

The Epistle of Paul to the Hebrews XI

Signs of God's People

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We want to review just a little bit, just so we understand very profoundly concerning the Sabbath. The Sabbath is a sign of God's people, always is. We'll see that again. However in addition to that, there are other signs that God gives which are important; in fact, take precedence over it.

I. First Sign—Keep the Commandments

Mark 12:29: "...Hear, O Israel. Our one God is *the* Lord, *the* Lord. And you shall love *the* Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength.' This *is the* first commandment. And *the* second *is* like this: 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' There is no other commandment greater than these" (vs 29-31). Matt. 22 said that 'on these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets.'

- if you have the Sabbath without love, *you don't have God*
- if you have the Sabbath without understanding the grace of God, *you do not have it right*
- if you have the Sabbath and you use it as a means of *salvation by works* through your Sabbath-keeping, *you have it wrong*

Sabbath-keeping is required, so we don't want to put Sabbath-keeping as the #1 thing. Jesus also said:

John 14:15: "If you love Me, **keep the commandments—namely, My commandments.**" The condition is on us, not on God. Never does it say *if God loves the world*, or *if God loves you*.

John 3:16: "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, so that everyone who believes in Him may not perish, but may have everlasting life."

Therefore, God's love for us will be constant ***IF*** we love Him and keep His commandments. If we do not, the wrath of God abides upon us. The wrath of God does not necessarily come with death and destruction and immediately.

II. Second Sign—Love One Another

I think within the Churches of God this is a great failing because we get caught up in the doctrinal wars. It is true we do need to have correct understanding of doctrine. False doctrine will lead you astray! But please understand this:

- *if you love God*, according to the first commandment, with all your heart, mind, soul and being
- *if you love your neighbor as yourself*, as Jesus said
- *if you love Christ* and keep His commandments

then you will come to the correct understanding of doctrine—not necessarily of prophecy, but of doctrine unto salvation.

John 13:34: "A new commandment..." This was not given before; and Jesus gave this to them on the Passover night, because He knew that instituting the New Covenant that things were going to change. This new commandment, please understand, does not wipe away all other commandments.

"...I give to you: **that you love one another in the same way that I have loved you, that is how you are to love one another**" (v 34).

This makes it especially difficult in the Church of God. God has given us a difficult proposition in it. It is easy to have camaraderie and join a club of like-minded people, and you become a Rotary, an Elk, whatever it is. *The hardest thing to do is to love someone not like you!*

III. Third Sign—Love Your Enemies

Always remember this; this is also one of the signs of God's people, in addition to the Sabbath, in addition to these other things:

Matthew 5:43: "You have heard that it was said, 'You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.'" Then He gives the hardest, hardest thing to do, which He knows is contrary to human nature.

- this takes the Spirit of God
- this takes understanding the plan of God
- this takes understanding of human nature to realize that many people do things that they don't even know what they are doing, even your enemies

Verse 44: "But I say to you, **love your enemies...**" Stephen did that. After he gave a tremendous witness before the Sanhedrin. They were so angry that they were gnashing their teeth, probably had broken teeth in their mouth as they took Stephen out and stoned him. What did he do? *He blessed them and said, 'Lord, lay not this to their charge.'* Then he died. So, he literally fulfilled it.

“...**bless those who curse you...**” (v 44). Why? *Vengeance belongs to God*, and He'll take care of it in the final analysis. Besides, maybe they're just filled with hate themselves that that is part of the curse that is upon them and you should pity them for the way that they are. It doesn't mean you have to be friends with them. It just means you don't hate them.

What about the 9/11 episode? God has the civil authorities that He says He's raised up and given the sword. He will use those to execute His vengeance. We can hate the deed, but truly, we ought to really feel sorry for those Arabs who have such a hateful religion that they live by the sword. Remember in *Fiddler on the Roof* when the young man came to the rabbi and he said, 'Rabbi, is there a blessing for the Czar?' He stroked his beard and thought a little while, and he said, 'Yes, my son, may the Lord bless him and keep him *far away* from us!' That's still loving your enemy.

To love your enemy means that you don't take up the sword and fight him. God will take care of it; *He will!* This is a tough one!

“...**do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you**” (v 44). *That's hard to do!* The truth is being a true Christian is really a difficult proposition. Without the Holy Spirit of God and you growing in it, it's an impossible thing to do.

I would have to say that just like it was said of the kings of Israel of old when the enemies came up against them, 'We'll surrender to them, because the kings of Israel are compassionate.' That is true even of modern Israel today. We go in and we bomb Afghanistan—parts of it—to near oblivion, and those who say, 'we're on your side' we come in and 'hug and kiss them' and say we'll rebuild the whole place. The movie, *The Mouse that Roared*—a little island government about ready to go into bankruptcy and they didn't know where they were going to get the money, so they came up with a great idea: let's declare war on the United States. Let them invade and we'll repent and they'll come in and rebuild us and we'll have a great economy.

This is also a built-in, natural trait that God has given to most Israelites! Not Levi and Simeon, because they had the sword, but most Israelites, especially Joseph—Ephraim and Manasseh—and because of that we get 'simple-headed' and stupid at times and get taken advantage of. However, God would rather have you be kind and compassionate and be taken advantage of, than to be mean and hostile and curmudgeon and overbearing.

Verse 45: “So that you yourselves may be *the children of your Father Who is in heaven...*”

Then He gives a statement to help us to understand lest we get caught up in: God has called us and 'tu tu' to the rest of the world.

