



³ For we which have believed do enter into rest, as he said, As I have sworn in my wrath, if they shall enter into my rest: although the works were finished from the foundation of the world. ⁴ For he spake in a certain place of the seventh day on this wise, And God did rest the seventh day from all his works. ⁵ And in this place again, If they shall enter into my rest. ⁶ Seeing therefore it remaineth that some must enter therein, and they to whom it was first preached entered not in because of unbelief: ⁷ Again, he limiteth a certain day, saying in David, To day, after so long a time; as it is said, To day if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts. ⁸ For if Jesus had given them rest, then would he not afterward have spoken of another day. ⁹ There remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God. ¹⁰ For he that is entered into his rest, he also hath ceased from his own works, as God did from his. (Heb 4:3-10)

For long ages, many saints of the Lord slept in the grave awaiting the chains of death to be broken by a Promised Seed and Redeemer. Our Lord Jesus referred to the death of the Elect of God as a 'sleep'. When the disciples could not grasp His meaning in saying that *Lazarus sleepeth*, He then made reference to the terms that they could comprehend: *Lazarus is dead!* (see John 11:11-14) Our finite minds cannot comprehend the infinite terms in which our Lord moves, so He had to resort to the simplicity of our own understanding in relating them. But the term 'sleep' perfectly describes the state of the dead in Christ. At the moment on the cross that our Lord yielded up the Ghost, we read: *⁵¹ And, behold, the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom; and the earth did quake, and the rocks rent; ⁵² And the graves were opened; and many bodies of the saints which slept arose, ⁵³ And came out of the graves after his resurrection, and went into the holy city, and appeared unto many. (Matt 27:51-53)*

What does all of this have to do with the Sabbath? The answer of course is in the meaning of Sabbath itself – REST. There is a rest of the sleep of the grave, and there is also a LIVING REST which coincides with the Eternal Sabbath of the Lord. Let us review the Creation Week in Genesis for further insight. Many will know the first five verses of Genesis by heart: *¹ In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth. ² And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters. ³ And God said, Let there be light: and there was light. ⁴ And God saw the light, that it was good: and God divided the light from the darkness. ⁵ And God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night. And the evening and the morning were the first day. (Gen 1:1-5)*

Observe that the first Creation of God on earth was LIGHT! Now what was the first day? *And God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night. And the evening*

and the morning were the first day. Pervasive and deep darkness prevailed upon the new world that God had made when He began His Creation. Before God acts or speaks, there is always thick darkness of night or of understanding. So the first day began in abject darkness and ended in LIGHT (the evening and the morning were the first day). It is for this reason that the Jewish Sabbath still begins at sundown on the sixth day and ends at sundown on the seventh. In fact, every day of the Hebrew calendar begins at eventide. Note, also, that each of the successive days of Creation ends with.....*and the evening and the morning were the second day.....third day.....fourth day.... fifth day....sixth day...etc.* But what of the Seventh Day? Does God stipulate an end to it? No, He did not. ¹ Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host of them. ² And on the seventh day God ended his work which he had made; and he rested on the seventh day from all his work which he had made. ³ And God blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it: because that in it he had rested from all his work which God created and made. (Gen 2:1-3)

God has left the Sabbath Day (7th Day) open for its eternal continuity. He gave us a seventh day rest because we physically need such a rest; however, the Sabbath Day of the Lord is an eternal Sabbath, or rest, and can only be discerned by the spiritual understanding of all of what God has done in creating a physical Universe for all creatures, but also in all that He has done in providing His Elect with a spiritual inheritance and REST through the redemptive work of His only Begotten Son, the Lord Jesus Christ.

You will recall that the day that Christ lay in the Garden Tomb was an High Sabbath Day. ³¹ The Jews therefore, because it was the preparation, that the bodies should not remain upon the cross on the sabbath day, (for that sabbath day was an high day,) besought Pilate that their legs might be broken, and that they might be taken away. (John 19:31) The Passover lambs were sacrificed precisely at three P.M. on the Friday before the Sabbath. Please note that the Passover Lamb of God was also sacrificed at that very hour on the cross of calvary. ⁴⁴ And it was about the sixth hour (12 noon), and there was a darkness over all the earth until the ninth hour (3 P.M.). ⁴⁵ And the sun was darkened, and the veil of the temple was rent in the midst. ⁴⁶ And when Jesus had cried with a loud voice, he said, *Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit:* and having said thus, he gave up the ghost. (Luke 23:44-46)

This High Sabbath concluded the redemptive works of God for all of His Elect – past, present, and future. It also opened the Gates of the Eternal Sabbath for His people. Not only was Christ in the tomb over the Sabbath Day, but was also sacrificed at the time of Temple sacrifice of the Passover Lamb. I find this exhilarating spiritually for its ramifications for us. The Jewish date for the sacrifice of the Passover Lamb is Nisan 14. That is the Friday of Christ's sacrifice. Nisan 15 (beginning at sundown of the same Friday) was the full Passover. Nisan 16 began after sundown on Saturday and was observed as the Feast of First fruits. It was Nisan 16 upon which Christ arose from the Tomb! He became the First fruits of God. ²⁰ But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept. ²¹ For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead. ²² For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive. ²³ But every man in his own order: Christ the firstfruits; afterward they that are Christ's at his coming. (1 Cor 15:20-23)

Aren't the predestined providences of God amazing! Not only has Christ become our Passover but our eternal Sabbath as well. ⁷ Purge out therefore the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump, as ye are unleavened. For even Christ our passover is sacrificed for us: ⁸ Therefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness; but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth. (1 Cor 5:7-8) To represent Christ, we use only unleavened bread in our Holy Communion service since the symbol must reflect the same kind as that which it symbolizes.

In what way is Christ our Sabbath? Have you ceased, as a believer, from your

old works of the flesh and entered into His rest (Sabbath) wherein our good works are not OURS, but Christ working in our members? ⁹*There remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God.* ¹⁰*For he that is entered into his rest, he also hath ceased from his own works, as God did from his.* (Heb 4:9-10) By the way, the word for the 7th day Sabbath differs slightly from that of the word REST in Heb 4:9. The word for the seventh day Sabbath is Sabbaton – meaning the tradition Sabbath rest of the seventh day (Matt 12:5); but the word for REST in Hebrews 4:9 is *Sabbatismo* which means a keeping Sabbath, or continual. Just as the Sabbath of God in Genesis 2 has no end, neither does the Sabbath Rest of the saints of God have an end if we allow Christ to work through us instead of our own labors predominating. ¹³*For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure.* (Phil 2:13)

Do you attribute your good works to the workings of God in you, or do you take credit for them yourself. If so, your best efforts are as filthy rags to God. Best take that eternal Sabbath and allow the Lord to do His good works through you.