

Exod 03-12-07b

Anything in heaven, earth, or the water under the earth. This is Tumuna. It's T apostrophe M-U-N-A-H.

Tumuna. And it means a form or a likeness, a representation. And even a simple plain cross or a simple plain fish.

You know they take the two little curved lines and make it a fish and then it's magnetized and you can stick it on your car. The worst vile ignoramuses in the world run around with crosses and it means nothing. That cross will be around their neck right before they get thrown in the lake of fire and it's meaningless.

They defile the whole idea just by wearing it. They wouldn't know that cross if it fell on them. I'm surprised it doesn't do to them what it supposedly in mythology does to vampires, you know, burn them.

If there was any significance in those crosses, if God assigned any weight to them, it would fry the flesh of the people who try to wear them. Some of our ladies and family members and things have little crosses they wear around their neck. That's fine.

I'm not saying don't do that. I'm saying that when it comes to worship, if you have a fish in your car, leave it there. It's fine.

What I'm saying is when it comes to worship, if you think that it's bringing you closer to God, now it can be a testimony and I think a lot of people who put a fish on their car or whatever, it's the same as leaving your Bible laying out. You're saying I am a Christian and I'm not ashamed of it and I don't mind people knowing it. And if that's your motivation, it's fine.

But if you think your car is safer because there's a fish on it, if you think your home is more blessed because you've got a cross on the wall or on your refrigerator or if you think you yourself are somehow protected from evil because you wear a cross, that's a problem. It's not the literal thing that is in view. There would not have been anything wrong with Israelites making statues or having paintings.

They took this to an extreme and said, okay, we won't do anything. The idea is have no other gods before me. Don't start letting symbols and representations become some sort of a channel.

You think, well, this is a vehicle or a means or some sort of an essential piece of worship. It's not. He says, I the Lord your God am a jealous God and if you fail in this area, I will visit the iniquity of the fathers on the children to the third and fourth generation of those who hate me, of those who think there's something better.

Now, how well does Israel learn this lesson? What's the very next thing that's going to happen?

Golden calf. So what good did the way God goes at great lengths here to explain this, have no other gods before me, don't make a graven image. Within days, Aaron is going to manufacture a golden calf and they're going to say, this is the God that brought us out of the land of Egypt.

Everybody join the party and let's worship and celebrate and fornicate and so on. So, what's the point? I was looking at it in Hebrew again. In verse 3 it says, lo ye'yet laka Elohim achrim al panay.

Which means, lo ye'yet laka means there will not be to you or there will not be for you Elohim achrim, a kind most Elohim. He says, I'm the Lord your Elohim, don't get some other Elohim that is supposed to be somewhere else. Achar means behind or after, something that follows, trailing in the dust.

God was first. Every simulated God is a cheap facsimile copy. Do you want your paycheck or do you want a fax of your paycheck? Do you want a real million-dollar bill or do you want the one I handed out on the break that is a manufactured facsimile? You think you could spend that anywhere? Not without getting seriously locked up.

Because it came after. There's real currency and then here's an imitation that comes after. God says, anything that purports to be Elohim has come after because He's existed from the beginning.

And then, but it's the last word I want to point out here. Panay. Panay means the surface of something, the face of something.

It's one of the first words used in the Bible. Do you remember Genesis chapter 1? In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth. That's verse 1. Verse 2 says, and the earth was without form and void, tohu wabohu, and darkness was upon the face of the deep.

Panay, the face of the surface. And the Spirit of God moved upon the waters. That's how it's used in many contexts.

So what does it mean there will not be for you some cheap following after copy God upon my face, upon my surface. It means don't superimpose a symbol or a copy or something else and say, well, this is really God. This includes your imagination of the gentle Jesus.

Well, you know, I read the New Testament and here's Jesus with a child in His lap. Jesus is the gentle, smiling, kind guy who's going to lead me by the hand through a big field of daisies. And He's love and sweetness and just gentle and compassionate.

If you take that aspect of the Lord Jesus and superimpose it on God, you stick it on the surface of God and say, well, this is all the God I want to talk about, you're violating this command. God says don't take something, an image or anything else, and stick it on me. Put it upon my surface.

Put it upon my face. That's what this literally says in Hebrew. Al means upon and panai means my face, my surface.

Do not take the name of the Lord your God in vain. We talked about this in the opening of our first session. You say in God we trust, but you don't.

You say I'm a Christian, but you ignore God. God doesn't take that lightly. The Lord will not hold him guiltless who takes his name in vain.

Then we have verse 8. Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy. Six days you will labor and do all your work. The seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord your God.

