

7.10.2024

Day Seven

Genesis

Chapter 2 (vs.1-3)

You can't go through the Book of Genesis, especially in creation, and think that God's trying to hold something back. The pages of creation really display God's generosity, His benevolence; shows His character and His nature in so many of the different acts which we begin to see Him work, and we realize that He is a God that wants good for us. If we were to sum it up, we'd probably sum it up from Psalm 84:11,

“For the LORD God is a sun and shield;
The LORD gives grace and glory;
No good thing does He withhold from those who walk uprightly.”

Is God trying to withhold? No, you can't come up with that conclusion, especially as you go through creation, and you see the love of God. Not only, like I said, do we see His generosity and His abundance, especially on day 5, that is emphasized, but we see a God that is over all, and a God that is supreme and superior over all that wants to give us everything. So, it shows the character and the nature of God as One who separates and distinguishes. What does He do towards the end of the creation? He separates and distinguishes. In day 6, He separates and distinguishes man from beasts, and you would have to say, as probably the debate goes in evolution, what's the difference between man and beast? God would probably give us the answer, “Well, man is only a breath away.” Because we realize the one thing that distinguishes man, as we will go on, and as Scripture will actually go into more detail about the creation of man himself, we realize that he has the breath of God in him.

If you go back into Psalm 49, a passage that I oftentimes refer to because of the way that man is actually regarded within the text and there is a sense of the concern for in the day of adversity and the day of the wealthy coming in and their perception is, of course, that they're superior beings. In this particular Psalm, God wants us to know that you're not superior, especially if in fact you think you're superior. So, the way He puts it, if you look with me in Psalm 49:5,

“Why should I fear in days of adversity,
When the iniquity of my foes surrounds me,

(Psalm 49:6) Even those who trust in their wealth
And boast in the abundance of their riches?

(Psalm 49:7) No man can by any means redeem his brother
Or give to God a ransom for him—

One of the reasons why he throws that verse in there is he wants to clarify, no matter how wealthy you think you are, wealth can't solve any problems and ultimately the greater problems that you have, which is survival. In the day of wrath, wealth is no good as Proverbs will say. So, man gets a little money, and he thinks he's better than everybody else, and he says, "Money is what distinguishes me from the beast." And God goes, "No, your pride; having that money and gloating in it actually makes you a beast."

So, he'll write this way,

"No man can by any means redeem his brother
Or give to God a ransom for him—

(Psalm 49:8) For the redemption of his soul is costly,
And he should cease trying forever—

In other words, not enough money to do anything that you're trying to do.

(Psalm 49:9) "That he should live on eternally,
That he should not undergo decay.

(Psalm 49:10) For he sees that even wise men die;
The stupid and the senseless alike perish
And leave their wealth to others.

(Psalm 49:11) Their inner thought is that their houses are forever
And their dwelling places to all generations;
They have called their lands after their own names.

(Psalm 49:12) But man in his pomp will not endure;
He is like the beasts that perish."

In other words, what brings man on the level of beasts? He acts like one, and he acts in regard to things based on wealth or what he possesses, and that's the way beasts act. They fight over what they possess, but that doesn't make you a human, so to speak.

It goes on and says,

(Psalm 49:13) "This is the way of those who are foolish,
And of those after them who approve their words.

(Psalm 49:14) As sheep they are appointed for Sheol..."

(Psalm 49:16) "Do not be afraid when a man becomes rich,
When the glory of his house is increased;

(Psalm 49:17) For when he dies he will carry nothing away;
His glory will not descend after him.

(Psalm 49:18) Though while he lives he congratulates himself—
And though men praise you when you do well for yourself—

(Psalm 49:19) He shall go to the generation of his fathers;
They will never see the light.

(Psalm 49:20) Man in his pomp, yet without understanding,
Is like the beasts that perish."

We kind of touched upon this last week, but as you go to the Book of Daniel, of course, you see the great nations, and how are they being described? As beasts. Why? Because they have an insatiable desire to conquer and to have more. Well, that's beastly. To have the Spirit of Christ, to have the breath of God in you, that's what distinguishes you. So, as we ultimately go in the New Testament, we have the Holy Spirit come upon us; this is what distinguishes us from the beast.

It is interesting that in day 6, you have the beasts of the earth that are created as well as man. Of course, the number of man is "666," and until we come into the realm of 7, he's really no different than the beast in that regard.

