

Script: Lesson 2, the Shadow of Things to Come

Good morning and welcome to **Lesson 2** of our study of **the Shadow of Things to Come**. For the next 11 weeks we will be doing a deep dive into Paul's statement in **Colossians 2:16-17** where he says,

"Therefore no one is to act as your judge in regard to food or drink or in respect to a festival or a new moon or a Sabbath day—things which are a mere shadow of what is to come; but the substance belongs to Christ."

Last week we discussed the greater context of that verse with an overview of Colossians 1 and 2. I shared with you the Judaizers' argument that had begun to infect the Colossian church with a fear over whether or not they were practicing their faith "correctly," because if they are not practicing their faith correctly, then they are running the risk of displeasing God, being "cut off" (however you define that), and being put out of the congregation. In other words, they might lose their salvation and never enter the Messiah's kingdom. The Judaizers have introduced a bunch of legalistic practices that come out of the Mosaic Laws—not all the laws, mind you, just a selection of them—which they believe are counted toward their righteousness before God. There is nothing wrong with what they are doing, per se. The problem is in their reason for practicing these things. Nothing that we do counts as righteousness before God apart from believing in Christ. When we believe in Christ and accept His death on the cross as atonement for our sins, then His righteousness is accounted to us and our salvation and place in His kingdom are assured. The pursuit of our own righteousness through legalistic practices does nothing for us. It is not meant to be the focus of our Christian walk. But the Judaizers have gotten the Colossians into the weeds over certain practices and are robbing believers of their security in their relationship with God through Christ and their assurance of their salvation. And so, Paul goes to bat against this argument and these legalistic practices.

Here in **Colossian 2:16-17**, Paul remarks on four specific practices.

- **What you eat and drink.** What you eat and drink are part of a **daily** practice.
- **Sabbaths.** Those are **weekly** practices.
- **New moons.** Those are **monthly** practices, and finally,
- **Festivals**, which are **yearly** practices.

So we have daily, weekly, monthly, and yearly practices. The practice of all these together encompasses the totality of personal and community life. It is a way of life into which the Judaizers are drawing the Colossian church.

As I explained last week, the “food and drink” aspect is referring to maintaining a kosher diet, which includes a prohibition against pork and shellfish. This is one of the lifestyle practices that the Judaizers stress. Paul reassured the Colossians: you will not lose your salvation for eating a marshmallow. I know that sounds absurd, but that is where my Judaizers took me, to that level of restraint.

So, we have covered the food and drink aspect. For the remainder of the semester we will focus on the Sabbaths, new moons, and festivals, beginning with the **study of the Sabbaths**. Paul says these things are a mere shadow of things to come, and they are pictures of Christ. So, these are the questions we will be answering as we work through these topics.

- How are the Sabbaths a shadow of something to come?
- How are they a picture of Christ?

We will be spending several classes putting together the picture of the Sabbath and discuss how it relates to us in our modern day.

Before we get into our study, I need to explain our study method because there is a **strategy for gathering information**. The first thing that we must recognize is the difference between studying the Old Testament and the New. They both tackle the same topic, only in different ways. I remember hearing Chuck Swindoll say this one time, and it struck me as being the perfect description. He said, “the New Testament **explains** what the Old Testament **describes**.”

- The purpose of the Old Testament is to build a picture of something or someone to come. You will never get an explanation of anything in the Old Testament. You are given a picture of someone or a scenario or a law regarding some practice, and it is up to you to draw an understanding from the model: is it right, is it wrong, and why?
- The purpose of the New Testament is to explain or clarify that picture. The explanation might include:
 - **How the physical model translates into a spiritual model**, for instance, how Christ’s death on the cross now takes the place of the physical animal sacrifices and how He now serves as our great High Priest instead of going through Israel’s physical priesthood.
 - **Explain the doctrine or principles that are derived from the picture**. There are principles at the heart of the Old Testament pictures, kind of like Aesop’s fables. The Old Testament gives you a picture of, let’s say, the race between

the tortoise and the hare, and the New Testament gives you the principle of “slow and steady wins the race.”

