

# The Need for Repentance

By Bill Parker

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**Bible Text:** Jeremiah 25:1-14  
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## Thirteenth Street Baptist Church

1812 13th Street  
Ashland, KY 41101

**Website:** [www.13thstbaptist.org](http://www.13thstbaptist.org)  
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Let's open our Bibles to the book of Jeremiah 25. Now, the title of the message this evening is "The Need for Repentance." The need for repentance. The passage of Scripture that Brother Bill just read in 2 Chronicles 36 reflects the historical time period of these chapters that we've been studying here of late in the book of Jeremiah. This is the setting of Jeremiah's prophecy and here in chapter 25, Jeremiah issues forth by the commission and the power and the word of God, the warnings to repent. Warnings to Judah, the people of Judah and the people of Jerusalem to repent. Repent. The issue of repentance, the reality of repentance is no option for the people of God. It's a necessity and we'll see that. But as we read through the first few verses of this chapter, what we're going to see is that all the warnings to repent that were issued by Jeremiah as the spokesman of God, as the prophet of God, that they went unheeded.

The people would not listen and what we have there is a picture of the natural man. The natural man. What is the natural man? That is the unregenerate man or woman. That's man as he is born into this world in sin, spiritually dead, totally depraved, without any inclination or desire for the things of the true and living God. It doesn't mean he can't be religious, he is, man by nature is religious but it's false religion. Man by nature is religious but it is religion that exalts man and lifts him up and gives him room to boast and that's what the problem is, "the natural man receives not the things of the Spirit of God neither can he know them." They are spiritually discerned. He is spiritually dead. And that's what we have here in the first few verses.

Listen to them. It says the word of the Lord, verse 1, "The word that came to Jeremiah concerning all the people of Judah, in the fourth year of Jehoiakim the son of Josiah, king of Judah (that was the first year of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon)," there is your setting there. "The which Jeremiah the prophet spake unto all the people of Judah, and to all the inhabitants of Jerusalem," this puts it in about the first attack, somewhere around the year of the first attack of Nebuchadnezzar and the Babylonian army upon Jerusalem that was followed by them taken captives back into Babylon. Bill read about that in 2 Chronicles 36. And Jeremiah, he preached for about 23 years to all the people of Judah and then to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, now that's everybody that lived in Jerusalem but specifically talking about the religious leaders: the king, the prophets, the priests of the temple, all of them. And those false prophets whose message was peace, peace when there was no peace, that could easily be proven wrong because Nebuchadnezzar had

already attacked, he was getting ready to attack Jerusalem and so they did not heed the word of God.

Look at verse 3, it says, "From the thirteenth year of Josiah the son of Amon king of Judah, even unto this day, that is the three and twentieth year," 23 years, "the word of the LORD hath come unto me, and I have spoken unto you, rising early and speaking," that reflects an eagerness to preach the word of God. Now we know Jeremiah wasn't always eager. Remember we read in an earlier chapter about he wanted to quit but he couldn't. But he said, "rising early and speaking; but ye have not hearkened," you didn't listen. You didn't obey. Man left to himself, man left to his own will, that's us by nature, isn't it?

He goes on and he says, "And the LORD hath sent unto you all his servants the prophets." Jeremiah wasn't the only true prophet of God, there were a few others, but very few compared to the false prophets. And those "prophets, rising early and sending them; but you have not hearkened," you have not hearkened, "nor inclined your ear to hear." You didn't even want to hear. Not only did you not obey what you heard but you didn't want to hear any more of it. That's what he's saying.

"They said, Turn ye again now every one from his evil way," and whatever evil way that was, "and from the evil of your doings," even your religion, "and dwell in the land that the LORD hath given unto you and to your fathers for ever and ever." Now, again, there are the terms of that conditional covenant which they break. Again, that's another testimony that man placed under any conditional covenant whereby he is commanded to earn or merit the blessings of God is an utter failure.

Now, another way of putting that is this: salvation is not by the works of men. If you believe that salvation at any time, to any degree, at any stage is by works, then you can forget the covenant of grace, you're under a covenant of works. Paul said it this way, he said if you be circumcised, for example, in other words if you think circumcision is the condition you must meet in order to earn or deserve it or merit God's blessing, he said this, "you are a debtor to do the whole law." You're under a covenant of works. You've just denied grace. You see, grace is salvation conditioned not on me or you but on Christ who fulfilled those conditions in his obedience unto death. That's why all the promises of God, the covenant promises of salvation and glory and blessedness, forgiveness, righteousness, justification, holiness, every one of them are in Christ, yea, and in Christ amen because he fulfilled the conditions, you see.

