritual intent of why you're doing what you're doing. Now that boils it down to, of course, the ox in the ditch, because you look at the intent. You're not going to leave the animal sink in the mud and stand there all during the Sabbath while you just watch it die; that's insane, that's not merciful, that's not showing concern for God's creation. You can have things that are done on the Sabbath - you have to look at the intent of why it's being done rather than just a hard rigid law that in itself is not balanced in any way.

**Verse 7 - But if you had known what this means, 'I desire mercy, and not sacrifice', you would not have condemned the guiltless.** It's about intent of the mind. Another reading of that verse 7 - **If you had any idea what this scripture meant, 'I prefer a flexible heart to an inflexible ritual' you wouldn't be nitpicking like this.** That sort of puts it into its real intent there, the nitpicking about things. But God's looking at the heart, the motive or why we're doing what we do. We need to look at the spirit of the law, the spirit of the Sabbath. What is the intent of the Sabbath? It is to rest from our ways and to do good spiritual works by the power of God's spirit. The Sabbath was made to benefit mankind physically and spiritually.

**Verse 8 - For the Son of man is Lord even of the Sabbath.** Or another way of saying that, **The Son of man is not a lackey or subject to the Sabbath; He's in charge!** And what it's really saying here, the Sabbath was made for Christ, it was to benefit Christ; it's not the other way around! It wasn't Christ who was made to benefit the Sabbath. He can do good on the Sabbath, He can do good works on the Sabbath because He is the Son of man and He's not tied up and bound by all these rituals of the Sabbath. The purpose of the Sabbath is good, it's to do Godly works, good for others. The Sabbath does not control Jesus Christ with regards to spiritual works, because that's what they were saying. They were virtually saying, "Well, the Sabbath, you can't do 'this', you can't do 'that'!" In other words, the Sabbath controls you as a person. No, it doesn't control you as a person, it's a time for good and Jesus Christ healed on the Sabbath. You will know that there were healings on the Sabbath that He did and they are good works, and yet He was condemned for that.

**Now when He had departed from there, He went to their synagogue:** In other words, it was another Sabbath day, He entered and taught as His custom was because He was a Sabbath keeper as His Father commanded.

**Verse 10 - And, behold, there was a man who had a withered hand.** So his right hand was all withered. **And they asked Him, saying, Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath?** Now, He'd actually answered that previously, about doing good; it's about your intent, it's not about the controls of the Sabbath **...that they might accuse Him.** So they're still looking at the physical. They're saying anything you do is work;

they were looking to condemn Him really, they'd already judged Him. They were just looking at a way to find fault with Him.

**Verse 11 - Then He said to them, What man is there among you who has one sheep and if it falls into a pit on the Sabbath will not lay hold of it and lift it out?** The principle of the ox in the ditch. There is a time when things have to be done. It's like for the ministry to set up a hall on the Sabbath. Well, technically you could say that's physical work, it's physical labor to set up chairs. But it's required so that people are comfortable, so that they can worship God and hear God, what God's got to say. It's the intent of why you do it. But if there was a concert that night, for example, a worldly concert where someone was going to get up there and play music or play piano or whatever, you wouldn't go setting up all those chairs. You wouldn't set them all up on the Sabbath so they were ready for Saturday night, because you see the principle is wrong, you're not doing it to benefit God, for the glory of God, you're doing it for a different reason, for something in the future that you could have had done on a Friday afternoon if you really wanted to.

**Verse 12 - For how much more value then is a man than a sheep? Therefore it is lawful to do good on the Sabbath.** Here is another way of saying it, **You will spend time and effort on an animal, but why not help a human that was created to become Elohim? What's wrong with your thinking?** Because here they're saying, "Well, you shouldn't do 'that'!" Yet, God's saying you'll go out and lift your animal out of the ditch but you won't help a human being that is being created for the *purpose* of entering Elohim, eternal life! That's an incredible... how *insane* is that thinking that you would do that, that you wouldn't help another human being that God is going to make Elohim at some point in time. What's wrong with your thinking? Isn't that totally wrong? Isn't that just carnal? Isn't that just stupid, really?