“...for He causes His sun to rise on *the* evil and on *the* good, and sends rain on *the* just and on *the* unjust. For if you love those who love you, what reward do you have? Do not the tax collectors...” (vs 45-46). He uses that because you know that all tax collectors are the most despised, hated, of any in the world; always, since the beginning of taxation.

“...practice the same *thing*? And if you salute your brethren only, what have you done *that is* extraordinary? Do not the tax collectors practice the same *thing*? Therefore, you shall be perfect, even as your Father Who *is* in heaven is perfect” (vs 46-48).

- that's the whole goal of overcoming and striving against sin
- that's the whole goal of the reason that God has called us, that we can practice this new commandment

Let's understand why it is more difficult within the Church of God. When we were in the world we could select our friends. What is the old saying, and you saw it from the time you entered into the sandbox: '*Birds of feather flock together and they love their own.*' You have little clichés and little gangs and so forth. I saw it when I was growing up.

I remember when I was in the third grade. I wanted to be one of those safety patrolmen and I could have on one of these little white harnesses that they had, and you have a badge on it and you stand in the corner and you've got a flag that you put out there to stop. They announced at school that they're going to choose the student patrol kids who could get out there and do that. Oh, I wanted that so bad! But, I wasn't one of the 'birds that flocked together.' So, it was a political thing. The son of the mayor got one. The son of the leading banker got another. The son of the principal of the high school got one. So, I got a real early lesson in partiality.

When we come into the Church of God, we do not have the selectivity or the sense of choosing our own, and we have the partiality of saying 'I like this person. I don't like that person.' We get a whole different mix, and yet, we have the commandment that we are to love each other as Christ has loved us. Here's why it's difficult within the Church of God, and it's more of a challenge to do so, and that's why we need the Spirit of God to do so.

1-Corinthians 1:26: “For you see your calling, brethren, that *there are* not many who are wise according to the flesh...”—are called. So, what

happens? *We have a lot of people who just are not well educated!* Those of us who have become well educated have had to work at it.

You've probably heard me tell the story of how I had to learn English. It goes back to 1953 when I made the 'wise decision' three months before graduation of high school to join the army. I joined for three years. Later I found out that I could have volunteered for the draft and only done two, but you see how smart I was. I wanted to be patriotic! I was RA [regular army] and even remember my number. They said to remember that serial number and never forget it.

In high school math and science were my strong forte. Of course, with sibling rivalry with my sister who was a year and half older than I, she was good in English and not good in mathematics. I determined I would be good in math and just sloughed along with English. Well, after I got out of the service and I decided the only way I could do anything was go to college, so I had the GI plan. I went to the College of San Mateo; it was a junior college at that time. I knew that I was very bad in reading, and I knew I was very bad in English. When I started going to San Mateo Jr. College I started at night. I knew I needed a running start and I was about 24-25 at the time.

I took public speaking, speed-reading, and when I started I could only read about 75 wpm—how's that for speed—huh? I finally got it up to where I could read 250 wpm, so that improve. Then the next semester I decided I knew I could not qualify for English 101, so I signed up for 'bone-head' English. They gave assignments: write a page on this and I would go home and I couldn't think of a thing. I'd walk back and forth, I didn't know how to write anything. Then they had a test that you would take. After six weeks of that I was hauled before Dr. Sharp—a German professor—and you talk about 'steely' eyes. You'd just tremble.

He looked at me with those eyes and said, 'How did you get in this class?' *I just signed up for it!* 'Your test scores are so bad that you do not even qualify for the English for the foreign born!' That's true! *What must I do?* 'You can stay in the class, but you know—he gave me a courtesy D-minus the first six weeks—you have to pass with a B-minus or you cannot continue in college.' I said *okay*. So, a woman (can't remember her name) ran a private school right close to where I lived. I went over to her school and said I've got a problem. She took me down to the teacher who taught 4th, 5th and 6th grade.

She wanted to know where I was in English, so she made me to do the thing I hated to do. She said to stand at the blackboard and write this sentence. I wrote it out. She said to diagram it.

Started out in the 6th grade level. Couldn't do it. We went down to the 5th grade level. Wrote another sentence. Diagram it. Which is subject and which is verb? Where's the preposition? What's the object of the preposition? *BLANK!* 4th grade—let's make this simple! Sure enough, I couldn't even do 4th grade. All right, 3rd grade. Here I am at 25, starting out English in the 3rd grade. I took private tutoring everyday after school and doing it before I went to work, too. I worked at night.

Needless to say, I got everything up. I got an A on my final exam in the writing and ended up with a B-minus for the course and passed. I can tell you, from experience, any education that I've had, has come the hard way! If you still see some typos in my letters or some misspellings, you will know that my English today may have improved a great deal. I remember when I first got my computer up and running. I think we had about 35-40 people on the mailing list and I brought the letter up and had Belinda read it, and it was so bad she said, 'Do you have 'spell check' on your computer?' I said, 'What's that?' I went home and sure enough it was there. What do you know! Lo and behold, spell check! That's why we need to understand. We don't very many PhDs, we don't very many experts in language and so forth. God intended that!