But go on. Verse 6, he said, listen, "And go not after other gods to serve them, and to worship them, and provoke me not to anger with the works of your hands." Now, he's talking about idolatry there but he's also talking about the religion of Cain. Salvation by works. It's an affront to God. It denies every attribute of God's glory because what we see in salvation by grace is every attribute of God's glory engaged in the salvation of sinners through Christ. Now, when a sinner comes before God presenting anything but Christ and him crucified, his blood, his righteousness alone, that's an affront to God. Isn't that right? Another way he puts it in the Old Testament, it's a stench in his nostrils whereas when we come to God pleading Christ, it's a sweet smell and savor. Do you see the difference?

Now, why is it such an affront to God? Because it denies every attribute. It denies his holiness. It denies his justice. It denies his truth. But it also denies his mercy and his grace and his love because all those are in Christ Jesus. Nowhere else.

So he said when you anger God "with the works of your hands," verse 6, "and I will do you no hurt." In other words, if you will cease to do that. Repentance. "I will do you no hurt." Well, they didn't listen. Remember he said it in Jeremiah 31, "which my covenant they break."

Verse 7 he says, "Yet ye have not hearkened unto me, saith the LORD," you have not repented, "that ye might provoke me to anger with the works of your hands to your own hurt." So here he is, Jeremiah the prophet, a priest for about 23 years to all these people. He preached a message of hope for sinners by the grace of God through the promised Messiah whom he identified as Jehovah Tsidkenu, the Lord our righteousness, and he preached a message of God's judgment and wrath against all who would come before God or seek salvation or blessedness from God in any other way. But did they heed God's word and repent? And the answer is no. The answer is no.

What about this issue of repentance? We read this morning in 2 Peter 3:9 about the long-suffering of God. The long-suffering, God is "long-suffering to us-ward," Peter said. That's his elect people. That's his chosen people. That is the redeemed of the Lord. And he says, "not willing that any of them should perish but that all should come to repentance." That's what God's goal for his people, repentance.

What is this repentance? In the Old Testament, the word actually indicated a change of direction as one going in one direction and turns around and goes the opposite; not just veering off the path but turning around and going the opposite way. In the New Testament, the word "repent" or "repentance" indicates "a change of mind." It is not just simply an intellectual thing, though, but it's a change of mind because of a great, miraculous, sovereign work of God, the Holy Spirit, in changing the heart of a sinner. It involves conviction of sin. That's what it is: Holy Spirit conviction of sin therefore the Holy Spirit who imparts life, spiritual life to dead sinners and gives them ears to hear and eyes to see so that with the heart they turn from themselves, from their idols, from their works, and they turn to the Lord Jesus Christ. In fact, repentance is in reality the goal of faith because it is in light of Christ that sinners are brought to repentance. Without seeing the right way, we cannot know the wrong way.

Look at Philippians 3. This is a passage that I always read when we are talking about repentance because it's one of the greatest examples. Paul, I believe he's a pattern here for the people of God, and what he virtually says here in Philippians 3:3, he says, "For we are the circumcision." Now, he's talking to Jew and Gentile here. So what does he mean "we are the circumcision"? The circumcision he's talking about, he defined it back in the book of Romans 2:28 and 29, it's circumcision of the heart and that's just an emblem, a symbol of the new birth, that giving of a new heart, that cutting away of the filth of the flesh. That's what repentance is and we've been circumcised in heart and ears. That's what he said.

Well, how do you know? What's the evidence? Well, we "worship God in the spirit." We worship God from the heart. We are not here just as a religious ceremony. We are not here just because we want people to see that we go to church. You know, somebody will say, "Well, we have to go to church somewhere." You know, I'm sad that people think that they have to go to church somewhere. I really am. I would rather you say, "I want to go to church. That's my heart desire. I want to worship God. I want to thank God tonight." Think about that. Somebody says, "Well, I don't want to go to church." Say it this way, "I don't want to thank God for the next breath I take. I don't want to thank God for saving my soul." Do you see what I'm saying? I want to express my gratitude to the Lord. I want to express my love for God, my love for the brethren. That's a heart thing. We worship God in the spirit.