In it you shall do no work. This whole thing was prefixed by God saying I am the Lord your God. I'm the Lord who brought you out of the land of Egypt.

What's the point of the Sabbath? How is it justified? Why should we take one day every seven days and do no work and keep it holy? It is the Sabbath of the Lord your God it says. This is probably the most glossed over statement in this entire section. The seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord your God.

He started out saying I am the Lord your God. Is this important or is it just so self-evident that we should not even mess with it? Let me tell you how important it is. God makes the statement I am the Lord 45 times in Leviticus.

He makes it 21 times saying I am the Lord your God. 45 times he says I am the Lord. He says it about 25 times, actually 17 times here in Exodus.

I am the Lord. So if he's saying it upwards of 60 times in the Pentateuch, if you count Genesis through Deuteronomy over 60 times God says I am the Lord. This would be an important concept wouldn't it? It's one thing for God to repeat something once or twice.

If he repeats it 60 times is it important? I think so. I am the Lord your God. And he says because of this you need to do some things.

There is obedience that is a result of the Lord being our God. He says observe the Sabbath because it is ours. Many times when God says I am the Lord he says I am the Lord that brought you out of the land of Egypt.

What does that mean to us? Were you brought out of the land of Egypt? Not literally. But if we are saved, if we've claimed Christ as our Savior then we have been brought out of bondage to sin. We've been given the gift of God's Spirit.

We have a whole new set of opportunities and a whole new set of obligations because we have been brought out of bondage. And many many of these times if you get a concordance, especially a computer concordance, and look up where it says I'm the Lord your God, many many times he says I'm the God who brought you out. The first time God makes this statement,

turn with me to Genesis chapter 15 and verse 7. Genesis 15 7. This is the first time in the Pentateuch that God says I am the Lord.

I am the Lord who did what? Brought you out of Ur of the Chaldees to give you this land to inherit it. It's the very same idea he expresses to Abraham when he says I took you out of Ur of the Chaldees to give you a land. He says it to Israel.

I took you out of the land of Egypt to give you a land. And he says it to us. We've been delivered and there's a purpose in it.

There's a reason for it. And we ought, according to scripture, we ought to live our lives in the light of that declaration. We are headed for an inheritance.

We are headed for a land. God didn't just deliver us and say okay you're not a slave anymore. He says I've taken you out of that land to give you something better.

But that something better is not automatic. That something better is conditioned on obedience. It's conditioned on paying attention to God and honoring Him, remembering Him.

That's why God commanded that every seven days the entire nation of Israel stop everything they're doing. Just lay everything down and do no work. Now let's take a look at this because we have a two-fold opportunity here.

Turn over now to Leviticus chapter 23. Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus. I'll show you something really interesting here.

Did you ever wonder should we be seven-day Adventists and worship on Saturday or is Sunday the new Sabbath for the church and all that? How come if the Ten Commandments are transcend dispensations as many people say, then what about remember the Sabbath? We say thou shalt not kill, thou shalt not covet, thou shalt not commit adultery, thou shalt have no other gods before me, honor your father and mother, all the rest of these. We say these are transcendent and they go beyond the nation of Israel. What about remember the Sabbath? Well, take a look.

You can actually begin in Leviticus 22. Look at verse 29. He says, when you offer a sacrifice of thanksgiving to the Lord, offer it of your own free will.

On the same day it shall be eaten, you shall leave none of it until morning. Why? I am the Lord. Pay attention to what I say.

I'm the Lord. Look at verse 31. Therefore you shall keep my commandments and perform them.

Why? I am the Lord. You shall not profane my holy name, but I will be hallowed among the children of Israel. Why? I am the Lord who sanctifies you, who brought you out of the land of Egypt to be your God.

I am the Lord. How many times does he have to say it? What's the point? He took us from somewhere. He's taking us to somewhere.

It creates in us an obligation. This is not optional. To fail to pay attention to this is to come under the curse.

I can't think of a worse place to be than under the curse of the God of the universe. What did he say? I will visit iniquity on generations of people who hate me, who disrespect me. Now look at chapter 23.

Right after that, the Lord spoke to Moses saying, speak to the children of Israel and say to them, the feasts of the Lord which you shall proclaim to be holy convocations, these are my feasts. Holy convocations, God says, they're mine. That time belongs to me.

The day belongs to me. The occasion belongs to me. You observe it because it's mine.

Right? Six days shall work be done, but the seventh day is a Sabbath of solemn rest, a holy convocation. You shall do no work on it. It is the Sabbath of the Lord in all your dwellings.

This is the official day of the week on which Israelites were to honor God. He says it belongs to me. It's a holy convocation.