"...not many who are powerful..." (v 26)—political people. 'Would you do me a favor?' *Yes, I'll go talk to the City Council... Board of Supervisors... the Governor personally for you!*

"...not many who are highborn *among you*.... [No princes! No kings!] ...Rather, God has chosen the weak things of the world..." (vs 26-27). Brethren, *that's us!* I have to admit it's hard to accept, but it's true. Now you know why we make such foolish mistakes, sometimes more than just time-to-time. This also makes it difficult because we are in the Church together, and wherever you are this would be true:

If you were in the world and you had your choice, you would not choose that person to be your friend to love. So, God has given us a great project—hasn't He? It becomes more important that we learn to love each other and to love God than to just bang the hammer on the Sabbath, though the Sabbath is very important. I think if you just look at Judaism and see that they are very lacking in love, and that you can have all the words of God in your hand—which they don't; they only have the Old Testament; but nevertheless those commandments are there—*without love you have nothing!* I mean, look at Islam. That's a big problem. Everything they do is by *works of law*. When God calls us together and we assemble on the Sabbath, yes we are to keep the Sabbath; no doubt about it!

Brethren, if we don't have these other things, then we're going to be as futile as they are. That's why when we come together to meet in Sabbath services we have to love each other. We have to love each other and be concerned for each other when we're not assembled together. We have to set aside our own carnal peculiarities and our own carnal choices as to whom our friends are, because God says *He has called all these people* and they are the *friends of Christ*. Though we're foolish! Though we're weak!

"...so that He might put to shame the strong things" (v 27). With it He's going to do a marvelous thing, because if you went out to world rulers today and brought all the people of God together and said, 'Here we are we're going to rule the world.' He'd look out there at our motley crew and say, 'Where did you get these people? What school did you attend? What experience do you have, that you would presume to rule the world?' God is going to make it happen.

"...and God has chosen the weak things of the world so that He might put to shame the strong things. And the lowborn of the world, and the despised has God chosen—even the things that are counted as nothing—in order that He might bring to nothing the things that are" (vs 27-28). Always remember this: The tiniest virus can take down the strongest, most virulent person in the world.

Verse 29: "So that no flesh might glory in His presence." We're not going to go to God and say, 'God, I'm sure glad you recognize my talent. I know that You had to call me. How could You escape not calling me, God.' That's why Job went through what he went through. So that Job could not go up and say, 'God, I was perfect in the flesh and You were indebted to me to give me eternal life.' **NO! God is not indebted to any man!** That's why these are the things that are most important for us.

Verse 30: "But you are of Him in Christ Jesus, Who was made to us wisdom from God..." If you have the Word of God you know the true wisdom.

"...even righteousness..." (v 30)—right standing with God the Father in heaven above; direct access to God the Father through the blood of Christ into the Holy of Holies of the throne room in heaven above.

"...and sanctification... [you're set aside as Holy for God] ...and redemption... [through the power of the resurrection] ...so that, as it is written, 'The one who glories, let him glory in the Lord'" (vs 30-31).

This is why God has called us from

everywhere, all different ages—young and old and in between—weak and strong. Most of us today are weak, especially the 'rust belt' crew. Aging is not the problem; it's the rusting out. This will help you understand this commandment even more:

John 13:34 "A new commandment I give to you..." It's not a suggestion! It is not an idea! It is not something that's just good for you to do so that you would like to do it! *It's a commandment!*

"...that you love one another in the same way that I have loved you, that is how you are to love one another. By this shall everyone know that you are My disciples—if you love one another" (vs 34-35).

While we emphasize the Sabbath, Heb. 4 makes it absolutely crystal clear concerning the Sabbath—and we're here emphasizing it—let us not lose sight of the important things that need to be.

John 15:7: "**If** you dwell in Me..." Conditional! How do you dwell and remain in Christ?

John 14:15: "If you love Me, keep the commandments—namely, My commandments."

John 15:7: "If you dwell in Me and My words dwell in you..." In reference to the Sabbath, what does it say? *The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath!* Therefore, *the Son of man is even Lord of the Sabbath!* Those are part of the words of Christ, as well as all His other words—you have to add all of them.

"...you shall ask whatever you desire, and it shall come to pass for you" (v 7). We know other Scriptures which say

- in God's time
- in His will
- in His way

Verse 8: "In this is My Father glorified, that you bear much fruit..."

- of love
- of knowledge
- of understanding

"...so shall you be My disciples. As the Father has loved Me, I also have loved you; live in My love. If you keep My commandments, you shall live in My love; just as I have kept My Father's commandments and live in His love. These things I have spoken to you, in order that My joy may dwell in you, and that your joy may be full. This is My commandment: that you love one another, as I have loved you" (vs 8-12). He said it twice.

Verse 13: "No one has greater love than this: that one lay down his life for his friends. You are

My friends, if you do whatever I command you" (vs 13-14).

When it's all said and done, when we get together as brethren, remember, everyone that is together and has the Spirit of God is a *friend of Christ!* He loves each one. We are to love each other and view each other as the very friends of Christ *in spite of our:*

- weaknesses
- faults
- difficulties
- obnoxiousness

But then it gives a challenge to each person to grow and overcome, and overcome the difficulties and failings that they have in their own lives, through Christ.

IV. Fourth sign—Live by Every Word of God

The final thing that shows that you are Christ's, is Deut. 8:3; Matt. 4:4; Luke 4:4—'Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God shall man live.' All of those are signs.

V. Fifth Sign—Keep the Sabbaths

Now, we're going to look at the sign of the Sabbath. We have the Sabbath in its proper perspective. However, Satan likes to come along and say: 'If you have all of these things that I have just now covered, you don't need to keep the Sabbath.' *Nonsense!* The truth is, you cannot have all of the above unless you keep the Sabbath.

