

Reflections on the Sabbath Debate

by Pastor Stephen Bohr

Introduction

I recently watched with great interest a debate between a Seventh-day Adventist evangelist and an Evangelical radio host. The subject was whether the observance of the Sabbath is part of the Old Covenant and binding only on the Jews, or whether God expects New Covenant Christians to keep the Sabbath as well.

The debate format forced the presenters to be very brief and many viewers came away frustrated because some questions did not receive adequate answers. In this document, I will attempt to respond to some of the seemingly persuasive and yet misleading arguments that the Evangelical radio host used. At the end of this study, I will also make a few remarks about the papal perspective of creation and the Sabbath. Let us begin with a point on which both debaters agreed. The days of creation week were literal days.

Were the days of creation literal 24-hour days?

- ✓ In the Old Testament, the word day with a numeral qualifier always means a 24-hour day.
- ✓ Each day had an evening and morning, a meaningless expression if the days of creation were vast periods of millions of years.
- ✓ Psalm 33:9 uses the language of immediacy: God ‘spoke and it was done; He commanded, and it stood fast.’
- ✓ The expression ‘and it was so’ in the creation story (verses 7, 11, 15, 24) does not suggest vast periods of time.

- ✓ The language of the **fourth commandment** would be absurd if the days were long periods. How could God command man to work six days and rest the seventh as He did at creation if the days were not literal?
- ✓ The **New Testament writers** understood the story of creation to be literal. So at issue is the integrity and **credibility** of Jesus and the New Testament writers (Matthew 19:4-6; 1 Corinthians 15:45).

The Evangelical's Premises

The Evangelical radio host based his arguments against the Sabbath as a Christian institution on **three propositions** and a **conclusion**:

- **Proposition #1:** Genesis tells us that it was **God who rested** on the seventh day.
- **Proposition #2:** The word 'rested' in Genesis 2:2, 3 is **Shabbat** that means '**to cease**'. The word does not describe the quality of God's rest but rather that He ceased from working.
- **Proposition #3:** The creation story contains **no command for man** to *Shabbat* or '**cease**'.
- **Conclusion:** Because the creation story affirms that God ceased and there is no command for man to cease, the Sabbath is **not a creation institution** but rather a part of the **Old Covenant** that applies **only to the Jews**.

I can **fully agree** with the radio host's **three propositions** but **not with his conclusion**:

- **Proposition #1:** True, the Genesis record states explicitly that it was '**God who ceased**'.
- **Proposition #2:** True, the Hebrew word **Shabbat** does mean '**to cease**' as we can see in the following examples:
 - ✓ Genesis 8:22: The seasons and the cycle of day and night will not cease after the flood.
 - ✓ Joshua 5:12: The Manna ceased the day after Israel entered the land of Canaan.
 - ✓ Nehemiah 6:3: Nehemiah told his enemies that he could not cease building the wall of Jerusalem.

✓ Psalm 46:8, 9: Describes the time when all wars will cease.

- **Proposition #3:** True, Genesis 2:2, 3 does not contain an explicit command for Adam and Eve to cease on seventh day.

However, the radio host's **conclusion** is wrong. He **assumes** that the absence of a divine command for Adam and Eve to cease on Sabbath indicates that the Sabbath is **not a creation institution**.

Therefore, the **million-dollar** question is why God did not give Adam and Eve an explicit command to cease on that first Sabbath. The reason is as simple to understand as **two plus two equals four**. Granted that the word ***shabbat*** means 'to cease', Adam and Eve could not cease from work on the seventh day because they **had not worked** the first six. Only God could cease because only God had worked!

Four Important Points

I believe the Bible gives us **clear theological reasons** why God did not command Adam and Eve to *shabbat* on the **seventh day** of creation week. We will turn to those reasons in brief, but before we do, we must consider four important points.

First, we must remember that when God ceased, there was **no sin** and there were **no Jews**. This being the case, if we can prove that God gave the **Sabbath to Adam and Eve** in the Garden of Eden before the inception of sin and before there were any Jews, then all the **Old Covenant arguments** that the radio host used are superfluous.

Second, the first six days and the seventh day of creation week are **all about what God did**. The word 'God' appears **31 times** in chapter one and **Genesis 2:2, 3** underlines **ten times** that it was God who worked six days and ceased on the seventh:

*"And on the seventh day **God** ended **His** work which **He** had done, and **He** rested on the seventh day from all **His** work which **He** had done. ³ Then **God** blessed the seventh day and sanctified it, because in it **He** rested from all **His** work which **God** had created and made."*

Third, after God **finished** all His work on the sixth day, He **rested** on the seventh and **after** He rested, He **set it apart** from the other six days as holy:

- ✓ **Genesis 2:3**: God rested and **then** sanctified the Sabbath:

*"Then God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it, **because** in it He **rested** from all His work which God had created and made." [See the causal use of the word "because" in Genesis 2:23]*

- ✓ **Exodus 20:11**: God rested and **then** sanctified the Sabbath:

*"For in six days the LORD made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that is in them, and **rested** the seventh day. **Therefore** the LORD **blessed** the Sabbath day and **hallowed** it." [See the causal use of the word "therefore" in Genesis 2:24]*

Fourth, after creating it, God **gave the week** to Adam and Eve. Here is the sequence of events:

- ✓ God worked **six days**.
- ✓ God **ceased** the seventh day.
- ✓ When the seventh day ended, God **blessed and sanctified** it.
- ✓ After God had worked six and ceased on the seventh, the week was **complete**.
- ✓ God then **gave the week** to Adam and Eve and their descendants.
- ✓ Creation week is what I call **God's week** because He—**not man**—worked six and ceased on the seventh.

In perfect harmony with Scripture, Ellen White wrote:

*"Like the Sabbath, **the week** originated at creation, and it has been preserved and brought down to us through Bible history. God Himself **measured off** the **first week** as a **sample** for successive weeks to the close of time. Like every other, it consisted of **seven literal days**. Six days were employed in the work of creation; upon the seventh, **God rested**, and He **then** blessed this day and set it apart as a day of rest **for man**." *Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 111*

Why no Command?

Now we are ready to answer fully the question of **why** God did not command Adam and Eve to cease on the seventh day of creation week:

First, as previously indicated, Adam and Eve could not cease from work on the seventh day because they had not worked the first six. How could they cease from work if **they had not worked**?

