

No.

22.

"IF YE THEN BE RISEN WITH CHRIST, SEEK THOSE THINGS WHICH ARE ABOVE, WHERE CHRIST SITTETH ON THE RIGHT HAND OF GOD." COL. 3. 1.

THE SABBATH  
AND  
THE LORD'S DAY.

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by

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## THE SABBATH AND THE LORD'S DAY.

Our subject this evening is, The Sabbath and the Lord's Day. The first point concerns the terms of the command in Exodus 20. In Exodus 20, we have the first and the most quoted divine command as to the seventh or sabbath day. It is not only, "Remember the sabbath day to keep it holy, but the other words must be added, "Six days shalt thou labour and do all thy work, but the seventh day is the sabbath of the Lord thy God, in it thou shalt do no work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy manservant nor thy maid servant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates, for in six days the Lord made the heaven and the earth, the sea and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day, wherefore the Lord blessed the seventh day and hallowed it". THAT is the command AND the reason for it. Now we see here how God appointed that the seventh day should be a day without earthly labour, nor was any business to be done, nor to be allowed to others in the family, nor to the cattle. This was a definite command. We first notice that the statement at the end of the command is, "The stranger that is within thy gates". The sabbath therefore, concerned those who had gates, cities, that is to say an earthly people. The precept is not addressed to strangers and pilgrims. It may be said "Ah, that is only if you happen to have gates, just as if you happen to have a manservant". But this objection is a mistake. It is possible for a child of God to have a servant, I allow, but it is NOT possible for a child of God in the present dispensation, if he follows the will of God, to have gates. Hence we see that the term, "within thy gates" makes the command apply to an earthly people with an earthly inheritance. Secondly, we notice the context of this commandment. Says verse 2, "I am the Lord thy God, which have brought thee up out of the land of Egypt, thou shalt have no other gods before Me". You recollect how, in accord with this God said in Chapter 19 and 4, "Ye have seen what I did unto the Egyptians, how I bare you on eagles wings and brought you unto Myself. Now therefore, if ye will obey My voice

indeed, and keep my covenant, then shall ye be a peculiar treasure unto Me above all people, for all the earth is Mine'. Then Israel said "We will do". God made with them the covenant of this twentieth chapter. Thus we learn that the command in Exodus 20 is definitely to Israel, to those brought out of Egypt. In dealing with this, I do not mean that NO part of Exodus 20 applies to us, but that we need other passages to show what applies to us, else we cannot take a precept out of its context, for Exodus 20 is addressed to a special people. Next we notice the reason of the command. "In six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day, wherefore the Lord blessed the seventh day and hallowed it", that is to say, it was a memorial of creation and particularly with man as unfallen, for when man fell, God altered a sabbath day rest for Himself, even as the Lord Jesus said, "My Father worketh hitherto and I work". In regard to this, the priest of Israel had work on the sabbath day, because sin had come in and the priestly work was in connexion with sin, and dealing with sin. Wherefore the sabbath day was particularly linked with a people treated in some measure as if unfallen. Let us recollect that Exodus 20 was dealing with Israel as those who COULD keep the law. It did not put aside the flesh, but it dealt with them as those who were to obey. "This do, and thou shalt live". Thus Exodus 20 did not assume that Israel were fallen creatures, but gave a covenant similar to the covenant with unfallen Adam. Not that man was given another chance, for the purposes of God were fixed and certain, but God was dealing with man again in a fresh dispensation, on the basis of the flesh to show the need for Christ.

Next we come to the second point. We read of a sabbath before Exodus 20, the first sabbath that we are told was kept, God rested. God is first in every thing in Scripture; in creating; in sacrificing; in speaking and in everything, and we do well to remember this with devotedness to Him. The first sabbath, God kept. After that, though we have a reference to a weekly arrangement in the account of the flood, the

