

The word "Sabbath" means rest. It is a Hebrew word transferred into the English language. When the Hebrews used the word "Sabbath," it conveyed the same idea to them that the word "rest" does to us. The fourth commandment therefore really says to us:

"Remember the rest day, to keep it holy. Six days shalt thou labor, and do all thy work; but the seventh day is the rest of the Lord thy God; in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, not thy son, nor thy daughter, thy man servant, nor thy maid servant, 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 rest day and hallowed it." Exodus 20:8-11.

We must not make the mistake of judging the Lord's rest from what men are accustomed to call rest. God is not a man. We should rather learn from God's rest what rest really is. God's rest is not mere physical rest from weariness. This we know from two facts: First, "God is Spirit." John 4:24^a. Not "a spirit," as though He were one of many; but He is Spirit, as it is rendered in the margin of the *Revised Version*. Second, "The everlasting God, the Lord, the Creator of the ends of the earth, fainteth not, neither is weary." Isaiah 40:28. The Lord therefore did not rest because He was tired, and His rest is not physical, but spiritual, since He is Spirit. "They that worship Him must worship Him in Spirit and in truth." John 4:24^b

God rested, not because He was weary, but because His work was finished. When work is finished, and is well done, nothing but rest remains. In six days God finished His work, and as He surveyed it, He pronounced it "very good." There was no flaw in it. It was without fault before Him. Therefore since God's work was done and well done at the close of the sixth day, "He rested on the seventh day from all His work which He had made" (Genesis 2:1-3). He had no sad reflections, no regrets ... Every portion of the work, even man, was as perfect as it was possible for it to be, and God took pure delight in contemplating the work from which He was resting, because it was complete and perfect.

This is the rest which He offers to us. It is not something He imposes on us, but which He in everlasting love and kindness gives to us. Rest is not a task that is laid on one. It is not a burden. They who look upon the Sabbath as a burden, have no idea of what the Sabbath of the Lord is. It is rest, perfect, unalloyed rest.

Jesus Christ is the One by whom the worlds were made, "for in Him were all things created, in the heavens, and upon the earth" Colossians 1:16, therefore He is the One who offers us this rest. Jesus is "the Lord also of the Sabbath." Mark 2:28. To every soul He cries, "Come unto Me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." Matthew 11:28. The rest is found in Him, because in Him the works of God are completed. In Him is the new creation, and if any man be in Him, he is new creature. On the cross Jesus cried, "It is finished," thus showing that in His cross we find that perfect rest that comes alone from the finished work of the Lord.

This rest is gained by faith. "We which believe do enter into rest." Hebrews 4:3. How so? Because by faith we have the finished, perfect work of the Lord as our own. "This is the work of God, that ye believe on Him whom He hath sent." John 6:29. Believing Him means receiving Him; and since in Him the works of God are complete, it follows that by believing on Him we find the rest.

The rest that Jesus gives is rest from sin. The heavy laden whom He calls to Him are those who are burdened with the weight of their sins. All men are thus burdened, "for all have sinned." Romans 3:23. Our best works are utterly worthless. Christ will have a people who are "zealous of good works" (Titus 2: 14, 15); but the good works must be those which God Himself has wrought for us in Christ. Only His work is enduring. "His work is honorable and glorious; and His righteousness endureth forever." Ps. 111:3. Therefore ...

"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. For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before prepared that we should walk in them." Ephesians 2:8-10.

It is "not by works done in righteousness, which we did ourselves, but according to His mercy He saved us, through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Ghost, which He poured out upon us richly, through Jesus Christ our Saviour." Titus 3:5,6. It is by the works of God, therefore, that we are saved, and not by our own. Good works there are in abundance, and they are for us too, but through no work of our own, solely through the perfect work of God in Jesus Christ. If the works were our own, then the rest would be our own; but God gives us His rest, not ours, because only His works can yield

perfect rest. "He hath made His wonderful works be remembered" (Psalm 111:4), or, literally, "He hath made a memorial for His wondrous works." That memorial is the seventh day, the day on which He has rested from all His works. That day He has blessed and sanctified, made holy. Its holiness has never departed from it, for "whatsoever God doeth, it shall be forever." Ecclesiastes 3:14. No matter what man does, nor how man regards the day, its holiness remains.