**Verse 13 - Then He said to the man, Stretch out your hand, and he stretched it out and it was restored as whole, as the other. And then the Pharisees went out and plotted against Him that they might destroy Him.** Because they hated that. They hated it because they were put in their place.

Some people have asked the question with regards to nurses working on the Sabbath. Once called a person needs to submit to God's will and begin to keep the 7<sup>th</sup> day Sabbath and Holy Days in a physical way - resting by not working - and more importantly keep them in their spiritual intent. Not earning a wage/income by working is a basic principle. A person would need to stop working on the Sabbath before being able to continue with their calling, because our calling of repentance starts with the Sabbath. A nursing role is not an excuse for someone to disobey God. In this world there are many people who can fulfill the role of a nurse at this time, those who are not called to repentance. But at this time, if you're called God requires you to stop working and keep the 7<sup>th</sup> day holy. Others who aren't called can fulfill the role of nursing.

The only time a nurse would consider working on the Sabbath would be in the case of an emergency, an ox in the ditch principle, and then it would be unpaid work. If they are called into work on a Sabbath under the ox in the ditch principle, an emergency, and it became a regular matter, a person would need to change occupations. This principle applies to many professions in the world at this time.

If a person refuses to obey this basic command to stop working on God's appointed times, which are Sabbaths and Holy Days, they are sinning and therefore they are cut off from God's spirit until they repent. The question of hospitals, doctors and nurses in the Millennium is not relevant at this time. God will provide His Church with the best way to handle health issues once the Millennium has started, because we don't fully understand all the things that are going to be needed, we just simply don't, and

God hasn't revealed all of that yet. We are not to discuss or get involved in debate in such matters or presume we know how it will all work in the Millennium because that would be presumptuous... because simply, God hasn't revealed it to His Church, and presumptuousness is, of course, sin. We simply do not know at this point in time as God has not revealed it.

Another matter that sometimes comes up is sport, because in today's society children of a young age are involved or asked to be involved in sports and the parents are pressured because they feel they need to let their child go and participate in sport and it involves the Sabbath day. It can be a difficult thing to address, especially when you love a special sport or a specific sport and have such great desire to participate. But the bottom line is that we do not work, nor seek our own pleasures, in activities like sports, movies, sporting events, etc., on the Sabbath, which we covered in Isaiah 58. We don't seek our own desires in it, we're to repent of that.

Sometime a coach will make exceptions for individuals when they understand it is a religious matter or a personal conviction. Because that's what it has to be, it has to be a personal conviction about not playing or participating in sport on a Friday night or a Saturday. We have some in the Church over time that have been given exemptions in High School, in College games that were conducted on the Sabbath and they were allowed to remain on the teams and play at other times. However, this is not always the case because you find that people don't understand it and therefore you may have to give up playing your sport on a Friday night and Saturday. But then God is greater than all of them and you know God's purpose, He seeks obedience, and if we are to submit and obey Him and keep the 7<sup>th</sup> day holy God will look after our lives. And in the scheme of things sport is what? Actually irrelevant. Irrelevant, it really is. And if we get into the wrong type of sport it's actually the spirit of competition because it's about competing, about destroying or pulling down, it's about winning at all costs. That is a wrong spirit, wrong intent. Where there are other sports that can be played that don't have that intent to the same degree, but that, of course, is a personal matter that each person needs to work through in their own life, and based on that understanding and maturity they will learn their own nature and how competitive our nature really is.

If we were to look at Mr. Armstrong's life you would find that the very first thing that he was challenged on was the weekly Sabbath. He found, through intense study, that Jesus Christ kept the weekly Sabbath on the 7<sup>th</sup> day. He found that the apostles observed the weekly Sabbath on the 7<sup>th</sup> day - even Paul was sent to the Gentiles, not to the Jews, taught the Gentiles on the 7<sup>th</sup> day Sabbath. In the beginning he was concerned about this 7<sup>th</sup> day Sabbath - the same as everybody that is called -they're going to have to look at this whole issue of the 7<sup>th</sup> day Sabbath.