And it also means this, it means we worship God not as we think he is. God is spirit but we worship God as he reveals himself to us through his word in Christ. You can't worship God without lifting up Christ. You can't worship God without preaching Christ. I don't care what you say. You might come in here tonight and get a moral peptalk but you haven't worshiped God until Christ is lifted up in the preaching of the Gospel. There are a lot of moral peptalks. And I'll be honest with you: we need morality. We need a lot of it. More of it. But that's not the Gospel. The Gospel is Christ and him crucified and risen again.

Then he says here, here's the next step. All right, we worship God in the spirit, here is the next evidence of the circumcised heart we "rejoice in Christ Jesus." Now, that word "rejoice" means "to boast." It doesn't mean to be happy. Now, there are other times in Scripture where joy and rejoice means to be happy, rejoice always, and again I say that means to be happy. But here the word "rejoice," it's the same word translated "glory" in Galatians 6:14 where Paul wrote, "God forbid that I should glory save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ." It means to boast. And I'm here to tell you, I've got something to boast about. I've got something to brag about. I've got someone to boast about and brag about and it's not me and it's not you, it's Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory. I'm going to brag on him. I want to tell you about him who is our hope.

So we boast in Christ, we have confidence in Christ, you see. I have confidence in Christ for my whole salvation. It's what Paul meant when he wrote in 2 Timothy 1:12, "For I know whom I have believed and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day." Well, what have I committed unto him? Now ask yourself that question: what have you committed unto him? "Well, part of my salvation." Well, that's not good enough. I've committed unto him my whole salvation, the forgiveness of all my sins by his blood alone. That's what I've committed unto Christ. I don't look to myself. I don't look to you. I don't look to the waters of baptism. I don't look to the church. I don't look to anyone for the forgiveness of my sin, I look to Christ and him alone and his blood alone.

What can wash away my sins? Nothing but the blood of Jesus. What can make me whole again? Nothing but the blood of Jesus. My complete acceptance before a holy God, my

justification, that's being cleared of all guilt, being declared righteous, I commit it unto him and him alone. His righteousness imputed. He is the Lord my righteousness and I've got no other plea but him. Somebody says, "Well, don't you plead your faith?" No, because it's not good enough. You see, my faith is in a Savior who is good enough. Do you understand that? And then I commit all of my final glory in heaven and all of my reward to him and not to myself. God forbid.

All right, so we boast in Christ. All right, here is the third evidence of the circumcised heart, "and have no confidence in the flesh." That's repentance right there. There is faith in Christ and repentance of dead works right there. Now, how did Paul get there? You know what happened with Paul the apostle on the Damascus Road. What was his name? Saul of Tarsus. He wasn't seeking the Lord, he was seeking what he thought was an idol, what he considered to be heresy. He was seeking out Christians to condemn them, have them judged, arrest them. He wasn't going to a prayer meeting. He wasn't on his knees in prayer. He had hatred in his heart, Saul of Tarsus, and what happened? God stopped him in his tracks on the Damascus road and revealed himself to him and in him.

And what happened to him? Well, here's how he describes it. Look at verse 7, "But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ." There is faith in Christ and repentance. "Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ, And be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith." We receive him by faith. That's the issue.

Then look at Romans 2. Turn to Romans 2 with me. Now, faith and repentance are both the gift of God. They are a gift of God's grace. They are not the product of a sinner's goodness. They are not the product of a sinner being less obstinate or less rebellious. I'll give you an example of what I'm talking about now. Now, Jonah, the prophet of God, was sent to Nineveh to preach and you know he went reluctantly, didn't he? That's an understatement, isn't it? But Jonah the prophet was sent to a place called Nineveh. You know about Nineveh. You read about it in the Old Testament. It's not one of the most religious places on earth, as they would say. But he was sent to Nineveh and he went reluctantly and he got there and he preached and what happened? The people of Nineveh repented. We've read it in the book of Jonah. Here's Jeremiah the prophet. He was sent to Jerusalem. To Jerusalem of all places, the city of God, the city of David where the temple of Solomon was, and he preached to them it says here 23 years but we know that there were other prophets that were sent. Isaiah about 100 years before Jeremiah. We could talk about all those others. They went to Jerusalem and they didn't repent. Now, my question: what's the difference between the people of Nineveh who repented and the people of Jerusalem who would not? What will most preachers tell you today? Well, those fellows in Nineveh, they were just a little less rebellious, a little less obstinate. They exercised their free will. Is that what happened? No. Not what the Scripture says. No sir. I'll tell you the difference was the sovereign grace and mercy of God in Christ. That was the difference.