seven days, we do not have the sabbath kept in the inspired record till Exodus 16, where some went out to gather manna on the seventh day, and could not find any. On the sixth day they had found double, and the rulers were all surprised, which shows that the sabbath had evidently not been fully remembered, or had not been understood in the way it was afterwards understood. Moses said to them, "This is that which the Lord hath said, therefore is the holy sabbath unto the Lord". Notice, this first mention of Israel's sabbath links it with the word "rest". "Bake that which ye will bake to-day, and seethe that which ye will seethe, and that which remaineth over, lay it up for you to be kept until the morning". And in verse 25 we find that God would give them no further manna on the sabbath day, and when some went out to find it, they could not. These words are remarkable, namely, "For the Lord hath given you the sabbath. Therefore He giveth you on the sixth day the bread of two days. Abide ye every man in his place, let no man go out of his place on the sabbath day". Thus the sabbath was emphasised before Exodus 20, and in a way which suggests that, though not generally known, it was not unknown to Moses. Moses evidently realised God's arrangement before Exodus 20. It is remarkable that this plan is in connexion with manna, and you recollect how when Adam sinned, God said, "In the sweat of thy brow thou shalt eat bread", but the manna was a contrast with the bread by the sweat of the brow, it was GIVEN bread, therefore the sabbath comes up specially in connection with something which almost takes man back to an unfallen state in one aspect of the type, for the manna was given, it was not the bread for which a man worked. Thus the sabbath again suggests to us a dealing with man as is the flesh, not the setting aside of the flesh. Having referred to the way in which this brings before us the sabbath in connexion with Israel, might I remind you that in Nehemiah 9 14, God is addressed in prayer as follows, "Thou madest known unto them Thy holy sabbath, and commanded them precepts and statutes and laws by the hand of Moses Thy servant, and gavest them bread". The sabbath there is particularly linked with a giving to Israel, and further on in Ezekiel 20, we are

told that God gave them His statutes (Ezek. 20.11.) and in the following verse we read, "Hereafter also I gave them my sabbaths", Notice the expression, "My sabbaths". "To be a sign between Me and them that they may know that I am the Lord that sanctify them!" This is emphasised in Ezek. 31; where we have the Jewish aspect again. Note verses 12 to 18 "Verily my sabbaths ye shall keep, it is a sign between me and you throughout your generations" "that ye may know that I am the Lord that doeth sanctify you". "Ye shall keep the sabbath therefore for whosoever doeth any work therein, that soul shall be cut off from among his people. Six days shall work be done, but in the sabbath is the sabbath of rest holy to the Lord, whosoever doeth any work in the sabbath day, he shall surely be put to death. Wherefore the children of Israel shall keep the sabbath to observe the sabbath throughout their generations for a perpetual covenant. It is a sign between Me and the children of Israel for ever, for in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, and the seventh day He rested and was refreshed." In accord with this, God, in Jeremiah 17 made the observation of the sabbath a basis for the continuance of the Jewish kingdoms. "If thou wilt do no work, then there shall enter into the gates of the city, kings and princes. Jeremiah 17, 18-27.

The third point concerns the sabbath and the sabbatical year. Let it be recollectcd that, as we see in Exodus 23 and in Leviticus 25, there was not a seventh day only, but there was also a stress on the seventh month, (which was emphasised in the feasts as having a sabbath on its first day and a sabbath on its tenth day and also two more extra sabbaths). Further, there was also a seventh year, or a sabbatical year. We are particularly told in the last book in the Hebrew arrangement of the Earlier Scriptures, (that is, II Chronicles) how Israel did not keep this sabbatical year for we find (verse 21) God arranged to fulfil His word by the mouth of Jeremiah, "until the land had enjoyed her sabbaths". God gave seventy years, for the kingdom had been four hundred and ninety years, and Israel had not truly kept the sabbath year during any of that period. Hence God claimed the seventy years they had stolen from Him.

Evidently it was for the sabbath year being neglected that God claimed the seventy years, for the kingdom had lasted four hundred and ninety years.

Q. From when?

H. From Saul to the time when Daniel was carried away captive at the beginning of the times of the Gentiles. So we see God claimed those years from Israel. The sabbatical year was, therefore, as much linked with God's commands as the sabbatical day. It was a divine appointment, and thus we see the general Jewish character of the seven, whether day, month, or year.