Now look at verse four. These are the feasts of the Lord. Now how are these different from the Sabbath? What's the difference in the description? Sabbath is a holy convocation.

The feasts of the Lord are holy convocations. On the Sabbath day they are to do no work. Verse 5, 14th day of the first month of twilight is the Lord's Passover.

This is a feast. 15th day of the same month is a feast of unleavened bread. Another feast, seven days eat unleavened bread.

First day, holy convocation. Verse 7, you shall do no customary work, just like the Sabbath. All of these are alike.

All of these are the same. You shall offer an offering made by fire. When you come into the land and you reap a harvest, you get down to verse 11 and 12, wave the sheaf of the Lord, wave the offering on that day.

It's an offering to the Lord. It is a holy observance. Count for yourself in the day after the Sabbath, verse 15.

The point is you go through this chapter all the way down. Each of these feasts is a holy convocation in which no work is to be done. It belongs to the Lord.

The description is exactly the same as the seventh day. So it's a package. This is my point.

The holy convocations are a package. You either take all of it or none of it. It was specifically for

Israel.

It was the Israelite calendar. If you're going to observe these feasts, you need to change your calendar. You need to get a calendar that's got the month of Abib on it so that you can track Passover.

Not only do you need to worship on Saturday, but you also need to observe Passover. You need to observe first fruits and the Feast of Unleavened Bread and trumpets and all the rest of it. The five great feasts in Israel where they were to assemble in Jerusalem.

If you're going to observe those, you need to do the whole observance. Animal sacrifice and the whole nine yards. It's all of a piece.

You can't just extract Saturday worship and say, well, that transcends. The Sabbath day is any Sabbath day. Passover is a Sabbath.

First fruits is a Sabbath. Unleavened bread is a Sabbath. All of these feasts are Sabbaths.

They're all holy convocations in which no work is to be done. So you cannot simplify it and say, well, it's really just a matter of figuring out when we're going to have church. The holy convocations are all covered under, remember, the Sabbath day to keep it holy.

They are all Sabbaths. The one that's in view here is the seventh-day Sabbath in which there to do no work. Six days, the rest of the seventh day, the Lord blessed the Sabbath and hallowed it.

But what do we do with this now? Do we just have a bye and we can kind of forget the whole Sabbath business? Well, we pay attention to everything that is taught in those feasts, don't we? Feasts are important. The church began on a feast day. The Lord Jesus was resurrected on a feast day.

The calendar of Israel and those feasts and what they represent is an integral part of God's plan. We observe it. We come to understand it.

And then we make an application in our lives. Every day is a Sabbath for you and me. Every single day.

How do I know this? Turn with me to the book of Hebrews. You get through the Pauline epistles. You get over there after Timothy and Titus and you get to Hebrews.

The Sabbath day, that day of resting from labor, is discussed in chapter 3 and it begins chapter 4 of Hebrews by saying, therefore, a promise of rest, of entering his rest, remains. It was not fulfilled. It wasn't completed in Israel.

There's a promise of entering his rest. Let us fear lest any of you seem to have come short of it. And the idea of rest, the purpose of the Sabbath, was to meditate on the works of God and make it the object of faith.

I am the Lord your God. This is the motivation for obedience. We have to remind ourselves that there's a God in heaven.

He is ours. He is our God. We have an obligation to him.

You can't be faithful. You can't be motivated to obey if you have no reason to. Why should I bother? Why do I care? I just want to.

My religion is if it feels good, do it. Or we get into a situation and we get consumed with the details of it and the relationships and the conversations and the in and out and well this person feels this way and they said this and now I feel bad and I said that now they feel bad and we get all wrapped up in the in the details of a problem and we lose sight of the fact that there's a God in heaven and whatever happens he's the one that needs to be pleased. I am the Lord your God, he says 60 times.

And he says the same thing to us. And he has a promise and he says there is a rest that you need to enter into where you cease from your own labors. Look at verse 4 of Hebrews 4. He has spoken in a certain place of the seventh day in this way.

What is the certain place? Exodus chapter 20. God rested on the seventh day from all his works. And again in this place they shall not enter my rest.

Since therefore it remains that some must enter it and those to whom it was first preached did not enter because of disobedience. In the same way that the rest of the commandments didn't do the nation of Israel much good because they kept fouling up. They didn't gain the benefits.

We have the same problem. He designates a certain day in David. Today if you will hear his voice do not harden your hearts.

Verse 9. There remains therefore a rest for the people of God. You could substitute the word Sabbath. There remains a Sabbath for the people of God.