But look here in Romans 2:1, he says, "Therefore thou art inexcusable, O man, whosoever thou art that judgest." What is he talking about? Well, he says, "for wherein thou judgest another, thou condemnest thyself; for thou that judgest doest the same things." Do you know what he's talking about there? He's talking about self-righteous judgment. It's like a religious person looking at another person and saying, "I know that person is under the judgment of God and condemned because that person is a sinner." Now, once you say that, do you know what you've done? You've just condemned yourself. And do you want to know why? Because you're a sinner too. I'm a sinner too. You're either a sinner lost in your sins or a sinner saved by grace. What's the hope for any sinner? God's grace in Christ. Mercy. That's what I need.

But look at verse 2. He says, "But we are sure that the judgment of God is according to truth against them which commit such things." Now, our judgments are not according to truth when we exercise that self-righteous judgment. That's hypocrisy. That's like saying, "Well, that person over there, they deserve to go to hell, but I don't." Well, what does the Scripture teach us? If God ever gave me or you or any of us what we deserve and what we've earned, what should it be? Eternal damnation. I preached that one time and a fellow told me after the service down south, he said, "Well, I know I'm not perfect but I've never done anything bad enough to deserve hell." And I told him, I said, "Sir, without Christ that's all you or me or any of us deserve is hell." The best of us and the worst of us. That's it. "Lord, if thou Lord shouldest mark iniquities, who would stand?" That's right and I believe David could say that. King David wrote that. I believe he could say that just as much while he's writing the 23<sup>rd</sup> Psalm as in any time in his life. You see, God doesn't give me what I deserve. "God be merciful to me the sinner."

Then look on, he says in verse 3, "And thinkest thou this, O man, that judgest them which do such things, and doest the same, that thou shalt escape the judgment of God? Or despisest thou the riches of his goodness and forbearance and longsuffering; not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance?" It's not the wrath of God that leads sinners to repentance, it's the goodness of God. Where do we find the goodness of God? In Christ. If there is any good, ultimate good now. I know even lost people receive good things but all those good things, my friend, unless they come to a saving knowledge of Christ, it ends up being a curse to them, doesn't it? That's what the Bible says. They are cursed when they sit down. It's a blessing to have a good chair to sit in, isn't it? The Bible says they are cursed when they sit down. It's a blessing to be able to get up on your own legs and stand up and walk, isn't it? That's a blessing. They are cursed when they stand up. It's a blessing to have good food to eat, isn't it? But those without Christ ultimately they are cursed when they eat. Do you see what I'm saying? If there is any ultimate goodness for any of us, where are we going to find it? In Christ. In Christ and him crucified and risen. Nowhere else.

But it's the goodness of God that leads thee to repentance. It's necessary in the salvation of sinners that we come to repentance and that repentance is the gift of God. And the nature of true godly repentance, it's not outward reformation or legal fears that bring us to make promises and drive us to works salvation. It's a change of mind, it's a change of heart in the power of the Holy Spirit to bring us out of ourselves and bring us to Christ.

Submit to him. Bow to him. "How much more," the apostle wrote, "shall the blood of Christ who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?"

Look back at Jeremiah 25. You see, repentance is the goal of faith. When you see the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ, you will not find any glory in self. Is that right? When you see the glory, the power of his blood, there is power in the blood. When you see the power of the blood, you won't find any power in yourself. You'll be like Daniel. He said, "My comeliness melts into corruption." When you see the glory and the value of his righteousness, you won't find any glory or value in your own. It will be him alone. He unto you therefore which believe, he is precious, nothing else is as far as salvation is concerned. Is that right?

