

## The Sabbath: Rest

Shabbat, Nuach, and Sabbatismos

Richard T. Ritenbaugh

Given 12-Oct-17; Sermon #FT17-14

The United States of America is a nation that prides itself on its self-sufficiency and hard work. We put in more hours at the office or wherever we happen to be: the factory or whatnot, than just about any other nation in the Western world. We are taking fewer vacation hours than those same nations and generally putting our nose to the grindstone an awful lot.

The workweek is supposed to be forty hours, but fifty, sixty, or more hours is not unheard of, especially in some of the fast-paced areas of the economy, such as in corporations where one needs to impress the boss by working long hours on the job—whether we get paid for them or not—if one wants to climb that ladder of success.

Our television commercials pitch this hardworking persona that we Americans like to brag about. Our work vehicles like Ford trucks are built *Ford Tough* and *The Best Never Rests*. Chevies are the *heartbeat* of the United States of America and are *like a rock*. They can haul tons of material without strain because of the massive amount of torque their powerful engines can produce. You can abuse them over rough terrain, and they will hold up under the toughest conditions: rain, heat, cold, snow, ice, windstorms, hailstorms, floods, and oncoming traffic. They will always be there to get our work done, the very important and vital work that we do.

It seems like that this nation has taken the Protestant work ethic to extremes at times, to the point that after we asked somebody his or her name, we say, “What do you do? What kind of work do you do?”

We tend to self-identify with our work: I am a preacher, I am an editor, I am a writer, I am a foreman on a construction crew, I am a farmer, and the list goes on and this is what we think of ourselves as. Our careers seem to be everything to us. It is not just for the money: We like the money. We like the things money can buy, but we like the self-worth that we feel because of a job well done.

We seem to be: We are what we do. But when that work is over, after our ten-hour day slaving in the steel mill or whatever it is, after we have our forty-five hours plus the long commute home, the rest is sweet is not it? We loosen our tie or take off our work boots. We sit back in our favorite easy chair and take a swig of beer and just relax for a couple of hours; do not we?

A day of hard work demands time of total relaxation and rest does not it? We would think so; but in reality, we often have to come home to other work that must be done because we went to work for the boss man. Upon returning home, we get the mower out of the shed and mow the lawn, we fix the faucet; change the light fixture; take out the trash; work on the car; pay the bills; do the taxes; buy the groceries; take the kids out; go to the store for food, clothing, school supplies, and whatever it happens to be; vacuum the carpet and on and on it goes: The work never seems to end.

I have to ask the question: Do we really have a rest if we are that busy working? Is there actually any time to relax? Even when we go on vacation? We are a phone call, text, or email message away from the office; from getting back to work. “Honey, just go down to the pool, take the kids; I just need to

check my emails just in case.” “Honey, I’m sorry the boss asked me to call on a vendor while we’re down here. I’m sorry. I let it leak that we were coming here, and he said this guy needs to be checked in on so we can keep the account. It will only take an hour.”

Or “I should probably check back in the office with the team just to make sure that they called that particular person that we’ve been trying to get this account with. I can’t really trust them to do it; they’re just lazy and they won’t do anything. So I ought to take care of it myself even though we’re here to have fun and relax. But let me just check in. That order needs to go to Acme Widgets.”

So even during our vacations, the specter of work hangs around like a cloud over us. And it keeps us from truly resting. Let us go to Genesis chapter three. God warned us that it was going to be this way. This is the curse on Adam, after eating of the forbidden fruit and it is pretty much all about work and death.

**Genesis 3:17-19** Then to Adam He said, “Because you have heeded the voice of your wife, and have eaten from the tree of which I commanded you, saying, ‘You shall not eat of it’: “Cursed is the ground for your sake; in toil you shall eat of it all the days of your life. Both thorns and thistles it shall bring forth for you, and you shall eat the herb of the field. In the sweat of your face you shall eat bread till you return to the ground. For out of it you were taken; for dust you are, and to dust you shall return.”

Because of Adam’s and Eve’s sin, the life of men and women is one of constant, unending, hard, and oftentimes unfulfilling work. The same old drudgery day after day when comparing this with how easy Adam and Eve had it in the Garden: fruit everywhere and hardly any work to be done. I am sure there was going to be work: trimming the hedges, mowing the lawn, and making sure that everything was cultivated nice. Eventually, they would have had houses and what not to keep up, and obviously, there would have been work to do.

Nonetheless, it would have been a lot easier and a more pleasurable type of work. Additionally, there would have been rest and relaxation in this beautiful garden that they would live in, and they would have been satisfied. But since then, sin upon sin in this world has made work drudgery. It is fatiguing. It is hard. It is something we have to drag ourselves out of bed every morning because we are so tired from the previous day’s work and all the days before that but we have to do it, so we get up and we do it, and we do it all day, and then we come home and do it all evening.

