

Sabbath Rest

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[0 : 00] Let's turn this evening to Hebrews chapter 4. Can read again verse 8. Hebrews 4 at verse 8.

For if Joshua had given them rest, God would not have spoken of another day later on. So then there remains a Sabbath rest for the people of God. For whoever has entered God's rest has also rested from his works as God did from his.

Let us therefore strive to enter that rest. But looking more particularly at the statement in verse 9. So then there remains a Sabbath rest for the people of God.

When you come to appreciate and when you come to appreciate increasingly as we surely want to do. The place that both the Sabbath as a day out of a week.

And the rest that's associated with that day in spiritual terms. When you come to appreciate more and more where God has placed that in the scheme of his entire provision for mankind.

[1 : 12] Especially in terms of spiritual but not leaving out physical rest. When you come to appreciate that increasingly. You do come to realize that any society of human beings.

Can be gauged very accurately by what they make of the Sabbath day. The attitude that any people have to the Lord's day.

Is a sure measure of where they are as a people spiritually and morally too. Because as we'll see from tonight's study. Just to remind ourselves of this pattern of Sabbath rest.

That focuses on a day that God has set apart. Or you could say is related specifically to this day.

The day cannot be understood apart from the rest that the Bible says is associated with it.

And as you come to appreciate that as we will hopefully this evening. So we'll see what a desperate straight our society is in. How bad are the conditions when we realize that the desecration.

[2 : 22] The abandonment. The overthrow. The setting aside. Whatever words we use of the Lord's day as a Sabbath of rest. It really is a telling indicator of how far from God.

And of how ungodly we become as a people. There are three rests that are mentioned. That we can follow through in the teaching of the Bible.

And they're largely pointed out to us in these chapters in Hebrews as well. The first of them is the rest following God's work of creation. The rest following God's work of creation.

Now when you go to Genesis of course you go back to the account of creation in Genesis. And you find it referred to there in chapter 2 as God finishing the work of creation.

And chapter 2 verse 2. On the seventh day God finished his work that he had done. And he rested on the seventh day from all his work that he had done. So God blessed the seventh day and made it holy.

[3 : 26] Because on it God rested from all his work that he had done in creation. But you also need to skip on to Exodus chapter 31 and verse 17.

Where there is another reference. We'll see a few tonight that are largely buried away. And really need to be dug out of the Bible. Even if we know the Bible very well.

Which I know you do. Nevertheless it's very easy to just perhaps not be as aware as we should be. Of some of these verses that perhaps we don't read all that frequently. But are yet full of little references that are important.

In regard to this and other topics to Exodus 31 and verse 17. Now this is really the Lord reminding the people how important the Sabbath was for them. And indeed that in those days anyone who desecrated the Sabbath would be put to death.

But this is how the passage goes on to say in verse 17. This Sabbath day is a sign forever between me and the people of Israel. That in six days the Lord made heaven and earth.

[4 : 32] And on the seventh day he rested and was refreshed. Now that's quite interesting isn't it? That it says there about God. It's God himself who's speaking.

Who is making this statement about the importance of the Sabbath day. He didn't just say that he rested on the Sabbath day. As you find back in Genesis. There's also this additional reference. And he was refreshed.

And that gives you instantly. Right near the beginning of the Bible. An entrance into the meaning of the Sabbath. The meaning of the rest. That God has actually revealed to us.

And provided for us. And has associated with this day of rest. And you can see from that. The two elements that are included. In the whole meaning of rest.

And Sabbath rest. First is a cessation from work. In six days the Lord made the heavens and the earth. And on the seventh day he rested.

[5 : 31] From all the work that he had made. In other words. In other words. The meaning of Sabbath rest. Is something that you need to take. You need to take it. For which you need to take into account.

The days of work that preceded it. God was working for the six days. That he took to create. The universe. Then when that was finished.

He rested. And sanctified that seventh day. As a day of rest. In other words. To get the meaning of rest. You need to take with you. An accomplished work.

A finished work. Because rest. Really in the biblical sense of it. Only has proper meaning. After rest. After work has actually been done.

