

Christian Study

Lesson 266

Be Light

Focusing on Church beyond Sunday

A Closer Look at the New Covenant

The Sabbath Rest

Our ultimate destination as children of God is heaven, and we look forward to that day when we will be in God's presence forever. However, God has a destination for us here and now. It is called the Sabbath rest. The writer of the book of Hebrews compares this spiritual destination to the Promised Land. God did not lead the Israelites out of Egypt to wander in the desert. He (God) had a specific destination in mind, a land flowing with milk and honey, complete with wells for drinking water and trees with every kind of fruit imaginable.

When the Israelites arrived, each of the twelve tribes would be apportioned a piece of land. Everything was already in place. God had done all that was necessary to prepare the land. All the Israelites had to do was to enter in. Instead, they roamed the desert for forty years, and only two of the generation of adults that crossed through the Red Sea ever made it into the Promised Land.

As it was for the Israelites, God's destination for our spiritual journey is set. All that Christ has accomplished has prepared the way for us to experience total forgiveness, to stand before God accepted and righteous in His sight, and to enjoy a personal and intimate relationship with Jesus Christ. It is there for the taking if we choose to enter by faith.

Key Verses:

- Hebrews 4:1 "Therefore since the promise of entering His rest stands, let us be careful that none of you be found to have fallen short of it."

- Hebrews 4:9-10 "There remains, then, a Sabbath-rest for the people of God; 10 for anyone who enters God's rest also rests from his own work, just as God did from His."

The writer could have had in mind both God's work in creation and Christ's work to secure our salvation. Let us take a look at both. Genesis 1 provides us with the story of creation and we read how God took six days to create everything. In **Genesis 2:1-3** "Thus the heavens and the earth were completed in all their vast array.² By the seventh day God had finished the work he had been doing; so on the seventh day he rested from all his work. ³ And God blessed the seventh day and made it holy, because on it he rested from all the work of creating that he had done." We read that God rested on the seventh day from His work of creation. God rested on the seventh day and blessed it because there was nothing else to be created and not because He was tired and needed a break. Humans were the last of God's creation after He had created everything mankind will need for life and godliness.

In the Old Testament, the Sabbath was the seventh day of the week (Saturday) but the Sabbath rest talked about in Hebrews 4 did not describe a day of the week. It describes a spiritual rest that we can experience every day through our relationship with Christ Jesus. Explaining the freedom that we have through Life with Christ, the apostle Paul had this to say to the believers in his epistle to the Colossians. "Therefore do not let anyone judge you by what you eat or drink, or with regard to a religious festival, a New Moon celebration or a Sabbath day. ¹⁷ These are a shadow of the things that were to come; the reality, however, is found in Christ." **Colossians 2:16-17**

As a result of the sacrifice Jesus made on the cross for us, the righteous requirements of the law have been fully met in us; we are made righteous in God's sight, and we are made complete. In John 19:30 Jesus finished His work of salvation as God the Father finished His work of creation in Genesis 2.

There is nothing to add to what Christ has accomplished on our behalf. According to Hebrews 10:12 after Jesus had offered His sacrifice for sin once and for all He is now seated at the right hand of God the Father. "But when this priest had offered for all time one sacrifice for sins, he sat down at the right hand of God." Now, because the work of bringing sinful man back in good relationship with Holy God is finished, believers are asked to make an effort to enter into that rest provided by Jesus.

Entering God's Rest

Hebrews 4:11 "Let us, therefore make every effort to enter that rest, so that no one will fall by following their (The Israelites) example of disobedience." We as believers in Christ have to stop religious activities, trying to make ourselves more accepted in God's sight, trying to gain more forgiveness or righteousness, or working to earn God's love. All of these have been done and given to us as a gift, and in order to reap the benefit of a gift, we must receive it, open it, enjoy it and give thanks to the gift giver. We are to be willing to rest from these works, and accept by faith all that Christ has accomplished on our behalf.

"For we also have had the gospel preached to us, just as they did; but the message they heard was of no value to them, because those who heard did not combine it with faith.³ Now we who have believed enter that rest, just as God has said, "So I declared on oath in my anger, 'They shall never enter my rest.' "And yet his work has been finished since the creation of the world. ⁴ For somewhere he has spoken about the seventh day in these words: "And on the seventh day God rested from all his work." **Hebrews 4:2-4.** To the Israelites who wandered in the desert for 40 years the message was of no value because they heard it but it was not combine with faith so they did not believe. Entering into the Sabbath Rest is simply hearing the Gospel and combined with faith.