Even our rest, in terms of sleep or any kind of rest and relaxation that we happen to get, is a brief but pleasurable interlude before plunging back into work again. It just never ends.

Let us go to Ecclesiastes chapter two. Here, Solomon gives his conclusions about work. Remember, chapter two has a lot to do with all the mighty works that Solomon did; all the great things that he planned: all the gardens, all the buildings, and all the zoos that he had while he was king in Jerusalem. Here we read his conclusion starting in verse eighteen:

**Ecclesiastes 2:18-21** Then I hated all my labor in which I had toiled under the sun, because I must leave it to the man who will come after me. And who knows whether he will be wise or a fool? [He actually turned out to be quite a fool.] Yet he will rule over all my labor in which I toiled and in which I have shown myself wise under the sun. This also is vanity. Therefore I turned my heart and despaired of all the labor in which I had toiled under the sun. For there is a man whose labor is with wisdom, knowledge, and

skill [Hopefully our labor is that way.]; yet he must leave his heritage to a man who has not labored for it . . .

It goes on to another generation and they just inherit it and they do not know all the blood, sweat, and tears that went into it all: as he says here all the thought, wisdom, knowledge, and skill.

**Ecclesiastes 2:21** . . . This also is vanity and a great evil.

Here, we work all our lifetime to accomplish something and then we die. What kind of rest, relaxation, or satisfaction is in that? Solomon calls that an evil.

**Ecclesiastes 2:22-24** For what has man for all his labor, and for the striving of his heart with which he has toiled under the sun? [There is really no reward in all of that.] For all his days are sorrowful, and his work grievous; even in the night his heart takes no rest. This also is vanity. [He makes a conclusion here.]. Nothing is better for a man than that he should eat and drink, and that his soul should enjoy good in his labor. This also, I saw, was from the hand of God.

So even though there is no true accomplishment in one's life, in terms of not only accomplishing it, but enjoying it forever, God has given us this labor and exercise to do. It is from His hand so that we can learn something very important from it.

Work is grievous, and even our sleep is not truly restful—it is a waste, it seems; so we might as well just enjoy what we can and think about what God wants us to get out of it.

Let us turn this toward us a bit more personally. We can thank God, though, that He has promised His people real rest, true rest.

Think about that, “My presence will go with you, and I will give you rest.” “I will give you rest.” We, as called and converted sons and daughters of God, have God's presence within us right now. God walks with us every step of the way and we can be grateful that He is fulfilling His promise in us right now.

Do you feel rest because you are one of God's chosen ones? Does that give you a feeling, a sense, an understanding of rest, confidence, vitality, hope, pleasure, expectation, and of wonder? It should.

If we let God, we can experience the rest of God, in type, right now as much as we can as physical human beings. Each Sabbath, we observe a foreshadowing of that greater rest that God will give His people and we have already begun to enter it through our conversion.

Speaking of rest and the Sabbath, this sermon will have very deep connections with the first one I gave on the first holy day of the Feast of Tabernacles. So, we will be going over some of the same ground in this sermon. It will lead to a little bit different conclusion.

Let us go back to Genesis 2 and pick up that section of Scripture where God rested on the seventh day, and lay the groundwork for this again:

**Genesis 2:1-3** Thus the heavens and the earth, and all the host of them, were finished. And on the seventh day 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.

Chapter 1 described God's creative work in the physical creation over six days and on the seventh day, He rested. Thus we have the first allusion to the day of God being the anti-type of the seventh day. God's day is the seventh day after the six days; the Sabbath is a type of rest—God's rest.

This forms the basis, if you will, for the belief that man has six thousand years in which to go his own way and then the last thousand years will be God's time to show man how to live properly. This is based on "a thousand years is as a day in your sight." Each of the six days of creation is physical in nature, and therefore the six thousand years of man will be mostly physical in nature, ruled by our carnality and our flesh.

But then the seventh day, the Sabbath day, the Millennium, as we call it, the thousand years in which God and Jesus Christ Himself will be ruling, will be a day that is concentrating on spiritual things primarily, There will be physical things done but the spiritual will be the predominant concept, if you will, and the attitude, outlook, and zeitgeist will not be like it is today.

Let us go to Revelation 20 and see the fulfillment of these in prophecy. We are going to both look at the Millennium itself and the White Throne Judgment. Verse 4 is talking about God's people who have been resurrected and are ruling with Christ:

**Revelation 20:4-5** And I saw thrones, and they sat on them, and judgment was committed to them. Then I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded for their witness to Jesus and for the word of God, who had not worshiped the beast or his image, and had not received his mark on their foreheads or on their hands. And they lived and reigned with Christ for a thousand years. But the rest of the dead did not live again until the thousand years were finished.