Second, God **had to make the Sabbath** before He could give it to man (Mark 2:27). John 1:3, 10 tells us explicitly that Jesus was the Creator. These verses tell us **four times** that Jesus **made** all things and the word 'made' is identical to the one in Mark 2:27. Jesus is **Lord** of the day because He **made it** and for that reason He has a **perfect right** to define **what is proper** and what is not proper on the day.

Third, Jesus could not have told Adam and Eve to keep the Sabbath of creation week holy because He did not **make it holy** until He had finished resting the entire seventh day.

Fourth, it is absurd to believe that Jesus would **bless** the Sabbath and set it apart as **holy for Himself**. In the Bible when God blesses and sanctifies something, He always does it with reference to His creatures and never simply for Himself. Mark 2:27 tells us explicitly that the Sabbath was **made for man**.

Fifth, Adam and Eve could not follow God's **example** of Sabbath observance until He had **first** given the example. In other words, Jesus did **not merely tell Adam and Eve** to keep it holy but rather **showed them** how to keep it!

*"God made man in His own image and then **gave him an example** of observing the seventh day, which He sanctified and made holy." Lift Him Up, p. 38*

Sixth, the **fourth commandment** applies to Adam and Eve beginning with the **second Sabbath** of human history. Notice the following sequence of events:

- ✓ Jesus worked six days and ceased on the seventh thus creating the week.
- ✓ After resting on the Sabbath Jesus blessed it and made it holy.
- ✓ Jesus then gave the week to Adam and Eve.
- ✓ They would now work six and cease the seventh as God had.
- ✓ The Fourth Commandment applies to Adam and Eve after they worked six:

Exodus 20:8-11:

*"Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. ⁹ Six days you shall labor and do all your work, ¹⁰ but the **seventh day** is the Sabbath of the **Lord your***

God. In it you shall do no work: you, nor your son, nor your daughter, nor your male servant, nor your female servant, nor your cattle, nor your stranger who is within your gates. ¹¹ For in six days the **Lord made** the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that is in them, and rested **the seventh day**. Therefore the Lord **blessed** the Sabbath day and **hallowed** it.”

Seventh, Ellen White was a firm believer in the creation origin of the Sabbath but she **never made the mistake** of writing that God commanded Adam and Eve to keep that first Sabbath:

*“**After** resting upon the seventh day, God sanctified it, or **set it apart**, as a day of rest for man. **Following the example** of the Creator, **man was to rest** upon this sacred day, that as he should look upon the heavens and the earth, he might reflect upon God's great work of creation; and that as he should behold the evidences of God's wisdom and goodness, his heart might be filled with love and reverence for his Maker.” Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 47*

*“The first six days of each week are given to man for labor, because God employed the same period of the first week in the work of creation. On the seventh day man is to refrain from labor, in **commemoration of the Creator's rest**.” Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 111*

*“Instead of keeping God's own rest-day, which he sanctified **after** he had rested upon it, and **set it apart for man** to observe and reverence, they honor a Papal institution.” Review and Herald, September 16, 1862*

Why no Evening and Morning?

There is another matter related to what we have covered in the previous section. The creation story tells us that each of the days of creation had an evening and a morning except the seventh. The question is why. Did Moses forget to include the formula ‘it was the evening and morning of the seventh day,’ or is there a deeper reason for its absence from the text?

In order to answer this question we must remember that the word *shabbat*, by the testimony of the Evangelical radio host, means ‘to cease.’ The question is, what did God cease from? The answer is that He ceased on the seventh day from the work he had done on the first six.

As I have indicated previously in this article, the first week of history is all about God—it is God’s week. God was the one who worked six and ceased on the seventh. Moreover, after ceasing on the seventh day God did not begin a new six day cycle of work because his work was finished. To this day, God has not begun a new cycle of six days, thus God is **still ceasing** from His works of creation.

Does this mean that the seventh day never ended and we are still living in the seventh day because it had no evening and morning? The answer is an emphatic ‘no’. How do we know?

The Fourth Commandment tells us that God worked six days and ceased on the seventh. The same commandment indicates that Adam and Eve worked the first six days of the second week and ceased on the seventh. Moreover, God commanded humankind to follow this cyclical pattern as long as time should last.

Where do we find this concept in the Bible? Let us go to Genesis 1:31-2:2 for the answer:

Genesis 1:31-2:2:

*“Then God saw everything that **He had made**, and indeed it was very good and so it was the evening and the morning of the sixth day. Thus the heavens and the earth, and all the host of them, were **finished**. And on the seventh day God **ended His work** which **He had done**, and He **rested** [ceased] on the seventh day from all **His work** which **He had done**.”*

Thus, the first week is **God’s week**. **He worked** six and **He ceased** on the seventh. The seventh day had no evening or morning for God because **He did not begin a new cycle** of work on the next day. That is, God is **still ceasing** from his creative works.

Put another way, when God ceased on the seventh day, he has **continued ceasing** ever since because He has not begun a new cycle of work. On the other hand, the **day after the first Sabbath** was a **day of work** for man so the seventh day did

have an **evening and a morning for man**. Where do we find this concept in the Bible?

Hebrews 4:3, NIV, last part:

*“And yet **his work** has been **finished since the creation** of the world.”*

This text tells us that concerning this world, God has been ceasing from creative works since creation week. The seventh day never ended **for God** because He has continued ceasing. Someone might object: But did not Jesus say that He and the Father were still working during the incarnation? Yes, He did and here is the text:

John 5:17-18:

*“But Jesus answered them, “My Father has been **working** until now, and I have been **working**.”*

However, the works that Jesus mentioned here were not works that began a new cycle of creation but rather a work of redemption or restoration. Jesus did not create anything new when he healed the paralytic but rather **restored** his legs, as they should have worked since the beginning. Jesus did something similar when He opened the eyes of a man born blind. He **restored** his eyes to what they should have been at the beginning. Hebrews 1:3 and Colossians 1:17 describe this work of upholding all created things.