"Therefore, brothers, since we have confidence to enter the Most Holy Place by the blood of Jesus, ²⁰ by a new and living way opened for us through the curtain, that is, his body, ²¹ and since we have a great priest over the house of God, ²² let us draw near to God with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled to cleanse us from a guilty conscience and having our bodies washed with pure water.²³ Let us hold unwaveringly to the hope we profess, for he who promised is faithful. ²⁴ And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds." **Hebrews 10:19-24**

According to the above passage, the blood of Jesus is what provides us the confidence to enter the Most Holy Place. A faithful God has promised so we have to rest on the facts that Christ's death on the cross has cleansed us once and for all from a guilty conscience. Today, we must be willing to trust Jesus' finished work on the cross and rest in the truth that God remembers our sins no more. As a result, "Let us then approach the throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need." If you are thinking that God is angry at you, you would not approach the throne of grace. A person with this mindset toward God will not experience the Sabbath rest, and

they are fearful of God and what they expect from God is punishment. Are you ready to approach the throne of grace in your time of need? Here is what Jesus said about this in the book of Matthew. "Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest.²⁹ Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. ³⁰ For my yoke is easy and my burden is light." **Matthew 11:28-30.** Believe it and live

Believe it and Live

Religion or legalism is man trying to reach up to God through self-effort to be accepted by God. This is nothing more than an Old Covenant mindset which believes, "If I obey and do all God has commanded, then He will bless me" We cannot earn God's love nor can we make ourselves acceptable in His sight. In the New Covenant we see just the opposite—God reaching down to us through Jesus Christ with love and acceptance. To embrace and experience all that God has for us through the New Covenant, we must first let go of the Old.

For a Trapeze artist to dazzle a crowd with his high flying acrobatics there come a point when he must let go of one bar and grab hold of the next. If he doesn't the old bar takes him right back to where he started. So it is with us. There comes a time in our spiritual journey where we must let go of our efforts to make ourselves acceptable in God's so that we can grab hold of all that God has provided for us in the New Covenant through His Son Jesus Christ. I beseech you to put aside all forms of religion and rest totally in the sufficiency of Christ Jesus

There is nothing we can add to what Jesus Christ has done. The debt for sin has been paid in full. The work is finished, because of His death and we live under the New Covenant where God remembers our sins and lawless deeds no more. Believe it and be happy. This is good news

Next week, Christians all around the world will be celebrating the most important event in the life of a believer, "**The Resurrection of Christ.**" How did you come to this conclusion?" you ask. My answer is simple, "**The Bible tells me so.**"

The Resurrection of Christ 1 Corinthians 15:1-4 & 14

1 Now, brothers, I want to remind you of the gospel I preached to you, which you received and on which you have taken your stand. **2** By this gospel you are saved, if you hold firmly to the word I preached to you. Otherwise, you have believed in vain. **3** For what I received

I passed on to you as of first importance: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, **4** that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures, **14** And if Christ has not been raised, our preaching is useless and so is your faith."

We are going to spend a few weeks on the resurrection. Get ready for an exciting ride. God bless U

It is no secret, what God can do. What He's done for others, He'll do for you.

Our mission is to help people find strength and security on the foundation that can never be shaken, cracked or shattered. This foundation is the remarkable truth of God's unconditional love and His indisputable grace experienced in a relationship with Jesus Christ. The critics of Christianity have launched a full attack to discredit the person and works of Jesus Christ and the reliability of His word. We cannot be silent anymore. Let us as children of light, stand firm in the faith, because He who has taken us this far will never forsake us. You are called Christians, be careful of that name. Let not our Lord Jesus Christ be blasphemed on your account

Believe this, "Jesus did not come to make bad people good, He came to make dead people live."

[Keep It Simple](#)

Jesus loves me this I know, for the Bible tells me so.

If you have any questions, comments or you know anybody else who will benefit from this study please feel free to give us their email address and they will be added to our mailing list to receive weekly lessons. The email address is santigiemando1@yahoo.com,

Remember: A candle loses nothing by lighting another candle (Ephesians 5:8)

Let's go light another candle!