I want to cover something very important, and this is in the way of a little review about 'katapausis' and the Sabbath and *rest* and *ceasing* and things like this.

Exodus 31:12^[transcriber's correction]: "And the LORD spoke to Moses saying, 'Speak also to the children of Israel, saying, "Truly you shall keep **My Sabbaths**..."'" (vs 12-13).

In the Hebrew and the Greek it is both plural. The Greek being the Septuagint; the Hebrew being the received official Masoretic text. The word 'keep' here in both Hebrews and Greek means *to keep, to observe, to guard, to protect!* This gives a responsibility of something that is a result of the first things that we covered as the signs of the people of God. This is what we are to do. Satan is there to attack that as the first thing.

I was talking with someone the other day and they said that it's so sad to see people who have kept the Sabbath for years, and you go up to them and they say, 'we don't have to do that anymore.'

Remember the example of two plus two plus two. If you only have two plus two, you have four, but the real equation will be six. If you have the things that I enumerated the first time and you don't have the Sabbath and the Holy Days, then you're still deficient! So, here's he given a responsibility *to keep, to guard, to protect!*

"...for it... [*keeping, guarding and protecting*] ...*is* a sign between Me and you throughout your generations to know that I *am* the LORD Who sanctifies you" (v 13). Here's another key: **You cannot really know the Lord unless you keep the Sabbath and the Holy Days!**

Then He goes on reiterating about the weekly Sabbath. Let's come to Deuteronomy 5. The Sabbath commandment here is just a little bit different than the one in Exo. 20. Because they're a little different, does not mean that one cancels out the other. It means that they both go together. Remember, in understanding the Scripture, the principle of addition: The Scriptures go together and both apply. The theology of the world and their hatred toward the laws of God is that they have the principle of subtraction. They come along and say, 'Since this commandment is not the same as the one in Exo. 20, therefore, which one is right?' Since we don't know which one is right, are we really under obligation to do anything?' That's the carnal reasoning!

Deuteronomy 5:12: "Keep..." In both Hebrew and Greek it means *to keep, to observe, to guard, to protect!* The Spanish is *guard*.

"...the Sabbath Day to sanctify it as the LORD your God has commanded you. Six days you shall labor and do all your work. But the seventh day is the Sabbath of the LORD your God..." (vs 12-14). God owns it! God has a great purpose for it:

- to put His presence in it
- to fellowship with you
 - ✓ through His Spirit
 - ✓ through His Word

When you read and study the Word of God, God is communicating to you. If you read the Word of God—which God has spoken—God has spoken to you. A lot of people say, 'If God would speak to me, I'd listen.' *He did!* That's important to understand. It belongs to God for a great and a marvelous purpose. That's what it's all about in Heb. 4:9, about entering into His *rest*.

"...*In it* you shall not do any work, you, nor your son, nor your daughter, nor your manservant, nor your maidservant, nor your ox, nor your donkey, nor any of your livestock, nor your stranger within your gates... [it does not say 'automobile'] ...so that

your manservant and your maidservant may rest as well as you. And remember... [we're to remember this, too, because we have the spiritual application of it] ...that you were a slave in the land of Egypt..." (vs 14-15).

Today we are to remember when we were out there in the world. As well intended as we may have been, or as bad and evil as we may have been, we were slaves to sin and Satan the devil. We are saved—by God's grace (Eph. 2), because He loves us—from our sins and trespasses in which we were dead, in which we were held in bondage in slavery.

"...and the LORD your God brought you out from there with a mighty hand and with an outstretched arm..." Likewise, the calling of God to understand the Truth and to receive the Holy Spirit of God is as much a miracle as coming out of Egypt with a strong hand. Even more so because God had to work in your mind to do something, which is the hardest place to work.

"...Therefore, the LORD your God commanded you to keep the Sabbath Day." (v 15).

Remember the Scripture that Jesus said in the Sermon on the Mount, Matthew 5:17: "Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I did not come to abolish, but to fulfill."

In *A Harmony of the Gospels* you can read the commentary on the Sermon on the Mount. Also see booklet: *How Did Jesus Fulfill the Law and the Prophets?*

Notice that Paul whom people say was an advocate of doing away with the laws and commandments of God. Here he is called to task. He was in Caesarea in prison, and Felix was the one who was the Roman curator at the time. Caesarea was one of those regional capitals, which was part of the Roman Empire. They were to have the Jews come down from Jerusalem to bring the charges against Paul, and Paul gave his defense.

Acts 24:12: "And neither did anyone find me disputing with anyone in the temple, nor inciting a tumult among the people—neither in the synagogues, nor in the city; neither can they prove *the things* of which they now accuse me. But I confess to you that according to the way, which they call heresy..." (vs 12-14). Believing in Christ as Savior; believing in forgiveness of sin through the blood of Christ, the grace of God.

"...so I serve the God of my fathers... [Abraham, Isaac and Jacob] ...believing **all things** that are written in the Law and the Prophets" (v 14).

We're going to look at something in the

Prophets. Paul said he believed this. There's a great message here:

Ezekiel 20:1: "And it came to pass in the seventh year, in the fifth *month*, the tenth day of the month..." This is the seventh year of the Babylonian captivity of the Jews.