So, as we come to the 7th day, there is a clear distinction. In the distinction that is given, we have a sense that this is a day that is most holy. Probably a day that has been most misunderstood of all the days is the Sabbath. So, my hope is as we go through this particular study and I kind of want to leave it open too, as I would always want to do this, to any questions that you have about things that we're talking about here, because I personally believe that this is such a key point in Scripture; that you really began to understand the heart of God if you can really understand the Sabbath. So, the defining and the relation of this at the end of creation and this day of rest that is given is very crucial.

So, if you look with me in Genesis 2, we come into the completion of and actually naming of the fact that everything was completed.

(Genesis 2:1) "Thus the heavens and the earth were completed, and all their hosts.

(Genesis 2:2) By the seventh day God completed His work..."

Now, it's very important, if I can overemphasize this, that when he's dealing with the word "completed." He is establishing the fact that we're really not in the realm of things evolving beyond this point. What we know is that when sin came into the world, it just became the opposite; things began to devolve. So, things aren't getting better, as we know is true. His point, which is interesting, is all this was created in those seven days, and lest there's an argument about the length of what a day is, Scripture has already defined the length of days, "And there was evening and there was morning one day."

Now, we also quote John 11:9, in which Jesus will say, "Are there not 12 hours in a day?" Now, I just want to emphasize this, Jesus is God. He is the Creator. So, the Creator is telling us what a day is, just in case we're confused. So, there was evening and there was morning one day. He breaks it into two categories, 12 hours, 12 hours. So, when He says in seven days it was completed. Guess what? It was seven days. I know that there's a debate about what is called the gap theory and whatever. The only thing I can figure is people are just trying to figure out how there could be dinosaurs or they're trying to figure out how there could be a really, really old rock, and like I oftentimes asked people, I said, "Well, have you ever seen a one-day-old rock?" Because when you look at Adam, how old was he? He was one-day-old when he was first created, but did he look one day old? I mean, I've seen a lot of one-day-old kids, and it seems like they were probably shorter, but the point is that you have trees, and you go, "There's a tree there." Yeah, that's right. How old is it? One day. So, the creative act brings time immediately into the focus that you would see stars that were billions of light years away. It's telling us that God created the light on the earth immediately. So, you go, "Well, that's impossible." That's what creation is. I mean, there's nothing about creation that fits in a scientific bubble because it's an anomaly. God spoke and it happened. The clear distinction is these things happened and were completed. Now the tie is going to be with the Sabbath in this sense of completion, but the word that he uses, "*kālâ*" is very distinct, and I want to emphasize, it's distinct from "seven." We oftentimes think of seven, "Ok, that's the day of completion." I would say, yeah, that's probably a part of it, but it's really not the focus of what 7 is about. Here again, that's where we kind of get off play.

At the very beginning of chapter 2, He says that the earth was completed. It is interesting that He doesn't use the word "seven" to make reference to that. He uses a totally separate word. His point is clear that God finished a work, and this is going to be the main focus of the 7th day, the finishing of the work.

Now if you look with me in verse 2,

"By the seventh day God completed..."

Once again, the same word, "*kālâ*" is being used as was used in verse 1.

“...His work...”

Now, if you would just underline that word “work,” because that’s a really crucial word and we’re going to be talking about the distinction between work and labor. When we use the word “work,” we think of something tumultuous, perhaps, or hard or difficult or laborious, thus, labor. So, that would be a different word than is being used in this, and we’re going to see this word brought in later on when dealing with and making reference to the Sabbath. The word that is used within the passage is “*m^ʾlā^ʾkâ*.” Now, “*m^ʾlā^ʾkâ*” is a very interesting word. In fact, if you were to follow this word throughout the New Testament, and I don’t know if I can be totally dogmatic about this, but rarely, if ever, is it referring to any kind of “labor” at all. That would make sense if you think about it, because you just can’t picture God going, “Well, I didn’t think that universe was going to be that hard.” I mean, He spoke, and it was done. What kind of sweat does that bring?

When you go into Proverbs 8, you see the joy of the whole creative work. You just could never really read “laborious” in this, and that when God was doing the work and once again, we use that word, we realized that it was with great joy that He did it, and great satisfaction. He comes to the end, and He goes, “It was very good.” So, there’s no mistake that all of this was extremely joyful.