And finished. And accomplished. And completed. You only find meaning in the word rest. When you take account of the fact. That it comes after. The days of work.

[6 : 27] That are mentioned. In relation to the creation. That's the first element. In the meaning of rest. It's a cessation of work. It's coming to rest. After.

A certain work has been. Accomplished and completed. But the second element in it. Is a satisfaction. With what has been created. A satisfaction.

With what has been created. Again back. In Genesis 1 and 31. God looked at all the work. That he had made. In the creation. And behold. It says.

It was very good. It was very good. And then you go to that verse. We read in Exodus 31. 17. That God rested on that day.

And was refreshed. He took delight. In the work that he had accomplished. He received satisfaction. From that work. That he had completed. He didn't just say.

[7 : 24] Now that work is done. I'm entering into. A rest. Because there's no more work. To be done. I've completed. What I set out to do. He also said. In what I see.

From what I have done. I have the most perfect delight. I have the greatest satisfaction. It is very good. In my eyes. There's cessation.

From work. And there is satisfaction. In what he created. And both of these elements. Even without going further. Into the New Testament. As we'll do in a minute.

Both of these elements. Are applicable to the Lord's day. And to the rest. That's associated with it. Spiritual rest. But also physical rest. There is in that rest.

A cessation. From work. From the work. That's ordinarily done. On the other days. Of the week. But there is more than that. There is a satisfaction.

[8 : 20] In the work of God. The work that he has completed. But not just in the creation. Also in his redemption. As we'll see in a minute. The Sabbath day.

Is very closely connected. With redemption. With salvation in Christ. When you take a rest. On the Lord's day. And you focus upon. What God has done.

You don't just go out. Into the hills. And enjoy the creation. There's nothing wrong. With doing that. As long as you give. The worship of God. As rightful place. But.

You're more than that. Contemplate the work. That he has accomplished. And completed. In Jesus Christ. The work of redemption. The work of which. Jesus himself said.

It is finished. The work that God's son. In coming to be seated. At the right hand of God.

Demonstrates. Is now. Fully completed. And finished.

[9 : 16] And you take. Satisfaction. In that. As you see that. As part of the meaning. Of Sabbath rest. You come. To rest.

In God. You take delight. In what he has done. You come. To participate. In his worship. Delighting. In what he has completed. And the Sabbath.

Day. Becomes for you. A day. That's filled. With meaning. And purpose. As you. Contemplate. As you. Meditate upon.

As you think on. As you speak about. As you hear about. The work of redemption. That's one reason. Why. The Sabbath. As a day.

Itself. Is so very important. Now that's the rest. Following. On the work of creation. Where God established. This day. And where God. Gave it to us.

[10:11] As a day. Gave it to mankind. As a day. Not just to the people of Israel. Long before. Israel as a people existed. Where mankind. Was represented.

There in our first parents. Adam and Eve. God. Had already. Established. This Sabbath. Day of rest. He sanctified it.

So that mankind. All mankind. Could actually. Have rest. And satisfaction. And refreshment. Of soul. On that one day.

Out of seven. But of course. Man sinned. And as man sinned. So God's curse. Fell upon mankind. Upon Adam. As the representative.

Of mankind. And as you find that. Curse falling upon him. And upon the creation. You find that God. Drove out. The man that he had made. Male and female. From the garden of Eden.

[11:07] Eden was shut. The Sabbath rest of Eden. Was closed. Against him. He could not return. He could not get into. The Eden. Where he had such rest. With God.

But here's something important. When God drove man. Out of Eden. He did not abolish. The Sabbath day. He did not actually.

Do away with a Sabbath. If he had done. It would have been. An indicator. To mankind. That there was going to be. No redemption. For him. Because the continuation.

Of the Sabbath day. After Eden. After man fell. Would be. For mankind. An indication. An actual. Anticipation.

Of a redemption. That God. Was going to provide. For him. You see. There's. There's no meaning. To the Sabbath. Without redemption. And where you've got redemption. You've got a Sabbath.