"...that some of the elders of Israel came to ask of the LORD, and sat before me" (v 1). So, they came to Ezekiel and they're going to ask him, 'Why are we here?' How many sermons have we heard that started out with 'Why are you here?' When you've lost your home; you've lost your land; you've lost all that you possess; and now you're a prisoner of war in a prisoner of war camp. He had a little bit of freedom, so he came and sat before them.

Verse 2: "And the Word of the LORD came to me, saying." These are not the words of Ezekiel; *these are the words of God!* Like I've said before, If God said it and you read it, then God has spoken to you.

Verse 3: "Son of man, speak to the elders of Israel and say to them, 'Thus says the Lord GOD, "Have you come to inquire of Me?..."' Isn't that what people do? *The biggest mistake that people do is go to God and have Him approve their actions!*

"...As I live,' says the Lord GOD, 'I will not be inquired of by you.'" (v 3). Why do you come and question ME? God *is* God!

Verse 4: "'Will you judge *them*, son of man, will you judge them? Cause them to know the abominations of their fathers.' And say to them, 'Thus says the Lord GOD; "In the day that I chose Israel, and lifted up My hand to the seed of the house of Jacob, and made Myself known to them in the land of Egypt; when I lifted up My hand to them, saying, 'I *am* the LORD your God'"'"' (vs 4-5).

This ties right in with the first commandment, which is: *I AM the Lord your God which brought you out of the land of Egypt!* That is the first commandment; everything else flows from that. If you don't believe the first one, then you're picking and choosing of which ones you will observe, and that amounts to thievery and lawlessness, that you would create a religious system using the Scriptures partially and excluding the rest of the words of God. That's why it says that the 'mystery of iniquity or lawlessness does already work' (2-Thess.). **Remember:**

- there is prosperity in sin, and pleasure in sin for a season
- Satan would like to deceive you and have you happy and believing in your deception that you are right

What better condition?

- Satan told Jesus, 'If you bow down and worship me, I'll give you all the kingdoms of the world, for they're delivered unto me and I give it to whomsoever I will.'

Therefore—I won't say all—many of the surface blessings that come from a lawless religion, do not come from God! That's rather shocking! You need to understand that not all 'good' comes from God. There is a 'good' that comes from the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil, which then is the good that *seems right to a man, but the ends thereof are the way of death!*

He made it clear, v 6: "In the day that I lifted up My hand to them, to bring them out from the land of Egypt into a land that I had searched out for them... [and He blessed them] ...flowing *with* milk and honey, which *is* the glory of all lands" At that time:

- it was forested
- it was beautiful
- it was fertile
- it had streams
- it had valleys
- it had the best climate in the whole world

Down in what is called the Jordan Valley, that climate being anywhere from 1200 feet below sea level clear down to the Dead Sea, you have the best climate in the winter to where you can even grow melons. Wonderful land!

Verse 7: "Then I said to them, 'Let each man throw away the abominations of his eyes, and do not defile yourselves with the idols of Egypt...'"—which then are other religions and other gods. And today, what is the greatest fascination of archeology; one of the greatest fascinations? *Egyptology*; the Egyptian pyramids, temples, mummies. They found out a lot about it. I just saw one the other day. Two of the most common diseases of Egypt were arthritis and hardening of the arteries. Nothing's new under the sun, and they had organic food!

Revelation 11:8: "And their bodies *will lie* in the street of the great city, which spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt, where also our Lord was crucified." That is Jerusalem! The long and the short of it is, nothing very much has changed since the exodus.

Ezekiel 20:7: "Then I said to them, 'Let each man throw away the abominations of his eyes, and do not defile yourselves with the idols of Egypt. I *am* the LORD your God.'.... [emphatically, the same as the first commandment] ...But they rebelled

against Me and would not hearken to Me. They did not each man throw away the abominations of their eyes, nor did they forsake the idols of Egypt. And I said, 'I will pour out My fury against them to fulfill My anger against them in the midst of the land of Egypt.' But I worked for My name's sake..." (vs 7-9).

Because He promised Abraham, God would not pollute His name. If God promises, He cannot lie, and He told Abraham that it would be so, which was not conditioned upon the behavior of his descendants. Therefore, since it was not conditioned on the behavior of his descendants, He promised He would do it, and He did it, but He also then punished the descendants for their behavior. He did not deprive them of the blessing that He promised, but when they didn't do as He commanded then He punished them.

Verse 9: "But I worked for My name's sake that it should not be profaned before the heathen..." Moses said it to the Lord. Remember when they rebelled in making the golden calves? Remember the weakness of Aaron? What did Moses say? After God said, 'Leave Me alone and I'll destroy them all and raise up a great nation of you and fulfill My promise.' Moses said to God, 'Lord, the heathen will say that You brought them out here in the wilderness to kill them.' God repented of that judgment. God said, 'All right, I won't do it.'

Verse 9: "But I worked for My name's sake that it should not be profaned before the heathen among whom they *were*, for I made Myself known to them in their eyes, by bringing them out of the land of Egypt."

This was a world-known thing! Egypt lay in such desolation and ruin that it was 400 years before they recovered from that. It was known! Remember when they were on the other side of the Jordan and ready to cross? All the heathen were afraid and they remembered what was done in Egypt and they said, 'Oh, it's going to happen to us.' That's what it's talking about here.

Verse 10: "And I caused them to go out from the land of Egypt, and brought them into the wilderness. And I gave them My statutes and showed them My ordinances, which *if* a man do, he shall even live in them. And also **I gave them My Sabbaths...**" (vs 10-12)—plural—so the Sabbath and Holy Days are gifts from God!