- **Explain what the pictures represent.** For instance, in Galatians 4, Paul compares Sarah and Hagar, saying,

“But the son by the bondwoman was born according to the flesh, and the son by the free woman through the promise. This is allegorically speaking, for these women [speaking of Sarah and Hagar] are two covenants: one proceeding from Mount Sinai bearing children who are to be slaves; she is Hagar . . . But the Jerusalem above is free; she is our mother [meaning Sarah].” Galatians 4:23-24 NASB95

The Old Testament gave you the picture of two women, Sarah and Hagar. The New Testament provides the explanation of the picture.

So, why not just study the New Testament?

Paul said in 2 Timothy 3:16-17,

“All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; so that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work.”

He wrote that before the New Testament writings had been codified and were little more than a bunch of letters circulating among the churches. The Old Testament was still the predominant teaching. The letters being written to the churches were, to a large extent, meant to address particular problems that were cropping up, not to fully explain the Old Testament teachings. A lot of times, the NT instructions merely built on those old pictures, assuming that the readers had already grasped the basics. It wasn't a bad assumption in the days when Paul writes his letters because the people of his day lived much closer that culture. In Paul's day, the Temple was still standing and a physical priesthood was still offering physical sacrifices at the Temple, and the Jewish community was still practicing these laws. They had that old understanding. We are so far removed from that cultural experience that we need to go back and read about it. We need the Old Testament to bring us up to speed.

But even more than that, the Old Testament gives us a stability in our understanding of New Testament doctrine. It is like having that extra backing to what we teach. It is my personal belief that part of the reason we have a lot of dissension within the Church over doctrine is because the arguments are largely, if not solely, New Testament-based. The more I have studied the Old Testament, the clearer different doctrinal positions have become for me.

As we get into our study, you will see just how vital the Old Testament foundation is for understanding doctrinal points.

For this class we are going to study from both Testaments. First, we are going to build the picture from the Old Testament description. Then we will look at how the New Testament explains it and casts it forward.

There is a study method for tackling the Old Testament. I like to call it **click**

The Old Testament Jigsaw Puzzle

I have put a picture of Saint Basil Cathedral on the screen here. I have this jigsaw puzzle at home. Now, whether you love jigsaw puzzles or hate them, you understand there is a process for putting them together. **click**

Q: What is the process for putting the puzzle together?

- So, first you take a good look at the picture on the box.
- Then you start sifting through the box of puzzle pieces looking for the corners and edges. You always put together the edges first. Those give you the boundaries of the picture.
- What do you do then? Do you start building the picture line by line in a linear fashion? No. You pick a part of the picture to build—say the turret with the blue-and-white-striped dome. You sift through the box of puzzle pieces looking for the elements that build that turret: the blue and white dome, the striped band beneath it, the arches beneath that, and the big triangles at the bottom. That turret has those elements to it.
- Then you pick another turret—maybe the small one with the green and yellow laced dome. You do the same thing. Eventually the small pictures begin to overlap one another, so you get connecting pieces. And so you build the picture.

That's the basic strategy. Let's apply this method to the Old Testament picture. **click**

- It would be nice to have the overall picture given to you, but we don't. So, we are building this blind. To start with, we only have one definitive edge, that is, "in the beginning," and maybe a few pieces of "end" events—but not all of them. So, we will begin **by identifying the "first" things**. Where does the picture begin in history? It will help to have a timeline to help us place the picture in history, so I will give you that.

- Let's say the turret with the blue-and-white-striped dome is the Sabbath. We are going to sift through the box (that is, the Old Testament) of puzzle pieces (those are the verses) looking for the elements that build the picture of the Sabbath.

Keep in mind, the Lord did not give Israel the whole box of pieces to begin with. He gave them part of the box, and then He added more pieces to the box over time. We have the benefit of having all the pieces in the box.

The picture will have different elements to it, for instance:

- Laws governing its practice
- Past events that happened on the Sabbath to be remembered.
- Prophetic events of things to come.

We put those element together to form the picture of the Sabbath.