Fourth point: In the Gospels we have the sabbath brought before us; the Lord Jesus did various miracles on the sabbath. In Mark 1 we find Him working a miracle on the sabbath; in Matthew 12 again, a miracle on the sabbath; in Luke 13, the ruler of the synagogue was indignant at a miracle on the sabbath, and in John 5 and John 9, we find Christ's miracles on the sabbath. That is to say, almost all the sabbaths that are specially brought before us in the Gospels are linked with Christ's miracles, and we remember His definite statement, "My Father worketh hitherto, and I work". And the miracles were dealing with sin, because a withered hand, and a beset woman, and one who was blind were in that condition through sin's entrance into the world. Hence there was a peculiar appropriateness in the Lord refusing to rest on the seventh day from this witness, but though He thus manifested His power and His grace, He never opposed or ignored the sabbath in the days of His flesh, for He came, and was "made under law" as Galatians 4 shows us. Setting aside all the rabbinical traditions, He did not set aside the sabbath. Nevertheless, by the statement that His people would flee if need be on the sabbath (Matthew 24) (the hindrance as to the winter being from without) He set aside the Jewish idea that the keeping of the sabbath would remain for His people after His death and resurrection. The last sabbath connected with our beloved Lord and His fulfilment of all that was legally required, the last sabbath He rested His body in the grave.

Q. How do you understand that the Lord's people would not wish to flee on the sabbath. Was this because

they would be persecuted by the Jews?

H. Evidently; just as winter would hinder them from without, so the sabbath day would hinder them from without. I repeat it is not that they would be unwilling. "Pray that your flight be not in the winter nor on the sabbath day" implies that they would be willing to flee. YOUR flight suggests this. If seventh day journeying were not permitted in the present dispensation, other words would be required.

We not only have the way the Lord Jesus kept the sabbath, but we also have the way His people treated the last sabbath before He was raised from the dead. In Luke 23,56 we read, "They rested the sabbath day according to the commandment", the last place in Scripture where we have "rest" on the sabbath day. The last place where we have the "commandment". This is important, for, till Christ was raised from the dead there was Judaism, hence the sabbath right up to the last. When He was raised from the dead, there was no more resting on the sabbath, no more recording of this commandment dispensationally.

Fifthly: The sabbath in the acts. In the Acts of the apostles, we find a wonderful appointed silence as to much that the apostles did, but nevertheless, we are particularly bold of their preaching on the sabbath, for that was the opportunity to reach Israel. In Acts 13, at Antioch, in Acts 16 at Philippi, in Acts 17 at Thessalonica, in Acts 18 at Corinth, we find the preaching on the sabbath. These passages, remarkably, are in the ministry of Paul. The ministry of Peter, who became apostle of the circumcision is singularly silent as to the sabbath, even as to preaching on it, but if we do not find more as to how the sabbath day was used and occupied during the period when dear children of God were leaving the dispensational change, the perfectness of the record is thus illustrated. The silence is striking inasmuch as in Acts 2, we have the first day of the week, "Pentecost". Therefore the sabbath is studiously passed over in Acts 2; then in Acts 20, the disciples waited seven days in Troas till the first day of the week. Thus the sabbath is studiously omitted, that is to say,

there are no cases in the Acts of the meeting of believers on the sabbath day, but the witnessing to Israel was then. The meetings of believers omit the preceding sabbath, yet Antioch, Phillipi, Thessalonica, and Corinth were all linked with the synagogue preaching to Israel, and prayer. Let it be repeated that in the places here we have the gathering of the redeemed, the preceding sabbath is definitely omitted. No one would praise God for the record in this connexion. We know very well that the Jewish believers were for a long while clinging to Judaism. Acts 10 makes this very clear, but though they clung to Judaism, there is no record of their observing the sabbath. If God had approved of this it would have been easily mentioned. There is not much doubt that they DID keep it, for as late as Acts 21, myriads were zealous for the law, and yet this keeping is entirely left out. The perfectness of the record and God's dispensational plan are thus emphasised together. As to the sabbath in the epistles, it is not frequently mentioned. In Colossians 2, 10, the Holy Spirit says, "Let no man judge you in respect to sabbaths", where it is linked with the feasts yearly, and the new moons monthly. Then we have sabbaths weekly. "Let no man judge you", implies that believers will receive judgment, that is, loss, at the judgment seat of Christ, if they keep any of these. The context shows. Hence the keeping of the sabbath is forbidden to us now. Hebrews 4 says, "There remaineth a sabbath-keeping for the people of God", and makes this, not the seventh day, nor the seventh year, but the seventh thousand years, or the thousand years when the Lord Jesus shall reign upon this earth. But though the sabbath is thus omitted in the epistles, (except to be refused to those who had no gates and no cities, and who are strangers and pilgrims), the sabbath comes up again in prophecy. See Ezekiel 44 for example, where we have Israel again having gates appropriately; there is the thought of the sabbath.

