

## Psalms: Book Four (Part Two)

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We have entered the fall festival season with its four holy days, the most that are in any season of the Hebrew calendar. This season, like the other four seasons in the Hebrew calendar, has its corresponding book within the Psalms.

We looked at the themes of Book Four last time and how they parallel the themes of the book of Numbers and the book of Ecclesiastes, as well as the themes of the fall festivals, as we have come to understand them. And not just the festivals themselves, but also the prophetic fulfillments of those festivals and how they all relate to our lives as Christians now and what we will be doing in the future and what Christ will be doing in the future.

As we start this sermon, I want to refresh our memories just a little bit on the themes that we went over in the last sermon about Book Four of the Psalms. We covered five major themes. I want to go through these quickly so I can get on to newer material but I just want to enumerate them.

Numbering or counting is the first theme that we went over. This highlights our need to make an accounting or deeply consider how to prioritize our lives.

The second theme is God's judgment and this is the reason why we have to prioritize—because He is watching and He will judge us according to our works, or our deeds. He gives us the promise, in many of the Psalms that we go over in Book Four, that He is coming to judge the nations and that the wicked will be judged righteously and justly.

Of course, that means (this is the third theme) that God is sovereign. He is over all. He is watching over all. He is controlling over all. He rules over all. And most importantly, to us, He is actively working out His plan to bring His people into His Kingdom. He is in control of what is going on and He is coming soon to set up a Kingdom to rule everyone and everything.

The fourth, once we realize that, is we see the vast difference between God and ourselves. There is no comparison. He is God. He is Creator. He is King. He is Judge. We could go on naming titles. My sister has a poster in her office naming a bazillion titles of Christ—a whole long poster of titles that He is. It would take me probably a

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minute or two (or five or eight) to read them all. But it is just awesome to think of what He is.

On the other hand, there is us. We are worms. We are not much to write home about. God is eternal, powerful, holy. Man is the exact opposite. We do not really even have a right to come before God unless He summons us. He is so powerful. But we recognize that He has opened a way for us through Jesus Christ. So, salvation, which is the fifth theme, is possible.

God is on a mission to save His people. He is going to redeem all—not just His people Israel, not just His people, the church, but *all* people. He wants them to be at one with him. His acts of deliverance and redemption are frequent and awesome, whether we recognize them or not. He is always watching over us and He is keeping us and helping us, guiding us, and moving us in the direction that He wants to go. Those are all acts of deliverance in salvation.

Ultimately, as I just mentioned, He wants to save everyone. Not just you and me, but everyone—all those people out there in Nashville, all those people in the States, all the people in North America, all the people in the Western hemisphere, all the people everywhere around the world; and not only that, those who are alive now and those who are dead as well. Everyone. When I say ‘everyone,’ I mean everyone. He does not think small. He starts small, but He is thinking big and He wants to save all mankind.

Now we see several of these themes in Psalm 149, which is the summary psalm of Book Four. We are going to go over this quickly. I wanted to do this in the last sermon, but I felt it goes here pretty well as a summary of what we went over last time to get us into the next section of my series.

**Psalm 149:1-9** Praise the Lord! Sing to the Lord a new song, and His praise in the congregation of saints. Let Israel rejoice in their Maker; let the children of Zion be joyful in their King. Let them praise His name with the dance; let them sing praises to Him with the timbrel and harp. For the Lord takes pleasure in His people; He will beautify the humble with salvation. Let the saints be joyful in glory; let them sing aloud on their beds [or while they are at rest]. Let the high praises of God be in their mouth, and a two-edged sword in their hand, to execute vengeance on the nations, and punishments on the peoples; to bind their kings with chains, and their nobles with fetters of iron; to execute on them the written judgment—this honor have all His saints. Praise the Lord [Hallelujah]!

Now, if you are keeping up with me there, the clear focus of this psalm is on the saints. What we have done, in going through Book Four (which we have not done completely, but by this time in the book of Psalms, Book Four is behind us) in the summary psalm, what God wants us to get out of Book Four was that this is where God was headed: to bring His saints to this point.

Did you notice a few things that He said about the saints and what they could do? Did you notice that the things that the saints are said to do are what Christ does? He is the One with the two-edged sword. He is the One judging the peoples. And on and on it goes.

So by the time we get to the summary psalm of Book Four, we see God's work of bringing His people to salvation accomplished. The psalm captures the joy and the exaltation of God's saints as the Millennium begins. They have been made like Christ and they are now performing the duties of the Bride of Christ, which are the duties of Christ Himself because they are one.

We see that this psalm not only gives us the sense of the exuberance and joy of all of this, but it also has a sense of their new duties as kings and priests under Christ. So there is a balance of this raw jubilation in their praise for God as well as a sense of responsibility for what they have to do in this time.

One key clause is in the first verse here. It says, "Sing to the Lord a new song." This is used in only two other places in the psalms. Do you know what book they are in? Book Four. If you want to just look back quickly, you will see that this is in Psalm 96:1 and Psalm 98:1. Both of them contain "Sing to the Lord a new song." Now what does that remind you of? Does it remind you of anything? Well, it reminds me of two passages in the book of Revelation.