- We do the same with the new moon and the Feast of Trumpets. Those three pictures will overlap one another.

This is how we are going to tackle the Old Testament picture, starting with the Sabbath. The question is: how do we find the puzzle pieces?

We will do that with a **word study** of the word, **Sabbath**. If you were in our “how to study the Bible class,” the instructors stressed the need to do word studies, so we are going to practice doing word studies this semester.

Using a concordance and a lexicon, we will pull out all the verses that have to do with the word, Sabbath, in the original languages:

- Greek: *Sabbaton* and *sabbatismos*
- Hebrew: *Shabbath* (that is the original name from which we get the word Sabbath. This is the proper name/noun) and *shabbath* (the action verb that is at the core of understanding the Sabbath. You have to study the core action associated with the names to grasp the concept. It's kind of like calling someone a joker. The person you are speaking to won't understand what it means to be a joker if they don't understand what it mean to joke. It is the same thing here. Some of the core actions might surprise you).

These are the words we will study when putting together the picture of the Sabbath. We are going to use two main study tools to do this. First . . .

A concordance. A concordance is **an index of verses** where a particular word is found. It is kind of like searching for a keyword on the internet. You type in the keyword or topic you

are looking for, and you get a list of results—articles or videos—in which the word or topic is mentioned. And so you read the article or watch the video.

Old Testament word studies are no different. The Sabbath will be our key word to look up in the concordance. The concordance I am using will include a link to the lexicon.

A lexicon. A lexicon is **a dictionary of Hebrew and Greek words.**

It gives you the definition of the word and how it is used in a sentence.

The concordance and lexicon I will be using are **Strong's Exhaustive Concordance and Lexicon** as well as some other study tools found on the **Blue Letter Bible website**. There are more robust lexicons out there, but this the one I know how to use. Just be aware, that if you want to access the Blue Letter Bible study tools, you can't use the BLB app. You have to open your internet browser and go to the website, BlueLetterBible.org. It is best to do this on a laptop or tablet. You can use your phone, but it is not easy.

So, let's get started.

[Flash Cards] There will be a lot of verses that go into this picture, so to keep you from getting bogged down with flipping through your Bible, I have put them on **flash cards** for you. *(For those of you watching online, you can just watch. I will put the cards up on the screen as we go.)*

In the deck of flash cards, you will find two sets of cards:

- The black-edged cards represent a timeline
- The yellow cards are the verse cards.

Let's establish the timeline first. At the top of your table, lay out the black cards on the table in a row. As we go through the yellow cards, we will put them onto of the appropriate stack once we are done with them. From left to right, the order of the black cards should begin with

- 1) **Eden to Egypt** (This is the book of Genesis)
- 2) **The Wilderness Years** (This covers Exodus thru Deuteronomy)
- 3) **The Kingdom Years** (This begins when Joshua brings them into the land and continues through the prophetic books up until the time of the Babylonian exile. I have listed the prophets of that era on the card. There is an asterisk besides Jeremiah and Ezekiel because they carry over into the day of the exile.)
- 4) **The Exile Years** (Daniel is the main prophet for this time period. The book of Esther also fits into this category)

- 5) **Return to the Land** (The return to the Land begins with the return from exile recorded in Ezra and Nehemiah and the post-exilic prophets and ends with Christ's death on the cross. The gospel accounts are technically part of the Old Testament in terms of how a relationship to God is governed.
- 6) **Church Age** (This began after Christ's death and resurrection and extends into the future. The rest of the New Testament writings fit into this time period.
- 7) **Messiah's Kingdom & Beyond** (This is the focus of the book of Revelation speaking about Christ's second coming and beyond).

These are the big chunks of time that I use to help me frame the unfolding picture of Christ. A timeline will help us establish where a picture begins and how it revealed over time. Remember, God didn't tell Israel everything up front. He revealed His plan in stages.

Before we get to the verse cards, I need to show you how I found them. I'm going to go to the Blue Letter Bible website and begin our word study.