In fact, if you look with me in Proverbs 8; let me just point to this passage because it’s such a great text and I’m just going to read it because sometimes too much commentating messes it up. So, I’m just going to read it and let you enjoy the passage. Wisdom is personified within the passage, and you feel that wisdom is saying, “Me and God, we’re like this, and we were together.” And you have this wonderful picture, really in the way of the Christophany is in this particular passage.

It starts off this way, in Proverbs 8:22,

“The LORD possessed me at the beginning of His way,
Before His works of old.

(Proverbs 8:23) “From everlasting I was established,
From the beginning, from the earliest times of the earth.

(Proverbs 8:24) “When there were no depths I was brought forth,
When there were no springs abounding with water.

(Proverbs 8:25) “Before the mountains were settled,
Before the hills I was brought forth;

(Proverbs 8:26) While He had not yet made the earth and the fields,
Nor the first dust of the world.

(Proverbs 8:27) “When He established the heavens, I was there,
When He inscribed a circle on the face of the deep,

(Proverbs 8:28) When He made firm the skies above,
When the springs of the deep became fixed,

(Proverbs 8:29) When He set for the sea its boundary
So that the water would not transgress His command,
When He marked out the foundations of the earth;

(Proverbs 8:30) Then I was beside Him, as a master workman;
And I was daily His delight...”

I mean, are you picturing any kind of laborious effort here? Right.

“... Rejoicing always before Him,

(Proverbs 8:31) Rejoicing in the world, His earth,
And having my delight in the sons of men.”

It's a great passage because the thought is, “I wonder what God was doing before creation. He must have been awful lonely.” I don't know if you read that I'm not real sure. The passage is giving us a picture of, well, “In His presence is fullness of joy.” And you almost have to ask yourself, “Where does joy come from?” His presence. So, was He sitting around moping in eternity past? He couldn't have been, because of who He is.

So, we come to this passage in Genesis 2, and God is going to do something which we would define as a characteristically unlike Him. Now, I have to be careful when I state that because obviously what's going to happen is the nature of God has not changed and God doesn't change. However, something's going to happen that's monumental on this day, and this is why the day is so holy. So, I want to identify this particular word “*m^ʾlā'kâ*.” It's used throughout Scripture to really identify something that you do, like your business.

In fact, in Jonah 1, “*m^ʾlā'kâ*” is actually translated “occupation.” So, what we're talking about is the things that you occupy yourself with; your business, the things that you do. It really, in a way, is defining that which you enjoy doing or the kind of work that you do. We would refer to a person that was a workman. Strangely enough, if you go a little bit further in the Book of Genesis and this is going to sound a little strange, but this word is actually going to be translated “cattle.” We won't turn there, but remember when Jacob is going to meet his brother Esau? So, he puts the family out there. He not only puts his family out there, but he

puts the animals out there first. That was nice, so the family wouldn't get it right away. Anyway, he puts the cattle out there, and the way that it reads is, as he's talking to his brother, he says, "And as the way of the cattle." Well, the reason why it's translated that way is that it's understood that he's talking about the cattle, but the emphasis of the phrase is the way that cattle walk. So, it's kind of like the way that cattle occupy themselves; the things that they do, the nature of cattle. So, when you're dealing with this particular word "work," you're dealing with the occupation or the business of God; the things that He involves himself in. We see of course, that everything's good, and His desire is for these things to be good. God loves good.

In fact, we read in Philippians 4, as it kind of goes down that wonderful list of the things we should be thinking about. It is an interesting picture of the way that God busies Himself. What is the business of God? What does He think about? What does He do? So, it's more description of the occupation or the business of somebody, the things that they do rather than the fact that they're laboring. Am I clear on that so far? So, interesting point as we look. Every time it makes mention of God in this creative state, it will use "*m'ālā'kâ*." It will not use "*'ābāq*" which would be that kind of laborious, and oftentimes translated as serving or servant type work. In every time, it's going to be talking about the work of God, the handy work of God, it's really going to be referring to "*m'ālā'kâ*" in that respect.

(Genesis 2:2) "By the seventh day God completed His work..."

His business, we could probably put that way; the thing that He was producing and wanting to produce.

"... which He had done, and He rested..."

Now, resting is not necessarily a word where somebody's taking a nap. In fact, more specifically, "*šābat*," in the Hebrew, the "b's" are more like "v's". So, "*šābat*" is simply ceasing and desisting. In the orientation class, we talked about this, and someday I'm going to learn what we actually call [the class].