This is a parenthetical statement saying that this time is a little bit after this, and then it goes back and says:

**Revelation 20:5-6** . . . This [what was said in verse four] is the first resurrection. Blessed and holy is he who has part in the first resurrection. Over such the second death has no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with Him a thousand years.

So that is a little foretaste and a bit of insight into what your life will be like after Jesus Christ returns. We will skip over Satan's rebellion and go down to verse 11.

**Revelation 20:11-15** Then I saw a great white throne and Him who sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away. And there was found no place for them. And I saw the dead, small and great, standing before God, and books were opened. And another book was opened, which is the Book of Life. And the dead were judged according to their works, by the things which were written in the books. The sea gave up the dead who were in it, and Death and Hades delivered up the dead who were in them.

And they were judged, each one according to his works. Then Death and Hades were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. And anyone not found written in the Book of Life was cast into the lake of fire.

**Revelation 21:1-7** Now I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away. Also there was no more sea. Then I, John, saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from heaven saying, "Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people. God Himself will be with them and be their God. And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away." Then He who sat on the throne said, "Behold, I make all things new." And He said to me, "Write, for these words are true and faithful." And He said to me, "It is done! I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End. I will give of the fountain of the water of life freely to him who thirsts. He who overcomes shall inherit all things, and I will be his God and he shall be My son."

The church of God has taught for years that these verses fulfill what is observed each year during the Feast of Tabernacles and the eighth day in the plan of God. These holy times are linked together, the eighth day tacked onto the end of the Feast of Tabernacles.

In the Bible, we do not have a great deal of explanation about what the eighth day is all about. But we understand it through prophecy, through little hints that are given here and there talking about this Great White Throne Judgment period, and indeed eternity after that.

Once the seventh day begins in the Millennium, then that rest just continues right through the Great White Throne Judgment, and it really takes hold once all of humanity is either converted or cast into the Lake of Fire into the second death. And then from eternity on, we enjoy God's rest.

This passage here gives us the clearest explanation of what the eighth day foreshadows. It does foreshadow the great final judgment of mankind. It does foreshadow the destruction of the last enemy, which is death, as mentioned in I Corinthians 15. But it also includes the new heaven and a new earth.

As I said, in terms of God's rest, once God's Kingdom is established, the rest never ends. As a matter of fact, God's rest and His Kingdom are nearly equivalent. They are our Promised Land, if you will.

We can experience God's rest right now because we have already been translated into the Kingdom of the Son of His love. But it is a foretaste of what it will actually be in its fullness. As I already mentioned, Exodus 33:14 says that God's presence is with us, and through His Spirit in us, God will give us rest.

Let us go to Psalm 95. I am driving towards something here; believe me, just stay with me. In this psalm, there are three settings contemplated by the author, or at least by God. First setting: the author is thinking about the Sabbath. Second setting: He is also thinking about our own particular day of salvation: his day, our day, or whatever time God calls us. Third setting: the time of God's reign; we could call it the Millennium and beyond, His Kingdom.

**Psalm 95:1-5** 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. [Do we not do that on the Sabbath day?] For the Lord is the great God, and 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.

It talks here about creation, so we are pulling in all kinds of different ideas here; not only about the creation but also God's sovereignty and His work.

**Psalm 95:6-7** 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 . . .

It comes around to us and mentions our prayers: Let us keep this in the back of our mind. God gives this run-up to us: We should praise and worship God for what He is and for all the things He has done. Among all the things that God has done for each and every one of us, the most important one, perhaps, is the fact that God made us one of His sheep and placed us in His flock.

This is the attitude we are supposed to have: an attitude of praise, worship, and prayer to this great and wonderful God. He makes the hammer come down on the anvil here in verse 7, "today." Remember, I said there were three times that God is talking about here: Today as in the Sabbath, today as in our time of salvation, and today as in the millennial period and beyond.

**Psalm 95:7-11** . . . 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.' "

Psalm 95 started out quite hopeful, joyful, and expectant; then, between verse seven and the end of verse eleven, it becomes a very severe warning.

This is where you are. You are at this point. You have been called. You have been given all of this information, knowledge, understanding, and wisdom. You have seen God's works. You have seen what God can do and where He is sending us and where He is trying to get us to.

What are we going to do about it? What is our response? How are we going to react? Are we going to be like the Israelites and just copy their horrible record of sin and letting down? To the point where God said to Moses: I would like to make a nation out of *you*?

We have here a tremendous warning from God that if we follow Israel's terrible example of disobedience, we are going to end up just like they did. And how did they end up? Dead, their bodies strewn in the wilderness.

When we reached verse 11, we actually saw there an idea that had never occurred before in the Bible up to this point: God calling the Promise Land His rest: "They shall not enter My rest." God had never called it *My rest* before.