In the New Testament a 'gift' is called *grace*. Comes from the word *grace*. A lot of people don't like to say *grace* and *Sabbath* go together, but they do! If it is a gift that God has given, and in that day God puts His presence to fellowship with you, which is a gift; and you have the Holy Spirit of God,

which is a gift; and it's all grace, the way that you fulfill the Sabbath is through the *grace of God while you keep it!* They're not contradictory one to another. Paul said, 'Do we, through grace, abolish the Law? GOD FORBID! We establish the Law.' So likewise, with the Sabbath, *you establish the Sabbath through the grace of God because it is His gift!* Remember: *He rested on the Sabbath and was refreshed!*

That's so that when we rest on the Sabbath and we become before God to learn of His Word, to learn of His way... I'll tell you what, if we don't keep the Sabbath every week, we're all just carnal enough that we begin losing it a little bit, a little bit every Sabbath. That's why we have the Sabbath! If we come to God on the Sabbath Day:

- knowing it's a gift
- knowing that we have His Holy Spirit
- knowing that He wants to fellowship with us
- knowing that He wants to bless us
- knowing that He wants to give us the way of salvation on this day so we can understand it

therefore, it becomes one of the most important tools of God

- to keep us in the faith
- to keep us in the love of God
- to keep us focused on His plan and purpose

That's why it says in Hebrews 4:9: "There remains, therefore, **Sabbath-keeping** for the people of God." When they cease doing that and cease looking to Christ—what happens? *He warned them that they were committing the unpardonable sin* (Heb. 6).

Ezekiel 20:12: "And also I gave them My Sabbaths **to be a sign between Me and them**... [We already covered the other signs that were in addition to it for the New Testament/New Covenant.] ...that *they* might know that I *am* the LORD who sanctifies them."

A very important thing to understand. Howbeit in 1-John they may not have been all the way into Sunday-keeping, but starting into it, therefore, he gives this warning. Remember, even there it says you're going to know the Lord, because of the Sabbath.

1-John 2:3: "And by this *standard* **we know** that **we know** Him..." You know it! That's why

- in the process of conversion
- in the process of growing and overcoming

- in the process of the trials that we go through

—which we all go through—we come *to know that we know!* It's one thing to say, 'I know' and still maybe have a doubt. It's another thing to say that *you know that you know*—no doubt! Total conviction! Total truth, because you *believe God* and *believe in God*.

Verse 3: "And by this *standard* we know that we know Him: **if** we keep His commandments. The one who says, 'I know Him,' and does not keep His commandments, is a liar, and the Truth is not in him. On the other hand, *if* anyone is keeping His Word, truly in this one the love of God is being perfected. By this *means* we know that we are in Him" (vs 3-5)—which goes right back to where we started.

Verse 6: "Anyone who claims to dwell in Him **is obligating** himself also to walk even as He Himself walked."

- Did Jesus ever break the Sabbath? *No!*
- Did He ever sin? *No!*
- What is sin?
- *Sin is the transgression of the Law!*

New Testament doctrine, written by John, agrees perfectly with this concerning the Sabbath:

Ezekiel 20:12: "...that *they* might know that I *am* the LORD who sanctifies them. But the house of Israel rebelled against Me in the wilderness... [we covered all of that in Heb. 3] ...they did not walk in My statutes... [right under the very nose of God] ...and they despised My ordinances, which *if* a man does, he shall even live in them. And they greatly polluted My Sabbaths. And I said, 'I will pour out My fury on them in the wilderness to destroy them'" (vs 12-13).

God had an obligation to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, and an obligation for His name's sake to the rest of the world.

Just like I brought out at the beginning with us. As brethren within the Church, what we are as a people, we're to love each other and we're stuck with each other. So likewise—'God, because of His promises, was stuck with Israel in their rebellion—which Moses said, 'You were rebelling from the day that I knew you.' That's quite a relationship. Does God love His people in spite of everything? *Yes!* But, will He correct them for their sins? *Yes!*

Verse 14: "But I worked for My name's sake, so that it should not be profaned before the heathen in whose sight I brought them out. And also I lifted up My hand to them in the wilderness, *and swore* that I would not bring them into the land

which I had given *them*—flowing *with* milk and honey, the glory of all lands—because they despised My judgments and walked not in My statutes; and they polluted My Sabbaths; for their heart went after their idols. Nevertheless My eye spared them—from destroying them; nor did I make an end of them in the wilderness. But I said to their children in the wilderness...” (vs 14-18).

Remember, they wandered in the wilderness 40 years and their carcasses were strewn all over the desert and buried. The ones 20-years-old and downward were able to live and go into the ‘promised land.’ Here He is telling them in the wilderness, “...‘Do not walk in the statutes of your fathers, nor observe their judgments, nor defile yourselves with their idols’” (v 18).

God had to put up with an awful lot; He puts up with an awful lot. I don't remember the exact time-setting of the division of the ten tribes of Israel after Solomon died, during the days of Jeroboam and Rehoboam, but God put up with the paganism of the ten tribes for well over 200 years before He sent them off into captivity. He put up with their paganism right in the wilderness.

Amos 5:21: “I hate, I despise your feast days, and I will take no delight in your solemn assemblies.”

Why? *Because they're not solemnized to God!* God didn't call for them. Those are not the ones that God authorized. These are by ‘do-gooders’ who are going to do their thing and try and force it down God's throat, which He won't do.