Isaiah 58, if you look there with me. We oftentimes go to this particular passage because there's no clearer passage to define the Sabbath than, I believe, this particular passage in Isaiah 58. So, if you read it with me, it reads this way,

(Isaiah 58:13) "If because of the sabbath, you turn your foot
From doing your own pleasure on My holy day,
And call the sabbath a delight, the holy day of the LORD honorable,
And honor it, desisting..."

See the word in the NAS? "Desisting" or ceasing would be another way of putting it. That's the word "rest." So, "rest" means that you stop doing something. Now, in the passage in Genesis,

what did he stop doing? He stopped doing His business. If you look at this, that's what we should be doing on the Sabbath.

"...call the sabbath a delight, the holy day of the LORD honorable,
And honor it, desisting from your own ways,
From seeking your own pleasure
And speaking your own word."

Well, this would be a cease and desist; stop. So, the Sabbath is a picture of God's ceasing and desisting. Let me just emphasize, interestingly enough, "š^abî" would be the word "seventh." Once again, our perception is that we would oftentimes define it as "kālâ," which means completed, which once again is not totally off base but misses the point. The point of seven is actually an oath or commitment. What is happening on the seventh day? God is making a commitment. He's given an oath. There are number of passages that I can give you.

One is found in Genesis 22. We won't try to hit all of them, clearly, but just to give you an example, if you remember in Genesis 22, when God told Abraham, "I want you to offer your own son." He takes him out on Mount Moriah and puts him on the altar.

(Genesis 22:14) "Abraham called the name of that place The LORD Will Provide, as it is said..."

We oftentimes use the phrase Jehovah-Jireh, which is basically "the Lord provides."

"...In the mount of the LORD it will be provided."

(Genesis 22:15) Then the angel of the LORD called to Abraham a second time from heaven,

(Genesis 22:16) and said, "By Myself I have sworn..." (seven)

It's actually in the reflexive. So, God is saying, "I have seven Myself." How was it translated within the passage? "Sworn." So, what are you dealing with? You're dealing with a total commitment. What's interesting about this passage, of course, you read something similar to this in the Book of Hebrews, where God could not swear by anyone higher. So, He swore by Himself, and you see that within this passage.

"... "By Myself I have sworn, declares the LORD, because you have done this thing and have not withheld your son, your only son,

(Genesis 22:17) indeed I will greatly bless you..."

Sometimes you wonder, "Why did God keep blessing the people?" Because by Himself, He swore, and He was going to follow through. "I'm going to make you a great nation." But it goes on, and Paul actually quotes this in Galatians,

(Genesis 22:18) “In your seed all the nations of the earth shall be blessed, because you have obeyed My voice.”

God is swearing by Himself. He's making a commitment. So, you have these things coming into play. The fact that it's the seventh day, there's clearly an oath, something of oath connection that's going to be made. There is this sense of rest that is ceasing and desisting from a particular occupation or business, if we can put it this way. So, there's a clarification.

Once again, Isaiah 45 would give you another example of this in which God will declare in a similar way as He gives a promise.

(Isaiah 45:22) “Turn to Me and be saved, all the ends of the earth; For I am God, and there is no other.”

(Isaiah 45:23) “I have sworn by Myself, The word has gone forth from My mouth in righteousness...”

Once again, the word “I have sworn by Myself” would probably be another way you could translate that. So, “seven” has significant meaning, There is a sense of completion in the sense of complete devotion and a complete commitment. I would say that's the greater emphasis of seven in the sense of He's swearing, He's making an oath, He's making a commitment.

So, you go back to Genesis 2,

(Genesis 2:2) “By the seventh day God completed His work...”

And there's some tie there with His business and the fact that He's making an oath.

“... which He had done, and He rested...”

Once again, ceased, and desisted.

“... on the seventh day...”

Once again, “seventh” emphasizing there must be some oath there, otherwise why the redundancy of the word? The redundancy of the word is always going to give some emphasis of the text.

“... on the seventh day from all His work ...”

Once again, He completed His work, completed His business, and He made an oath from all His business.

“... which He had done.”

Now, it uses it in the past tense. Once again, if you go through Genesis 1, you see that God created this and says, "This was good." "God created this," and it ends, "All very good." So, you have the sense of God is doing all that is His good pleasure. There's a joyfulness in that respect.

Then if you look with me in verse 3,

"Then God blessed the seventh day ..."

So, "seven" is now interjected again within the passage or even greater emphasis in the text.