It is the Hebrew word, *menuchah*. *Menuchah* means a “resting place” or even “a time of rest.” I pulled out this material again from a word I covered in a sermon that I gave sixteen years ago during the Feast of Tabernacles.

*Menuchah* derives from the Hebrew verb *nuach* which means to rest, to repose, to settle down, to be quiet, or to remain. Both Hebrew words *nuach* and *menuchah* refer to the peace, the quiet, and the settling down one would expect to do after a long migration to a new land.

We go for forty years, and I think it is time to have a little bit of rest, is it not? We have been walking all this time. God has been doing all this leading and all these works. We have been trudging gratefully behind Him. We finally get to the Promised Land and, after that long trek, we could expect to be able to rest.

Let us go back to the book of Genesis and see the first time the Hebrew word *nuach* is used. This verse will give us a better understanding of what the underlying sense of *nuach* is.

When a word is used for the first time in the Bible, it is called the Law of First Mention. When a word is used for the first time, it is oftentimes very descriptive of how it is going to be used in the rest of the Bible. So we have an example here in the word *nuach*.

In Genesis 8:1, as the Flood was ending (I always loved this verse), God remembered Noah, his family, and all the animals that were with him in the ark and brought them all to a place they could get out!

**Genesis 8:1-4** Then God remembered Noah, and every living thing, and all the animals that were with him in the ark. And God made a wind to pass over the earth, and the waters subsided. The fountains of the deep and the windows of heaven were also stopped, and the rain from heaven was restrained. And the waters receded continually from the earth. At the end of the hundred and fifty days the waters decreased. Then the ark rested [*nuach*] in the seventh month, the seventeenth day of the month, on the mountains of Ararat.

The ark rested (*nuach*): The ark rested or settled down on the mountains of Ararat. Think of this in terms of what happened during the Flood. People entered into the ark, God sealed them in, rain was coming down; the fountains of the deep opened up, and the whole earth was covered with water. The mountains were underwater as this little tiny ship was on top of the water, going here and there, all over the face of the earth, and bobbing for a hundred and fifty days. It ended up being a lot more because of all the time it took for the waters to recede and the ark to settle into place where it needed to be. Think about the sloshing of the planet as all this water was on there. The ark was being driven here and there. Probably like a cruise liner caught in a storm, just like a little bob on the top of the sea, constantly full of motion. It never stopped; even though God had designed the ark to be a perfect floating device in this kind of condition so that it could withstand all that and save the people that were in the boat. With all kinds of forces and energies working, there was activity all the time—up, down, in and out. And as the ark was constantly moving, there was a great deal of things going on all the time.

We now reach Genesis 8:4 when the ark finally rested. We could say that the ark came to a permanent and welcome condition of stillness after its necessary but turbulent motion throughout the entire time of the Flood.

The ark had fulfilled a great purpose. It had done a first-class job of protecting all those people and animals. But it had to go through a great deal; it had to endure all that time, all that water, all that motion; and then it came down on the mountains of Ararat. It was still, its purpose was complete.

The flood had stopped; the waters had receded and abated; the danger was passed, and now the ark could rest from its labors.

This should help us understand what *nuach* is all about. The idea is of resting after work and a great deal of activity, but it is a lot more. Let us go back to Genesis 2. It is not the word *nuach* but the word *rest* that appears in the following verse:

**Genesis 2:2** And on the seventh day [the Sabbath day] God ended His work which He had done, and He rested on the seventh day from all His work which He had done.

Compare this to the ark. God had been doing a great deal of activity and work on the six days, and when He came to the seventh day, He settled down and did not do any work anymore. But *nuach* is not used here. When Moses wrote this down, he did *not* say that God *nuach*!

God did not do anything in terms of *nuach*. Moses uses the verb *shabbat* here. In the previous sermon, we saw that *shabbat* does not mean "rest," at least not its primary meaning. The verb *shabbat* really means to stop; to cease, or to desist from something.

So, here we have God stopping. That is what the focus is on here. God had been working, and now He stopped. God desisted from His labors. He ceased them. This is what Moses wants us to understand when we read Genesis 2. God stopped—He stopped from doing what He had been doing. That does not mean that He did not start doing something else, but the physical work that He had done in creation was ended. It stopped, and He stopped applying Himself that way.

We know this because God does not need to rest from labor. He does not need to repose because He is fatigued. God does not become tired or weary from work. We need to understand that both verbs *nuach* and *shabbat* are similar. The difference is that *shabbat* comes before *nuach*. To rest, *nuach*, occurs as a result of *shabbat*, or as a result of ceasing, stopping, or desisting.

We first *shabbat*, and then as a result of *shabbat*, we *nuach*. Ceasing is what we do on the Sabbath as a result of obeying God's command and keeping His example, thus facilitating the condition of rest.