Well, look here beginning at verse 8. There is something really interesting here that you need to see. He talks about seventy years here and I want you to see this. "Therefore thus saith the LORD of hosts; Because ye have not heard my words," you haven't repented, you haven't believed God, you haven't repented, "Behold, I will send and take all the families of the north, saith the LORD, and Nebuchadrezzar the king of Babylon, my servant, and will bring them against this land, and against the inhabitants thereof, and against all these nations round about," that includes Egypt, "and will utterly destroy them, and make them an astonishment, and an hissing," something that people will hiss at, "and perpetual desolations," continual destruction. "Moreover I will take from them the voice of mirth," there will be no happiness, "and the voice of gladness, the voice of the bridegroom," I believe that's speaking of the joy that people have at wedding ceremonies, "and the voice of the bride, the sound of the millstones, and the light of the candle." Now, we could make a spiritual application there, couldn't we? The voice of the bridegroom, that's Christ. He's the bridegroom. That's the preaching of the Gospel. There will come a day when that won't be around. There will be no Jeremiah, he's saying, to tell the truth. What would it be like to be without the word of God, the preaching of the truth, the preaching of the Gospel? What would it be without the candlelight of his truth?

Verse 11 he says, "And this whole land shall be a desolation," all of it shall be a desolation, "and an astonishment; and these nations shall serve the king of Babylon seventy years." That's the first time that it has been revealed in the book of Jeremiah, the prophet Jeremiah that he revealed to the people. "You are going into captivity and it's going to be seventy years."

Let's read on just a few more. He says, "And it shall come to pass, when seventy years are accomplished, that I will punish the king of Babylon." Do you see that? Babylon is called the instrument of God's judgment against Israel, against Judah. And yet God is going to punish Babylon. Well, that's one of those classic examples that we read that truth all the way back to Genesis where Joseph stood before his brethren and he told his brethren, he said, "You did evil. You meant it for evil but God meant it for good." And that's what's happening here. Sovereign God. The sovereign God of providence who is working all things after the counsel of his own will and who does what's right no matter how we think. Babylon is going to get what it deserves. You say, "But God used them to punish

Israel." Yeah, but Babylon meant it for evil. You see, we don't have the capacity to do anything evil for good, but God, he works it all, all things work together because why? Because God works it.

And he says, "I will punish the king of Babylon, and that nation, saith the LORD, for their iniquity, and the land of the Chaldeans," that's another name for Babylon, "and will make it perpetual desolations," just like Judah. Continual destruction. "And I will bring upon that land all my words which I have pronounced against it, even all that is written in this book, which Jeremiah hath prophesied against all the nations. For many nations and great kings shall serve themselves of them also: and I will recompense them according to their deeds, and according to the works of their own hands."

Now, let me just say a few words about this seventy years. You know, there was much much disobedience in Judah. I suppose if you took a tablet and a pen and you walked around and you said, "I'm going to record the sins that I see," not counting sins of the heart, not counting sins of omission. Let's say you were just going to say, "Well, I'm going to record all the sins that I see." There will be many many sins, so many that you would run out of ink and paper. That's the way it is with us, isn't it? Where sin abounded. And, again, sins of the heart, sins of thought, sins of motive, sins of omission, as well as sins of commission. You know what I'm saying. There is no way you could write them all down. Where sin abounded, overflowed me like a flood, drowning in a sea of sins, sin within, sin without. So there was much disobedience in Judah of which to repent. Not just one sin. Not just one sin now.

Now, how many sins deserve death? Two, three? No, just one. Any sin? All sin. James made a statement that ought to startle all of us. He said to be guilty of breaking one commandment is to be what? Guilty of all. Paul wrote that "he that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them, he is," what? "He is cursed." So this thing about tallying sins, you know, people talk about, "Well, when I get to the judgment, God is going to weigh my good works against my sin." Listen, let me tell you something: without Christ, we have no good works. Without Christ, all we are is sin and can do nothing but sin in the eyes of God. Nothing we do measures up. That's why it's called iniquity or in-equity. Even our best. That's why we need grace. That's why we need Christ. That's why we must have his blood and his righteousness alone.

But here there is one sin, one sin that sort of incorporates all sin, showing forth man's wicked attitude toward an unbelief of God, and this sin is set forth here by the punishment of seventy years in captivity. Now, why seventy years? Go back to 2 Chronicles 36. Remember what Bill read here. Here is this Jehoiachin, eight years old, he did that which was evil. He reigned about three months and 10 days, it says. A very short reign and God removed him. Do you know who he used to do it? Nebuchadnezzar. And then Nebuchadnezzar put a man in his place, Zedekiah. Remember, Jeremiah mentions Zedekiah. Zedekiah, you know, he was the one who sent the emissaries to Jeremiah that said, "Come and pray for us," and Jeremiah said, "It's too late. The judgment of God is upon you. Now submit to God's wrath." That's what we deserve. Take sides with God against yourself. And he was 21 years old when he began to reign and he rebelled against

Nebuchadnezzar and that's when Nebuchadnezzar came in and just stomped the whole city of Jerusalem, the temple, the walls to nothing but dust.