Ellen G. White on God's Cessation

Ellen White's explanation of John 5:17, 18 is enlightening:

*“As regards **this world**, God's work of creation is **completed**. For ‘the works were **finished** from the foundation of the world’ (Hebrews 4:3) But His energy is still exerted in **upholding** the objects of His creation.” **Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 115***

"Although the Lord has ceased His work in creating, He is constantly employed in upholding and using as His servants the things which He has made Said Christ, "My Father worketh hitherto, and I work" (MS 4, 1882). [6BC 1062](#)

"As regards this earth, Scripture declares the work of creation to have been completed. "The works were finished from the foundation of the world." Hebrews 4:3. But the power of God is still exercised in upholding the objects of His creation." [Education pp. 130, 131](#)

No evening and morning for us?

The fact that the God has been ceasing from his work of creation since the first seventh day does not mean that we have been ceasing with Him since then. The fourth commandment clearly commands humankind to work six and cease on the seventh in a continual cycle in commemoration of the Creator's rest. Just because God ceased on the seventh day does not mean that human beings are still living in the seventh day.

- The seventh day did have a beginning and an end because God set the day apart from the other days when it ended. How could God set the Sabbath apart from the other days if the Sabbath never ended?
- A numeral adjective is used of the seventh day just like the first six days
- The sun rises and sets on the seventh day just like every other day. The day does have an evening and morning which is determined by the rising and setting of the sun:

"When the Lord declares that He made the world in six days and rested on the seventh day, He means the day of twenty-four hours, which He has marked off by the rising and setting of the sun." [Testimonies to Ministers, p. 135](#)

- [Leviticus 23:32](#) explicitly commanded Israel to celebrate the Day of Atonement Sabbath from evening to evening (see also Mark 1:32). This

means that the Sabbath did have an evening and a morning (see also Mark 1:32)

- How could Israel keep God's command to observe the Sabbath in a continual weekly cycle of seven days if the seventh day never ended?

The Bible is clear that when the seventh day ended, God **worked no more** but the very next day **man began the cycle of work**. This shows that the seventh day had no evening and morning for God but it **did have for man**.

Commonalities

Some have argued that the Sabbath in Genesis is different from the Sabbath that God gave to Israel. However, this is not tenable because there are several commonalities between the Genesis and Exodus accounts. In both:

- ✓ The Sabbath is a **memorial** of **creation**.
- ✓ The Sabbath comes **after six days** of labor.
- ✓ The Sabbath is the **seventh day** of the week .
- ✓ In both accounts God **rested** and then **blessed** and **sanctified** the seventh day.

God's Example of Rest

It is true that Genesis 2:2, 3 and Exodus 20:11 use a different word for 'rest'. While Genesis 2:2, 3 describes God's rest with the word *shabbat* ('ceased'), Exodus 20:11 uses the word *nuach* ('rested'). If Moses wrote both Genesis and Exodus, why did he use a different word in Exodus for 'rest' than he did in Genesis? There must be a reason for the difference.

As we have already noted, the emphasis of the word *shabbat* in Genesis falls upon the fact that on the seventh day God **created no more**. On the first six days, He worked and on the seventh, He did not. We use the word 'rest' in a similar way today when the district attorney has finished presenting his case to the jury. He tells the judge: **'The prosecution rests.'** This does not describe the quality of rest that the district attorney enjoys when he has finished presenting his case but

rather that he has no more evidence or arguments to present in the trial—his work is finished.

Genesis 2:2, 3 tells us what God did **not do** on the seventh day—he created no more. However, the question that stares us in the face is this: What did God **do** on the seventh day while He ceased? The answer to this question comes from several sources.

First, the Genesis record explicitly tells us that at the end of the sixth day "God **saw** everything that He had made, and indeed it was very good." Clearly, God **beheld** the fruit of His creative work with satisfaction so the Sabbath was a day for God to relish His magnificent creation.

Second, the use of the word *nuach* in the Fourth Commandment is significant. In distinction to the word *shabbat* in Genesis 2, the emphasis in the Fourth Commandment falls upon **how** God rested on the seventh day while He ceased because He was giving an **example** to humanity on how to rest on it.

The Old Testament links the word *nuach* with the idea of **joy, gladness, and feasting**. This word not only describes a rest of **passive repose** but an **active rest** of celebration. Proverbs 29:17 couples *nuach* with the concept of delight:

*"Correct your son and he will give you **rest** [nuach]; yes, he will give **delight** to your soul."*

In this synthetic parallelism, Solomon describes rest not a passive repose but rather as a delightful rest! In this context, we can hardly miss the fact that the gospel prophet Isaiah twice refers to the Sabbath as a delight:

*"If you turn away your foot from the Sabbath, from doing your pleasure on My holy day, and call the Sabbath a **delight**, the holy day of the Lord honorable, and shall honor Him, not doing your own ways, nor finding your own pleasure, or speaking your own words, then you shall **delight** yourself in the Lord."*

After God delivered Israel from their enemies in the days of Esther, they established a commemorative feast called **Purim**. Although Purim was a day of rest, it was not a day of **passive repose**. It was a rest of feasting, gladness and joy:

Esther 8:20-22:

*"And Mordecai wrote these things and sent letters to all the Jews, near and far, who were in all the provinces of King Ahasuerus, 21 to establish among them that they should celebrate yearly the fourteenth and fifteenth days of the month of Adar, 22 as the days on which the Jews had **rest** [nuach] from their enemies, as the month which was turned from sorrow to **joy** for them, and from mourning to a **holiday**; that they should make them days of **feasting** and **joy**, of sending presents to one another and gifts to the poor."*

Third, Scripture informs us that God did not delight on the seventh day alone. The entire heavenly universe sang and shouted for joy when they beheld the marvelous works of God at creation:

Job 38:7:

*"Where were you when I laid the foundations of the earth? Tell Me, if you have understanding. ⁵ Who determined its measurements? Surely you know! Or who stretched the line upon it? ⁶ To what were its foundations fastened? Or who laid its cornerstone, ⁷ when the **morning stars sang together**, and all the **sons of God shouted for joy?**"*

Ellen White captured the profound sense of God's rest with all heaven at creation:

*"The Sabbath was hallowed at the creation. As ordained for man, it had its origin when "the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy." Job 38:7. **Peace** brooded over the world for earth was in **harmony** with heaven. 'God **saw** everything that He had made, and, behold, it was very good' and **He rested** in **the joy** of His **completed work**. Genesis 1:31." *The Desire of Ages*, p. 281*

Fourth, Exodus 31:17 gives us an additional glimpse into the quality of God's rest on the seventh day of creation week. In speaking to Israel, God said concerning the Sabbath:

*"It is a sign between Me and the children of Israel forever; for in six days the Lord made the heavens and the earth, and on the seventh day He **rested** and was **refreshed**."*

This verse tells us two facts about God's experience on the seventh day. First, He ceased (*shabbat*) from His work of creating. That is, on the seventh day He created no more. The second fact is that on the seventh day He **was refreshed**.