And there is a way to prove the 7<sup>th</sup> day Sabbath *in* the New Testament if you look at the reality of what happened in the apostasy. If you look at the apostasy, what actually took place? The reality was the apostasy was about the changing of God's law, and in particular the 7<sup>th</sup> day Sabbath. An incredible attack on the Church! Mr. Tkach declared a change in the most basic and fundamental doctrines of God's true Church. Mr. Tkach declared that the 7<sup>th</sup> day Sabbath and the annual Sabbaths, the Holy Days, were no longer binding on God's Church. And yet we've already looked at scriptures - it's a *perpetual covenant*. *No man* can change what God has sanctified and set aside as holy. Because you can't go changing something that God has *used* to the benefit of mankind. God loves mankind and He pours out His spirit on that day and here comes a man who says it's no longer binding on God's Church. That's what really the apostasy was about. He declared lots of things, but in particular this was the main issue. Sunday observance of worshipping God was now acceptable; Satan's day, the day of the sun! That's incredible! And that's what the people in God's Church at that time had to face, and it depended on the person's



thinking and understanding of the depth of the Sabbath, that is a command, a command of God, that depended on what they then did.

Could Mr. Tkach have been right? Could he have been right, that the Sabbath was done away and was no longer binding on God's Church? Let's look at Hebrews 3:1 and we're going to go through Hebrews 3 and Hebrews 4, part of it, to get an answer of what God really says about the 7<sup>th</sup> day Sabbath. Because there *are* people out there that will say, "Oh, it's done away, etcetera, etcetera..." and Mr. Tkach said the same, it's no longer binding. Well, is that really true? If you look at Hebrews 3:1 we'll start there. We're going to work our way through because it covers this very issue about the Sabbath and about a rest, a future rest, but also the purpose of a rest and what it's about.

**Hebrews 3:1 - Therefore, holy brethren, partakers/sharer's sharing in of the heavenly calling,** we have a sharing in a calling from God, **consider the Apostle, one sent forth, and High Priest of our confession, Christ Jesus;** so let's think about Jesus Christ and His way of life. **Who was faithful to Him who appointed Him;** God the Father appointed Him, **and Moses also was faithful in all his house. For this one has been counted worthy,** counted worthy by God, **of more glory,** greater honor, **than Moses:** so Jesus Christ has been accounted worthy, been appointed by God the Father, and therefore is worthy of more honor, greater honor than Moses, **in as such as he who has built the house has more honor than the house.** God the Father built the Church in and through Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ is the Head of the Church. **For every house is built by someone; but He who built all things is God.** God the Father built all things; something that was nothing God built it, He established it all, He created the 7<sup>th</sup> day Sabbath, He created it for a reason and a purpose. God has built *all* things.

**Verse 5 - And Moses indeed was faithful in all his house, as a servant, for a testimony/witness of those things which would be spoken afterwards.** In other words, things that would follow, follow in the future.

**Verse 6 - But Christ as a Son over His own House; whose House we are,** Church of God, **if we hold fast,** if we keep **the confidence,** the boldness to live this way of life, **and the rejoicing of the hope firm, steadfast, sure to the end.** We are part of the household of God *if* God's spirit dwells in us, if we endure, hold fast with confidence to the truth to the end, whatever that may be for each and every one of us.

Now it goes on about the Sabbath and the rest that is required: **verse 7 - Therefore,** in other words, Because of this **(as the holy spirit says,** as God says, **Today if you will hear His voice,** will we listen to God on the 7<sup>th</sup> Day Sabbath is the question. Will we listen to it? Because you see, the Israelites didn't. **Today if you will hear His voice,** talking to us, **Do not harden your hearts,** do not harden your thinking **as in the rebellion,** as the Israelites did, **in the day of trial in the wilderness:** They resisted God when He was telling them something; they didn't want to hear it.