[Blue Letter Bible homepage]

This is the Blue Letter Bible home page. The best way to begin our study of the Sabbaths is simply to go to our Colossians verse. So, I will type Colossians 2:16 in the search field, and then I will select the version of the Bible I want to use. The field will default to the KJV, but you can use the pull-down menu to change the version. For the purpose of word studies, it is best to use one of the NASB versions, and I will show you the reason for that once we get into the verses. Since we will be in this version extensively for this study, I have set it as my default using the button at the bottom of the list where it says "set primary and Parallel translation preferences."

Press the magnifying glass, and it takes us to . . . the Bible passage. There is our verse, highlighted. The Bible study tool we will be using are found in the "Tools" button to the left of the verse. When we click that button, a panel opens up below the verse.

At the top of the panel, we have some option buttons: Interlinear, Bibles, Cross-Refs, Commentaries, Dictionaries, and Misc. The only two I use are the Interlinear page (which is the default view we see here) and the Bibles page. The Bibles page shows you how the verse reads across different Bible versions, which can be helpful. Let's go back to the interlinear page.

On this page we find the words of our verse. The words, in English, are listed on the left. Let's scroll down to find the word Sabbath. Next to the English word we find a Strong's reference number, G4521. (That takes us to the lexicon information. We will go there in a moment.) It also shows us what the word looks like in the original Greek. Under the Greek

word, they have given us an English rendering of it—Sabbaton. This is where we will begin our word study. Let's click on the link to the lexicon.

There is a lot of information on this page, but I don't want to go into all of it yet, because we need to begin in the Old Testament. At the top, in the Root Word field, we find the Hebrew equivalent of this word, so let's click that link. We need to drill down into this.

The link takes us to the Hebrew word, Shabbath. You can see how it is pronounced in the pronunciation field. Shabbath. This is the word that we have anglicized into the word, Sabbath. If we scroll down a bit, we find an outline of how the word is used in the Old Testament. It is the Sabbath, and the word crops up in the context of a Sabbath day, as part of the Day of Atonement, a Sabbath year, in regard to a week in general (from Sabbath to Sabbath), and referring to the produce of the Sabbath year. Where did this list come from? It comes from the verses in which the word is found, which are listed at the end of the page. Let me scroll down to the concordance results. We can see that the word occurs 111 times in 89 verses, and then it lists the verses. In a quick glance at the verse, you will see little red-letter numbers after some of the words. These red notes tell you which English word is being translated as the word, Shabbath.

This is why I use the NASB. Only the NASB version gives you this note to tell you which word in the English is the actual word in the Hebrew or Greek. None of the other versions will have the red note. But this is very helpful because sometimes it is hard to tell which English word in the verse corresponds to the Hebrew word you are studying. We will see that in a minute.

Now, we aren't done drilling down into this word yet. We are going to return to the top of the page and look at the Root Word field. It says that Shabbath is the intensive form of another word. When we click on that word, we find the word . . . shabbath—only this time it isn't the proper name. It is a verb—an action verb. This is where we want to start, at the primitive root. Let's look at how it is used in the Bible. Shabbath, as an action, means:

- To cease, desist, rest

In other words, when you read the English word "cease" in your Bible, it might be this word, *shabbath*. When you read the English word, *rest*, it might be this word, *shabbath*, or it may be another word for rest. There are different kinds of "rest" in the Hebrew, of which *shabbath* is only one. We will talk about that. But the word doesn't just mean to cease, desist, or rest. Depending on how it is used in the sentence, it can mean to cause to cease, to put an end to, to exterminate or destroy, to remove—those are a kind ceasing that is part of the Sabbath picture. When you think of the Sabbath, do you think of something being destroyed?

- The word, *shabbath*, is used in a second sense that means “to keep the Sabbath.” You go through the motions associated with the Sabbath.

So, we see there is some depth to the concept of *shabbath*-ing. You can *shabbath* in a number of different ways. To get a better sense of this, we need to look at the actual verses where this word occurs and what is going on in that context. And so we scroll down to the verses at the bottom. These are where we are going to begin our study today.

We see that the word is used 71 times in 67 verses—usually multiple times in any given passage. These are the verses I have put on your yellow flash cards. We are going to begin working through them today.