"... from all His work which God had created and made."

There is clearly a ceasing and desisting from creation and making in the way that He had done what He did at this juncture. What is also interesting is, as you go into Chapter 2, God will go into the details of forming man, verses 7 and 8, and placing him in the garden. So, it's like we're going back into day six, but He wanted to establish this point before He does that. So, why would He be doing? Of course, the Sabbath is celebrated in the Ten Commandments.

You'll see the same thing in Deuteronomy 5, but if you look with me in Exodus 20, you'll see this, and just to kind of brush up on what these Ten Commandments are about,

(Exodus 20:1) "Then God spoke all these words, saying,

(Exodus 20:2) "I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery."

Once again, we start off with the God who gives. Whether it's in creation or whether it's in redemption, God's the one that's doing the giving. God is the One that's loving, not man. Man rarely reciprocates. He rarely gives praise. He really gives the thanks that is to God. The psalmist will say give God the praise and the honor due to His name, but we don't do that.

(Exodus 20:3) "You shall have no other gods before Me."

As He goes on in these initial commandments, what is He talking about? Well, "You owe everything to Me. You need to understand this. You need to comprehend what I've done for you." But obviously man does not, and God has to remind him in the Law. Man would have a tendency to go out and make an idol and say, "It did this." I mean, you make a golden calf, and "The golden calf saved us from the Egyptians." Where did you get that from? Man will elevate anything but God. We do the same thing with technology or whatever, but God is the One that heals, and God is the One that saves. We give credit to so many other resources.

(Exodus 20:5) "You shall not worship them or serve them..."

See the word there? "Serve"? Ok, that's this word. That's like doing labor. So, we'd probably use the word "work" here in in the sense of service. Now, you can work hard for somebody and

want to do it, or you can work hard and not want to do it, but it's just generally a word of labor. The point in verse 5 is that you cannot labor for other gods.

To put it in the context of Colossians 3, "whatever you do, do your work heartily as for the Lord." So, if you're working for money, you're working for another god, mammon. If you're working for the accolades of men, you're working for another god. You should not ever work for another god. It's fundamentally the commandment within the passage.

"... for I, the LORD your God, am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children, on the third and the fourth generations of those who hate Me."

Besides in Colossians 3, if you look with me in Ephesians, that gives emphasis to this as well.

(Ephesians 6:5) "Slaves, be obedient to those who are your masters..."

I mean, God's not telling you not to go to work, but what He is saying is, when you go to work and you work for your master, watch for what he says in verse 5,

"Slaves, be obedient to those who are your masters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in the sincerity of your heart, as to Christ;

(Ephesians 6:6) not by way of eyeservice, as men-pleasers, but as slaves of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart.

(Ephesians 6:7) With good will render service, as to the Lord, and not to men."

So, Colossians 3 and Ephesians 6 make this really clear and really put it probably in the vernacular of laborious work, whether it's jobs or whatever, but it puts it in context in the sense of I think oftentimes we're working for somebody else other than God. And God says, "This is offensive to Me." That's what He's saying in the commandments. "It's offensive to Me that you would work for somebody else."

Question

So, as it goes on within the passage, He directly ties in verse 5, "You shall not worship them or serve them." Once again, working for something else is a form of worship as well. It goes on and says,

(Exodus 20:7) "You shall not take the name of the LORD your God in vain..."

That doesn't simply make reference to cursing, but more specifically trivializing God's name; misusing it, and I would say as well, misrepresenting Him. One of the statements that is made in the Book of Psalms is, "What right do you have to put my words in your mouth?" And sometimes we just throw things out there that are in our head about God rather than saying who He really is. So, we misrepresent Him. In some way, we distort. I think we all wrestle with

that because even Isaiah, when he comes in the presence of God, realizes, "What have I been saying? I had no idea that You are Who You say You are. I mean, I had no idea Who You were." So, he says, "I put my hand over my mouth." Job says the same thing when he comes in contact with God, that God is holy and must be treated as such. You get this feeling in Exodus 20 as well, and those first commandments are just really establishing this.

(Exodus 20:8) "Remember the..."

What? "*šabāt*," right.

"Remember the Sabbath..."

Here again, let's just clarify what we're talking about. "Remember the ceasing," would be another way of putting this. "Remember what God did in desisting." So, obviously God wants us to remember that, and that this is holy, a day set apart, sanctified. There's no day like this. So, if we only understood that God is a God who makes distinctions in creation, right? So, He's clearly distinguishing this day is very, very unique and very different.