When we stop our work, we can actually have the quiet, the stillness, the peace that *nuach* brings. We cease from work on the Sabbath day. We stop doing our own things. We stop saying our own words. We stop doing our own deeds and eventually learn to do God's words, thoughts, and deeds like we saw in Isaiah 58:13-14. We cease doing our ways, our pleasures, and our words, and we do God's ways, God's pleasures, and God's words. I think we understand now.

Let's turn to Exodus 21 and look at an interesting little tidbit. Same author—God first of all and Moses who, in the context of the creation week, refers to the Sabbath command.

**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 [*nuach*] the seventh day. Therefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath [*Shabbat*] day and hallowed it.

Back in Genesis 2:2, we saw that Moses says that God rested and used the verb *shabbat*. We might think that in Exodus 20, Moses is referring to Genesis 2:2 and using the same word, but is he? No, he is not. Moses did not write that God *shabbat* but that God *nuach*. God rested on the seventh day. So in this commandment—at least in part of it—God is not focusing on stopping but on *resting*.

Some of us might think that the result of stopping *nuach* and *shabbat* are synonymous, and both words mean the same thing: to rest. But we should not make that assumption because the difference should make us think about something else.

It should lead us in a slightly different direction. Both Hebrew words overlap. There are similarities between *shabbat* and *nuach*, but here, in this part of the commandment, Moses, under God's inspiration, emphasizes the *nuach* part of it—the result of stopping.

How do we know these are not exact synonyms? We know because God provided us, if you will, a translation. The reason being the apostle Paul gave us an understanding of how these two words work together.

Let's go back to Hebrews 3. I hope this is not too technical, as I am trying to make it as simple as possible. Hearing it makes it sometimes a little difficult for those of you who are more visually oriented and prefer seeing or reading it, but it is a very interesting concept.

Hebrews 3 begins with a quotation of the end of Psalm 95 because Paul (or the author of Hebrews) is trying to get us to understand this particular concept.

**Hebrews 3:7-12** Therefore, as the Holy Spirit says: “Today, if you will hear His voice, do not harden your hearts as in the rebellion, in the day of trial in the wilderness, where your fathers tested Me, proved Me, and saw My works forty years. Therefore I was angry with that generation, and said, ‘They always go astray in their heart, and they have not known My ways.’ So I swore in My wrath, ‘They shall not enter My rest.’” Beware, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God; but exhort one another daily, while it is called “Today.”

Remember what the author of Psalm 95 was referring to? He was referring to three different things: First, the Sabbath and our day of salvation; second, the Millennium; and third, the time beyond that.

**Hebrews 3:13-19** But exhort one another daily while it is called “Today,” lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin. For we have become partakers of Christ if we hold the beginning of our confidence steadfast to the end, while it is said: “Today, if you will hear His voice, do not harden your hearts as in the rebellion.” For who, having heard, rebelled? Indeed, was it not all who came out of Egypt, led by Moses? Now with whom was He angry forty years? Was it not with those who sinned, whose corpses fell in the wilderness? And to whom did He swear that they would not enter His rest, but to those who did not obey? So we see that they could not enter in because of unbelief.

**Hebrews 4:1-3** Therefore, since a promise remains of entering His rest, let us fear lest any of you seem to have come short of it. 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:

“So I swore in My wrath, ‘They shall not enter My rest,’” although the works were finished from the foundation of the world.

We need to understand that we have been moving along in God's plan, and He has put us in it. And God has given us an even better opportunity than what He gave to the Israelites because we have faith.

**Hebrews 4:4-5** 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” [Paul goes straight back to Genesis 2 and Exodus 20]; and again, in this place: “They shall not enter My rest.”

He keeps pounding away at this warning, even though we have been given all of these wonderful gifts and all of these helps, we could still fall away. We can still fail to enter His rest.

**Hebrews 4:6** Since therefore it remains that some must enter it [there is a group who will enter], and those to whom it was first preached [children of Israel] 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.”

This is very current, very present—today, *today*—understand what God is saying here: Do not let it go to tomorrow. *Today!*

**Hebrews 4:8** For if Joshua had given them rest, then He would not afterward have spoken of another day.

David is meant here. David was post-Joshua. So Joshua, obviously, had not accompanied them into that rest.

**Hebrews 4:9-10** There remains therefore a rest for the people of God. [It is still out there.] For he who has entered His rest has himself also ceased from his works as God did from His.

All of these ideas are being put into a mixture here so that we can understand: The Sabbath, our day of salvation, and the future rest of God in the Kingdom of God from the Millennium onward. Remember, we are talking about these two words being synonymous.

Except for one verse, in Hebrews 4:9, every time Paul (or whoever the author of Hebrews may have been) uses the word *rest*, he uses the Greek word *katapausis*, which does not mean to rest but “to cease, to stop, or to end.” In this case, Hebrews 4:9, Paul uses the Greek equivalent for *shabbat*. Had Paul wanted to say “rest,” as in the Hebrew word *nuach*, he would have used a very similar Greek word but with a different prefix: That word is *anapausis*. In Greek *anapausis* means “rest, repose, or comfort.”