Sixthly: The first day is before us in the earlier Scriptures. First, in Genesis 1, where God said "Let there be light!" and there was light! The first day was thus linked with God's gift of light where there

had been the darkness associated with judgment. Then the first day is brought before us in the types. In Leviticus 23, we have the day after the sabbath, with the waving of the sheaf before the Lord, and from that was counted the feast of Pentecost, which, as it was seven weeks after, must also have been a first day. Some of the Jewish commentators try to alter this most important point as to the first day of the week. They have said that the day after the sabbath when the sheaf was waved before God was not the day after the ordinary sabbath, but the day after an extra sabbath of passover week, but this is twice disproved. First of all, if that were the case, the feast of Pentecost would be a fixed day of the month, and there would be no reason why passover is given a fixed day of the month and the feast of tabernacles is given a fixed day of the month, and pentecost is not, and the special day in passover week is not called a sabbath. If, on the other hand, we take it that God marked out the day after the ordinary sabbath in passover week, pentecost would not be a fixed day in the month, and the fact that in Leviticus 23 fixed days of the months are given for the other feasts and not for pentecost, is explained. Is that quite clear?

Q. I could not follow at all what you were saying.

H. In Leviticus 23, there are three feasts, Passover, Pentecost, and Tabernacles. In the first of them we find that the day after the sabbath (verse 11) there was to be a sheaf waved before the Lord, and from that day, seven weeks were to be counted and then pentecost would arrive. Now the passover is said to be the fourteenth day of the first month, tabernacles is said to be a certain day of the month. The day of atonement is said to be a day of the month, but pentecost is not said to be any day of the month. If it was counted from a passover ordinary sabbath, of necessity it would not be a fixed day of the month. Hence this would account for the divine wording. But if it was counted from the first day of passover, as rabbinical Jews say it was, which THEY call a sabbath, it would be a fixed day of the month, and the silence would be inexplicable. But Scripture shows it was not counted

from first day of Passover, but from the ordinary sabbath in Passover week. This fact has an important bearing. If it was counted from the first day of Passover, Pentecost would have been on different days of the week in different years. If it was counted from the ordinary sabbath, it would always be the first day of the week. Therefore, Christ's resurrection on that day and Pentecost on that day, would be first days of the week. Christ was raised on the very day on which the sheaf was raised before the Lord. Do you follow now?

Q. It is not clear to me yet.

H. Shall I go through once more? The Jews say that the special holy convocation days in Passover week were called "sabbaths", and add that the day after the sabbath meant the day after the special first day of Passover, which they call a sabbath. This would make the waving of the first-fruits on different days of the week, but a fixed day of the month, therefore Pentecost would become on different days of the week, and a fixed day of the month. But Leviticus 23 puts Pentecost alone as having no fixed day of the month. Therefore it was not reckoned from the first day of Passover, but from the ordinary sabbath, and thus would have different days of the month, but always one fixed day of the week.

Q. Was Passover a fixed yearly date?

H. Yes. From the fourteenth day of the first month. So have the other feasts except Pentecost. This illustrated the dating from the ordinary sabbath in Passover week, which must vary about. One year, the ordinary sabbath might be the first day, might be the second day, or might be the third day.

Q. Then Pentecost was always the first day of the week?

H. Always, and this accounts for the fact that it is given no day of the month in Leviticus 23. We have two first days in Leviticus 23, both linked with types of the present dispensation, and it is remarkable that in Leviticus 23 we find the following feasts. The first feast is sabbath, the second feast is Passover, which, being a week long, must have a sabbath, but which had no

