

LESSON 13



THE REST GIVEN BY GOD

Scripture Text: Matthew 11:28-30; Hebrews 4:9-11

Israel as a nation was not in Canaan. They were now in the land promised them by the Lord. If they would obey and keep His commandments, He would fight their battles and give them victory over their enemies and give them rest. He would provide all they would need.

It is important that we leave old Israel and look at the rest given the new Israel by Jesus Christ. This rest is victory over sin. The presence of the Holy Spirit in the heart gives love, peace, joy, and hope of eternal life in Heaven. This is soul rest. Only Jesus Christ can give it. Today's study is really a study in values.

MEMORY VERSE: *Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.*

—*Matthew 11:28*

The Great Invitation

Matthew 11:28 Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden. The ones to whom Jesus will give rest are those who are tired of being loaded down with the problems, fears, and regrets of sin. Sin is life's heaviest burden. David wrote, "Neither is there any rest in my bones because of my sin. For my iniquities are gone over mine head: as an heavy burden they are too heavy for me" (Psalm 38:3-4). No one is too crushed under sin for Jesus to set free (Hebrews 7:25). Jesus will give rest only to those who come unto Him. The world gives outward, temporary things. Only God can give rest to the soul that lasts for all eternity. The Lord will give, but our part is to come unto Him in faith to receive. It is not in anything we know about Christ that we find this rest, peace, and power; it is in Christ Himself. Our salvation centers in a Person, and that Person is a divine Savior.

Yoked With Christ

Matthew 11:29-30 Take my yoke upon you . . . and ye shall find rest unto your souls. When we turn to Christ in repentance by faith in His atoning blood, He takes us unto Himself. We wear His yoke to serve Him. Jesus uses the figure of the yoke to describe the relationship between Him and His followers. We recall, first of all, that the yoke is put on the shoulders of the ox, not to burden him but to enable him to draw a heavy load with comparative ease. Also, the yoke always rests on two animals, never on one. Together they pull the heavy load. Jesus declared that no disciple is left to face life alone or to bear its burdens alone. Christ and the believer are yoked together.

Of what does the yoke consist? It consists of faith, trust, a love for Christ's precious teachings, and an assurance of His presence in our lives day by day. When we have these things, we are yoked to Him, and when we are yoked to Him, the burdens of life are no longer too heavy for our shoulders and hearts to bear. **For my yoke is easy . . . burden is light.** It is easy and light because He puts rest into our souls. When the heart is at rest, outside burdens lose their greatest weight. Soul rest is the blessing the Sabbath day symbolized. Every one of us bears a yoke. Many are yoked to the world and Satan, and such yokes are hard to bear. They are taken on because they think they will make life an intolerable burden. The world regards the yoke of Christ as intolerably heavy. That is because worldly-minded

men do not realize the heaviness of the burden under which they stagger day by day in an attempt to find happiness.

Rest Is a Condition

Hebrews 4:9-11 There remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God. Only God's people enjoy this rest. Rest is not a day but a way of life. Rest is not a "something" but a condition. It is entered through belief in the shed blood of Christ. Unbelief kept most of Israel from entering (verses 6-8). They kept the day but missed the spiritual rest.

This rest, this sabbath, the people of God are living in is freedom from sin. It is the holy life. **He also hath ceased from his own works.** Our own works are the works of the flesh. To cease from our works is to repent of our sin, turn from it, turn to Christ, die to self, and yield the open heart to the Holy Spirit to enter and to take control. When we have salvation, we have entered the life of soul rest. It is called walking in the Spirit (Romans 8:1-2; Galatians 5:16). One walking in the Spirit is keeping the sabbath, not the day but the life, not the shadow but the fulfillment.

There is fullness of life awaiting every one of us if we will but humble our hearts to receive it. Praise God at all times for the things which are really worthwhile. Take them to your own heart, for they are a yoke which is easy; they are a burden which is light. Jesus Christ is the open door by which we enter into that rest, both here and in the life beyond the grave.

JUST A THOUGHT

**Jesus Christ Himself is the source of all blessings;
they are reserved for men alone.**