We just saw that these two Greek words are very similar and have the same root, *pauo*. The base meaning of this word is “to cease, to leave off, or to stop.” Our word *pause* derives from the same Greek word, *pauo*. A pause is a brief stop. We pause or stop a tape player for a small amount of time, hit the play button, and the tape starts playing again.

Notice that these two Greek words, *katapausis* and *anapausis*, are spelled very similarly. The difference, however, is in the prefix *kata* on the one and *ana* on the other: *kata* and *ana*. Believe it or not, but these two Greek prefixes are opposites of one another: The prefix *kata* means "down" and the prefix *ana*, of course, means "up." Consequently, the words must have different meanings.

It is possible to combine those two prefixes "down" and "up" with the same word or thing, and that is exactly what we have here: *katapausis* is literally a down-cessation or a down-stoppage, and *anapausis* an up-cessation or an up-stoppage.

*Katapausis* is negative or neutral in tone. When we *katapausis* or down-stop, we are stopping an activity, and the activity ends. Contrary to *katapausis*, *anapausis* is positive: We stop-up; it is an up-stoppage, and that is why it means "rest" because rest is positive, rest is good, rest is comforting. We relax when we rest, and that is the reason why it is more positive.

Let us check *anapausis* in a couple of scriptures. Turn to Matthew 11 where Jesus uses *anapausis* in talking about taking His yoke upon ourselves.

**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 for your souls."

We will find *anapausis*, an up-cessation, an up-stoppage for our souls. It is a very positive thing that Jesus Christ is giving us here. If we are just like Him, if we do the work, we take His yoke upon ourselves, and we go His way, it is going to end in a very positive experience, a rest for our souls as Jesus Christ says here.

Let us look at another example in the book of Revelation.

**Revelation 4:8** The four living creatures, each having six wings, were full of eyes around and within. And they do not rest day or night, saying: "Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, who was and is and is to come!"

The four living creatures never stop. They never take this rest where they just do not do anything; or where they are in repose, they are always busy with activity.

Back to Hebrews chapter four. We saw as we went through this that Paul (or the author of Hebrews), is proving throughout these first ten verses that the Israelites, entering the Promised Land, did not fulfill God's promise of rest. The children of Israel, at least their descendants or next generation, did enter the land of Canaan. They did cross over the Jordan River. The waters were pulled back and they went over on dry land. They did enter the Promised Land and camped in Gilgal. They entered the land that God had said He would lead them to. But then what happened? Did the children of Israel ever rest? What did they do right after the circumcision of that generation?

The first thing the children of Israel did was to go to war. Is that restful? They had wars; they had droughts; they had famine and pestilence. They had great conquering armies coming through: once, twice, three times whether it was Egypt, Assyria, Babylon, Persia, or whoever. The Greeks came through as well and so did the Romans, but that came a little later after their time.

But even so, there was no rest. God put the children of Israel in a land that was a crossroads between Europe, Asia, and Africa; and everybody was moving. There was no settling down, no rest, no

repose, and worst of all, and one of the real points that I am getting to here, the children of Israel never ceased, and never stopped from their own works.

What were the children of Israel's works? Sin and more sin, transgression, trespass, doing bad things, evil and wickedness; a lot of idolatry and huge amounts of Sabbath-breaking. All those things were the children of Israel's works and they never ceased from them. They never experienced the result of ceasing from their works, which would have been rest, repose, quiet, settling down, and being still.

Paul then concludes, "Look at the children of Israel. How many of them died? All of them! They did not enter the rest. Since God's promise is sure, this must mean that this rest is still future."

In Hebrews 4:3-4, we saw that Paul refers to the creation and God's rest on the seventh day and creating the Sabbath. This proves, if you will, that the rest Paul is addressing here is not from fatigue or due to the fact that we have done some work because God is never weary.

Had it been fatigue or God allegedly resting because of work, Paul would have had to use another example. Since God never gets weary, He needs no rest, so this rest must be something other than relaxation or taking our shoes off after a long day of hard work.

In Hebrews 4, Paul reminds us that God stopped or God *katapausis*. Paul uses the Greek word *katapausis* for God stopping. That is a down-cessation, God's down-cessation. God stopped His creative efforts on the physical side of things. As we already saw last time, God stopped His physical work and picked up a spiritual work on the Sabbath. God ceased working to set us an example of what we have to do. It is an example of what we have to do on the Sabbath: We too have to cease working.

Paul is telling us very pointedly here that the future rest, the one that has not been entered into fully yet, contains elements of the Sabbath rest: a very simple point showing that stopping from physical works is a large part of it.