Look at verse 20 of 2 Chronicles 36. Listen to it, it says, "And them that had escaped from the sword carried he away to Babylon," that's one of the deportations, "where they were servants to him," that is to Nebuchadnezzar, "and his sons until the reign of the kingdom of Persia," that's when Cyrus, remember Cyrus is called God's anointed. Isaiah prophesied of Cyrus about 170 years before Cyrus. Cyrus came in and he freed up the people of Jerusalem and Judah but how long did it take? Verse 21, "To fulfil the word of the LORD by the mouth of Jeremiah, until the land had enjoyed her sabbaths: for as long as she lay desolate," the land, "she kept sabbath." What does that mean? It means she rested. Does that mean a parcel of land could keep the Sabbath? No, it means that land rested. There was no work done on it. There was no tilling of the land, of the soil, no breaking of the soil. It rested and it did it, "fulfill threescore and ten years," seventy years.

Now, what happened? Why this seventy years? Why is all this happening? Well, what Scripture tells us is this: for 490 years the people of Judah in Jerusalem had ignored the Sabbath law concerning the land. Now, you can find it, we won't turn their but mark it down, Leviticus 25. That's where it is. The Sabbath law. You know, they had many Sabbath laws. You know the seventh day Sabbath. They had Sabbath weeks but there was a Sabbath year for the land which said simply this: that the people, Leviticus 25:4 is where this is specifically said but you can look at the whole chapter, the people were to rotate their crops and let the fields lie fallow every seventh year. But apparently they had ignored that law for 490 years and as a result God said, "Well, I'm going to give the land a rest." And that equals seventy years, every seventh year.

Now, what's the lesson there? Well, the lesson is don't neglect the Sabbath, right? Don't neglect the Sabbath. Now, you know what the Seventh Day Adventists do with that, don't you? Of course they only talk about the seventh day, the weekly Sabbath under the old covenant. I don't know what they do with this every seventh year. I don't know. I guess they might have some farmers who do. I don't know. I don't know but they turn it into a legal system of works. You know that.

But what does it mean to us? Well, you know, Daniel he knew something about it. Look over in Daniel 9. Now, Daniel, here he is, one of them who was carried away into captivity for this seventy years. Listen in verse 1 of Daniel 9. He knew something about this. Daniel 9:1 it says, "In the first year of Darius the son of Ahasuerus, of the seed of the Medes, which was made king over the realm of the Chaldeans; In the first year of his reign I Daniel understood by books the number of the years, whereof the word of the LORD came to Jeremiah the prophet, that he would accomplish seventy years in the desolations of Jerusalem." Daniel read Jeremiah and he said, "I understood it by books, how it has come." And there is Daniel's prayer of repentance there for himself and the people of Judah.

And interesting enough, look over there in verse 24 of chapter 9. It ends up with a prophecy of the Messiah. Look at Daniel 9:24, "Seventy weeks," that's literally seventy

weeks of years which would equal what? 490 years. It's interesting, isn't it? God knows what he's doing. He's a good mathematician. "Seventy weeks are determined." Who determined that? God did. "Upon thy people and upon thy holy city," do you know what he's talking about? What he's talking about here is from the time of the rebuilding of the temple and here they are seventy years in Babylon, he gets them back into Jerusalem, they rebuild the temple and from the time that that temple is finished to the time that the Lord Jesus Christ came into the world was about 490 years. That's what he's talking about.

And what is the Messiah going to do? Listen, he's going "to finish the transgression." Now, how is he going to do that? By his death on the cross. He's going to make an end of sins by his death on the cross. He didn't make an end of sin, sin will make an end of us. He made an end of sin by his death on the cross. Our sins imputed, charged, accounted to him. He paid the debt in full. That's what it means when it says, "it behooved him." He came under obligation of the debt.