**Revelation 5:8** Now when He had taken the scroll, the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders fell down before the Lamb, each having a harp, and golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints.

Notice "the prayers of the saints"—you get the idea of saints in your mind.

**Revelation 5:9-10** And they sang a new song, saying, "You are worthy to take the scroll, and to open its seals; for You were slain, and have redeemed us to God by Your blood out of every tribe and tongue and people and nation, and have made us kings and priests to our God; and we shall reign

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on the earth.”

So who sings the new song?

**Revelation 14:1-3** Then I looked, and behold, a Lamb standing on Mount Zion, and with Him one hundred and forty-four thousand, having His Father’s name written on their foreheads. And I heard a voice from heaven, like the voice of many waters, and like the voice of loud thunder. And I heard the sound of harpists playing their harps. And they sang as it were a new song before the throne, before the four living creatures, and the elders; and no one could learn that song except the hundred and forty-four thousand who were redeemed from the earth.

So, back to Psalm 149, the phrase “Sing to the Lord a new song” does identify these saints that he is talking about here as specifically the redeemed, the one hundred and forty-four thousand, the firstfruits—those who are glorified at Christ’s return in the first resurrection. So we have New Testament confirmation of just who this psalm is talking about.

Let us just notice the themes that are here in Psalm 149 that refer back to the themes of Book Four. Immediately (it is not said outright), we get the impression of this disparity between God and man because he opens up this psalm with what God is. “Let Israel rejoice in their Maker.” This is lesser to a greater here. Israel is the created thing and their Maker (the Creator, the One who is much greater and much more powerful, the One who has it all going) is God. So they are praising Him, lauding Him, glorifying Him because He is so much greater than they.

Here it calls the saints “the children of Zion.” Just the fact that they are called ‘children’ puts them in a lesser sense; they are under a Father, they are under authority as it were. So the church is shown (as the “children of Zion”) to be under their King. He is the One with all the power, He is the One that rules, and everything that they have comes from Him. So we get this disparity between the greatness of God and the neediness and the submission, as it were, of those under Him—the saints.

We also have salvation appearing in verse 4: “For the Lord takes pleasure in His people; He will beautify the humble with salvation.” There is the word! That appears as a word itself and not just as an idea. And this “beautify the humble” (the margin says it might also be the meek—do not the meek inherit the earth, as in Matthew 5?) is

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showing that He has brought them to salvation and given them their reward.

The phrase “beautify the humble” has parallels with “the beauty of the Lord” in Psalm 90:7 (“let the beauty of the Lord our God be upon us”) as well as the mention of “the beauty of holiness” in Psalm 96:9. The beauty of holiness is that glory that comes from being holy like God. Of course, there is the idea of glory in verse 5.

And then we get into the latter part of the psalm where we are given a two-edged sword, we are to execute vengeance, we are supposed to execute punishment, we are to bind their kings and to execute the written judgment. This has to do with the act of judging. So another one of the big themes comes forward.

Psalm 149 summarizes the major themes of Book Four and places its relevance and action firmly at the time of Christ’s return and the beginning of the work of the saints of God, or the Bride of Christ, under Christ, to do what needs to be done in the Millennium. So that is the time we are looking forward to in the Feast of Tabernacles when the saints of God—the church of God—is glorified, changed, made immortal, married to Christ, and then given the responsibilities to do the work of that time. And we will see in just a moment what that work is.

Let us go to Isaiah 62 and just see kind of a parallel to this, as we have seen in Psalm 149. We are going through the first three verses and the last two verses of this chapter (verses 11 and 12). The prophet writes here, speaking for God:

**Isaiah 62:1** For Zion’s sake I will not hold My peace, and for Jerusalem’s sake I will not rest, until her righteousness goes forth as brightness...

I just want you to recognize here that God does not rest, in doing this work.

**Isaiah 62:1-3** ...And her salvation as a lamp that burns. The Gentiles shall see your righteousness, and all kings your glory. You shall be called by a new name [Remember we saw that they got a new name that the Father wrote on their foreheads.] which the mouth of the Lord will name. You shall also be a crown of glory in the hand of the Lord, and a royal diadem in the hand of your God.

**Isaiah 62:11** Indeed the Lord has proclaimed to the end of the world: “Say to the daughter of Zion, ‘Surely your salvation is coming; behold, His reward is

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with Him, and His work before Him.’ ”

So He comes with a reward to do a work and we are to be helpers with Him in that work.

**Isaiah 62:12** And they shall call them [the saints] The Holy People, the Redeemed of the Lord; and you shall be called Sought Out, a City Not Forsaken [meaning, people will be flowing into that city for what the saints have to offer].

Now all this that was shown to be—what we are looking forward to and working toward—is the result for us of God’s sovereignty and grace in bringing His people into His family. This is what we are observing in this feast: We are looking forward to this glorious time in the Millennium.