One of the major things Paul points out here is in its full completion, God's rest will feature a complete cessation of human works—physical works, works of the flesh, and works of our carnality. The main attribute of God's future rest is the fact that the works of the flesh and the works of the human mind, driven by carnality, will have stopped and ceased.

We could go to II Peter 3:13 where God says that *no* unrighteousness will dwell in the new heavens and the new earth: In God's future rest, unrighteousness will have stopped.

I should also mention that once human works will have been eliminated true rest can be experienced. This will result in the condition we already read in Revelation chapter twenty-one. These are all the things that are going to stop:

**Revelation 21:4** And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death [What is death the result of? Sin. That will have stopped, and so, because there is no more sin.], nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain, for the former things [the works of the flesh, the works of carnality, and all those other physical works] have passed away."

**Revelation 21:8** But the cowardly, unbelieving, abominable, murderers, sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars shall have their part in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death.”

All of those things will have been put away:

**Revelation 21:27** But there shall by no means enter it anything that defiles, or causes an abomination or a lie, but only those who are written in the Lamb’s Book of Life.

All of those bad things will have stopped. They will have ceased and come to an end. It is that *katapausis* that we were talking about—the stopping, the cessation, they are done. What will then be the result of this? *Sabbatismos* or *nuach*: real true rest, real relaxation, real peace and stillness.

In Hebrews 4:9, we come across the Greek word *sabbatismos*: “There remains therefore a rest [*sabbatismos*] for the people of God.” It still belongs to the future. When we consider our own lives, have our own human carnal works stopped yet? It is still future, but we are working on it, right? That is good.

Paul turns the Hebrew word *shabbat* into a Greek noun, *sabbatismos*, which does a couple of things. *Sabbatismos* links the weekly Sabbath with the future rest of God, and it also characterizes the future of God’s rest, the Kingdom of God, as a time of cessation from activities, as on the weekly Sabbath, and the doing of godly activities.

Paul is cluing us in on what the goal of the Millennial period is, and that is to change the focus of the entire world—changing mankind’s focus from indulging in ungodly and carnal activities in rebellion against God to doing godly, positive, eternal works out of love for God and for fellow man.

This should give us a clue about what we should be doing on the Sabbath day. To summarize, God’s rest begins with the conversion of humanity. That is the goal in the Millennial period which makes the other rest [*sabbatismos*] possible.

Once people stop or cease from the rampant sinning, repent, and become converted, then the rest can begin. Once people stop doing those human works, they can begin to rest. The goal of the Millennium, if you will, is to get all the billions of humanity, however many there will be, to the eighth day, as it were. The goal is to get everybody to become members of the God Family. The goal is to have everyone be resurrected eternal and to enjoy the rest that we can have with God throughout all of time.

Everybody will need to come to the point where they will have ceased from their works, just like God ceased from His physical works, and get them to a position where they are truly keeping the Sabbath. Their life will become an ongoing observance of the keeping of the Sabbath. They will have ceased from their physical works. They will have ceased from their carnal works, and then true rest can begin.

That true peace, that ultimate peace and quiet that we want, that ultimate rest and repose, can only happen when there is universal righteousness. I am talking about everything, everyone, and without any unrighteousness whatsoever—not even a *memory* of unrighteousness. We will have true rest in

the entire universe, when everyone is on the same godly path. Only then will we have true rest in the entire universe, and that's the reason why it still belongs to the future.

Think about it. What will it be like for everyone to live in the light of God? Everyone we meet will be fully righteous, not a speck of sin in them. What will it be like to be able to trust everybody we meet because they will never lie to us? They will never give us a cross word. They will not gossip about us or slander our name amidst their friends.

What will it be like never to hear of war or some mass shooting; or disease running rampant; or babies going hungry; or even natural disasters killing hundreds or thousands or millions of people? What will it be like? We will never have to worry about all that. What will it be like not to worry about our possessions being stolen, leaving our car unlocked, leaving our house unlocked, leaving things anywhere and no one coming to take them?

What will it be like not to have to worry about fraud and other people cheating; or about injustice in the world? Everybody will be treated with equity. What will it be like to have no crime blotter and no police blotter to put all those crimes on? What will it be like to have no more wanted posters; no more mug shots; no more prisons; no more executions?

We have no idea what it will be like. We cannot even conceive of it. We cannot even have the faintest inkling of what this kind of life would be like. Our minds, our bodies, and our whole environment are so infused with sin and its results that we cannot even imagine it. We can try, but the fullness will be so much better than we could ever imagine.

What does all that I said today mean in terms of our weekly Sabbath-keeping? Because this is where I have been heading this whole time. My intent, in these three sermons that I have given over this Feast, has been to give us something to do on the Sabbath that is going to help us walk better with God better and lead us to this rest.