**Verse 9 - When your fathers tested Me, tried me,** they wanted to examine God, to prove God, to deem Him worthy, because they didn't really want to believe Him. They wanted proof, physical proof all the time. ...**they saw My works forty years.** They witnessed God's love for them but they did not understand or see it on a spiritual level. They did not believe God. They tested Him all the time. When God said, "This is what I'm going to do." They'd go, "Oh yeah, sure..." and then God did it and they sent for God and moved on to something else. They required God to prove Himself to them all the time. It was this continual thing.

**Verse 10 - Therefore I was angry**, in other words, God was vexed; it irks God that this is a continual attitude of the carnal mind, wanting to have to prove it all the time. Being proved once... we should be able to prove God through our calling. God has proved Himself to us through our calling, because surely from our calling we can see what we would be without God. Surely we've had the time to think, "What would my life be if I didn't have God in my life or God's way of life?" Surely just that in itself is proof that God is working with us. **...therefore I was vexed/angry with this generation and said, They always**, they continually, it's a duration of time, **go astray**, they deceive themselves, they're seduced, they wander off really easily **in their heart**, in their thinking, in the inner man. So we should guard against that. **....and they have not known/perceived/understood My ways**, what God's thinking. If God's revealed it to us, brethren, we do understand God's ways. The Sabbath is one of them, a requirement, because from that we can see the beauty of the Sabbath. We need the holy spirit to see and understand God's love.

**Verse 11 - So I swore in My wrath, They shall not enter My rest.)** Now God is talking about here a physical resting place of peace, which was the promised land. God said to them, "Because of this continual hardness of your heart and your rebellion and I have to prove Myself to you all the time I'm not going let you enter My rest... or you're not going to enter into the promised land." And of course, of a certain age they died and they did not enter the promised land.

Now Paul highlights the spiritual component to the Church. So here it is, because of this hardness of the heart we should learn something. **Verse 12 - Beware, take heed, brethren**, members of the Body of Christ, **take heed lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, unfaithful in departing**, which is to cause to withdraw, to remove yourself, to stand off, to be aloof **from the living God**. In other words, we withdraw from our relationship with God, we put ourselves above God because we think we know better, we no longer believe what God says, we doubt and we refuse to believe God, we harden our heart because we raise ourselves up because we think we know better. We withdraw in our relationship from God or with God. We withdraw in our relationship with God, we hold back, we pull back, we don't put more into it, we withdraw. And Paul says here, **beware brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief**, unfaithfulness! Because when we withdraw from God we now are going to enter another relationship with someone else, we become unfaithful to the one who's called us.

**Verse 13 - But exhort/beseech/comfort/encourage one another daily**, we can encourage one another daily by remembering our calling; **while it is called Today**, this very day; **lest any of you be hardened**, to become obstinate or stubborn in pride **through the deceitfulness of sin**. We let sin in and it becomes unrepented and therefore we drift away from God, we begin to justify our thinking. Satan, at this time, is attacking the Church like never before in my knowledge, and therefore most of it is in the mind. It's about creating doubt and reasoning and thinking outside of what God has given to the Church to believe, when God has warned us to beware of this because it's the stubbornness of our own pride, it's justifying our thoughts, our thinking.

**Verse 14 - For we have become partakers/sharers of Christ if we hold the beginning of our confidence steadfast/firm/sure to the end;** So brethren, remember our calling, remember your calling. Remember what you would be like if you hadn't of been called, what your personality would be doing now, how you would be treating others, how your mind would wander in the world.

Remember from where we heard the truth. People have sat down over time, and if you list 57 Truths and in a natural carnal mind try to work out which ones you believe should be kept and which ones shouldn't - what arrogance! What pride! That is terrible! But that's the tendency of the carnal mind because we think we know better than God. Remember how we heard it! How did we hear the truth?