special sabbath, for the first day, and the seventh day, X though they were holy convocations, are not called sabbaths, but it necessarily includes a sabbath. On the other hand, pentecost was not a week long, it was only one day long, and as it was the day after the sabbath pentecost was always a feast without a sabbath. The ninth day of the seventh month was called a sabbath. The day of atonement which comes next is called a sabbath. The feast of tabernacles was a week long and therefore would contain sabbaths, and also beyond that, its first day and its eighth day were called sabbaths. Now note the typical teachings, the first feast in Leviticus 23 the sabbath day, secondly passover must contain a sabbath, but not a special sabbath, pentecost had no sabbath at all. Tabernacles contained a sabbath because it was a week, and had also two special sabbaths. The other two feasts mentioned are expressly called sabbaths. Therefore every feast in Leviticus 23 had a sabbath except pentecost, and that was the day the Lord picked out for the forming of the church. Passover, the one feast which was a type of the church as well as of Israel, had a sabbath AND a first day. Tabernacles which is a type of Israel's future X had no special first day, but only sabbaths. So strikingly is Tabernacles a picture of blessing to the Jewish nation and the future dispensation, that its eighth day, which we should have thought would have been called a first day, was called a sabbath. Now, I am afraid, dear friends, you are a little confused - one of the most wonderful collection of thoughts that we find in any chapter on the sabbath is in this chapter to make God's teaching clear to us. God has put so much of typical teaching here, and I don't want to hurry away from it.

Q. As to passover?

H. Passover, being a week long, must have an ordinary sabbath, but its holy convocation days were not called sabbaths, because, I would suggest, the passover was a type of the church of the present dispensation as well as of Israel. Passover was the only feast that had a sabbath AND a first day both. Pentecost, no sabbath, only a first day. Tabernacles, no first day, only an ordinary sabbath AND special sabbaths.

Q. But that is only because the special days are

called sabbaths, is it not?

H. Yes but this fact is very important that they are not called sabbaths in passover week, because it includes types of the church. Remember that no sabbath comes in pentecost and that no first day comes in tabernacles because it is a type of the future dispensation.

Q. As to the meaning of the word "sabbath"?

H. The word "sabbath" simply means "rest" or "cessation", it does not mean (as it is commonly thought) "seventh".

Q. Do we have the first day brought before us in the gospels during Christ's lifetime?

H. Not till His resurrection, and then after His resurrection, He never appeared to His disciples gathered together on a sabbath day, but only on the first day, that is, when we are told which day of the week. There are three dated gatherings of the disciples with the Lord in resurrection, and they are all on the first day.

Then we come to the Acts, the gatherings of the redeemed ones which are dated (Acts 2 and Acts 20) are first day gatherings. In I Corinthians 16, we read "On the first day let every one of you lay by him", implying it is not a working day, and the apostle adds "that there be no collection when I come", implying that this was the day of settling everything as to the spiritual arrangements, and in the Book of Revelation we find the first day called the Lord's Day (I shall not give the proofs of this just now). A word as to the manner of keeping. It is true we are not Jews, nor under Jewish arrangement as to the sabbath. The first day is not a transferred sabbath, but it is important not only to do nothing whereby our brethren stumble, but to remember the passage in I Corinthians 16, coupled with the stress that we have as to the Lord's people gathering on the "first" days. These things together would keep us from ordinary occupation on that day. Historically, we find that many in early christendom kept both the sabbath and the first day, until some forms of Judaism were ruled out, and Babylonianism altered the aspect by appointing a first day to the world. Thus we have man's "Sunday" to be observed by all "men" according to the famous edict of

~~Constantine, 321~~ contradicting the Lord's idea of the Lord's Day for His people.

Q. You would not say that there was a blessing through the issue of that edict?

H. Only as everything in history has a blessing in God's overruling.

Q. Apart from that, I suppose the whole of the day would have been worked?

H. This might have been the best test possible for believers.

Q. But worse for the health of the others.

H. Overruling, I grant, has been a blessing, both as to physical things and spiritual things, but to take the first day as the "Sunday", and make the world have a Lord's Day observance is confusion regarding relationship to a risen Lord.

Q. But it has made the path easier for believers of course?

H. Yes in some ways.

H. As to point six, God will arrange the sabbath to be kept by an earthly people in the millennium. This will be a resuming of His dealings, and what I may call a "compensation", just as He took the seventy years that Israel had sinned from Him. Then He will arrange that on this earth He shall have a thousand years of compensation, as it were. The sabbath of a thousand years to show His purpose will stand and that He is not frustrated in a ruined world of six thousand years.