What does this mean, what we have gone over today, in terms of our weekly Sabbath-keeping? The author of Hebrew says very clearly that there remains a keeping of the Sabbath for the people of God. That is what *sabbatismos* implies. It not only applies to the future rest, but it also means that we must continue to keep the Sabbath. God's example has not gone away. God's commandment has not gone away. We still have to keep the Sabbath because of its ability to help us in our relationship with God and our walk with Him.

We saw in the first sermon, "The Sabbath: Creation," that the Sabbath was a memorial of creation; making God's created works a major focus of the Sabbath day. We also saw what God is doing within us to make us into a new man or a new woman and to transform us into His sons and daughters.

We saw in the second sermon, "The Sabbath: Redemption," that the Sabbath is a memorial of our redemption by God from our personal Egypt. God redeemed us from this world. That redemption includes all the works, all the providential things, the blessings, and the benefits that He continues to bestow upon us. We focus on God and all of the things that He is doing.

God wants us to think about His works—remember when we read Psalm 95 that those Israelites *saw His works*, they went awry and ended up dead because they did not make the connection. We have to make the connection between God's works and what He is doing for us to bring us to salvation. That is why we need to focus on God and His benefits on the Sabbath.

In this sermon, finally, we have the Sabbath as a type of God's future rest, which is essentially the fullness of the Kingdom of God. This should make the Kingdom of God our focus on the Sabbath day. But we have not reached it yet, and that is our problem. We are still here in this world. We still have our physical baggage. We still have our carnality. We still have Satan out there trying to trip us up at every turn.

What do we do? What are we supposed to be doing? Paul says in Philippians 2,

**Philippians 2:12** Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling.

He goes on to verse thirteen and tells us that it is “God who works in you.” Finally, we find out with both verses that we are to be working, and God is going to be working with us to bring us to salvation. So, what do we do on the Sabbath day to ensure that we will enter His rest, His Kingdom?

In the next couple of paragraphs of Hebrews 4, the author of Hebrews provides the answer. Paul had just finished in verse 9 saying that “there remains a rest for the people of God.” He also tells us that the person who enters his rest (verse 10) is doing what God did: ceasing from his works. He is telling us that we need to cease from these physical works, but then in verse 11 he tells us how:

**Hebrews 4:11-16** Let us therefore be diligent to enter that rest, lest anyone fall after the same example of disobedience. For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. And there is no creature hidden from His sight, but all things are naked and open to the eyes of Him to whom we must give account. Seeing then that we have a great High Priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession. For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

Broadly, Paul's answer to what we need to be doing is something that we are probably already doing. The first thing is the diligent study of God's Word. This is what Paul is getting at. If we are to going to be diligent in entering into that rest, we have to know the Word of God. The sword of God is the tool that will cut into our flesh and find all those carnal works that we need to get rid of.

Paul wants us to study God's Word diligently with the intent of discerning and rooting out all that is ungodly and then establishing and developing Christ-like character. The Word of God not only shows us where we are wrong and where we need to improve, but it tells us how to do it and what we need to become.

The second thing Paul tells us to do is to pray *boldly*. When we pray boldly, we seek the help of our High Priest mediating our forgiveness before God and providing us with the gifts that we need in aiding us in overcoming our difficulties.

Both our prayer and Bible study Sabbath tasks have the goal of building our faith. Remember how this was the part that the Israelites lacked? They did not mix what they knew and what they saw with faith. And consequently, they could not enter God's rest. If we take what we have learned and mix it with faith, then we will be some of those who will enter His rest.

Is Bible study and prayer what we have been doing? Easy, right? However, the underlying tone of Paul's exhortation is urgent, critical, and essential. Today—*today*! How many times has Paul been saying this through these couple of chapters? Do it now! Do not let it go! Do not put it off! It needs to be done right away! Because if we fail to do this, we will land in the same mess the Israelites found themselves in—shut out of the Promised Land, or in our case, shut out of the Kingdom of God. Dead in the wilderness.

Or it will land us in the same predicament that these Hebrews to whom the letter was written found themselves in, slipping slowly away from God through neglect. That is what it says at the beginning of Hebrews 2.

At the end of Hebrews 4:14, the author mentions that we must "hold fast our confession." In essence, the author tells us to keep or guard carefully, faithfully, and urgently what we profess to believe. It implies diligent and even intensive effort to put our money where our mouth is, to prove in deed and in fact that we are what we claim to be—God's people.

Are we one of God's people? Are we one of those to whom this promise of rest applies? If we are, we ought to show Him. We need to tell God and the world that we are who we claim to be: the true followers of Jesus Christ, who are developing His own image in us and that we are becoming copies of the true God, even as much as we can in the flesh.

That is what we need to be doing on the Sabbath day because that is what it takes to enter God's rest.