[12:04] As one of the great. Indicators of it. And when man fell. And was driven. Out of Eden. There is no corresponding. Abolishment. Of the Sabbath day.

It continues. As a day. In seven. For mankind. To observe. And in observing it. Mankind. Is given. If he has a mind. To do it.

Now that he's fallen. To think about. The coming redemption. That God. Is going to reveal to him. And prepare for him. So that brings you. To the second rest.

That's the rest. Following. The work of creation. Secondly. There's. The rest following. The deliverance. Of Israel.

From Egypt. Because here. In Hebrews. You find. Arrest mentioned. That's obviously. The rest. Of. Canaan. God didn't take.

[13:00] The people. Out of Egypt. So as just to take them. Into the wilderness. And aimlessly. Wander about. In the wilderness. Without having a specific. Objective. And terminus.

For them. He came to reveal himself. To Moses. In such a way. That said to him. I have come down. I heard the groaning. Of the people. I am come. To deliver them. I have come.

To take them out. So that I might. Take them in. To the land. That I have prepared. For them. This land. That's flowing. With milk. And honey. Now.

In Deuteronomy. Chapter 5. Here's another text. That. Lies. There. Sometimes. Again. We pass over. To perhaps. Deuteronomy 5. Where you find.

That. Moses. Is again. Reiterating. The 10 commandments. To the people. Here they are. Remember. Deuteronomy. Is given. At the time.

[13:54] When they're. Coming towards. The border. Of the promised land. So it's all of these years. They've. Been going through. The wilderness. And here is Moses. In the book of Deuteronomy. Largely. Reiterating.

For them. What God had done. And what God had promised. And God's commandments. And here he is. In chapter 5. Of Deuteronomy. Saying. These. The 10 commandments. But as he comes to. The Sabbath day. This is what he says. Observe the Sabbath day. In verse 12. To keep it holy. As the Lord. Your God. Commanded you. For in six days. You shall labor.

And do all your work. But the seventh day. Is a Sabbath. To the Lord. Your God. On it. You shall not do any work. You or your son. Your daughter. And your male servant. Or your female servant. Or your ox.

Or your donkey. Or any of your livestock. Or the sojourner. Who's within your gates. You shall remember. That you were a slave. In the land of Egypt. And that the Lord.

[14:47] Your God. Brought you out from there. With a mighty hand. And with an outstretched arm. Therefore. The Lord. Your God. Commanded you. To keep the Sabbath day.

You see what's happening. There's no mention of. Being redeemed from Egypt. On Mount Sinai. When God. Firstly specified. The Ten Commandments. When he built them.

Into this stone. That he wrote upon. So that there was a permanence. Given to these Ten Commandments. As the moral law. There is nothing there. Mentioned in the fourth commandment. With regard to. The be delivered. From Egypt. Therefore. They were to keep the day holy. But there is there. In Deuteronomy. And God. Is widening. And opening up their view.

And their understanding. Of what the Sabbath day. And Sabbath rest means. And now you see. They're seeing. That it's not simply. A going back to the days of creation.

[15:42] And God resting from his creation. But that it has to do. Also with. A redemption. From slavery. From bondage. And a being brought.

From that redemption. From that bondage. And slavery. Into. Into. Into. Into. Into. An inheritance. Into. Into. Canaan. Into. A rest. That God.

Has provided for them there. In other words. The Sabbath. Has then become. Very closely linked. To the whole idea. Of redemption.

Of deliverance. Which of course. In these days. In the Old Testament. There is. Itself. Symbolic. Of how. Spiritual. Redemption. From the bondage.

From the slavery. Of sin. From the curse. Of sin. From all that. The New Testament. Reveals more fully. But there it is. In its embryo. If you like. There back in. Deuteronomy 5.

[16:37] Where God is saying. Remember. You were a slave. In Egypt. And the Lord. Delivered you. Therefore. You shall keep. This. Sabbath day. Holy. In other words.

The rest. That God. Kept ahead of them. After taking them. Out of Egypt. The rest of Eden. Being behind. Now. No access.