And is he going to say it's Saturday or it's Sunday? Look at verse 10. He who has entered God's rest has also ceased from his works. What were they supposed to do on the Sabbath? In the day of holy convocation you will do no work.

So what does the author of Hebrews tell us here? How do we do no work? How do we honor the Sabbath? We enter into God's rest. It's transcendent. We saw in Psalm 27.

David says I am protected. I'm safe because I'm going to dwell. I will hide in the tabernacle of the Lord.

Is he talking about the literal tent made of goat skins? No. It is a place which we enter by attitude. It's a place that we enter by choice.

By the way we live and the way we prioritize things. He who has entered into God's rest has

ceased from his works. He has honored the Sabbath.

He has remembered the Sabbath day and kept it holy. He has kept all of the feasts of Israel. You know we actually do observe all of the feasts and every Saturday Sabbath when we enter into God's rest.

So this seems to simplify things greatly. All we have to do is figure out how to enter God's rest and we will be keeping this fourth commandment. Right? In the same way that we are obligated to keep those commandments in the transcendent sense.

We're not Israelites but the principle behind them is still valid. So how do we remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy? We rest from our works by entering into God's rest. So we need to understand this process.

How do you enter God's rest? Look at verse 11 of Hebrews 4. Let us therefore be diligent to enter that rest, lest anyone fall according to the same example of disobedience. Remember the first guy that went out and gathered sticks on the Sabbath? What happened to him? He stoned him. He lost his life over it.

We were talking about the difference between punishment and consequences on the break. And you think, well, does the punishment fit the crime? The guy walked out on Saturday and picked up a few sticks and suffered capital punishment. Lost his life over it.

Doesn't really seem fair. Well, how serious do you think God takes entering his rest? How seriously do we think God takes the fourth commandment? Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy? Most of Christianity says we really only worry about nine of the commandments. We're off the hook on the Sabbath.

No, we're not. Let us be diligent to enter that rest, lest anyone fall just like they did because of their disobedience. What happened to the Israelites? They fell.

They lost their lives. Do you want to lose your life over the fourth commandment? That's what can happen. What is the rationale for entering that rest? Look at the next verse.

For the word of God is living and powerful and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of the soul and the spirit and the joints and the marrow, and is a discernor of the thoughts and intents of the heart. And there is no creature hidden from his sight. All things are naked and open to the eyes of him to whom we must give an account.

This Sabbath observance is internal. It is revealed by the sword of the word of God that lays bare the thoughts and intents of the heart and causes our thinking and our priorities and our values and our goals to be open and naked before him with whom we have to do. Seeing then that we have a high priest, this goes back to the Levitical code that we're about to see, who has passed through the heavens, Jesus, the Son of God, let us hold fast our faith.

Confession here means our faith. We do not have a high priest who can't sympathize with our weaknesses. He was tested just like we are, without sin.

Verse 16, let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need. Do you see Psalm 27 here? Do you see dwelling in the tabernacle? Coming to the place of worship which was normally a Sabbath day observance, and yet David said, I will be there continually. That is my place of refuge.

And even David in the Old Testament age understood the true Sabbath, which is in our thoughts. It's in our soul. Let us come boldly to the throne of grace, mercy and grace to help in time of need.

Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy. Six days you will labor and do all your work. So now what about the six days? This is also, by the way, a command.

Six days thou shalt labor. We are not to just sit and say, you know, I'm meditating on God, so the rest of my life will just take care of itself. Israelites had to watch the calendar, didn't they? They had to remember what day of the week it was, and when Saturday rolled around, they had to observe the Sabbath.

These in the wilderness had to remember that it was Friday and that it was double manna day and that they had to lay up ahead of time. They had to keep track of where they were. They had to discern when to do their work and when it was a day of rest.

We have the same obligation. There are parts of our life that require us to get busy. We are commanded to do our part.

We have to take up the cross. Remember when Jesus was talking in the Gospels and he says, if any man will come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me? He doesn't say, if any man will come after me, let him stand still and I'll drop a cross on him. Did he? I mean, you think about it.

It sounds ridiculous, but he says, the man, if he wants to be where I am, if he wants to follow me, he has got to lift the cross. It doesn't get dropped on him. He doesn't just get nailed to it by somebody else.

You have to pick up the cross. That's work. You pick up your cross.

You deny yourself. You follow me. Have you ever followed somebody? My dad used to get so frustrated when we first moved to Dallas and none of us knew the geography very well and we'd go to church and then try to drive out to Rockwall where we live and there's lots of turns and exits and I would be in an animated discussion with my wife about what had gone on in church and I would forget that somebody was trying to follow me and I would dive off on an exit at the last minute.