I had half a mind, before the feast, to exchange places with Dr. Maas but I thought, “No, it will work just as well on Sunday as a kind of a dichotomy” because yesterday was the Sabbath, which is a type of the Millennial reign of Christ. It is the seventh day which parallels the seventh millennium of God’s plan in bringing humanity to salvation, and it also has a great deal to do with Book Four because it contains two Sabbath psalms. God has commanded us to remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. He wants us to do this every week, to have a reminder.

I have read many articles by Protestant authors who find great wisdom in keeping the Sabbath (“Oh yeah, God was really smart to put it right there in the Ten Commandments that we should keep the Sabbath”). So they write in their little articles and what-not that we should keep a Sabbath each week because people need physical rest each week to slow down and recharge. And it is always, always ‘a’ Sabbath. They never advocate keeping ‘the’ Sabbath because that would be Jewish (a bit of anti-Semitism coming out there). But they recommend that the people get some weekly downtime ‘a’ seventh day, not ‘the’ seventh day.

But if we go back to Exodus 20, there does not seem to be a whole lot of wiggle room from the mouth of God, on this seventh day. It is very clear.

**Exodus 20:8-10** Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days you shall labor and do all your work, but the seventh day [‘the’ seventh day; get that ‘the’ article] is the Sabbath of the Lord your God. In it you shall do no work: you, nor your son, nor your daughter, nor your male servant, nor your

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female servant, nor your cattle, nor your stranger who is within your gates  
[nor your Protestant neighbors, nor your Catholic neighbors].

Everybody is to keep ‘the’ seventh day.

**Exodus 20:11** For in six days the Lord made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that is in them, and rested the seventh day. Therefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day and hallowed it.

So, like I said, there is no wiggle room here about the Sabbath. It is ‘the’ seventh day. We are to work for six days and not work on ‘the’ seventh day, which is the Sabbath of the Lord. That is God’s day. He possesses that day; He is in that day; He calls us to be with Him, in that day, on that day. So it is the seventh day that the Lord has blessed and hallowed, the very one that He Himself rested on, providing an example for us to follow, and that is back in Genesis 2.

In Hebrews 4:9, which I want to cite at this point, the apostle Paul (or whoever it is that wrote the book of Hebrews) writes very clearly (it is clear in the Greek, but it is very, very horribly translated into the English). He says: “There remains therefore a rest [a Sabbath rest—a sabbatismos] for the people of God.” Most translations hide this because they do not want to acknowledge that the people of God need to keep this rest.

So we are very clearly commanded to keep *the* seventh day. That is the Sabbath of the Lord. If we are going to follow Him, if we are going to obey Him, that is the day we keep. If we do not keep that day, we are not obeying Him and we are not His people. We are just playacting as His people; we are a counterfeit (a word that has been used a lot about the churches of this world who want to be Christian but do not want to knuckle under what God says). And it is not a knuckling under. We find that if we keep God’s way, there is all kinds of blessing in it. But they think “Oh, that’s horrible. A bondage of the law.” It is terrible. God wants us to be miserable, I guess, huh?

**Genesis 2:1-3** Thus the heavens and the earth, and all the host of them, were finished. And on the seventh day [look, it is there: ‘the’ seventh day again] God ended His work which He had done, and He rested on the seventh day from all His work which He had done. Then God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it, because in it He rested from all His work which God had created and made.

Three times—three verses—he says “the seventh day” and He rested on it as an example for us to show that He rested from the work that He had done in the physical creation. Very clear. Which day is the Sabbath? ‘The’ seventh day. No wonder, Paul tells us, that a veil has been put on the minds of the people, not only ancient Israel, not only the Jews, but all Israel, all the world. They cannot get something as simple as this.

In the Bible, if you just do a survey (you can read the whole thing later), you find that God is almost constantly shown working. He is doing something. He is doing this, doing that, doing this other thing. He is constantly active. He is doing something.

Jesus attests to this in John 5:17: “My Father has been working until now, and I have been working.” And that was one of the main things He showed, that He was like the Father, that He and the Father were one because they were both at work bringing salvation. They were both doing the same jobs. And the Jews were just all up in arms about this: “You have just made Yourself equal with God.” He answers, “Yes. We have the same job description. We do the same things. He works and I work, and we are going to the same goal.” Think about that for yourself and the end result. But I will just leave that for right now.

Now, here in Genesis 2, is one of the few places where it says that God rested—that He stopped working. If this is such a rare thing that we see God actually stopping (resting) and then saying that He is doing this as an example to us so that we can also rest, this rest must be pretty important. And you know what? This rest appears in the second chapter of the book.

He is showing us that this rest of God is an important thing and we should mark it every week (every seventh day, on ‘the’ seventh day), that there is going to be a time of rest like God rested from His physical creation. So the theme of rest pops up in the second chapter and it carries all the way through the Bible. Because that is what we are shooting for: The rest of God.