What we are looking for is what has ceased, and in what sense. Is it in the sense of resting, or destroying, or otherwise putting an end to something? And who is doing the *shabbath*-ing, God or man? What happens when God *shabbaths*? What happens when we do?

So, let’s begin with our yellow flash cards. Layout cards 1, 2, and 3. We will go through these in a group. On the cards, I have put the verses, and I have added the word *shabbath* where it crops up in the verse. We are going to read the verse, but do **not** read the word *shabbath* out loud when you read the verse. Just read the English.

[Card 1] Creation Week (Edenic Covenant). [Read the card]

Genesis 2:2-3 NASB *“By the seventh day God completed His work which He had done, and He rested **[shabbath]** on the seventh day from all His work which He had done. Then God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it, because on it He rested **[shabbath]** from all His work which God had created and made.”*

In small letters at the bottom, I have given you a little more information for context. When God made the earth, and put man in it, He gave man some directions for ruling over his realm. We call this the **Edenic Covenant** (Genesis 1:26-29, 2:16-17), and it states that mankind (male and female) were created in God’s image. They were to rule over the animal kingdom. They were to reproduce and inhabit the entire Earth. They were to eat only fruits and vegetables. Eating the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil was forbidden. These are the rules for living in God’s created world.

The seventh day of creation is where the first *shabbath*-ing is mentioned in the Bible. This is how it became known as the Sabbath, because of this action God performed.

Q: God *shabbath*-ed in what sense?

Even as life is beginning, the LORD begins to develop this idea of ceasing. So we have a literal beginning, but also an end. There is a shadow of an end picture in that.

There are a few other details that we need to fill in for this day. First of all, there is something missing on the seventh day that the rest of the days have. All the other days of creation end with this formulaic statement:

“ . . . There was evening and there was morning, one day.”

“ . . . There was evening and there was morning, a second day.”

“ . . . a third day.”

“ . . . a fourth day.”

“ . . . a fifth day.”

“ . . . There was evening and there was morning, the sixth day.”

But this formulaic is missing on the seventh day. It just says that God blessed the seventh day because on it He rested. The Sabbath day is a day without a night. It is a day that has an eternal quality about it that suggests an age of time.

Q: Is there another place in the Bible that describes a day without a night?

In Revelation 21, John tells us a vision that he has of a day without a night.

“Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth passed away, and there is no longer any sea. And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God ... I saw no temple in it, for the Lord God the Almighty and the Lamb are its temple. And the city has no need of the sun or of the moon to shine on it, for the glory of God has illumined it, and its lamp is the Lamb. ... In the daytime (for there will be no night there) its gates will never be closed;”

(Revelation 21:1-2, 22-23, 25 NASB)

The new heaven and new earth are like the Sabbath. They have an eternal quality about them because they have only day time but no night. And so we have established an end point to the big puzzle.

The next context in which the word *shabbath* crops up is in the Flood account. We go from life created to life destroyed.

Q: What happened in between? Was there another “ceasing” moment?

[Card 2] Life in Eden ceases (Adamic Covenant)

Because Adam and Eve sinned, they were removed from the garden. Life in Eden ceased, and God gave them new rules going forward—the Adamic Covenant.

There would be enmity between the serpent and Eve and her descendants. Childbirth would be painful for women. There would be marital strife between husband and wife. The earth is cursed with thorns and thistles. Survival would be a struggle. Death was introduced and became the inescapable fate of all living things.

Even though the word *shabbath* isn't mentioned in these passages, being sent out of the garden is a *shabbath*-ing moment. Life, as it had been, ceased, and human life moved forward under new conditions and with a very different relationship with God.

[Card 3] The Flood (Noahide Covenant) I have given you more than just the one verse with the word *shabbath* in it, just to establish the context.