What does the word ‘refreshed’ (*naphash*) imply? The word is not a common one in the Old Testament appearing only four times. It means ‘to take a breath’ or to ‘refresh oneself’ after much hard labor. Exodus 23:12 is of particular importance because it uses three words for rest, *shabbat*, *nuach* and *naphash*:

*“Six days you shall do your work, and on the seventh day you shall **rest** [shabbat], that your ox and your donkey may **rest** [nuach], and the son of your female servant and the stranger may be **refreshed** [naphash].”*

Of course, the inevitable question is this: in what sense was God refreshed on the seventh day? It certainly cannot mean that God was famished at the end of six days of hard labor and needed a ‘breather’, because the prophet Isaiah tells us that the Creator God does not get weary or tired (Isaiah 40:28). The only conclusion we can reach is that God reflected upon His creative work and took a deep breath of satisfaction. Ellen White was right on target when she described how God viewed His creative masterpiece:

*“God looked with **satisfaction** upon the work of His hands. All was perfect, worthy of its divine Author, and He rested, **not as one weary**, but as **well pleased** with the fruits of His wisdom and goodness and the manifestations of His glory.” Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 47*

We must remember that God created Adam and Eve on the sixth day so they must have been eyewitnesses of God’s manner of resting on the seventh day. What did Adam and Eve do on the seventh day, the first full day of their existence? They certainly **did not work** on the seventh day while God was resting! According to the fourth commandment, the day after the Sabbath was their first day of work so they must not have worked on the seventh. No doubt, God gave them the **scenic tour** on the seventh day, showed them **how to keep** the Sabbath and then told them to do as He had done—work the next six days and rest the seventh.

God’s Signature on Creation

As we read the conclusion of the creation story, we find something very unusual—God finished His work **twice**. Notice Genesis 1:31-2:3:

Genesis 1:31-2:2-3

*“Then God saw everything that He had made, and indeed it was very good, so the evening and the morning were the sixth day. Thus the heavens and the earth, and all the host of them, were **finished** [kalah]. ² And on the seventh day, God **ended** [kalah] His work which He had done, and He rested on the seventh day from all His work that He had done. ³ Then God blessed the seventh day and **sanctified it, because** in it He **rested** from all His work which God had created and made.”*

You might ask how someone can finish something twice. Perhaps an illustration will help us understand.

Let us imagine an artist painting a beautiful nature scene. The first day the artist prepares the frame, staples the canvass to the frame and adds some background colors. At the end of the first day, the artist steps back, looks at his work and says to himself, ‘it is good’. The second day the artist paints a blue sky with some fluffy clouds and at the end of the second day, he looks at his work and says ‘it is good’. The third day the artist paints some beautiful green grass, trees and flowers; at the end of the day, the artist steps back and says ‘it is good’. The fourth day the artist paints a radiant sun and an opaque moon in the sky and at the end of the day steps back and says to himself ‘it is good’. On the fifth day of work the artist paints some birds sailing through the air and some fish leaping out of a beautiful lake and at the end of the day steps back and says, ‘it is good’. On the sixth day, the artist paints all kinds of land animals and a man and a woman standing in the midst of the glorious nature scene. The artist then puts the finishing touches on the canvass, steps back and says ‘it is very good’.

Has the artist finished his work? Yes and no! The work of art is finished but there is one thing lacking—the signature of the person who painted it. Without the signature, anyone can claim the masterpiece. Likewise, God finished His work of art on the sixth day and on the seventh, he put His signature on His work. It would be forgery for someone to replace the name of God with his own!

Is it not true that all days belong to God?

The radio host argued, as many Christians do today, that all days belong to God and therefore we should worship Him every day.”

No one would argue against the idea that all days belong to God and that we should worship Him every day. However, the Bible simply does not teach that all days are **holy**. The Fourth Commandment leaves no doubt that six days are for our secular labor and work but the seventh day Sabbath is holy because God set it apart from the rest.

By way of analogy, the Bible tells us that **all** the money that we manage belongs to God (Haggai 2:8). Does this mean that all the money we have is holy and we must return 100% of our money to God? Of course not! Although all the money that we have belongs to God, only 10% is holy—the tithe. Likewise, all days belong to God but only the seventh is holy.

Did Jesus break the Sabbath that He created?

In the debate between the Adventist evangelist and the Evangelical radio host, the Evangelical claimed that because Jesus is the Lord of the Sabbath, He had the right to break it and He did. Does this argument stand up to scrutiny?

The text that the Evangelical radio host used was John 5:18. A careless reading of the text without its context would seem to indicate that Jesus broke the Sabbath. However, the context of this verse and other texts in the gospels clearly indicate that Jesus did not break the Sabbath that He Himself created. Let us take a closer look at John 5:18.

John 5:18:

*“Therefore **the Jews** sought all the more to kill Him, because He not only **broke the Sabbath**, but also said that God was His Father, making Himself equal with God.”*

This text clearly indicates that **the Jews** were accusing Jesus of breaking the Sabbath. Jesus had just healed a paralytic on the Sabbath and the Jews accused Him of breaking the Sabbath. It bears noting that there is no Old Testament law against **healing** on the Sabbath or telling a man to **pick up his bed** and walk home. These were rabbinical rules added by the scholars, not found in Scripture and handed down by tradition.

Luke 13:14 tells us that Jesus healed a woman who had been unable to stand straight for **18 years**. The **ruler of the synagogue** accused Jesus of breaking the law because He healed the woman on the Sabbath. The ruler announced to

the crowd that six days were for work and on those days, they could come for healing but **not on the Sabbath**. It bears repeating that there is **no law** in the Old Testament that forbids healing on the Sabbath. The law against healing was a **rabbinical rule** based on human tradition.