"There remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God" Hebrews 4:9; and the seventh day, which God forever declares to be His rest, is that by which He makes known to us the perfection of His rest, because it calls us to contemplate a finished and perfect new creation. It reveals to us the everlasting God, the unwearied, almighty Creator, who has wrought and laid up great goodness for them that trust in Him before the sons of men. Psalm 31:19. It reminds us that we are "complete in Him, which is the head of all principality and power."

Colossians 2:10. It tells us that, although we have sinned, and brought the curse on God's perfect creation, the cross of Christ, which bears the curse, restores and perpetuates the perfect work of God, so that through it we may stand without fault before the throne of God, just as when man was first made. "Thanks be unto God for His unspeakable gift." 2 Corinthians 9:15.

For what purpose was all this done? Why was the Sabbath made? It was made for man. Mark 2:27. Well then, God rested and put His spiritual rest upon the day for man, did He? God's refreshing, His rejoicing in that day was for man. The blessing with which He blessed it was for man. The holiness which His presence brought to it and which His presence gave to it, was for man. His presence sanctifying it was for man. Well then was it not that man through the Sabbath might be a partaker of His presence and be made acquainted by living experience with the spiritual rest of God, the spiritual blessing, the holiness, the presence of God to make holy, the presence of God to sanctify him? Is not that what God intended the Sabbath to bring to man? Well, the man who gets all that in the Sabbath is the man who is a Sabbath-keeper. And he knows it too. He knows it and he is delighted to know it.

Now another thing: Who was the real present agent in creating? Christ. Who was it that rested? Christ. Who was

refreshed? Christ. Who blessed? Christ. Whose presence made it holy? Christ's. Whose presence is in the day? Christ's. Then the man whom the presence of Jesus Christ does not sanctify, and does not make holy and does not bless and to whom it does not bring rest, why, he can't keep the Sabbath. Don't you see, it is only with Christ in the man that the Sabbath can be kept; because the Sabbath brings and has in it the presence of Christ.

To keep the Sabbath of the Lord is to delight in the Lord. Those who do not delight themselves in the Lord, do not keep His Sabbath, no matter when they abstain from labor. It is absolutely impossible for one who is not a Christian to keep the Lord's Sabbath; for, as we have seen, God's rest comes only from His perfect work, which is found only in Christ.

Therefore no Jew, so-called, as distinguished from a believer in Christ, keeps the Sabbath of the Lord, even though he apparently rests on the seventh day of the week. His rest is his own rest, and not the rest of the Lord.

Do you see the difference? The Jewish Sabbath falls on the same day of the week as the Sabbath of the Lord, but it is not by any means the same thing. It represents only the man himself, and his own work. Instead of being the sign of justification by faith in the work of the Lord [Jesus], it is the sign of self-righteousness, as indicated by the question which the Jews asked of Jesus: "What shall we do, that we might work the works of God?" John 6:28. They counted their own works equal to God's works. Their obedience was not the obedience of faith, but only of form. From such a Sabbath may the Lord deliver us. It is from it that we are delivered in the Sabbath of the Lord, for we are saved from [not, by] our own works, and given the perfect works of the Lord. "The seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord," but let us beware of making it a mere caricature of rest. Let us take it for what it is: the rest of the Lord [Jesus].

There is such a thing as "the Jewish Sabbath," or the Sabbath of the Jews, but it is a far different thing from the Sabbath of the Lord. Many people imagine that if one observes the seventh day he is keeping the Jewish Sabbath; but that does not at all follow ... There is the same difference between the Jewish Sabbath and the Sabbath of the Lord, that there is between a man and God ... The seventh day is "the Sabbath of the Lord." ... A man may cease from physical toil on the seventh day of the week, and not keep the Sabbath of the Lord.

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You Cannot Keep
The Sabbath of the Lord
Without Resting in
The Lord of the Sabbath



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and I will give you rest."
~ Matthew 11:28 ~***