So such a rarity that we see God resting just heightens the significance of God’s example for us. He did something that He does not ordinarily do: He took a day off. And He says, “You need to do this too. Once a week, take a day out of your labors because you need to learn something. You need to follow My example and get this cycle in your head, in your body, in all your rhythms, and then raise that to a spiritual level.” This is what God is doing: He is working toward a rest. If He did this—if He rested on the seventh day after His work—then so should we. If it is good enough for God, it is good enough for us.

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Moses uses the word 'Sabbath' here, which most of us assume means 'rest.' But we would be wrong. 'Rest' is a secondary meaning of 'Sabbath.' Its primary meaning is 'to stop,' 'to cease,' 'to desist.' The resting part is secondary; it comes as a result of stopping.

First, you stop, and by stopping, you rest. It is important for us to understand this for the rest of the sermon. We need to understand that resting is a result or an effect of the prior action of ceasing, or of stopping, or desisting. Rest is part of the Sabbath's purpose but the chief part is 'stopping,' 'ceasing.' Because if you are doing what God does on the Sabbath, you are not necessarily resting. But if you do what God did on the Sabbath, in ceasing, then you have the opportunity to rest as God rested.

The first you thing you do is stop. That is the first lesson you are supposed to get out of the Sabbath, that you stop. So what do we cease from? What do we stop doing? What does Exodus 20 tell us? We cease from our labor, we cease from work. Well, what is that?

Let us go back to Isaiah 58 and we just want to pick out the one verse here:

**Isaiah 58:13** If you turn away your foot from the Sabbath, from doing your pleasure on My holy day, and call the Sabbath a delight, the holy day of the Lord honorable, and shall honor Him, not doing [stopping, ceasing, desisting] your own ways, nor finding your own pleasure, nor speaking your own words.

We are to stop or cease or desist doing our own ways, pleasures, and words. Now, if we just want to get a general overall principle here that Isaiah (or God through Isaiah) is getting across here, we stop doing our things and we start doing God's things and taking pleasure, delight in what He takes pleasure in—the things that make Him happy and joyful.

So consider this: What are our things? What do we normally do in the six days of the week when we are allowed to work? Well, we go to school or work. We prepare food. We wash the clothes. We clean the house. We fix the car. We go shopping. We go to the movies. We work in the garden. We do home improvements. We go to the dentist. Whatever we do, that is what we do during the week.

Almost everything we do—except for the times when we take the time to pray or study, meditate on God's Word, do good—deals with physical pursuits: Things like making

money; maintenance and repair of our homes, our cars, our bodies, what have you. Also we pursue our own entertainments and goals. We go do the things that we like to do.

Those are the kinds of things that God wants you to stop on His Sabbath day. The normal activities of the work week, He says, cease and desist. Put those things away. Put those things aside. Close your garage. Put your tools away. Give yourself over to Him, in His time, and start doing His things, speaking His words, doing His pleasures—that sort of thing. So those are the things. As I said, we are to stop doing those things, we are to start doing God's things. Very simple.

In Hebrews, starting in chapter 3, verse 7 and going all the way through chapter 4, verse 10, rest is used quite a bit. Except for Hebrews chapter 4, verse 9, which I mentioned earlier, every occurrence of the word 'rest' is a Greek word 'katapausis.' It means 'to cease' or 'to end.' If Paul had wanted to say 'rest' (and this just shows you how bad the translation is), he would have used a very similar word but a different word, and that is 'anapausis'.

Did you notice there is only a minor difference in those two words? You have 'katapausis' and 'anapausis.' 'Katapausis' means 'to cease' or 'to end' and 'anapausis' means 'to rest' or 'repose' or 'to take comfort.' The root is the same—'pauo'—and it means 'to cease' or 'to leave off' or 'to stop'. Our word, 'to pause,' comes from 'pauo' ('Katapausis,' 'anapausis').

The idea of pausing is in both of those words and in the root, of course ('pauo'). The difference, as we saw, or as we can tell with my spelling of it, is in the prefixes 'kata' and 'ana.' They are opposites. 'Kata' means 'down' and 'ana' means 'up.' So, literally, by using 'katapausis,' Paul is telling us to pause or to stop down when, if he wanted to say 'rest,' he would have told us to pause, stop up.

We have a similar way of talking, using words. Maybe a good example for us to understand is, "I should wind up this sermon." But, on the other hand, I could wind down and you could see there is a subtle difference between the two terms. 'Winding up' tells me to finish, 'winding down' means I am kind of fading off—coming slowly to a stop. There is a slight difference in the way we use those terms 'to wind up' and 'to wind down.' It is very similar with 'katapausis' and 'anapausis.'

The first—katapausis—is either negative or neutral in the way that it strikes us. 'Anapausis' is positive. When you say 'Stop,' oftentimes that means you are being told to do something you do not want to do—'cease' and 'desist.' But if you are told 'to rest,'

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well, that is nice. That is more positive. That is something most of us like to do, especially in these days that are so hectic and frenetic.

So we can see that Paul was talking about stopping here—katapausis (stopping up, ceasing up, desisting up, if you will)—not necessarily resting, as we understand it. Had he wanted to use ‘anapausis,’ it would have given us the flavor of Matthew 11:29. This is very well known from Jesus Christ.