Luke 13:14:

"The Lord then answered him and said, "Hypocrite! Does not each one of you on the Sabbath loose his ox or donkey from the stall, and lead it away to water it? ¹⁶ So ought not this woman, being a daughter of Abraham, whom Satan has bound — think of it — for eighteen years, be loosed from this bond on the Sabbath?"

Jesus pointed to the absurdity of **their law** by telling them in effect:

"Your traditions allow you to care for the needs of beasts on the Sabbath but not of a human being."

Matthew 12:10, 12 tells us explicitly that Jesus did not break the Sabbath law by healing on the day. His work of healing on the Sabbath was **lawful**:

*"And behold, there was a man who had a **withered hand** and they asked Him, saying, "**Is it lawful** to heal on the Sabbath [**not according to them!**]"—that they might **accuse Him**. ¹¹ Then He said to them, "What man is there among you who has one sheep, and if it falls into a pit on the Sabbath, will not lay hold of it and lift it out? ¹² Of how much more value then is a man than a sheep? Therefore **it is lawful** to do good on the Sabbath."*

The Evangelical radio host used the example of a police officer who is above the law because he can violate the speed limit. However, Jesus did not come as a police officer to be above the law. According to the apostle Paul, Jesus was **born under the law** (Galatians 4:4, 5). He needed to obey all the law because He was taking our place. If Jesus had broken the law, He would be a sinner and would have needed a Redeemer.

Does the Sabbath belong only to the Old Covenant?

The Evangelical radio host repeatedly underlined that the Ten Commandments are a part of the Old Jewish Covenant and therefore they do not apply to Christians. He is correct on two counts. First, Deuteronomy 4:12, 13 does tell us

that the Ten Commandments are the Covenant and second, God did give the Ten Commandments initially to Israel. Here is the evidence:

Deuteronomy 4:13-14

*"So He declared to **you** **His covenant** which He commanded **you** to perform, the Ten Commandments; and He wrote them on two tablets of stone."*

Exodus 20:1, 2:

*"And God spoke all these words [to Israel], saying: ² "I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of the **land of Egypt**, out of the house of bondage."*

Whereas the Evangelical radio host is correct on these two counts, he is incorrect in the conclusion he draws from them.

Exodus 20:1, 2 tells us that God gave **all** the Ten Commandments (not only the Sabbath) to Israel so the question is, are all the Ten Commandments **only** for Israel? Is it proper for Christians to have other gods, worship idols, take God's name in vain, dishonor their parents, kill, commit adultery, steal, bear false witness and covet? To answer this question with a 'yes' is absurd!

God gave the Ten Commandments to Israel because they were His people at the time when He gave them, but nowhere does the Bible tell us that God gave them **exclusively** to and for Israel! By way of analogy, Jesus promised His twelve disciples that He was going to heaven to prepare a place for **them** (John 14:1-3). He said: "I go to prepare a place for **you** and if I go and prepare a place for **you**, I will come again and receive **you** unto Myself that where I am there **you** may be also." Does this mean that only the disciples can claim the promise of the second coming of Christ? Of course not! God gave the promise initially to the disciples but it is a promise for everyone!

Scholars have written numerous volumes on the concept of Covenant in Scripture. The topic appears to be complex; but it is not as complicated as it may appear! Let us briefly examine the biblical concept of Covenant.

There is only **one** Everlasting Covenant that was devised in the ages of eternity past (Zechariah 6:12, 13). In this Covenant, the Father and the Son agreed that should man break God's eternal Moral Law, the Son would come to earth to take the place of sinners. He would live the perfect life that the Law requires of humanity, bear their sins, and suffer their penalty of death.

Clearly, this Covenant has two components and both of them are eternal. I call these two components, 'Covenant Law' and 'Covenant Sacrifice'. Although the two components are distinct, they are intimately related. The transgression of the one (the eternal Moral Law) makes the implementation of the other necessary (the Covenant Sacrifice).

Regarding Covenant Law, there can be no doubt that the foundational principles of the Ten Commandments are eternal because they describe perfect relationships of man with God and man with man in a sinless society. Just imagine what the world would be like if everyone kept the Ten Commandments!

God commanded Adam and Eve to keep the eternal Covenant Law that they might live. However, when they disobeyed the eternal Moral Law, God pronounced the sentence of death and announced the implementation of the 'Covenant Sacrifice' that had been hidden in the mind of God for eternal ages.

The concept of Covenant Sacrifice is just as eternal as Covenant Law because Peter wrote that the plan of salvation 'was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times' (1 Peter 1:20) and John wrote that Jesus is the Lamb 'slain from the foundation of the world' (Revelation 13:8). Paul refers to this Covenant as the 'mystery which has been hidden from ages and from generations, but now has been revealed to His saints' (Colossians 1:26). Referring to this Covenant Ellen White perceptively wrote:

*"Christ was not alone in making His great sacrifice. It was the fulfillment of the **covenant** made between Him and His Father **before the foundation of the world was laid**. With clasped hands they had entered into the solemn pledge that Christ would become the surety for the human race if they were overcome by Satan's sophistry." The Faith I Live By, p. 76*

*"The covenant of grace is not a new truth, for it existed **in the mind of God from all eternity**. This is why it is called the **everlasting covenant**." The Faith I Live By, p. 77*

*"The covenant of mercy was made before the foundation of the world. It has existed **from all eternity**, and is called the everlasting covenant. Just as surely as there never was a time when God was not, so surely there **never was a moment***

*when it was not the delight of the eternal mind to manifest **His grace** to humanity.” Signs of the Times June 12, 1901*

Yet Covenant Sacrifice has two stages, one old and one new, one temporary and one eternal. In the Old Testament God gave Israel a ceremonial system of rites, ceremonies and sacrifices that pointed forward to the one and only Covenant Sacrifice of Christ. This system of ceremonies had no power in itself to save the sinner but rather pointed to the Savior who was to come. Although this Ceremonial Law was temporary until Christ came, it was actually a revelation in types and shadows, of the Everlasting Covenant Sacrifice that had been in the mind of God long before the inception of sin.