We heard it in God's Church. We heard it in sermons. When? On the Sabbath day and Holy Days, when God feeds the truth to His Church.

**Verse 15 - While it is said, Today if you will hear His voice do not harden your hearts as in the rebellion.** So it's a reminder about what happened. Paul is telling them that it is not about a physical rest but it's about a spiritual one *for us*, brethren, because they were promised a rest, the promised land, but they couldn't enter it because of their disbelief and hardness of the heart and their pride, because they couldn't do anything else, they didn't have God's spirit. But for us Paul is saying, "Well, be very careful that we don't go down that same path and let our carnal mind rule our lives, because God has promised a spiritual rest for us, one when we enter Elohim."

**Verse 16 - For who,** talking about the Israelites in the wilderness, **having heard rebelled?** They heard the truth but they rejected it. **Indeed, was it not all who came out of Egypt led by Moses?** Yep, that's right, they rebelled.

**Verse 17 - Now with whom was He angry for forty years? Was it not all those who sinned, whose corpses fell in the wilderness?** Because of the hardness of their heart, because they wouldn't believe God, they *refused* to believe God. God had to prove Himself to them all the time. God was trying to love them and nurture them and care for them but they actually wanted it another way, they wanted it their way.

**Verse 18 - And to whom did He swear that they would not enter His rest,** God turned around and said, "Well, the physical promise...guess what, it's not going to be given to you because of the hardness of your heart, because of your pride." **...but to those who did not obey?** So that's the warning to us. The warning to us is that if we do not obey God - 7<sup>th</sup> day Sabbath and all the other things required of us by God through the power of His spirit - we can't enter that rest.

**Verse 19 - So we see that they could not enter in because of unbelief.** They were unfaithful to God through their disobedience.

**Hebrews 4:1 - Therefore,** because of all this that we've just covered before, **since a promise remains of entering into His rest,** we have a promise to enter His rest, a spiritual rest, **let us fear lest any of you seem to have come short of it.** The promise remains which is the promise of eternal life. It is a spiritual rest in the Kingdom of God but we can live it on the 7<sup>th</sup> day, the spiritual rest, brethren. It's like a practice run of resting spiritually because it's a 'type' of a rest that's going to come in the Millennium, but also a spiritual rest to enter Elohim.

**Verse 2 - For indeed the gospel/the good news was preached to us as well as to them,** the Israelites: **but the word which they heard did not profit them,** because it couldn't, **not being mixed with faith in those who heard it.** They didn't have the power, really, to believe God because they never had God's spirit. God must give us faith by the power of His spirit.

**Verse 3 - For we who have believed,** called to see spiritually, **do enter the rest,** physically and spiritually on the 7<sup>th</sup> day by obedience, **as He has said, So I swore in My anger, they shall not enter My rest: although the works were finished,** in His plan, **from the foundations of the world.**

**Verse 4 - For He has spoken in a certain place of the seventh day in this way,** talking about the Sabbath, the 7<sup>th</sup> day, **And God rested on the seventh day from all His works.** Paul explained here in

verse 4 that Israel had refused to hear God's instruction and they were incapable of doing so because they lacked the faith that is made possible only by the receiving of God's spirit.

**Verse 5 - And again in this place, They shall not enter into My rest.** So now Paul summarizes what he's saying.

**Verse 6 - Since therefore it remains that some must enter,** a physical and spiritual rest, **and those to whom it was first preached did not enter,** the Israelites, **because of their disobedience: Again, He designates,** or He declares or limits or determines **a certain day,** the Sabbath. God designated or limited a set day. He sanctified the 7<sup>th</sup> day, **saying in David, Today, after such a long time; as it has been said, Today if you will hear His voice, do not harden your hearts;** in other words, do not resist God spiritually! God tries to feed us on the Sabbath, let's have the right *attitude* when we go to services to hear God - with an open heart of belief, a faithful heart, relying on what God feeds the Church to help us to grow and overcome our natures.