Further to that. The bondage. Of Egypt. Being behind them. And he keeps. Before them. This great promise. Of rest. The rest. Of Canaan. When the wilderness.

Wandering is done. When all the battles. Are over. They come to settle. In the land. And take it over. And settle in it. And take delight in it.

And that's what you find. Here. In. Hebrews. Chapters 3. And 4. And you notice. How often there. In Hebrews 3. 11. And then. In verses 3.

[17:36] And 5. Of chapter 4. Hebrews 3. 11. The same thing as. Chapter 4. Verses. 3. And 5. The rest is. This is God.

Being quoted. From the likes of. Psalm 25. Psalm 95. This. It says. God. Is what. I swore in my wrath. They shall not. Enter. My.

Rest. Now. Isn't that also. Interesting. That God. Describes. Canaan. The inheritance. He was giving. To the people. As. My rest. It's God's rest.

It's the rest. That belongs. To him. But he's given it. To the people. It's my rest. He says. In the sense. In which. I am providing it. For you. I am the creator. Of it. I'm the one.

Who is. In grace. Actually. Given it. To you. And provided. It for you. And brought you. To it. It's. My rest. He provided it. For them.

[18:31] And yet. The quotations. There. From Psalm 95. Are from a time. Long. After the people. Had settled. In Canaan. Under Joshua.

And then. Immediately. After. Because. They're taken. From the days. Of David. And then. In the form. Of a warning. For the people. Who had settled. In the land. Of Canaan.

Not to be. Complacent. Not to think. That. They just. Automatically. Or by right. Had this. Inheritance. Provided for them. And of course.

The writer. To the Hebrews. Is using that. To speak. To the people. Of his own day. That just. As some people. Fell in the wilderness. Who had been promised. This rest.

Of Canaan. By God. And never entered it. Because of unbelief. So it was possible. For people. Under the gospel. To be offered. And to be aware.

[19 : 24] Of the rest. That God had provided. In redemption. In Christ. And yet. Come short of it. That's why. So. A number of times. They are saying. As it is said.

Today. If you hear his voice. Don't harden your hearts. As in rebellion. Therefore. While the promise. Of entering his rest. Still stands. Let us fear. Lest any of you. Should seem. To have failed. To reach it. Let us strive. He says here. Later on. In verse 11. Let us therefore. Strive to enter that rest.

So that no one may fall. By the same sort. Of disobedience. So there you have. Canaan. Being the rest. That followed. The.

Exodus. Exodus. From Egypt. The deliverance. From Egypt. But then the writer. Is saying. That doesn't complete. By any means. The idea of rest. For he says.

[20 : 18] If Joshua. Had given them rest. If Canaan. Had really been. The final rest. That God. Had meant. For his people. Then he would not. Have spoken. Of another day.

Later on. So then. There remains. A Sabbath rest. For the people of God. He didn't abolish. The Sabbath. When man fell. And was driven.

Out of Eden. Nor was the idea. Of rest. And the provision. Of rest. Exhausted. Or completed. By the rest. That he had given. To his people. In Canaan. There remains.

A rest. For the people. Of God. And that takes you. To the third rest. In many ways. The most important one. The one towards which.

The rest of Canaan. Pointed. And that is. The rest. That follows. The resurrection. Of Christ. Of course. It takes in his death.

[21 : 15] As well. The ministry of Christ. But it's especially. Associated. With his resurrection. Because. The Lord. Jesus Christ. Rose from the dead. On the first day.

Of the week. He came to meet. His disciples. In the room. As we saw recently. On the first day. Of that week. On the evening. Of that day. And during.

That apostolic time. For reasons. We have no time. To go into. Tonight. But. The Sabbath day. Which became. The Lord's day.

Was altered. From. The last day. Of the week. The seventh day. To become. The first day. Of the week. And you can say. Just very. Briefly about it. That. In the Old Testament.

The Sabbath day. As the seventh day. Anticipated. The incarnation. The coming of Christ. The resurrection. Of Christ. Now with the resurrection. Finished. And accomplished.