The enemies of Sabbath observance have done their utmost to eliminate the distinction between the Ten Commandments and the Ceremonial Law. They have gone to great lengths to blend the two into one, referring to both as the Old Covenant and affirming that both were Jewish and therefore abolished when Christ died on the cross. However, the distinction between the two is broad and clear. Ellen White perceptively wrote:

*“There are many who **try to blend** these two systems, using the texts that speak of the ceremonial law to prove that the moral law has been abolished; but this is a perversion of the Scriptures. The distinction between the two systems is **broad and clear**. The ceremonial system was made up of symbols pointing to Christ, to His sacrifice and His priesthood. This ritual law, with its sacrifices and ordinances, was to be performed by the Hebrews **until type met antitype** in the death of Christ, the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world. Then all the sacrificial offerings were to cease.” Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 365*

When Adam and Eve transgressed God’s eternal Moral Law, He immediately put the eternal Covenant Sacrifice into effect. Sacrificial animals were slain, God made garments of skins and covered the shame of Adam and Eve’s nakedness (Genesis 3:21). The transgression of the Moral Law made the **implementation** of the Covenant of Sacrifice necessary. Thus, both Covenant Law and Covenant Sacrifice existed long before the events at Mt. Sinai.

God revealed this Covenant of grace repeatedly in Old Testament times in various stages. He revealed it to Adam (Genesis 3:15), to Noah (Genesis 9:9-16), to Abraham (Genesis 17:13), to Isaac (Genesis 17:21), to Jacob (Leviticus

26:42), to Israel at Mt. Sinai (Exodus 19:5) and to David (Acts 2:29, 30). These were several manifestations of the one and only covenant.

Let us turn for a few moments to the idea of Covenant in the book of Hebrews. The central theme of Hebrews is not the contrast between 'good' and 'bad' but rather 'good' and 'better'. The Old Covenant Sacrificial system of types and shadows was good in that it pointed forward to Christ. However, the New Covenant system is better because Jesus fulfilled what the Old Covenant Sacrificial system foreshadowed. Jesus offers a better hope, He is the mediator of a better covenant based upon better promises, and He offered a better sacrifice with better blood. The blood of bulls and goats was good in the sense that it foreshadowed the blood of Christ but it could not legally take away sin (Hebrews 10:4). Jesus referred to the blood of His sacrifice as 'the blood of the New Covenant' and Hebrews refers to 'the blood of the everlasting covenant' that brought Jesus back from the dead (Matthew 26:28; Hebrews 13:20).

However, the book of Hebrews not only addresses the Covenant Sacrifice, eternal in the mind of God, announced in the sacrificial system, fulfilled in fact when Jesus lived and died and forever to be remembered by the universe after the final eradication of sin. The book of Hebrews also addresses the issue of the everlasting Moral Law.

Exodus 19 describes the arrival of Israel at Mt. Sinai. Moses went to the top of the Mount and God gave him a message to share with 'the house of Jacob' and the 'people of Israel'. God first told Moses about His goodness, 'You have seen what I did to the Egyptians, and how I bore you on eagles' wings and brought you to Myself' (verse 4).

Next, God announced that He wanted to make a covenant with 'the house of Jacob' and 'the people of Israel': 'Now therefore, if you will indeed **obey** My voice and **keep My covenant**, then you shall be a special treasure to Me above all people; for all the earth is Mine" (verse 5). Moses then relayed the message to 'the house of Jacob' and 'the people of Israel' to which they replied, 'all that the Lord has spoken we will do' (verse 8). Finally, in chapter 20, God revealed to 'the house of Jacob' and 'the people of Israel' the Covenant, the Ten Commandments.

Israel's vow of obedience to their marriage covenant with the LORD was short lived. In Exodus 32, we find them repudiating their 'I do' wedding vows with their 'husband' and playing the harlot with the Egyptian gods. What went wrong so quickly? The prophet Jeremiah some 800 years later explained:

Jeremiah 31:31, 32

*"Behold, the days are coming, says the Lord, when I will make a **new covenant** with the **house of Israel** and with the **house of Judah**—³² not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt, My covenant **which they broke**, though I was **a husband** to them, says the Lord."*

There was nothing wrong with the marriage Covenant at Sinai. The problem was with the people not with the Covenant. The writer of the book of Hebrews, reminiscing about the Sinai event stated that God found fault with the people, not the Covenant (Hebrews 8:8). The problem was that the people looked at the Law as an external code written on tables of stone to obey but without a heart relationship with their husband. So what was the solution to the problem? Did God decide to abolish the Covenant Law that He wrote on tables of stone? Jeremiah provided the answer:

Jeremiah 31:33:

*"But this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the Lord: I will put **My law** in their **minds**, and write it on their **hearts**; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people."*

Both the Old and New Covenants have the **same Law**, the Ten Commandments. However, the place where God writes that Law changes. When the Law is written merely on tables of stone outside man, obedience becomes external, forced, dry and legalistic. However, when God writes the Law upon the human heart, obedience becomes loving and spontaneous. Israel sought to render God a loveless obedience to the Law as a bare code written on tables of stone.

Someone might object, Jeremiah was talking about 'the house of Israel' and the 'house of Judah' and therefore what he says applies only to the Jews. The problem with this argument is that the book of Hebrews applies these verses

from Jeremiah to Christians! Thus, the expressions ‘house of Israel’ and ‘house of Judah’ today refer to Christians! (Hebrews 8:7-12)

Let us now apply this to the Sabbath in the time of Christ. The **Pharisees** of Christ’s day were a perfect example of the Law written **only** on tables of stone. Like Israel at Mt. Sinai (where the people promised: “all that the Lord has commanded **we will do**”) they rendered the law written **on stone** an **external, legal** obedience that did not come **from the heart**. Their observance of the Sabbath was loveless, harsh and merciless. They saw the Sabbath as a means to earn salvation, and it was a burden because it was devoid of love. When Jesus healed on the Sabbath, the religious leaders focused on the external code instead of focusing on those who were suffering and in need of healing. Jesus did not break or abolish the Sabbath but rather restored it to its original intent and meaning. A Christian who truly loves Jesus will find it a delight to suspend their own activities for twenty-four hours to focus only on their relationship with Jesus and the needs of others. The foundation of lasting and deep relationships is spending time with the one we love and God has given us an entire day a week to spend with Him!