**Matthew 11:29** Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest [anapausis] for your souls.

You will find rest in Jesus Christ for your souls and obviously it means a kind of peace or repose or rest.

In Revelation chapter 4, there is a similar usage.

**Revelation 4:8** The four living creatures, each having six wings, were full of eyes around and within. And they do not rest [anapausis] day or night...

So they are constantly busy. They are not in repose. They are not doing nothing. They are actually active all the time, doing this singing:

**Revelation 4:8** ...“Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, who was and is and is to come!”

They are constantly at work praising God. They do not rest.

Please turn to Hebrews 4. I would like to read the first 10 verses so we get the gist of this. Paul is warning these Hebrews that their lackadaisical attitude could easily get them into trouble with God, and this is the tack that he takes:

**Hebrews 4:1** Therefore, since a promise remains of entering His rest, let us fear lest any of you seem to have come short of it.

Now, remember, this rest is ‘katapausis’—the stopping, the ceasing.

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**Hebrews 4:2-3** For indeed the gospel was preached to us as well as to them; but the word which they heard did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in those who heard it. For we who have believed do enter that rest, as He has said. . .

We are on the way to that rest.

**Hebrews 3-10** ...“So I swore in My wrath, ‘They shall not enter My rest,’ ” [Just so you know, this is quoting from [Psalm] Book Four] although the works were finished from the foundation of the world. For He has spoken in a certain place of the seventh day in this way: “And God rested on the seventh day from all His works” [This is Genesis 2, which we just went over]; and again in this place: “They shall not enter My rest.” Since therefore it remains that some must enter it, and those to whom it was first preached did not enter because of disobedience, again He designates a certain day, saying in David, “Today,” after such a long time, as it has been said: “Today, if you will hear His voice, do not harden your hearts.” For if Joshua had given them rest, then He would not afterward have spoken of another day [Because David was hundreds of years after Joshua]. There remains therefore a rest [sabbatismos] for the people of God. For he who has entered His rest has himself also ceased from his works as God did from His.

Now, remember, the works that God did was making the physical creation of the earth. This is a hint that when those who enter the rest of God, they are going to cease with their physical labors and there is something better in the rest of God that they will be doing.

The Israelites’ unbelief and rebellion had kept them from the goal. God was leading them to His rest. God was leading them to the Promised Land, which is a clear reference to the Kingdom of God, that is, His nation. He was to rule over them as King. But they did not. They failed to do what God had told them to do. They failed to follow God and they all died in the wilderness.

Back in Hebrews 3, right in the last few verses, it tells us essentially that their corpses were strewn in the wilderness because of their sin. They could not enter His rest. So the rest, he says, remains unfulfilled. If Joshua did not bring them into the rest, then there must be a rest in the future.

In verses 3-4, he refers to creation and to God's rest on the seventh day in creating the Sabbath. Now this is proof, if you will, that the rest that Paul is suggesting is not 'repose' because God is never weary. He does not need to rest to become reinvigorated and reenergized. So the rest he was referring to in that is something different from repose. It is something different from 'anapausis.' It is not a physical, reclined rest of that sort. He is talking about a different kind of rest.

We saw that God stopped His creative efforts on the physical earth and then He ceased working, to set us an example of how to keep the Sabbath. That is what we went through when we went through Exodus 20, Genesis 2, and Isaiah 58—that we stop doing those physical things that we normally do and we do something else. So Paul is implying, by going to these examples, that the future rest (the one we are working toward, the one that we still have before us as a goal) is a lot like God's rest on the seventh day of creation, that our rests (God's rest) is a ceasing. It is a stopping. It is an ending of something.

Now, in verse 9, as I mentioned before, we have the other rest—the sabbatismos. This is actually, as far as we know, a Pauline coined word, that he kind of just made it up. He turned the Hebrew sabbath into a Greek noun. This does a couple of things.

It links the weekly Sabbath with the future rest of God, that in our keeping of the Sabbath every week we are prefiguring the rest of God of the future.

It also characterizes the future rest of God (or we could call it maybe the Millennium or the Kingdom of God) as a time of cessation from certain activities, as on the weekly Sabbath (we cease certain activities). Well, in the Millennium, there is going to be a stoppage, a ceasing of certain activities. And, then, because we have stopped doing these certain activities, we can then do the godly activities in imitation of God. We stop doing those physical things and start doing a lot of spiritual things.

Thus Paul clues us in on the goal of the millennial period. The goal of the millennial period is to change the focus of the entire world from doing its ungodly carnal activities in rebellion against God—that is our works, the works of humanity. We are going to cease doing those things and we are going to turn to doing godly, positive, eternal works out of love for God and out of love for fellow man.

Before Christ comes, the whole world, as we know, is under the sway of Satan the Devil and they are doing the things that he wants us to do. When Christ comes, He puts Satan away; we are going to cease doing all those bad things that Satan wanted us to do; and now we are going to turn our attention fully to God and the world is going to

begin doing what God wants us to do.