[22 : 11] The Sabbath day. Commemorates that. But now. Looks forward. To something else. To the rest. Of heaven. To the rest. Of being. Glorified with Christ. In heaven above.

That's the rest. That remains. For the people of God. And. There are three elements. To that as well. And we need to take account. Of these three elements. Although the. Third one.

Is really the one. That we're referring to. Our rest in Christ. But remember too. That. There was a rest. For Christ himself. It was important. That Christ.

Entered into his rest. Because his. Entering into his rest. In his being exalted. And taking his seat. At the right hand of God. Was itself.

The great indicator. That his work. Was accomplished. And. That it was accomplished. Not to be added to. And not to be taken from.

[23 : 09] It was absolutely. Perfect. And complete. And entire. Forever more. As the basis. Of our redemption. And secondly.

The father's rest. Is also important. Because. Remember. We said at the beginning. That rest means. A cessation from work. But also.

A satisfaction. In the work. That's been accomplished. This. Is. My. Beloved son. In. Whom. I am. Well.

Pleased. And that's going on. And will always go on. For all eternity. As the father. Looks at the work.

Of his son. As the father. Looks at the work. Of redemption. That the father. Himself. Has had a part in. And accomplished. Through the work. Of his son. This. Is something.

[24 : 02] Of which he says. Is very good. He takes delight. In it. He continues. To be fully. Satisfied. And refreshed. If you like. To use the word. From Deuteronomy.

From Exodus. He is. Taking. Refreshment. Delight. Satisfaction. From it. The father. Rest. In him. And that means. That. Any people's. Dishonoring. Of the Lord's day. Any people's. Desecration. Of the Lord's day. Any people's. Failure.

In respect. To the Lord's day. And especially. The failure. That just. Puts it aside. And says. It's absolutely. No longer. Relevant. It is. Nothing. Less than.

The most. Awful. Dishonor. Given. To the son. Of God. Because. It includes. The father's. Rest. In him. And the rest.

[24 : 57] That he himself. Has now. Gone. To occupy. Having finished. The work. He had come. To do on earth. We despise. The Lord's day. Then we're despising. Christ. We desecrate.

The Lord's day. We're profaning. The work. Of Christ. We're putting. The Sabbath day. Aside. As of no relevance. Or use. In our present. Society. We're saying. About God.

The father. That he needs. To take. No delight. In the work. Of his son. That's not relevant. That's why. It's so important. That's why. It's a gauge.

To people's. Thinking. About God. And about. These great issues. Morally. And spiritually. That affect us all. And then. Of course. There's our rest.

In the. In this redemption. That Christ obtained. Now there's a sense. Of course. In which. We. Enter into that rest. When we come to. Enter into. Christ himself. By faith. By that.

[25 : 51] I mean. Enter into. The actual. Possession. Of. Eternal life. Even in this. Present world. By faith. You enter into. You're brought into.

That eternal life. That is in him. When you have Christ. You have that life. Even though it's not yet. Fully. Perfected. As it will be. In glory for you. But of course.

This is really. Going beyond that. This rest. That remains. For the people. Of God. Really means. The rest. That is heaven. Itself. The rest.

That heaven is. The rest. That follows. The work. The labor. Of this world. Of this life. He that has entered.

Into his rest. Has rested. From his works. As God. Did. From his. Is. And you find. Verses in the Bible. That pick up. That same thing. Blessed are they.

[26 : 47] Who have. Gone to. Enter that rest. Because they rest. From. Their labors. And their works. Do follow them. That doesn't mean. They. Continue to.

Have a. A labor. In the sense. You have in this life. They've gone to. Their rest. Christ. And so. The Lord's day. As we know it. Today. Has to.

Draw in. All of these things. From the past. From history. From God's. Acts of redemption. From the work of Christ. From where Christ is now. From the provision of redemption.

For us in him. It draws in. All of these things. When you ask. What is the Sabbath day? Why is it important? Why do we bother with it anymore? Because it is itself.

