

Message Six

**Christ as Our Sabbath Rest,
Typified by the Good Land of Canaan**

Scripture Reading: Heb. 3:7—4:13

I. If we would have the proper understanding of the Sabbath rest in Hebrews, we need to know the significance of the first mentioning of the Sabbath rest in the Bible—Gen. 2:2-3:

- A. God rested on the seventh day because He had finished His work and was satisfied; God's glory was manifested because man had His image, and His authority with His dominion was about to be exercised for the subduing of His enemy—1:26.
- B. When there is a situation on earth in which man expresses God and represents God, that situation is a Sabbath rest to God; the Sabbath rest is simply God's satisfaction in His heart's desire—vv. 26-28; Heb. 2:6-8a.
- C. God's seventh day was man's first day; after man was created, he did not join in God's work, but he entered into God's rest; man was created not to work but to be satisfied with God and rest with God—cf. Matt. 11:28-30.
- D. The Sabbath signifies that God has done everything, completed everything, and prepared everything and that man must stop all his work; to keep the Sabbath is to stop our work and to take God and all that He has accomplished for us as our enjoyment, rest, and satisfaction; this is God's economy—Exo. 20:8.
- E. The New Jerusalem will be God's ultimate and eternal Sabbath rest because there all the redeemed saints will fully express God in glory and reign with God's authority for eternity—Rev. 21:10-11; 22:1, 4a, 5b.

II. The Sabbath rest is Christ as our rest, typified by the good land of Canaan (Deut. 12:9; Heb. 3:7—4:13); Christ is rest to the saints in three stages:

- A. In the church age the heavenly Christ, the One who has expressed, represented, and satisfied God and who rests from His work and sits at the right hand of God in the heavens, is the rest to us in our spirit (Matt. 11:28-29); the Sabbath rest in Hebrews 4:9 is Christ as our rest, typified by the good land of Canaan (Deut. 12:9; Heb. 4:8).
- B. In the millennial kingdom, after Satan has been removed from the earth (Rev. 20:1-3), God will be expressed, represented, and satisfied by Christ and the overcoming saints; then Christ with the kingdom will be the rest in a fuller way to the overcoming saints, who will be co-kings with Him (vv. 4, 6) and share and enjoy His rest.
- C. In the new heaven and new earth, after all the enemies, including death, the last enemy, have been made subject to Him (1 Cor. 15:24-27), Christ, as the all-conquering One, will be the rest in the fullest way to all of God's redeemed for eternity.
- D. The Sabbath rest mentioned in Hebrews 4:8-9 refers to Christ as our rest in the first two stages, and especially in the second—the rest that remains for us to seek after and enter into diligently:
 - 1. The rest in the first two stages is a prize to the Lord's diligent seekers, who enjoy Him in a full way and become the overcomers; the rest in the third stage is not a prize but the full portion allotted to all the redeemed ones.
 - 2. In the second stage of His being our rest, Christ will take possession of the whole earth as His inheritance, making it His kingdom for a thousand years—Psa. 2:8; Heb. 2:5-6.
 - 3. In the second stage of Christ's being our rest, all His overcoming believers who seek Him and enjoy Him as their rest in the first stage will participate in His reign in the millennium (Rev. 20:4, 6; 2 Tim. 2:12); they will inherit the earth (Matt. 5:5; Psa. 37:11; Luke 19:17, 19), and they will partake of the joy of their Lord (Matt. 25:21, 23).

III. We need to take heed to the Lord's word in Matthew 11:28-30—"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":

- A. 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.
- B. 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.
- C. 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.
- D. The Lord lived such a life, caring for nothing but the will of His Father (John 4:34; 5:30; 6:38; Isa. 42:4a; cf. 53:2; 11:1-4a); He submitted Himself fully to the Father's will (Matt. 26:39, 42); hence, He asks us to learn from Him (Eph. 4:20-21).
- E. To be meek, or gentle, means not to resist opposition, and to be lowly means not to have self-esteem; He submitted Himself fully to the will of His Father, not wanting to do anything for Himself or expecting to gain something for Himself; hence, regardless of the situation He had rest in His heart; He was fully satisfied with the Father's will.
- F. 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.
- G. 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—cf. Mal. 3:14.
- H. 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.