A few years ago, Roy Moore, the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of Alabama placed a 5,300-pound monument of the Ten Commandments in State Building of Alabama. Does placing the Ten Commandments on a monument of stone really transform society? Actually, it does little good to have the Ten Commandments merely on a monument of stone. In order for the Commandments to be effective, God must write them on the tables of the human heart because true morality works from the inside out.

In 2 Corinthians 3 the apostle Paul seconded Jeremiah’s perspective of this matter when he wrote that the Ten Commandments should be written, ‘not on tablets of stone but on tablets of flesh, that is, of the heart.’ (2 Corinthians 3:3).

Is the Sabbath Jewish?

Frequently I ask Christian friends of other denominations to whom the light, the firmament, the vegetation, the heavenly bodies, the fish, the birds, the land animals and human beings belong. Their immediate answer is that it all belongs to God. Then I ask them, why these things belong to God and the answer is immediate: “Because God created them.” They are of course correct:

Psalm 24:1, 2:

*"The earth is **the Lord's**, and all its fullness, the world and those who dwell therein.² **For** He has founded it upon the seas, and established it upon the waters."*

However, these same Christian friends fail to take their statement to its logical conclusion. If everything that God made during creation week is His, because he made it then the Sabbath must be His as well because He made it for man at the conclusion of creation week (Mark 2:27). To say that all that God made the first six days is His but the Sabbath is of the Jews is absurd. This is why the Bible refers to the Sabbath with expressions such as:

- 'the Sabbath **of the Lord** your God' (Exodus 20:11)
- 'you shall keep **my** Sabbaths' (Ezekiel 20:12, 20),
- God refers to it as '**my** holy day' (Isaiah 58:13, 14)
- The Son of man is **Lord of the Sabbath** (Mark 2:27)

Never once in the Old or New Testament, not even once, do the writers refer to the Sabbath as the **Jewish Sabbath** or the Sabbath of the Jews. However, John refers to the feasts that passed away when Jesus died as 'feasts of the Jews'.

- Jesus is the king of the Jews (Matthew 2:2; 27:11). Is He not the king of everyone?
- John 2:13: The Passover is called the 'Passover of the Jews'
- John 5:1: 'a feast of the Jews'
- John 6:4: 'the Passover, a feast of the Jews'
- John 7:2: 'the Jews' Feast of Tabernacles'
- John 11:55 'the Jews Passover was nigh at hand'

Was the Sabbath only a sign for Israel?

Frequently anti-Sabbatarian Christians affirm that the Sabbath was a sign **only** between God and literal Israel. The passage that they usually refer to as proof is Exodus 31:13, 16, 17.

Exodus 31:13, 16, 17:

*"Speak also to the **children of Israel**, saying: 'Surely **My** Sabbaths you shall keep, for it is **a sign** between **Me and you** throughout your generations, that you may*

*know that I am the Lord who sanctifies you. ¹⁶ Therefore the **children of Israel** shall keep the Sabbath, to observe the Sabbath throughout their generations as a **perpetual covenant**. ¹⁷ It is **a sign** between Me and the children of Israel forever; **for** in six days the Lord made the heavens and the earth, and on the seventh day He rested and was refreshed.'"*

These verses clearly tell us that the Sabbath was a sign between God and Israel. However, the text does not say that it was **exclusively** a sign between God and Israel. Let us notice several indicators that the Sabbath was for all human beings.

First, God gave **all** Ten Commandments **to Israel** at Mt. Sinai. Does this mean that the Ten Commandments were binding **only** upon Israel because God revealed them to them? To answer **yes would be absurd!** It defies logic to say that nine of the Ten Commandments apply to everyone but **only one** applies exclusively to the Jews. God gave the Ten Commandments to Israel because they were **His people at that time**. However, that does not mean that they were binding **only** upon **literal** Israel. The text does not say that the Sabbath was a sign **exclusively** between God and literal Israel.

Second, the motivation for the observance of the Sabbath **transcends** literal Israel because **creation** is the reason why the Sabbath is a sign between God and His people. That is to say, Israel must keep the Sabbath because God established it as a **sign of creation**. Would it make any sense to think that **Israel alone** was required to keep the Sabbath in **commemoration of creation**? Do not all human beings need to remember that God created the heavens, the earth and everything in them?

Third, **Galatians 3:28, 29** states that those who are '**in Christ**' are Abraham's seed and heirs according to the promise. If Christians are Abraham's seed, then they are members of Israel and as such should keep the Sabbath.

Finally, **Isaiah 56:4-7** clearly states that the Sabbath was intended for **Gentiles** as well as Jews and Jesus explicitly affirmed that the Sabbath **was made for man** (**Mark 2:27**). Thus, our Lord taught that the Sabbath was a creation institution that He made it for the benefit of man. The use of the word **anthropos** by Jesus in Mark 2:27 is significant. He did not say He made the Sabbath for Israel but rather for '**humankind**' (NRSV).

A Sign of Redemption from Bondage

Let us now consider another argument that the Evangelical radio host used to discard the need for Christians to keep the Sabbath.

Deuteronomy 5:12-15

*"Observe the Sabbath day, to keep it holy, as the Lord your God commanded you. ¹³ Six days you shall labor and do all your work, ¹⁴ but the **seventh day** is the **Sabbath** of the Lord your God. In it you shall do no work: you, nor your son, nor your daughter, nor your male servant, nor your female servant, nor your ox, nor your donkey, nor any of your cattle, nor your stranger who is within your gates, that your male servant and your female servant may rest as well as you. ¹⁵ And remember that **you were a slave** in the land of Egypt, and the Lord your God brought you out from there by a mighty hand and by an outstretched arm; **therefore** the Lord your God commanded you to **keep the Sabbath day.**"*

The Evangelical radio host said that this passage proves that the Sabbath was **only** for the Jews because it was a sign of their deliverance from Egypt. This is not true! The passage simply proves that the Sabbath took on an **added significance** for Israel. The original creation function remained because Exodus 31:17 tells us that Israel was to keep the Sabbath as a commemoration of **creation**. At the Exodus, the Sabbath simply took on an added function to remind Israel that God had redeemed them from bitter servile slave labor. This added dimension of the Sabbath does not abolish its original creation function!