The great indicator. Of all of the. Ideas that you come. To see in the Bible. That actually are within. This whole idea of. Rest for the people of God.

[27 : 47] And so. When you despise. The Lord's day. When people despise. The Lord's day. When people say about it. And of course. You find that in the Old Testament too. Which is.

What you find sometimes. The prophets denouncing. In their own day. People saying. Well. When will the Sabbath be over? We're longing for the end of the Sabbath. So we can get back to our ordinary. Everyday work.

What happens when you do that. Is that you are actually. Rejecting the gospel. And it's through the gospel. That God. Brings us the message of life. Of eternal life.

Despising the Lord's day. Is despising the gospel. And the eternal life. That's brought to us.

Through it. There's no surer way. To fail. To enter heaven. For any people. Than for them. To set aside.

[28 : 45] The Sabbath day. Because the two things. Are so. So. Closely. Interlinked. Locked together. In God's own arrangement.

A day. That is kept holy. For him. That is connected. So closely. To his redemption. In Christ. Rest. Where the keeping of it. Indicates. That's what's important.

To us. As a people. That's what's important. To me. As an individual. That I know. Of this rest. And that I honor God. In keeping that day.

That's associated. With it. That's why our concern. Should be a great concern. To support every means. That's used. Legitimately.

And biblically. To promote the Lord's day. Promoting observance. Of the Lord's day. Promoting local observance. Of the Lord's day. Every advantage.

[29 : 43] Is given to a people. To profit. Under God. If they give place. To his Sabbath. If they put it aside. Their advantages. Are virtually gone.

As one of. The writers on. The theme of. The Lord's day. Put it. When you. When you neglect. The Lord's day.

You are actually. Neglecting. One of your best friends. I was to say to you tonight. To drive. From here. To Stornoway.

Those of you. Drive. Could say. Quite easily. Well of course. I can do that. I've done it many times. I can easily go. From here. And make my way. To Stornoway. I've done it many times. But if I was to say to you.

Yes. But you have to. Drive. On this. Dark night. With no stars. And no moon. And no street lights. And no lights. On your car. How easy would you find it then?

[30 : 45] It'd be virtually impossible. Well that's something of an illustration. Of what people do. When they put aside the Lord's day. When they do away with Sabbath rest.

They're trying to make their way. Onwards in life. And they're in the darkness. They've done away with one of the best aids.

That God has given. For us to know what's important. And why it's important. And therefore how. We should keep it holy.

Unto himself. Let's pray. Gracious Lord. Our Father in heaven. We thank you for.

All that you have appointed for us. By way of indicators to your grace. And mercy. In redemption. We thank you Lord. That we worship you.

[31 : 44] In the knowledge that you are. Our creator. And the creator of the universe. That you have given us a pattern. To follow. In the way in which you created. The universe in six days.

And then took. Rest on the seventh day. We thank you too Lord. That you have come. Especially to. Unite your Sabbath day. To that redemption.

That you have accomplished. We give thanks for the way. In which the Lord himself. In this world. Made it so obvious. In his own life. The place that he gave.

To the Sabbath day. To his observance of it. And to the way in which. It was consecrated by him. To God as well. We bless you Lord.

For that. Indicated in this day. And for the advantages. It brings to us. And we pray. That you would continue. To enable us. To value it as highly. As your own word requires.

[32 : 41] And enable us Lord. We pray to commend it. To our day. But to do so in a way. That is meaningful. A way that is patient. With people. When their lack of understanding.

Lord. Of these spiritual issues. Is so evident to us. And we pray gracious Lord. That you'd be merciful to us. As a people. Who have indeed come to spurn this day.

To turn away from it. To turn it into a day. For commerce. For all kinds of worldly. And other ends. And we ask oh Lord.

That you would be merciful to us. To restore to us. That sense of a Sabbath day. Well spent. So that if we indeed. Come to honor your Sabbath. Once again. Then we will come to know.

The benefit of your promises. And come to know them. Realized. In our life as a people. Go before us now we pray. And hear our prayers. For Jesus sake. Amen.