

## Lesson 7

### "Lord of the Sabbath"

Christ is Lord of the Sabbath, the Creator of all things, and the Institutor, with His Father, of the day of rest. He kept it, therefore those who have His life in them will keep it too. And they will not be afraid of the consequences, whether it be loss of position, loss of wealth or influence, or persecution from those who know not God.

The Lord's day, according to the Bible, which is our only guide, is the seventh day of the week. And yet many people do not so regard it, because they think that in some way or other the crucifixion of Christ made a change in the day. It ought to be sufficient to say that the Lord with His voice from Sinai called the seventh day His day. The Lord Jesus Christ declared Himself to be Lord of the day; He never gave so much as a hint that any other day was His special day. No other day was ever called His day; but all the other days of the week are classed under the general head of "the six working days."

But let's see exactly what relation there is between the cross of Christ and the Sabbath. In the first place we find that the Sabbath was given to man at the close of the creation of the earth, before the fall. It is an institution of Eden (see the second chapter of Genesis). Therefore the keeping of it as it was given, must bring something of Eden into this wicked world.

The Sabbath was given to commemorate creation completed. "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. 2:3). "In six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day: wherefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day, and hallowed it" (Ex. 20:11). And so when the Psalmist says that the work of the Lord is honorable and glorious, he adds, "He hath made His wonderful works to be remembered" (Psalm 111:3, 4). How? By giving the Sabbath. That which causes a thing to be remembered is a memorial; and so we have the plainer and more literal rendering of the last text, "He hath made a memorial for His wonderful works."

There is another thing that dates back at least as far as the Sabbath, and that is the crucifixion of Christ. We read of Christ that He is "the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world" (Rev. 13:8). Therefore the Sabbath and the cross run parallel through the history of the world, and it is certain that the hanging of Christ upon the cross of wood, in the sight of men, could make no difference with the Sabbath. Any effect that the cross

was to have upon the Sabbath must have been seen in the very beginning; but it is certain that since the crucifixion of Christ was only the continuation of a thing that had taken place at least four thousand years before, it could make no change in the Sabbath which had existed all that time in connection with it.

The Sabbath, as we have seen, is the memorial of the wonderful works of God, and the power of God is seen clearly in the things which He has made. Now the Gospel is "the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth" (Rom. 1:16). Therefore, since the power of God is seen in the things that He has made, and the Sabbath is the memorial of His works, it is evident that the Sabbath is the great Gospel memorial. In and through it we learn the power of Christ to save.

The cross of Christ is also the power of God. "For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God" (1 Cor. 1:18). Therefore since the Sabbath and the cross of Christ both show forth the same power of God, it is evident that not only are they parallel, but that they are most intimately connected. Colossians 1:12-17 shows the connection [please read]. Christ, who is the image of the invisible God, is the one through whose blood we have redemption, because by Him all things were created. All things were created in Him, and all things exist in Him.

The Sabbath, which is the memorial of God's works, shows identically the same thing that the cross of Christ sets forth to us. It shows the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believeth. For redemption is creation. "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: not of works, lest any man should boast" (Eph. 2:8, 9).

Creation and redemption are the same, and the Sabbath and the cross are so intimately connected, because both are manifestations of the life power of Christ. He is the first-born of every creature, or of all creation. In Him all things were created. He is the beginning, the head or source, of the creation of God (Rev. 3:14). That is, in the begetting of Christ by the Father, in the eternal ages past, the creation of all things was accomplished. In Him they were created. In Christ all things existed from the days of eternity, just as surely as they did after He by His word made them to appear. "In Him all things consist" (Col. 1:17). "In Him we live, and move, and have our being" (Acts 17:28).

It is by the life of Christ that we are saved (Rom. 5:10). The blood is the life, and we have redemption through His blood. On the cross Christ shed His blood, poured out His life for man. The preaching of the cross is the power of God, because it is the preaching of the giving of the life of Christ for our salvation. But that life which was given for us on the

cross is the life from which all creation sprung. Therefore the cross of Christ brings to us the creative power, which is commemorated by the Sabbath. "Is the law then against the promises of God? God forbid" (Gal. 3:21). So the Sabbath of the Lord, instead of being opposed to the Gospel of Christ, is the very heart of that Gospel.

The Sabbath is a great memorial of the wonderful works of God, which are the measure of His graciousness. He gave it that we might know that He is the Lord that sanctifies us. Therefore as the cross of Christ brings joy and celebration, so the cross of the Sabbath is not a cross hard to be endured, but a cross that lifts up and saves. Instead of mourning over the difficulties involved in keeping the Sabbath, we say with the Psalmist, "For Thou, Lord, hast made me glad through Thy work; I will triumph in the works of Thy hands" (Psalm 92:4).

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