Genesis 8:20-22 NASB *“Then Noah built an altar to the LORD, and took some of every kind of clean animal and some of every clean bird and offered burnt offerings on the altar. The LORD smelled the soothing aroma, and the LORD said to Himself, ‘I will never again curse the ground on account of man, for the intent of man’s heart is evil from his youth; and I will never again destroy every living thing, as I have done. While the earth remains, seedtime and harvest, cold and heat, summer and winter, and day and night shall not cease [shabbath].’”* [And there is our word, *shabbath*. Last time it was translated as rest. Now it is translated as cease.]

Q: How was the Flood a *shabbath*-ing event?

Q: The LORD promises that these conditions for life will remain as long as this earth, as we know it, remains. When will the earth change?

Revelation 21:1 NASB95 – *“Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth passed away, and there is no longer any sea.”*

There is a little more to the Noahide covenant. This part is God's covenant with His creation, but there are a few more rules that He gives to Noah and his family. God goes on to say in Genesis 2:1-7:

“And God blessed Noah and his sons and said to them, ‘Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth. The fear of you and the terror of you will be on every beast of the earth and on every bird of the sky; with everything that creeps on the ground, and all the fish of the sea, into your hand they are given. [Man is to rule the animal kingdom.]

Every moving thing that is alive shall be food for you; I give all to you, as I gave the green plant. Only you shall not eat flesh with its life, that is, its blood. [Humans will eat meat, but there are some rules for not eating it with the blood in it. The blood becomes a sacrosanct thing.]

Surely I will require your lifeblood; from every beast I will require it. And from every man, from every man's brother I will require the life of man. Whoever sheds man's blood, by man his blood shall be shed, for in the image of God He made man. [This is the beginning of human government. Man is given the command to establish courts of justice by which murder is judged and capital punishment is rendered. Human courts and authorities are given the power to exact a death penalty.]

Q: As you look across these three cards, there is an element that each *shabbath*-ing event has in common. What is it?

Covenants. In each case, a way of life comes to an end, and another begins with a new set of rules that would govern life and a new way of relating to God. We will keep that in mind and look for covenants in future cards.

Put these cards on the “Eden to Egypt” stack. Lay out cards #4-8.

[Card 4] Bondage in Egypt

Exodus 5:5-8 NASB *“Again Pharaoh said, ‘Look, the people of the land are now many, and you would have them cease **[shabbath]** from their labors!’ So the same day Pharaoh commanded the taskmasters over the people and their foremen, saying, ‘You are no longer to give the people straw to make bricks as previously; have them go and gather straw for themselves. But you shall impose on them the quota of bricks which they were making before; you are not to reduce any of it. Because they are lazy, for that reason they cry out, “Let us go and sacrifice to our God.””*

Under Pharaoh’s kingship, God’s people had no rest. Under God’s kingship, they had rest. Pharaoh didn’t provide for them, but God will. Israel’s exodus out of Egypt was a *shabbath*-ing moment when life as they knew it changed and their relationship with God changed.

[Card 5] The First Sabbath Day Observed

Exodus 16:29-30 NASB *“See, the LORD has given you the Sabbath; therefore He gives you bread for two days on the sixth day. Remain every man in his place; let no man go out of his place on the seventh day. So the people rested **[shabbath]** on the seventh day.”*

The same command is reiterated in Exodus 23:12:

Exodus 23:12 NASB *“For six days you are to do your work, but on the seventh day you shall cease **[shabbath]** from labor so that your ox and your donkey may rest **[nuakh]**, and the son of your female slave, as well as the stranger residing with you, may refresh themselves.”*

Notice that the seventh day is called a day of ceasing, but it includes another kind of rest—the *nuakh* rest. It is not enough for a servant to cease working. They need to be able to sit down and relax. Sitting down is part of Sabbath rest, but it is a separate aspect of rest that God is going to develop later on.

Q: How do you experience into the LORD's rest on the Sabbath day?

Q: Can you relax if you are worried about having food to eat?

When you *shabbath*, you are to cease worrying as well. *Shabbath*-ing is about entering into a new dynamic relationship with God. The first thing God teaches His people is the necessity of trusting Him. **The Sabbath was a trust-building exercise.** Those who trusted God entered into that experience of rest. Those who did not trust God did not enter into that rest.