So if we want to put it in a nutshell, as we have heard before, the goal of the millennial period—the goal of the rest of God—is to convert humanity: To convert everybody from following Satan to following God; to cease doing Satan's things and start doing God's things. And that is why we have the Sabbath. Every week we get a reminder that this is our goal.

This review of God's rest has given us the necessary background for understanding two psalms in Book Four—Psalm 92 and Psalm 95—both of which are Sabbath psalms. Both are Millennial and they are thematically linked to the Feast of Tabernacles.

As we saw in Psalm 149, it is a very jubilant, upbeat feeling that we are supposed to have when we come before God and recognize not only who He is but what He is up to and where He is headed with us and why did He choose us. But He has and we are going forward into the rest of God, by God's grace, and how wonderful an honor that is! That is the sort of thing that we need to be thinking about Sabbath after Sabbath, that God has chosen us as the sheep of His pasture and He is going to bring us into those beautiful highlands where we can rest.

Let us go back to Psalm 92. We are going to look at the first of these quickly. This psalm is traditionally sung on the Sabbath day by the Jews. As you can see in the superscription, it says right in there: "A Psalm. A Song for the Sabbath Day." Now the Jews had psalms for every day of the week. Sunday was Psalm 24. Monday was twice that: Psalm 48. Tuesday was Psalm 82. Wednesday was Psalm 94. Thursday: Psalm 81. Friday: Psalm 93. Saturday: Psalm 92.

I do not know if you recognized it as we were going through those numbers, but three of the weekdays' psalms are found in Book Four—Wednesday, Friday, and Sabbath. I do not know exactly what that means, but it does reflect on the theme of days, of weeks, of counting, maybe even the seven thousand year plan. But this idea that these days are marked out—the halfway point (Wednesday), the preparation day (Friday), and the Sabbath.

Christ came at the halfway point, a little bit after, but you would consider it that day because He died mid through the week—on a Wednesday. That is significant. That opened everything up. It made us possible. As we saw from John Ritenbaugh's sermons about the church, that is when He started the church. So Wednesday could be why that one is in this one, because that was the beginning. What are we doing? Friday is the preparation day. We are getting ready for the Sabbath rest. And then Psalm 92 is

the Sabbath itself. So it is kind of interesting.

Psalm 92 is a psalm of praise and thanksgiving to God for His works almost as if we have come to the end of creation week and are reviewing what He had accomplished, just like He did in Genesis 2: He looked back on His works that He had done, He said they were very good [Genesis 1:31], and then He rested on the seventh day and He was glad and made a great example for us. But after reading this psalm, we realize that those are not the works that the psalmist really has in mind.

**Psalm 92:1-5** It is good to give thanks to the Lord, and to sing praises to Your name, O Most High; to declare Your lovingkindness in the morning, and Your faithfulness every night, on an instrument of ten strings, on the lute, and on the harp, with harmonious sound. For You, Lord, have made me glad through Your work; I will triumph in the works of Your hands. O Lord, how great are Your works! Your thoughts are very deep.

So we are getting an indication here that we are not talking necessarily about just His physical creation. His thoughts go far deeper than that. He has some deep purpose.

**Psalm 92:6-10** A senseless man does not know, nor does a fool understand this. When the wicked spring up like grass, and when all the workers of iniquity flourish, it is that they may be destroyed forever. But You, Lord, are on high forevermore. For behold, Your enemies, O Lord, for behold, Your enemies shall perish; all the workers of iniquity shall be scattered [It is in a time to come, but it is a certainty]. But my horn You have exalted like a wild ox; I have been anointed with fresh oil [interesting—oil as a symbol of God's Holy Spirit].

So there has been exaltation and anointing. Glory and anointing separation.

**Psalm 92:11-13** My eye also has seen my desire on my enemies; my ears hear my desire on the wicked who rise up against me. The righteous shall flourish like a palm tree, he shall grow like a cedar in Lebanon. Those who are planted in the house of the Lord shall flourish in the courts of our God.

Now, notice, the house is like a dwelling, but the courts are more often associated with rulership. So not only do we dwell in the house of God, but, as it says, we flourish. We

grow and are green, as it were, in His courts.

**Psalm 92:14-15** They shall still bear fruit in old age; they shall be fresh and flourishing, to declare that the Lord is upright; He is my rock, and there is no unrighteousness in Him.

So the works that he is praising God for in this psalm begin to appear in verse 7. He is thankful that He has given the wicked their due.

In the timing of things, then, this brings us right on the brink of the Millennium, or right after Christ's return. Again, the Sabbath rest is about to start. The enemies, if we look in Revelation 19, have been stopped. They have been killed. The Beast and the false prophet have been put into the Lake of Fire. So he is sure that the enemies have been done away.

And then he begins to hit on the themes of Book Four. In the background, of course, is the difference between God and man. He is the great Creator. He does all these works. We are praising Him for everything because there is no way that we could have done any of this on our own because we are nothing. And He has exalted us from nothing to this wonderful thing where we can live with Him in His house.