Verse 22: “Though you offer Me burnt offerings and your grain offerings, **I will not accept them.** Nor will I regard the peace offerings of your fat animals.”

If the heart was not right, if it was not according to the way that God said, then it was unacceptable! It fits into the same category as the sacrifice between Abel and Cain. Cain did it his way, to say, ‘God, You must accept it; look how good I am.’ And God said, ‘No, sin lies at the door.’ Abel did it according to the way that God said and he was righteous. Likewise, here, He says, ‘No, I'm not going to listen to it.’

Verse 23: “Take the noise of your songs away from Me; for I will not hear the melody of your harps. But let judgment roll down like waters, and righteousness like a mighty stream. Have you offered sacrifices and offerings to Me **forty years in the wilderness**, O house of Israel?” (vs 23-25).

Remember how I said in going through Stephen's statement that the tabernacle had to be removed out of the camp because of the sins of the

people. And that there were Sabbath services with Moses and those who worshipped God, and there were these services with those people who rebelled. Listen, here it is right here. Do we have 40 years? *Yes, in the wilderness!* That's what it says, in the wilderness for 40 years.

Verse 26: “But now you have carried the tabernacle of your Moloch and Chiun, your images, the star of your gods which you made for yourselves.... [which they never gave up] ...So I will cause you to go into exile beyond Damascus,” says the LORD, Whose name *is* the God of hosts” (vs 26-27).

We have, likewise, the same thing here in Ezek. 20 in the seventh year of their captivity. In the fifth month on the tenth day, they came before Ezekiel to find out: ‘What's the Word of the Lord? When are we going to get out of this captivity? We don't like it.’ So, this is what He said:

Ezekiel 20:19: “I *am* the LORD your God.... [again relating to the first commandment] ...Walk in My statutes, and keep My ordinances, and **do them**, and keep My Sabbaths Holy; and they shall be a sign between Me and you, that you may know that I *am* the LORD your God.... [the Bible talks about He held out His hand to a gainsaying people] ...But the children rebelled against Me....” (vs 19-21).

There are certain events that happen that become so mind-impressing that you wouldn't forget, such as when we had the earthquake here in 1988. Well, there was an earthquake that took place after the golden calf, and all of those that were on God's side came over to Moses, and the earth opened up and swallowed those who did not come over to Moses' side, for their golden calf and religious activities that they had of which Aaron was greatly to be blamed in it. You would think that if you were standing there and you witnessed that, that that would be enough for you to hear and fear that God means what He says. But it didn't impress them.

Verse 21: “But the children rebelled against Me. They did not walk in My statutes, nor keep My ordinances to do them—the ordinances which, *if* a man do, he shall even live in them. And they polluted My Sabbaths...” Listen, when you pollute the Sabbath it is an abomination and you pollute God's name.

“...and I said I would pour out My fury on them, to fulfill My anger against them in the wilderness” (v 21). You talk about long-suffering!

Since you have trials, and some of them are pretty tough to go through, we've never asked:

- Does God have trials?
- Was this not a trial for God in dealing with the children of Israel?
- Was it not as frustrating to Him as some of your trials are to you?

He had His presence there in the pillar of cloud by day and fire by night and they still didn't believe. Seeing is not believing! When God gets mad, listen! God says, 'Vengeance belongs to Me.'

Verse 22: "Nevertheless, I withdrew My hand and worked for My name's sake, that it should not be polluted in the eyes of the heathen, in whose eyes I brought them out. I also lifted up My hand to them in the wilderness, *swearing* that I would scatter them among the heathen and scatter them throughout the lands" (vs 22-23)—which He eventually did.

It is true to this day, especially for the Jews who are hissing and cursing to this day, until they repent and accept Jesus Christ—yes, Jesus Christ!—that shall continue. I think the final holocaust is going to be worst than what Hitler had. In that we know they will repent!

This is a very key, important verse to understand, because this is where Sunday-keepers go to say *we don't have to keep the Sabbath*.

Verse 24: "Because they had not done My ordinances, but had despised My statutes and had polluted My Sabbaths, and their eyes were after their fathers' idols." Today, that's this way:

- Once a Catholic always a Catholic. My mother and father were Catholics and it's good enough for them, it's good enough for me.
- Once a Buddhist always a Buddhist. My mother and father were Buddhists, therefore, it's good enough for me.
- Once a Muslim always a Muslim, and my mother and father were Muslim and it's good enough for me.
- Once a Protestant; my mother and father were Protestants and it's good enough for me.

Went after their idols!

Verse 25: "Wherefore I also gave them **over to their own** statutes that were not good, and *their own* ordinances which they could not live. And I defiled them in their own gifts..." (vs 25-26)—meaning *He gave them up to their pagan religions* and let them suffer the consequences of it.

That's what He did. This does not mean that He forsook His Sabbath as those who believe in Sunday-keeping try and twist and turn it.

"...in that they caused all that opened the

womb to pass through *the fire...*" (v 26). They went so far as to worshipping Molech and passing their children through the fire. In other words, the firstborn were sacrificed as a burnt offering.

"...that I *might* make them desolate, to the end that they might know that I *am* the LORD" (v 26). This is meaning: Through the experience of this horrible sin, they will come to absolutely abhor it so much that they would repent! In that repentance they might know and understand that God's way is supreme and not their way.

