

Message Nine

**The Intrinsic Significance
of Keeping the Sabbath and of Fasting**

Scripture Reading: Isa. 55:1; 56:2;
57:15, 20-21; 58:8-14; 66:1-2

- I. The real meaning of keeping the Sabbath is that we cease from our doing, stop our work, get ourselves “fired,” and enjoy what the Lord has done for us, drinking of Him, the consummated Spirit, as the waters—Isa. 56:2; 12:3; 55:1:**
- A. Keeping the Sabbath in this way is to be terminated and replaced by Christ so that we may enter into Him and rest in Him for eternity.
 - B. To believe in the Lord Jesus is to keep the Sabbath; on the day we were saved, we were “fired” and replaced with Christ.
 - C. “I am crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but it is Christ who lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live in faith, the faith of the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself up for me” (Gal. 2:20)—this is the keeping of the Sabbath.
 - D. The entire Christian life should be such a Sabbath—Heb. 4:9, footnote 1, Recovery Version.
 - E. This extended Sabbath becomes a feast in which we cease from our doing and are replaced with Christ.
 - F. The more we realize that it is no longer we who live but that it is Christ who lives in us, the more we drink of the waters.
 - G. On the seventh day, the Sabbath, God rested because He had finished His work and was satisfied; God’s glory was manifested because man had His image, and His authority was about to be exercised for the subduing of His enemy, Satan; as long as man expresses God and deals with God’s enemy, God can rest—Gen. 1:26, 31; 2:2-3; Rom. 5:17, 21; 16:20:
 - 1. God’s seventh day, the Sabbath, was man’s first day; God had prepared everything for man’s enjoyment.
 - 2. After man was created, he did not join in God’s work; he entered into God’s rest; man was created not to work but to be satisfied with God and rest with God.
 - H. “Come to Me all who toil and are burdened, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am meek and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For My yoke is easy and My burden is light”—Matt. 11:28-30:

CRYSTALLIZATION-STUDY OUTLINES

Message Nine (continuation)

1. Toil refers not only to the toil of striving to keep the commandments of the law and religious regulations but also to the toil of struggling to be successful in any work; whoever toils thus is always heavily burdened.
2. Rest refers not only to being set free from the toil and burden under the law or religion or under any work or responsibility, but also to perfect peace and full satisfaction.
3. To take the Lord's yoke is to take the will of the Father; it is not to be regulated or controlled by any obligation of the law or religion or to be enslaved by any work, but to be constrained by the will of the Father:
 - a. The Lord lived such a life, caring for nothing but the will of His Father—John 4:34; 5:30; 6:38.
 - b. He submitted Himself fully to the Father's will (Matt. 26:39, 42); hence, He asks us to learn from Him.
4. To be meek, or gentle, means not to resist opposition, and to be lowly means not to have self-esteem:
 - a. Throughout all the opposition the Lord was meek, and throughout all the rejection He was lowly in heart.
 - b. He submitted Himself fully to the will of His Father, not wanting to do anything for Himself or expecting to gain something for Himself.
 - c. Hence, regardless of the situation He had rest in His heart; He was fully satisfied with the Father's will.
5. The rest that we find by taking the Lord's yoke and learning from Him is for our souls; it is an inward rest and is not anything merely outward in nature.
6. The Lord's yoke is the Father's will, and His burden is the work of carrying out the Father's will; such a yoke is easy, not bitter, and such a burden is light, not heavy.
7. His yoke being easy means that His yoke, the Father's will, is good, kind, mild, gentle, pleasant—in contrast to hard, harsh, sharp, bitter.

II. The real meaning of fasting is to stop eating all things other than the Lord Jesus and to not have a taste for anything other than Him:

ISAIAH (2)

Message Nine (continuation)