Well, he didn't have time to get over and he'd miss it and I'd have to pull over and wait for him and then it would be repeated two or three exits down. Very frustrating because if you're going to follow someone, you've got to pay attention. Of course, you know, this is... and they have to be somebody who's reasonably able to be followed.

But, you know, if you are the follower instead of the followee, you really have to be diligent, pay close attention to the one you're trying to follow, right? So that you can stick with them. You turn around to talk to somebody and look back and the person you're following has taken a turn and you didn't see it. Well, you know, you're not following anymore.

Jesus says, follow. Following is work. Sometimes it's really hard work.

But following is work. Taking up the cross is work. In our daily life, what is the point? How do we observe the Sabbath? How do we enter into that rest? We have to figure out.

You know, this experiencing God thing just drives me nuts. Look around and see where God is at work and join Him in His work. Read your Bible.

God is at work in you to will and to do His good purpose. And there's not a shred of command in the Bible that says join God in His work. What does it say? Enter into His rest.

You do your work and enter into His rest. It doesn't say go do His work. That's blasphemy.

You can't do the work of God. It's God does God's work. And He does it in us.

God is not trying to evangelize the world through us. God is evangelizing the world through His own Spirit. We get to participate, but God does it.

God puts the right people in the right place at the right time. You can hardly help but be used. If you are willing and able to speak the truth in love, you don't have to get on a plane and go to some far-off land.

Now there are people that got details to do that. They have the gift of evangelism, the gift of missions, and it's great. But for most of us, 99.5% of Christianity, we're supposed to live quietly and work with our hands and cultivate the work of God within.

And six parts of it is what we are supposed to do. We have to take up our cross. We have to follow.

One part of it is recognizing the areas where we can't work and enter into the rest of God. Let God do what God does. We do what we're supposed to do.

We are obedient. We are faithful. We learn the word.

We meditate on it. We seek to apply it. We accomplish the tasks of our day.

We try to be faithful in the things that we are enjoined to do, just like the Israelites did with all

the commands of the law. But there is a part of our life, there are things that come up over which we have no control and at which we cannot work. And you have to enter into God's rest and cease from your own labors.

We do what we are required to do, and that requires discernment. You have to know the difference. You know the old song, God grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change, and the, you know, whatever the rest of that, the wisdom to know the difference.

Well, there's a grain of truth in that. We have to analyze our life and say, this is something where I am responsible. This is something where I'm accountable.

I am commanded to work. Six days thou shalt labor. Six days thou shalt do what thou art supposed to do.

Go men and earn your bread by the sweat of your brow. It's a command of God. It's a responsibility.

Husbands, love your wives. It's not optional. This is love in the sense of be a benefit, be a blessing, be a benefactor.

Wives, be respectful to the authority of your husbands. It's a command. It's not an option.

It's just the way God set it up. He could have just as easily have switched the genders and given the same commands, and then all the men would be on the hook for respect, and all the women would be on the hook for benevolence. But this is, maybe he did, and this is an alternate timeline, and now all the men and women are getting to come up and seeing what it's like on the other side of the gender fence.

The point is this, we all have things that we are obligated to do before the Lord. Children, obey your parents and the Lord, for this is right. Parents, do not frustrate your children, for this is wrong.

It's in the Word of God. So we look and find those things that we are accountable for, and we do them, and then we find the things that God is accountable for, and we rest in Him. How do we know the difference? This is why we're in Bible class.

You've got 66 books of the Bible to teach us the difference between what we do and what God does. And it's not something that's going to come immediately to mind. The man who delights in the law of the Lord is going to meditate in it day and night, and if you think about it, and you ask and you seek and you knock, you will know in your circumstance, in your life, what part is God's and what part is ours.

We will know. God says, if you come to me, I'm not going to hand you a rock when you're asking for bread. I'm not going to give you a snake when you're looking for nourishment.

God answers prayer. God reveals His will to those who are seeking. David says, I will inquire in

the temple.

That's our opportunity. That's our responsibility, because we belong to God. He says, I am the Lord your God.

I delivered you. I'm trying to take you to a place. Don't drop in the wilderness like we have this example, Hebrews chapter four.

You can make it. You can enter the land, but you've got to figure out what's going on. That's what's going on in the Ten Commandments.

Well, three weeks now, we've done the first four commandments. I will make you a promise that we will get to the rest of it next time, but let's close in a word of prayer. Father, thank you for the clarity and the purpose and the truth of your Word.

We pray that God, the Holy Spirit, will impress it on us, that we will be changed by it, that we can offer ourselves as a living sacrifice, which is your will for us. We pray it in Jesus' name. Amen.