Verse 27: "Therefore, son of man, speak to the house of Israel and say to them, 'Thus says the Lord GOD, "Yet in this your fathers have blasphemed Me, in that they have acted treacherously against Me. When I had brought them into the land, which I lifted up My hand to give to them, then they saw every high hill, and all the thick trees, and they offered their sacrifices there. And there they provoked *Me* with their offerings. There also they made their sweet savor, and poured out their drink offerings.... [that is to other gods] ...And I said to them, 'What *is* the high place to which you go?' And its name is called High Place to this day.'" Therefore say to the house of Israel, 'Thus says the Lord GOD, "Are you defiled in the same way as your fathers? And do you commit whoredoms after their abominations? For when you offer your gifts, when you make your sons to pass through the fire, you defile yourselves with all your idols, even to *this* day. And shall I be inquired of by you, O house of Israel? *As I live,*" says the Lord GOD, "I will not be inquired of by you"' (vs 27-31).

- You're not going to come and question Me!
- I've done all of this!
- I've been gracious!
- I've been good!
- I've been kind!
- I forebear!

Verse 32: "'And what comes into your mind shall not come to pass at all—in that you say, 'We will be like the heathen, like the families of the countries, to serve wood and stone.'"

That is a prophecy we can carry unto this day, that we'll have a great one-world religion where we all get along.

Verse 33: "'As I live,' says the Lord GOD, 'surely with a mighty hand, and with a stretched out arm, and with fury poured out, I will reign over you'" (v 33). Eventually it's going to be. Finally they will repent.

Verse 43: "'And there... [when He finally brings them out of captivity] ...you shall remember your ways and all your doings in which you have

been defiled. And you shall loathe yourselves in your own sight for all your evils, which you have committed. And **you shall know that I am the LORD** when I deal with you for My name's sake, not according to your wicked ways nor according to your corrupt doings, O house of Israel,' says the Lord GOD." (vs 43-44). They're going to know then!

We've covered enough of Hebrews 4:1-9. Go back through the study paper. Why do we have so much Sunday-keeping? I was talking to a man who said he spent some time in Israel and Jerusalem and he says that Jerusalem is a terrible city. He says to think of this: Friday the Muslims take off, so this section of the city has no business. Saturday the Jews take off and they close everything down in their section of the city. On Sunday the Catholics and Orthodox have their day and they close down their shops and businesses. So the truth is in Jerusalem you really have only four good shopping days of the week. When you come to Friday, if you're in the Jewish section you've got about a half a day.

Ezekiel 22:25: "There is a conspiracy of her prophets in her midst, like a roaring lion tearing the prey. They have devoured souls; they have taken the treasure and precious things; they have made many widows in her midst. Her priests have done violence to My law and have profaned My Holy things. They have put no difference between the Holy and the profane..." (vs 25-26).

All days are the same! What day do you worship on? *I worship every day*. What Sabbath is for you? *Everyday is a Sabbath for me; my Sabbath is in the Lord*. Not so!

"...and have not taught the difference between the unclean and the clean, and **they have hidden their eyes from My Sabbaths, and I am profaned among them**" (v 26). That's what happens.

Someone comes up in a Sunday-keeping church and says, 'I've been reading the Bible, what about the Sabbath?' *Don't worry about it! Christ did away with it! We are in the Sabbath-rest of God* and Christ has kept all the commandments for you. All you have to do is love God and be good. Whatever you feel is good, *that's good*. Whatever you feel is right, because you love God, *that's got to be right*.

Well, that's not what Hebrews 4:9 says: **"There remains, therefore, Sabbath-keeping for the people of God.** For the one who has entered into His rest... [Sabbath-keeping] ...he also has ceased from his works... [on the Sabbath] ...just as God *did* from His own *works*. We should be diligent therefore to enter into that rest..." (vs 9-11).

Weekly Sabbath, and also can pertain to the Kingdom of God ultimately. But if you don't diligently enter into the rest of the Sabbath, you aren't going to be in the Kingdom of God!

"...lest anyone fall after the same example of disobedience" (v 11)—which we just read of in Ezek. 20.

All Scriptures from *The Holy Bible in Its Original Order, A Faithful Version*

Scriptural References:

- 1) Mark 12:29-31
- 2) John 14:15
- 3) John 3:16
- 4) John 13:34
- 5) Matthew 5:43-48
- 6) 1 Corinthians 1:26-31
- 7) John 13:34-35
- 8) John 15:7
- 9) John 14:15
- 10) John 15:7-14
- 11) Exodus 31:12-13
- 12) Deuteronomy 5:12-15
- 13) Matthew 5:17
- 14) Acts 24:12-14
- 15) Ezekiel 20:1-7
- 16) Revelation 11:8
- 17) Ezekiel 20:7-12
- 18) Hebrews 4:9
- 19) Ezekiel 20:12
- 20) 1 John 2:3-6
- 21) Ezekiel 20:12-18
- 22) Amos 5:21-27
- 23) Ezekiel 20:19-33, 43-44
- 24) Ezekiel 22:25-26
- 25) Hebrews 4:9-11

Scriptures referenced, not quoted:

- Matthew 22
- Deuteronomy 8:3
- Matthew 4:4
- Luke 4:4
- Exodus 20
- Ephesians 2
- Hebrews 6

Also referenced:

- Book: *A Harmony of the Gospels* by Fred R. Coulter
- Booklet: *How Did Jesus Fulfill the Law and the Prophets*
- Reference Paper: *Hebrews Study 4:1-9*

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