God begins small—just trusting Him for one day—but then that trust gets tested over increasingly longer periods once they enter the Land.

[Card 6] The Sign of the Sabbath (Mosaic Covenant)

The first Sabbath day was observed even before they came to Mount Sinai and received the commandments. Now they receive the commandments.

Exodus 31:13, 17-18 NASB *“But as for you, speak to the sons of Israel, saying, ‘You shall surely observe My Sabbaths; for this is a sign between Me and you throughout your generations, that you may know that I am the LORD who sanctifies you. ... It is a sign between Me and the sons of Israel forever; for in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, but on the seventh day He ceased [shabbath] from labor, and was refreshed.’ When He had finished speaking with him upon Mount Sinai, He gave Moses the two tablets of the testimony, tablets of stone, written by the finger of God.”*

At Mount Sinai, God delivers the BIG picture of what a relationship with Him entails. This is the Mosaic Covenant.

The Sabbath was a sign for the children of Israel—a signature act that characterized their relationship with God. It wasn't their works that identified them with God but their *ceasing* from that works-driven life. For six days they would work, and then on that seventh day, they would stop relying on their works to provide for them, but rest in the provision the LORD had made for them by His grace. The Sabbath prefigured a coming day when God's people would make that transition from works-based living to grace-based living, and that grace-based living wouldn't just be for a day. It would characterize an age.

There is some irony here because the Mosaic Covenant itself contains a long list of physical things Israel had to do in order to have a relationship with a holy God. There were sacrifices and purification rituals, on top of all the lifestyle and government laws. They lived life, doing these things, in order to be deemed righteous before God.

But even though it was a physical task for them, ceasing from works, week in and week out, was meant to prepare Israel for a future spiritual transition from works-based righteousness to grace-based righteousness. The day was coming when this kind of works-based righteousness would cease, and their relationship with God would transition to grace-based righteousness granted by God's provision—the death of His Son on the cross.

This is part of what the Sabbath prefigured—the change in how God's people would relate to Him. Making that transition takes faith and trust that God will provide. It was meant to create a mindset that accepts that the relationship with God would undergo another change at some point. One way of life would cease, and a new way of life would begin with a new way of relating to God.

In this sense, the Sabbath prefigures Christ's work in His first advent, facilitating that transition into grace-based righteousness, which is the issue at the heart of Paul's battle with the Judaizers. They are trying to keep the Sabbath as a way of being righteous before God without understanding that the transition had been made. Righteousness is no longer according to our works and keeping all those regulations. Time has ticked over into the age of Sabbath grace.

Even as Paul is arguing this with these Judaizers, he makes the statement that the Sabbath is *still* a shadow of something to come. We have seen how it is part of Christ's first coming. Now we need to look for how it becomes part of His second coming.

[Card 7] The Sabbath Year

Leviticus 25:2 NASB *"Speak to the sons of Israel and say to them, 'When you come into the land which I shall give you, then the land shall have [shabbath] a Sabbath to the LORD.'"*

Notice the phrase, "when you come into the Land."

Q: Could Israel keep all of the commandments while wandering in the wilderness?

No. Because these Laws, in their totality, were really meant to govern a kingdom-community in the Land, and caring for the Land itself is part of the covenant.

So we understand that even though the commandments are given, there are circumstances under which they cannot be carried out, and God drives those changes of circumstances.

[Card 8] Blessing & Cursing

Leviticus 26:6 NASB (blessing) *“I shall also grant peace in the land, so that you may lie down, with no one to make you afraid. I shall also eliminate **[shabbath]** harmful animals from the land, and no sword will pass through your land.”*

Leviticus 26:34-35 NASB (cursing) *“You, however, I will scatter among the nations and will draw out a sword after you, as your land becomes desolate and your cities become waste. Then the land will restore its Sabbaths all the days of the desolation, while you are in your enemies’ land; then the land will rest **[shabbath]** and restore its Sabbaths. All the days of its desolation it will have the rest **[shabbath]** which it did not have on your Sabbaths, while you were living on it.”*

Until the spiritual relationship between God made the next grand transition, keeping the Laws was the only way for Israel to maintain a relationship with Him, and God warned them what would be the blessings and curses if they didn’t keep these commandments.