- A. We need to fast, to cease from all other kinds of eating, to stop the taste for all other foods, and to eat Jesus as the bread of life embodied in His word—John 6:48, 51, 63, 68.
- B. The evil condition of the wicked is that they do not come to the Lord to eat and enjoy the Lord—Isa. 57:20-21; cf. 55:1-2, 6-7:
 - 1. They do many things, but they do not come to contact the Lord, to take Him, to receive Him, to taste Him, and to enjoy Him.
 - 2. In the sight of God, nothing is more evil than this—Jer. 2:13.
 - 3. The wicked ones do many things, but they cannot have peace, because they do not contact the Lord, rest in Him, and remain in His presence—Isa. 57:20-21.
 - 4. We need to learn at every moment and during every action to touch, taste, eat, and enjoy the Lord.
 - 5. We should not only touch the Lord but also be touched by Him.
 - 6. The way to have a real revival is to contact the Lord with a contrite and humble spirit—v. 15; 66:1-2.
- C. When we fast by ceasing from the taste for anything other than Christ, we have an appetite only for Christ, and we do not eat anything other than Christ.
- D. God intends to reconstitute His people by changing their diet; His aim is to eliminate every trace of our Egyptian, worldly, constitution in order to make our constitution purely of Christ—Exo. 16:3-4, 14-36; John 6:32-35, 48-51, 57, 63:
 - 1. Whatever we desire, hunger, and thirst after is the diet according to which our being has been constituted; whatever satisfies, strengthens, and sustains us is our food; the unique food we take for our sustenance, strength, and satisfaction must be Christ—Num. 11:4-6.
 - 2. The Lord desires to take away the desire and hunger for anything other than Christ; Christ as the heavenly manna nourishes us, heals us, and eliminates the negative things in us to reconstitute us with Himself.
 - 3. Only those who are reconstituted with Christ by eating Him become the dwelling place of God; may the Lord change our diet so that we may be reconstituted with Christ and become God's dwelling place.

Message Nine (continuation)

III. Isaiah 58 describes the hypocrisy of the house of Jacob and Jehovah's instruction to them; they fasted outwardly, but they did many things in pursuit of their own interests; they did not rest in God or take Him as their nourishment and life supply:

- A. Verses 8 and 9a say that if we fast in the way of contacting the Lord, taking Him as our nourishment and sustaining power, our light will break forth like the dawn: "Then your light will break forth like the dawn, / And your recovery will speedily spring forth. / And your righteousness will go before you; / The glory of Jehovah will guard you from behind. / Then you will call, and Jehovah will answer; / You will cry out, and He will say, Here I am."
- B. Verse 9b says that if we fast in the proper way, we will remove the yoke from our midst, the pointing of the finger and the speaking of wickedness.
- C. Verse 10a goes on to say that we will also draw out our soul to the hungry and satisfy the desires of the afflicted; this is to be merciful to others and to sympathize with them.
- D. Verses 10b through 12 say that those who fast in the right way will be full of light and life, they will be useful, and they will enable others to go on: "Then your light will rise in the darkness, / And your gloom will be like midday; / And Jehovah will guide you continually, / And satisfy your soul in the dry times, / And strengthen your bones; / And you will be like a watered garden, / And like a spring of water, / Whose waters do not deceive. / And those who are of you will rebuild the ancient ruins; / You will raise up the foundations of generation upon generation; / And you will be called the repairer of the breach, / The restorer of the paths in which to dwell."
- E. In verse 13 Jehovah instructs the house of Jacob not to do whatever they please on His holy day; they were to call the Sabbath a delight and honor it, not doing their own ways, nor finding their own pleasure and speaking idle words; they were to keep the Sabbath by enjoying God, having been fired and replaced by Him.
- F. Verse 14 says that if they honor the Sabbath, they will have delight in Jehovah, and He will cause them to ride upon the

Message Nine (continuation)

heights of the earth, and He will feed them with the inheritance of Jacob their father.

IV. God wants us to learn one lesson—to stop our doing, taking Christ as our replacement, and to keep away from the taste of anything other than Christ:

- A. We should be replaced by Christ and enjoy God continually; this is the purpose for which Christ died for us and was resurrected for us.
- B. He is our Sabbath and our food; now we can rest in Him, feed on Him, and have Him as our replacement in every way and in everything.
- C. In the New Jerusalem for eternity, we will have a life of resting and fasting:
 - 1. Having been fully “fired,” we will not work but will be at rest; this will be the situation of everyone in the New Jerusalem—Rev. 21:2; Isa. 66:12.
 - 2. Our unique food will be Christ, the embodiment of the Triune God, as the tree of life—Rev. 22:1-2.
- D. By resting and fasting we can partake of all that the processed Christ has accomplished for us; in totality, what He is and has accomplished is just the divine water, which is the consummated Spirit for our enjoyment—Isa. 55:1; 1 Cor. 12:13.
- E. When we heard the gospel and received the Lord Jesus, we immediately began to keep the Sabbath and to fast; now we should be “fired” again and replaced by Christ more and more, resting in Him and fasting from every taste other than Him.
- F. According to the divine revelation in the Scriptures, we all need to learn to keep the Sabbath and to fast.