Q. What is the day referred to in Psalm 118. "This is the day which the Lord hath made"?

H. I think that is a prophecy of the Lord's Day as well as of the day of the Lord.

Q. "Sunday Travelling", not ruled out by Scripture is it?

H. Much depends upon what you mean "by Scripture".

Q. Supposing anyone wished to travel ten miles by rail on the Sunday, to break bread with you, would you consider such were fit for fellowship?

H. I should consider that they were doing something which would cause others to stumble, and therefore I should suggest to them that they were so doing, and I think very soon the Lord would solve the problem, even

before it had taken such a definite head as you suggest.

Q. There is no Scripture as to the wrong of Sunday travelling, only one would keep away from Sunday travelling where it is possible, is that so?

H. If you mean, dear brother, by "no Scripture", no direct statement in Scripture, there is no direct statement, but is there not a divine principle that we shall avoid doing anything whereby our brother stumbles? Also to give none offence to Jew or to Gentile or to the Church of God?

Q. If you burn electric light on Monday, you are causing someone to work on Sunday.

H. I know there are certain difficulties and problems to know what would just cause people to stumble and what would not, and it is one of the most difficult parts of the believer's life to consider before God.

Q. Travelling on Sunday is a very important practical question for people living in London.

H. I grant, that it is an important practical question. My own experience is this, that I know that I should cause some to stumble if I travelled, and on this account I should lose enjoyment of the Lord's presence if I did so. Hence I have invariably walked. And though it may have caused certain inconvenience, I cannot say that on any occasion it has been a hindrance to me in the Lord's work.

Q. You would not be judged for travelling on the Lord's day, but for travelling on the sabbath.

H. We cannot expect others to understand all the dispensational teaching. The question is, do you cause others to have any misunderstanding that would be harmful spiritually? Do you give any offence to them? I would say I should, therefore I refrain. The thought that I am "entitled" to travel on the Lord's day because the world has nothing to do with the first day of the week, does not apply. I may seem to be as much entitled to travel as to do many other things which cause stumbling, but am I more entitled to do these things than I am to eat meat? But the apostle says that if his eating meat would cause any to stumble, he would even give that up, and therefore even as to actions regarding which I may be perfectly entitled and have a clear conscience, I will

refrain before God and not act unkindly, lest I condemn myself in that which I allow. Therefore I refrain, NOT because of any Mosaic law, not because the worldly man has a right to compel me to refrain, but as an act of love, desiring to obey the command and wish of the Lord that I should avoid anything which would hinder in His work, giving up a matter which is not commanded, just as giving up eating meat and drinking wine, lest I should cause sin in others, (and my conscience in this matter goes yet further).

Q. As to the world travelling on Sunday?

H. I think it is a sad thing, in that it is an indication of the casting off of the fear of God.

Q. One day's rest in seven seems necessary. Napoleon tried to have one day in ten and it was a failure.

H. There is not much doubt upon that point. I think one day in seven is physically, as well as spiritually, right. But I cannot agree that the world in picking out the first day have picked out the right day. If there is anything that belongs to the world, I should say it was Saturday, because the ungodly are viewed as men in the flesh, but I cannot legislate for them, and NOW the setting aside of the first day involves the showing forth of a heart against God and His remembrance.

(Several experiences were related).

H. I do not think that we shall obtain profit spiritually in this comparison of experiences and "feelings". We all recognise that the first day is marked out in Scripture. We see the typical and striking teaching; we all recognise that we are not under the law of Moses. Now there comes the very important principle of which we have an example, namely, to do nothing whereby a brother stumbles or is offended or made weak, and I am inclined to think that it would be more helpful to consider this subject prayerfully before the Lord at one of our further evenings, than to continue the conversation now, because our subject to-day has been rather doctrinal, and though all doctrinal subjects are evidently practical, we are apt in

considering these hurriedly in the very few final moments at our disposal to say things, or to omit to say things, in a way which will grieve us afterwards. The best thing is to seek the Lord's will, that His people may do nothing to cause stumbling, or give offence; that is to say, to ask themselves, 'What is the force of Romans 14, and I Corinthians 8 applied in the Holy Spirit's power in my life?'