Now these four themes: The first three emphasize the difference between God and man—God is eternal and powerful, but man is temporary and weak. Front and center in this psalm are the themes of God's just judgment and His eternal sovereignty—He is going to make sure everything gets done. And as the psalm concludes, another—the fourth theme of Book Four—springs up and that is the salvation of the righteous.

Notice that the psalmist says: "My eye also has seen my desire on my enemies; my ears hear my desire on the wicked." It shows that the resurrected saints will have been part of that judgment, as we saw in Psalm 149, that they saw it happen. They saw the fulfillment of that promise. And then we see that they have been exalted at this point. He plants them in the house or in the family of God and they will "flourish," "grow," "bear fruit," and "be fresh." They are all positive things—all things of growth and prosperity.

Each of these descriptions pictures a people who, while advancing in years, never diminish in strength and in productivity and in vigor and in energy. In a physical sense, it is a lot like Moses was. He was 120 years old and he never lost his natural vigor. He was still raring to go in the work for God. That is only on the physical sense. We have to take this a little bit higher on to a spiritual level. What he is describing here is glorifying

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saints who have been anointed with fresh oil—unlimited Holy Spirit—and they live forever in God’s service. They are spiritual. They have spiritual bodies. They have spiritual minds. They can go on forever.

Now notice what these planted (which is permanent), flourishing saints do. It says they declare God’s praises for the fact that He is upright (that is, He is the standard of perfection), that He is a rock (He is steady, immovable, constant, never changes). They declare that He is righteous. Everything He does is good and right. And they are declaring this; they are proclaiming this; that is their job. They are worshipping Him, praising Him for all of these wonderful attributes.

And what it does, it gives us the picture that our overall work is to be witnesses for God, even in the Kingdom. We are training now to be witnesses for God in this evil world, but that job will continue. We are going to continue in the Millennium to let everybody know how great God is, and to allow people to see our examples and to know where we have come *from* and now where we have come *to*. So it indicates, if you will, that we will be working in a mediatory way between God and the people that are trying to come to God—just like Jesus Christ. He is the bridegroom and we are the bride and we are going to be doing the same type of things that He does.

So this is describing our priestly activity in the Millennium (not so much the king part, but the priest part), that we are going to be the ones letting everybody know about His way of life because the people of this world will not understand. They will see the great works. They will see the wicked go down. But they will not understand the way that we heard about, and they will have to be taught.

I was going to go to Revelation 11:15-18 which is talking about the beginning. It is the proclamation of Christ’s return—that He is setting up His Kingdom—and it is very interesting what is said there about what is going to happen. It is parallel to this psalm. Christ returns, the wicked get their due, the righteous are given their reward. And it is interesting, just as a minor thought, to consider that this is in the same chapter as the Two Witnesses. Maybe that is a clue that the Two Witnesses’ work is a precursor of our major work during the Millennium—that we are going to be doing what the witnesses did, but in a greater scale.

Let us read Psalm 95.

**Psalm 95:1-10** Oh come, let us sing to the Lord! Let us shout joyfully to the Rock of our salvation. Let us come before His presence with thanksgiving; let us shout joyfully to Him with psalms. For the Lord is the great God, and

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the great King above all gods. In His hand are the deep places of the earth; the heights of the hills are His also. The sea is His, for He made it; and His hands formed the dry land. Oh come, let us worship and bow down; let us kneel before the Lord our Maker. For He is our God, and we are the people of His pasture, and the sheep of His hand. Today, if you will hear His voice: “Do not harden your hearts, as in the rebellion, as in the day of trial in the wilderness, when your fathers tested Me; they tried Me, though they saw My work. For forty years I was grieved with that generation, and said, ‘It is a people who go astray in their hearts, and they do not know My ways.’ So I swore in My wrath, ‘They shall not enter My rest.’ ”

Two very different halves of this psalm. Now this psalm (and particularly in the word in verse 7—‘Today’) indicates three distinct days. It is the Sabbath day, obviously, as we have seen from Hebrews 4. It is also the individual’s day of salvation (the day of their conversion, the time of their calling when they have their chance, their opportunity, to turn to God and to do His will). And then the third is the day of God’s reign, the day of the Millennium as it were—the thousand years.

It is speaking, in a way, to three different types of people but it has import obviously for the children of Israel who did not use their ‘day’ properly and died in the wilderness. It has import obviously to us because this is our day of salvation, and in the Millennium it will have great import to those people. “Do not be like your fathers who died in the wilderness in their day. In this day, turn to Me”, God says.

So the psalm begins with an appeal to worship and to recognize (to acknowledge with your mouth) how wonderful and sovereign our God is. He cannot be compared to anything. The idea that we have seen in several of these other psalms, that He is our Rock and our salvation, comes up again. These ideas we need to remember. He is the One we cling to. He is the constant One. He is the One that is going to help us and save us. We need to remember Him and make Him the focus of *everything*. And, especially on the Sabbath day, we are to remember this, and stop doing our things and do His things because He is the focus of that day.