(Exodus 20:9) "Six days you shall..."

What's the phrase? "You shall," what? Labor, "*āḇad*," right?

"Six days you shall labor and do all your..."

What? "*mālā'kâ*." To put it another way, "Six days you shall labor and go about your business." Watch the way this is translated,

(Exodus 20:10) "But the seventh day is a sabbath of the LORD your God; in it you shall not do any..."

Does it use the word "labor"? No. Why do you think it doesn't use the word "labor"? Because you do serve God on the Sabbath. In fact, when you go in into the Levitical writings, it will actually use this word over and over and over again for what the Levites are doing on the Sabbath; whether it's in the sacrifices or I mean, there's labor. In fact, the priests labor more on the Sabbath than any other day for God. So, there's going to be work. In fact, when Christ comes on the earth, He goes, "I'm doing work, the day is now that My Father and I are both working." So, that's pretty interesting in John. The point is that Christ is making it clear. In fact, this is why the Pharisees and Sadducees go, "You healed somebody on the Sabbath." He goes, "Wait a minute. We're not supposed to do something good on the Sabbath?" Now, the Pharisees knew that the priests and all those did work, labored on the Sabbath. So, this particular passage, when He's talking about the Sabbath, He's not going to emphasize this because He knows you're going to work. Here again, what the Pharisees did was they mixed it up. So, they go, "Well, you can only lift your spoon so high, and you can only walk a Sabbath

day's journey. You can only do this." Sounds like politics, doesn't it? If you could just twist what a particular word means, then you can use it to fit whatever you want to do. I mean, they didn't mind pulling an ox out of the hole if it was theirs. I'm sure they wouldn't help somebody else.

Watch the way that it says it here in verse 10,

"But the seventh day is a sabbath of the LORD your God; in it you shall not do any work, you or your son or your daughter..."

Then it goes on.

Now, if you back up into verse 9,

"Six days you shall labor and do all your..."

Ok, one word you might want to underline in this, "your." Remember what work was? Your business. So, what is it He's wanting to cease on the Sabbath? Your business. Self-enrichment would probably be a way to put it, but also anything that would benefit you. You're laying that aside.

When you come into the Book of Hebrews, and in particular you go into Chapter 10, and you know the declaration that's quoted out of the Old Testament, "I came to do My Father's will." That He wasn't looking for the blood of bulls and goats. He was looking for a body that says, "I come to do Your will." What we see is a picture of what the Sabbath is about. It's about that desisting from my ways to do His. Once again, that's clear in Isaiah 58.

Now, if you go into Hebrews, you'll see this as well. We'll go there just a minute, but what's being made clear within this particular passage is the difference between the labor and the business, and the focus is on the pronoun "your business," and "What I want you to do on this day is to cease from your business." Now, if you go with me to Hebrews 4, the writer of Hebrews is going to directly equate this to the Israelites who were not allowed to go into the promised land. It's an interesting picture of entering into the promised land, and he equates it with entering into a rest. So, why didn't they enter into a rest? Well, the end of Hebrews 3 says it's because they were disobedient. Well, what does "disobedient" mean? He explains at the beginning of Chapter 4, disobedient means they didn't believe. So, the word "disobedient" within the Greek is "without belief, unbelieving the word." "Unbelieving" in the Greek is the same word as "disobedient," and will be translated oftentimes back and forth. If you look with me in Hebrews 4,

(Hebrews 4:1) "Therefore, let us fear if, while a promise remains of entering His rest..."

Once again, how was rest defined? Ceasing. So, what is it we should be ceasing from? Our ways. What is it that the Israelites did not cease from? Their ways because they were still grumbling

and complaining, trying to figure things out, trying to do things their way, wanting to go back to Egypt. They were doing everything but trust in God, right?

(Hebrews 4:2) “For indeed we have had good news preached to us, just as they also; but the word they heard did not profit them, because it was not united by faith in those who heard.

(Hebrews 4:3) For we who have believed enter that rest...”

So, how do you enter into rest? Faith.

Now, let's kind of take this a little bit slower. So, what is faith? Faith is doing something that you wouldn't normally do. Faith is trusting in Him instead of you. It's trusting in Him instead of everything else out there, and that's not natural. It's an anomaly. Faith is the substance of things not seen. We walk by faith, not by sight. Who does that? That's why it's called repentance. We don't think this way. We've got to change our way of thinking because we don't think that way. So, when He's talking about this, He's saying, “You didn't desist from your ways. The evidence is that you didn't put your trust in Me.”