"And to make reconciliation for iniquity." Listen, he's going to reconcile God to his people and his people to God. God is a just God and a Savior. Then it says he's going "to bring in everlasting righteousness." He's going to fulfill all conditions of the covenant. He's going to satisfy the justice of God. He's going "to seal up the vision and prophecy." Everything in the Old Testament that prophesied of him, typified or promised of him, fulfilled right there. It is finished, he said. "And to anoint the most Holy." He's going to make away into the Holy of Holies. The veil was rent in two from top to bottom when he gave up the ghost.

Now, how does that all apply to this Sabbath thing? Well, the year there, Daniel, you know, he had been taken captive and he was preaching the Messiah just like Jeremiah and here is this seventy weeks and seventy years, all of it, it's no arbitrary time set but it's a determined time set by God before the foundation of the world concerning the Messiah and his great work and that's what corresponds to God's just punishment against sin. The punishment must fit the crime. You know, all the Sabbaths that were instituted and established and commanded by God under the old covenant had one purpose and that was to picture and typify the believing sinner's spiritual and eternal rest in Christ who is our Sabbath.

Turn to Hebrews 4 and we'll conclude with this. And listen, that's a lesson for us today. We are sinners and we have committed many many sins but the one sin that brings sinners under condemnation is what? Unbelief. Failing to rest in Christ and his finished work. If we reject Christ, we fail to rest in him. If we plead anything but his blood, we fail to rest in him. If we fail to submit to his righteousness as that which alone justifies us and entitles us to eternal life in glory, we fail to rest in him. If we choose our own way, then all sin will end in death. But if we have Christ, his blood cleanses us from all sin. His blood and righteousness. No sin is charged to us. We have righteousness in him.

Look at verse 1, "Let us therefore fear," Hebrews 4, "lest, a promise being left us of entering into his rest." And that's a good way to put it. There is a sense once it becomes

our rest but it is ultimately and by purchase and by work, his rest. "Any of you should seem to come short of it. For unto us was the gospel preached, as well as unto them: but the word preached did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in them that heard it." They didn't believe it. "For we which have believed do enter into rest." That's what faith is. Faith in Christ. He said, "Come unto me all ye that labor and are heavy laden and I will give you," what? "Rest." "For we which have believed do enter into rest, as he said, As I have sworn in my wrath, if they shall enter into my rest: although the works were finished from the foundation of the world." This is no new thing. "For he spake in a certain place of the seventh day on this wise, And God did rest the seventh day from all his works." That's the creation of the world. "And in this place again, If they shall enter into my rest. Seeing therefore it remaineth that some must enter therein, and they to whom it was first preached entered not in because of unbelief: Again, he limiteth a certain day, saying in David, To day, after so long a time; as it is said, To day if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts. For if [Joshua]," that's the name Joshua, "had given them rest," there is Joshua leading the people, the Hebrew children over into the Promised Land. Now if that had given them rest, the rest that he's talking about here, "then would he not afterward have spoken of another day." But look at verse 9, "There remaineth therefore a rest," a Sabbath, "to the people of God."

Now, right now today there remains a Sabbath for the people of God. Now, what is that? Well, it's not Saturday. That was the old covenant law and, my friend, it's not Sunday. What is the rest that remains for the people of God now? Verse 10, "For he that is entered into his rest, he also hath ceased from his own works, as God did from his." Now, whoever he's talking about here ceases from his works just like God did from his in creation.

Now, who is he talking about here? Is he talking about you or me? Is he talking about us going out here and working a week and then resting on Sunday? No, he's talking about Christ here. He did a work and after he did the work, what did he do? He rested. He sat down on the right hand of the Father. No priest had ever done that because the work was never finished under the old covenant. There were no chairs in the temple, in the Holy of Holies, even in the holy place. But Christ sat down. Having purged our sins, the Scripture says, he sat down. He did a work. He finished it and he entered into his rest, the rest that he took from finishing the work. From doing what work? Making an end of sin. Finishing the transgression. Bringing in everlasting righteousness.

Then verse 11, "Let us labour therefore to enter into that rest," enter into Christ, rest in Christ, believe in Christ, "lest any man fall after the same example of unbelief." And when they failed to keep those Sabbaths, any Sabbath, Sabbath day, Sabbath week, Sabbath year, whatever, what they were doing in essence was thumbing their nose at God's Messiah who those things typified and pointed to. You enter into his rest. You believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and that's all sin is put away in him.

All right, let's sing hymn 328, "Close to thee."