Added to this fact that He is the Creator of all things, He far outstrips anything that we could ever do or anything we could even think of doing. There is this dichotomy, this difference, between God and us. We need to remember that.

Therefore, as the psalmist says, He is worthy of worship, praise, and obedience on the Sabbath, during our conversion, and during the Millennium. He is changeless, His law is

changeless, His way is changeless, and He is worthy of praise forever.

Now the idea, as I just mentioned, is that He is the primary focus of our Sabbath worship—just as He is our focus in our conversion and just as He will be the focus in the Millennium. Everything goes back to Him. Without Him we are nothing. Without Him we can go nowhere. Without Him there is no goal.

So make Him the center of your life, and especially make Him the center of your Sabbath day. Because that is what God told us to do: “Stop doing your things, start doing My things, and be at rest.” So everything revolves around God. We need to make sure we remember this every Sabbath.

He says here in verse 7: “We are the people of His pasture, and the sheep of His hand.” Right after he mentions how great God is and how we owe everything to Him and we need to praise Him, he turns to us and says “Look, this great God chose us as His sheep. Can you believe it? He put us in His pasture.” And the other one, it was in the house. He planted us in the house. He planted us in His courts.

But in this one the metaphor changes. We are now the sheep under His care, in His flock. And it is very reminiscent of what we see in John 10. This is the idea, I think, that the psalmist is trying to get us to understand, that we are now under the Great Shepherd, Jesus Christ, and He is going to take care of us. He is going to lead us. We could not be in better hands—God’s hands. Can you believe it?

**John 10:7-16** Then Jesus said to them again, “Most assuredly, I say to you, I am the door of the sheep. All who ever came before Me are thieves and robbers, but the sheep did not hear them. I am the door. If anyone enters by Me, he will be saved, and will go in and out and find pasture. The thief does not come except to steal, and to kill, and to destroy. I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly. I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd gives His life for the sheep. But he who is a hireling and not the shepherd, one who does not own the sheep, sees the wolf coming and leaves the sheep and flees; and the wolf catches the sheep and scatters them. The hireling flees because he is a hireling and does not care about the sheep. I am the good shepherd; and I know My sheep, and am known by My own. As the Father knows Me, even so I know the Father; and I lay down My life for the sheep. And other sheep I have which are not of this fold; them also I must bring, and they will hear My voice; and there will be one flock and one shepherd.”

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**John 10:27-30** “My sheep hear My voice [Right here, you see this?], and I know them, and they follow Me. And I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; neither shall anyone snatch them out of My hand. My Father, who has given them to Me, is greater than all; and no one is able to snatch them out of My Father’s hand. I and My Father are one.”

“We are of one mind on this. We are united. We are going to take care of you. Remember that.” So this is the kind of thing Psalm 95 is getting us to understand.

God is awesome, He is great, He does all these wonderful things. And you know what? We are His sheep, we are in His pasture, we have the greatest care there is. He is going to lead us where He wants us to go. And then he says, “Today, if you will hear His voice, do not harden your hearts as in the rebellion. Don’t follow the bad example of Israel. Don’t take for granted what you’ve been given. Don’t take that great God, who is going to give you everything you need, for granted because God wants you in His rest. But if you do that, He won’t let you in.”

Notice how strong that is: “So I swore in My wrath: ‘They shall not enter My rest.’ ” “I won’t have any sheep here who won’t follow Me, who won’t hear My voice, who won’t obey what I have said.”

So though it is a wonderful thing what God has done for us, we have to follow through. That is what he is trying to tell us: God picked us as His sheep. We need to respond to the Shepherd. We need to take this as a great warning, that we need to be careful in following our God into His rest. We need to strap down, buckle in; the days are not getting any better. We need to be ready.

I do not need to go to Hebrews 4:6-10. All I wanted to pick up there is the fact that Paul says in that section that that rest is still future. It is still before us. God still has work to do and we still have work to do. If you look in your spiritual mirror, you probably figured out that you also have work to do. So that time of ceasing our work and being able to rest (the sabbatismos, the anapausis) is still future. We still have something to work for. We are still in process. We cannot let down. Do not harden your heart as in the rebellion.

Now the irony of entering God’s rest is that it is a time of ceaseless work. What makes the difference is the kind of work. We put away our work and we start doing God’s work. We stop doing our things, we start doing His things. That is the rest of God.

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I will also just mention Ezekiel 37:21-29. What it indicates there is that God is going to raise Israel up in the second resurrection and Israel will be the first order of business. You could also apply this to the Millennium as well because this will happen in the Millennium. God will bring back Israel in the second exodus, and Israel, at that time, will also be our first order of business.

It will be our job, under Jesus Christ, to bring the descendants of the children of Israel into His rest. Those ones that failed to come into the physical rest will be brought into His rest by our work under Christ. It will be our job, after we have come into His rest, to bring the rest of the world into His rest.

Big job, but a glorious job, to do the work of God. We will welcome them freely into God's rest until the whole world is converted and using God's Spirit to live in peace and harmony.

And now you know the rest of the story.