“... “AS I SWORE IN MY WRATH, THEY SHALL NOT ENTER MY REST.” ...”

The wonderful thing about the Book of Hebrews is he quotes this passage,

“AS I SWORE IN MY WRATH, THEY SHALL NOT ENTER MY REST.”

“They will” in the past tense, and then He will swear by His name that you will be saved. Anyway, it ties it in verse 4 directly to creation. Do you see this?

(Hebrews 4:4) “For He has said somewhere concerning...”

I wonder where this is? That would be like Genesis 2. So we'll help Hebrews out a little bit.

“For He has said somewhere concerning the seventh day: “AND GOD RESTED ON THE SEVENTH DAY FROM ALL HIS WORKS.”

There's the pronoun again. What does God want you to do on the Sabbath? Cease from your ways. Why? Because God ceased from His works. This is a very important point. If you continue within the passage, obviously there's a Sabbath beyond the Sabbath of entering into the promised land because they didn't get that rest. So, God through David, through the Psalms later on spoke of another Sabbath, and he quotes this in verse 7.

(Hebrews 4:7) “He again fixes a certain day, “Today,” saying through David after so long a time just as has been said before,

“TODAY IF YOU HEAR HIS VOICE, DO NOT HARDEN YOUR HEARTS.”

(Hebrews 4:8) For if Joshua had given them rest, He would not have spoken of another day after that.

(Hebrews 4:9) So there remains a Sabbath rest...

"Sabbatismos," a continual rest, is actually the word that he uses here.

"So there remains a (continuous) rest for the people of God.

(Hebrews 4:10) For the one who has entered His rest has himself also rested from his works, as God did from His."

What is it saying that God did? He ceased from His business.

(Hebrews 4:11) "Therefore let us be diligent to enter that rest..."

So, He wants us to make the tie between God's rest, and now, we need to rest the same way that God did. The introduction of this at this juncture and then going into the creation of man is where God is leading us. It begins to demonstrate to us that God goes from the realm of this creative, eternal enjoyment, and I've often likened it to a young couple that gets married, and everything is wonderful, hopefully, at the very beginning, and they enjoy each other. Then somebody says, "We're having a kid." And you say, "And who is the father?" (*laughter*) So, things change, and what changes is that these parents who used to go around and go wherever they wanted to go, do whatever they wanted to do quickly, with much more energy, now are servants. At the whim of this child crying, they get up in the middle of the night. They have to serve this kid, and it's almost like the kid's the boss, if you didn't know any better, because the child is delegating everything that you do.

The parallel passage to this, of course, is Philippians 2 that says, "Though He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped, but He emptied himself and He took on the form of a bond-servant." So, He goes into labor for us. So, Scripture is revealing the sacrifice of God.

Let me show you why the Sabbath is so holy. Well, let me just emphasize that the Sabbath is holy. If you look with me in Exodus 35, it will bring this up. There's a parallel in Deuteronomy 5 as well, so you might want to look at that passage too.

(Exodus 35:1) "Then Moses assembled all the congregation of the sons of Israel, and said to them, "These are the things that the LORD has commanded you to do:

(Exodus 35:2) "For six days work may be done..."

You can carry on your business.

“... but on the seventh day you shall have a holy day, a sabbath of complete rest to the LORD; whoever does any work on it shall be put to death.”

Well, he's really taking this very seriously. Why? Because it is a foreshadowing of what Christ did on the cross, and if you disregard what He did for, you trampled on the foot of the grace of God. If you disregard that, what will happen? Eternal death. So, the Old Testament gives you this picture, in a physical realm, a foreshadowing of you ignoring the grace of God. See that? Really, what you're dealing with in the seventh day is one of the greatest pictures of God's grace. I mean, did God have to give up His time, His effort? Was God groping? Was He sad? No. I can tell you this, that when man was created and as man continued to exist, God even sorrows to the point of regretting. We're not saying that in the sense of where He wanted to reverse it, but that He was sorrowful over the fact that He had created man and had to bring a flood. Now, you can't say that God was jumping around in great joy, and it was the greatest day of His life if I could put it in anthropomorphic terms, and I don't want to do that too much. The point is that sorrow, I mean, you can hear them throughout the prophetic utterances, where He's crying out, “But wait, I loved you. You abandoned Me. I was faithful to you. You were unfaithful to Me.” Whether you go into the Book of Hosea or another book, and you're going, “Why would God put up with all this grief?” This is what makes the seventh day so magnificent, God's saying, “I'm putting aside the joy of what I could create and do, that I might demonstrate a love.” And really, love is demonstrated in sacrifice. It's impossible to demonstrate the depth of love without sacrifice. Greater love has no man than this, well, you've got to lay down your life, which means you'd have to sacrifice in order to show that kind of love. You can do a superficial love. Of course, Adam could only throw his wife under the bus, but I'm not even sure that he bought her a diamond ring. In fact, all he did was take things from her. Yeah, but the point is that when you just are given things, you can't really appreciate, and you don't really love, but in order to demonstrate this, God was going to go through this for us.