**Verse 8 - If Joshua had given them rest,** which he did not, **then he would not afterward have spoken of another day.** About a future rest.

**Verse 9 - There remains therefore a rest for the people of God. For he who has entered His rest has himself also ceased from his works as God did from His.** Paul explained that for the Church **there remains therefore a 'rest'**, and that word is 'Sabbatismos' - the 'keeping of the Sabbath' **for the people of God. For he who has entered into His rest,** into God's weekly 7<sup>th</sup> day Sabbath rest, **he also has ceased from his works,** ceased from his carnal ways of thinking by seeking to obey God and to live God's ways, **as He did from His,** in like manner, **as God rested from the beginning on the 7<sup>th</sup> day.**

**Verse 11 - Let us therefore be diligent to enter that rest,** let's be diligent to enter into a 7<sup>th</sup> day rest because it leads to an eternal rest. Because that's the process that God established; we enter a physical rest and a spiritual rest on the 7<sup>th</sup> day Sabbath so that God can teach us and change our thinking, to transform it so that we one day can enter into a spiritual rest as spirit beings! Isn't that an incredible process? So that's why it all starts with the Sabbath. Anybody that's called, it all starts with the Sabbath.

**Verse 11 - Let us therefore be diligent to enter that rest, let anyone fall according to the same example of disobedience.** If we disobey God about the Sabbath we can't enter that rest. It's simple enough, can't enter a physical, spiritual rest with God.

So we can see from Hebrews 4:9 there remains a keeping of the Sabbath for the people of God. It's very straight forward. It *is* a truth of God and somebody with God's spirit being called will see that truth and they will see the lie that people have tried to put up in God's Church and that people have put up in the world that the commandment of God, the 4<sup>th</sup> Commandment, is done away. *That is a lie!* Because God clearly states 'there remains a rest for us' for the purpose of entering a spiritual rest in the future as Elohim.

Satan has deceived mankind concerning the 7<sup>th</sup> day Sabbath. Some keep the day but they have made it a burden. Most professing Christians observe the 1<sup>st</sup> day of the week, Sunday, to worship *their* god. They don't worship the true God. In fact, they follow the way of worship of Baal from the Old Testament times. They call it worshipping God and Jesus Christ but it is still worshipping the old sun god.

The plan of God is revealed through the 7<sup>th</sup> day Sabbath and it remains a mystery to man because they haven't been called into this beautiful truth and knowledge about the Sabbath. When God reveals His truth concerning the 7<sup>th</sup> day, the Sabbath, people must choose whether or not they will repent from their ways and begin to submit to God's ways.

The Levitical system with its ceremonies and sacrifices was changed through Jesus Christ from what is commonly referred to as the Old Testament times to New Testament times. Through that period of time, however, the law of God contained in the 10 Commandments (which is also the 4<sup>th</sup> Commandment) was never changed and it *cannot* be changed by man. Only God in His power and His authority can change something to do with His law, and He's not going to do that because it was created to *benefit mankind!* And God loves mankind and therefore the 10 Commandments were for mankind so that they can enter a relationship with Him and a relationship with one another on a spiritual level.

The apostles and New Testament Church observed the 7<sup>th</sup> day Sabbath and annual Sabbaths. The apostle Paul, some thirty years after the death of Jesus Christ, taught God's people the importance of observing the Sabbath as outlined in Hebrews 4. It is clear.

There are other scriptures in Acts that clearly state that Paul kept the 7<sup>th</sup> day Sabbath. Although those in traditional Christianity teach that the laws of the Old Testament are done away it should be obvious that they are not, because the early Church, the New Testament Church, kept the weekly 7<sup>th</sup> day Sabbath and Paul's instructions to the Corinthians clearly shows that the Church observed the annual Sabbaths as well.

Yes, brethren, we know that in **Hebrews 4:9 there remains therefore a rest for the people of God, for he who has entered His rest has himself also ceased from his works as God did from His.**

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