The curses reflect the *shabbath*-ing theme. If Israel ceased obeying these commandments, God would cause things to cease for Israel. He lists five increasing degrees of discipline:

#1: Fear and Fruitlessness: Their sense of security and prosperity will cease.

#2: Famine: The Land will cease to produce.

#3: Plague and Predatory Beasts: Sickness and that which is bestial in nature will abound. Travel will cease.

#4: Besieged by enemies. The people will gather together for security and protection from enemies but end up isolated and on rations. The supply of bread and water ceases. Once cut off from food supplies and resources, the people will resort to cannibalism.

#5: Destruction and Exile. He will desolate the Land and exile His people.

God gives Israel this bucket load of laws to follow as part of the Mosaic Covenant. They can’t keep all the laws during the wilderness journey because many of these laws applied to life in the Land of Israel. In the wilderness, they can only keep the Sabbath day, but once they come into the land, then a cycle of Sabbath years begins.

There are a few more verses that talk about the actual practice of the Sabbath, but we will come back to those in the next few classes. We need to finish building the picture of “ceasing” before we get to the laws for Sabbath practice. We are looking at the spirit of the Law, and not the letter.

So, we have come to the end of our session today, and we have begun to glean a picture of shabbathing or ceasing out of these first 8 cards. So let’s summarize the elements we have identified so far.

- When building a picture puzzle, it is important to note the “firsts,” that is, where the picture begins on the timeline. In this case, the **first ceasing** was when
 - **God ceased on the seventh day** of Creation. There was another first
 - when **Israel began to observe the Sabbath** on the way to Mount Sinai. God ceased and then man ceased.
- We noted that the seventh day was **a day without a night**, suggesting that it might represent a longer period of time, like an age.
- It is a day (or an age) that completes a period of time
- Ceasing mark major transitions
 - They mark when one way of life ceases and another begins.
 - They mark a change in the way man relates to God.
 - They mark a weekly transition from a week of works-based living to a day of grace-based living (If we look at the day as an age, then it marks the transition from an age of works-based righteousness to an age of grace-based righteousness)
 - As part of the Mosaic covenant agreement, if Israel ceased obeying the commandments, then God would put an end to some things as part of her discipline, ending ultimately in exile from the land. Those are the transitions.
- On card six, we noted that the sign of the covenant would be the day when God’s people ceased from their work.
- Finally, ceasing are often followed by new covenants

I want to come back to this idea of the *shabbath*-ing on the seventh day (or age) as being a completion of a period of time. This idea of a “day” representing a somewhat fluid length of time is Scriptural.

Genesis 5:23 says, “So all the days of Enoch were 365 years.” Thus, days can be years.

Psalms 90:4 NASB95 says, “For a thousand years in Your sight are like yesterday when it passes by, or as a watch in the night.” Thus, a thousand years can be a day. That is more like an age of time.

Peter speaks of the **Day of the LORD** in 2 Peter 3:3-8, and I read:

“Know this first of all, that in the last days mockers will come with their mocking, following after their own lusts, and saying, ‘Where is the promise of His coming? For ever since the fathers fell asleep, all continues just as it was from the beginning of creation.’ For when they maintain this, it escapes their notice that by the word of God the heavens existed long ago and the earth was formed out of water and by water, through which the world at that time was destroyed, being flooded with water. But by His word the present heavens and earth are being reserved for fire, kept for the day of judgment and destruction of ungodly men. But do not let this one fact escape your notice, beloved, that with the Lord one day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years like one day.”

Jewish scholars over the ages have speculated that the seventh age (the Sabbath age) would be the age of the Messiah’s kingdom. Is He Lord of the Sabbath?

To answer the questions:

- How is the Sabbath the shadow of something to come?
- How is it a picture of Christ?

This is the last instance of *shabbath*-ing in the Wilderness Years. We will pick up next week with the next *shabbath*-ing which happens when they enter the Land.