You see that wonderful picture if you look with me in John 19. Christ is on the cross, the great picture, and it says in verse 30,

“Therefore when Jesus had received the sour wine, He said, “It is finished!” And He bowed His head and gave up His spirit.”

Now, I think the way it's quoted in Luke 23 is Christ declared, “Into Thy hands I commit My Spirit.” What day is this? We're entering into the Sabbath. How do we know that? Verse 31. It was a high and holy day. It was part of the feast, as well as it was the Sabbath. What is happening on this day? God is ceasing. He's giving up His spirit. He's giving up His comfort. He's giving up His riches. The seventh day is holy. God gave up.

Lest you think it's about the celebration of the day, turn with me to Colossians 2.

(Colossians 2:16) “Therefore no one is to act as your judge in regard to food or drink or in respect to a festival or a new moon or a Sabbath day—”

Why? What does the next verse say? The self-fulfilled in Christ. The whole purpose of the Sabbath day was to point to the selflessness of God. The selflessness of God is demonstrated on that cross. It was fulfilled. It was finished. It was declared. That's why when we come to God and we worship, we worship on the first day of the week, once again, Resurrection Day. It's a new creation through Christ, but the point of the Sabbath is, “Do you have any idea what He did for you?” He gave up everything and that's what makes the seventh day so magnificent. He gave up everything for you. I mean, God gave up everything for you. There's no day like this, ever in all of eternity. There's no day like this. So, when God turns to us and He says, “Now follow Me.” What does He mean by that? He wants you to give up everything.

“For the joy set before Him endured the cross.” (Hebrews 12:2) Yeah, because at the point that you're willing to give up everything is the point that you enter into the realm of love. Up to that point, you can't say, “I love you with all my heart.” But if you say, “I'm willing to give up everything for You.” See, we use phrases like that every day without really any thought, but Scripture is literally defining what love looks like and the willingness of God. This is why the Sabbath was so holy, and unfortunately the Pharisees and the scribes are doing everything but giving up on this day. They were using it to manipulate people, and they were using it for their own benefit. They made it this detached thing that took people away from relationships rather than clarify the depth of God's love. So, Sabbath is just a magnificent picture, and one of the reasons why we shouldn't discard the thought of the Sabbath. We have entered into a “*sabbatismos*” in Christ, and we literally say, “We're no longer doing our will, but Yours.” And every day should be that way.

So, when we go to work, once again, you're in Colossians right here. When you go into Chapter 3, and you look in verse 23,

(Colossians 3:23) “Whatever you do, do your work heartily, as for the Lord rather than for men,

(Colossians 3:24) knowing that from the Lord you will receive the reward of the inheritance. It is the Lord Christ whom you serve.

(Colossians 3:25) For he who does wrong will receive the consequences of the wrong which he has done, and that without partiality.”

His point obviously is, “Who are you serving?” And the answer is, “Well, I used to serve myself, but we've entered into a “*sabbatismos*,” a continual Sabbath in which we don't do anything for ourselves anymore. We don't go to work for ourselves, we go to work for Him. So, if you were

to be asked, "What is your occupation?" My occupation is in serving the Lord. That's my occupation. So, interesting difference of words within the passage.

Closing Prayer:

Father, thank You for Your love for us and the manifestation of that love in a very clear, concise and real way. Father, we are drawn to Your love, and we've oftentimes thought about this day, and I must admit, oftentimes in a very cavalier way of thinking, but this is a holy day. It's a magnificent day. You gave up everything, even Your spirit. There's no one like You. May we be holy as You are. We pray this in Your name. Amen.