IV. Exodus 31:12-17 reveals that the Sabbath follows the charge for the building of the tabernacle:

- A. "You shall surely keep My Sabbaths; for it is a sign between Me and you throughout your generations, that you may know that I am Jehovah who sanctifies you...Therefore the children of Israel shall keep the Sabbath, to observe the Sabbath throughout their generations as a perpetual covenant. It is a sign between Me and the children of Israel forever; for in six days Jehovah made heaven and earth, and on the seventh day He rested and was refreshed"—vv. 13, 16-17.
- B. On the seventh day God "rested and was refreshed"; man was God's refreshment because man was created in God's own image with a spirit so that man could fellowship with God and be God's companion and counterpart.
- C. We need to see the following divine principle—God first supplies us with enjoyment, and then we work together with Him; in order to be one with God in His work, we must enjoy Him.
- D. At Pentecost the disciples were filled with the enjoyment of the Lord—"they are full of new wine" (Acts 2:13); then Peter and the eleven stood to work together with the Lord (v. 14).
- E. With God it is a matter of working and resting; with man it is a matter of resting and working; then we work with the Lord by being one with Him.
- F. As God's people, we should bear a sign that we need God to be our strength, energy, and everything so that we may be able to work together with Him for the building up of the church as Christ's Body; this honors and glorifies Him—1 Cor. 15:10, 58.
- G. The sign we bear is that we rest with God, enjoy God, are refreshed with God, and are filled up with God first; then we work together with the very One who fills us in oneness with Him; this is an eternal covenant, an eternal contract, with God.

V. The means of enjoying Christ as the good land is the living and operative word of God that is "sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing even to the dividing of soul

and spirit and of joints and marrow, and able to discern the thoughts and intentions of the heart”—Heb. 4:12:

- A. The children of Israel are a type of us, the New Testament believers (1 Cor. 10:6a, 11), in our participation in the full salvation of God:
 - 1. In the first stage we receive Christ and are redeemed and delivered from the world, just as the children of Israel were delivered from Egypt.
 - 2. In the second stage we become wanderers in following the Lord, just as the children of Israel wandered in the wilderness; our wandering always takes place in our soul.
 - 3. In the third stage we partake of and enjoy Christ in a full way, just as the children of Israel partook of and enjoyed the riches of the good land; this is experienced in our spirit.
 - 4. The Hebrew believers were wondering in their mind what to do with their Hebrew religion, and this wondering in their mind was a wandering in their soul, not an experience of Christ in their spirit.
- B. The writer of the book of Hebrews advised the Hebrew believers not to stagger in the wandering of their soul but to press on into their spirit to partake of and to enjoy the heavenly Christ:
 - 1. The very Christ who is sitting on the throne in heaven (Rom. 8:34) is also now in us (v. 10), that is, in our spirit (2 Tim. 4:22), where the habitation of God is (Eph. 2:22).
 - 2. At Bethel, the house of God, the habitation of God, which is the gate of heaven, Christ is the ladder that joins earth to heaven and brings heaven to earth (Gen. 28:12-17; John 1:51); since today our spirit is the place of God’s habitation, it is now the gate of heaven, where Christ is the ladder that joins us, the people on earth, to heaven and brings heaven to us.
 - 3. Hence, whenever we turn to our spirit, we enter through the gate of heaven and touch the throne of grace in heaven through Christ as the heavenly ladder—Heb. 4:16.
 - 4. The staggering Hebrew believers were wandering in their soul and had neglected their spirit, but the new testament is absolutely a matter in our spirit, not in our soul—Rom. 8:16; 2 Tim. 4:22; Gal. 6:18.
- C. The Hebrew believers’ soul, with its wondering mind, its doubting concerning God’s way of salvation, and its considering its own interests, had to be broken by the living, operative, and piercing word of God that their spirit might be divided from their soul—Heb. 4:12:
 - 1. As the marrow is concealed deep in the joints, so the spirit is deep in the soul; just as the dividing of the marrow from the joints requires mainly the breaking of the joints, the dividing of the spirit from the soul requires the breaking of the soul—1 Pet. 3:4.
 - 2. Whenever we read the Bible, it must be living, energizing, and sharp enough to divide our soul from our spirit and discern our thoughts and intentions, revealing which are of and for the self and which are of and for God; we must mix the word with faith by means of all prayer in spirit in order for it to be living and operative—Heb. 4:2; Eph. 6:17-18.
 - 3. The living word of God must pierce into our being and deliver us from our wondering mind and wandering soul into Christ as the Sabbath rest in our spirit; we should not be those who stagger in the wandering of our soul, but we need to deny the soul and press on into our spirit to partake of and enjoy the heavenly Christ so that we might participate in the kingdom rest of His reign in the millennium.