As we have previously seen, Jesus was the Creator of Genesis 1 (see John 1:1-3) so it was Jesus who created the Sabbath! Notably, the very same Jesus delivered Israel from Egypt and gave them the Sabbath as the sign of their redemption. This same Jesus also wrote the law with His own finger at Mt. Sinai. You might be wondering how we know this.

When Moses drew near the burning bush that was not consumed, the LORD called to him from the midst of the bush and told Moses that He had descended to deliver Israel from bondage (Exodus 3:6-9). When Moses asked the LORD in whose name he was to speak to the people, God replied that he should tell them that 'I AM that I AM' (Exodus 3:14) had sent him. The same I AM spoke and wrote the Ten Commandments and gave them to Israel on Mt. Sinai. We know this because the giver of the Law spoke to Israel saying: "**I am** the Lord your

God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage” and as we have seen, the Sabbath became a sign of their deliverance from bondage in Egypt.

There is a definite link between the deliverance of Israel from bondage in Egypt and deliverance from bondage to sin. In John 8 we find Jesus conversing and with the Jews and the conversation revolved around deliverance from bondage. The conversation began with Jesus telling the Jews ‘you will know the truth and the truth will set you free’ (John 8:31) to which the Jews quickly responded that they were free and had never been in bondage to anyone. Jesus then told them that whoever sins is a slave to sin and told them that if they accepted Him they would be free indeed (John 8:32-36). The conversation concluded when Jesus said, ‘Most assuredly, I say to you, before Abraham was, I AM.” (John 8:58).

The point is that the same person who delivered Israel from literal bondage in Egypt would deliver those who accepted Him from spiritual bondage to sin. As the blood of the Passover lamb in Egypt marked Israel’s deliverance from physical bondage, so Jesus, the true Passover Lamb shed His blood to deliver His people from bondage to sin. Moreover, after Jesus finished His work of redemption, He rested in the tomb on the Sabbath day and as Christ commanded Israel to rest on the Sabbath in commemoration of their deliverance from bondage, so the followers of Jesus rested in commemoration of their release from spiritual bondage to sin.

Luke 23:54-56

*“That day was the **Preparation**, and the **Sabbath** drew near. ⁵⁵And the women who had come with Him from Galilee followed after, and they observed the tomb and how His body was laid. ⁵⁶ Then they returned and prepared spices and fragrant oils and **they rested** on the Sabbath according to **the commandment**.”*

True, the followers of Jesus did not yet understand the profound redemptive significance of the Sabbath but in time, they would. Ellen White was right on target when she described the relationship between creation, redemption and the Sabbath:

*“The **Father and the Son rested** after **Their work** of Creation. ‘Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host of them. And on the seventh day, God*

*ended His work which He had made. . . . And God blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it: because that in it He had rested' Genesis 2:1-3. The death of Christ was designed to be at the very time in which it took place. It was in God's plan that the work which Christ had engaged to do should be **completed on a Friday**, and that on the Sabbath He should rest in the tomb, even as **the Father and Son had rested after completing Their creative work**. The hour of Christ's apparent defeat was the hour of His victory. The great plan, devised before the foundations of the earth were laid, was successfully carried out." Manuscript 25, 1898, pp. 3, 4 ("The Man of Sorrows," typed, February 24, 1898)*

The Manna episode in Exodus 16 bears a close relationship with the redemptive significance of the Sabbath. The story tells us that Manna fell on the first six days of the week but not on the seventh day Sabbath. When the people picked up a double portion of Manna on Friday, it was as fresh on Sabbath as it had been on Friday. However, if they picked up a double portion any other day, it bred worms and stank. What is the Christ centered meaning of this and how does it relate to the Sabbath? We must go to the New Testament to find out.

The gospel of John tells us explicitly that the Manna represented the flesh of Jesus that He would give for the life of the world (John 6:51). What would have happened to an ordinary body that died on Friday? The answer is that shortly after death the body would begin the process of decomposition that would lead it to breed worms and stink. However, the body of Jesus was different. While His flesh rested in the tomb on Sabbath, it did not see corruption because He was what the Manna represented (see Acts 2:25-27). Thus, the Sabbath is a reminder of the rest of Jesus from His redemptive works where His flesh saw no corruption.

However, the Sabbath has yet a third dimension. The book of Revelation describes seven devastating plagues that will afflict creation just before the second coming. God gave the prophet Jeremiah a glimpse of what the earth will be like because of the plagues:

Jeremiah 4:23:

*"I beheld the earth, and indeed it was **without form**, and **void**; and the heavens, they had **no light**."*

The scenario that Jeremiah described is that of the earth before creation week:

- ✓ **No light** in the heavens
- ✓ The **atmosphere** defiled by putrefaction
- ✓ All the **vegetation** dried up and died
- ✓ The **sun, moon and stars** were moved out of their places
- ✓ All the **fish** in the sea died
- ✓ All the **birds** of the air were gone
- ✓ All the **land animals** died
- ✓ No **human beings** on earth

However, the book of Revelation tells us that God will create a new heavens and a new earth (Revelation 21:1) and the gospel prophet Isaiah explains that **all flesh** (not only the Jews) will come to worship God in commemoration of the new creation.

Isaiah 66:22-23

*"For as the **new heavens** and the **new earth** which I will make shall remain before Me," says the Lord, "So shall your descendants and your name remain. ²³ And it shall come to pass that from one New Moon to another, and from one **Sabbath** to another, **all flesh** shall come to **worship before Me**," says the Lord."*

- ✓ No doubt, God will recreate the world in six days and cease on the seventh. God's people could not go to worship before the Lord on the seventh day Sabbath unless there were six days before the seventh.
- ✓ In contrast to the beginning when Adam and Eve did not see God create anything, God's people will be alive and **eyewitnesses** of the new creation.
- ✓ Someone might ask, how then do we explain **Revelation 21:23** where John tells us that the New Jerusalem will not need the sun or moon? If there is no sun or moon how can there be days and weeks? No problem. The text does not say that there will be no sun or moon but rather **in the city** there will be **no need** of sun or moon (see Isaiah 24:23).

Argument from Silence

The radio host claimed that because there is no mention of Sabbath observance in the Biblical record between Genesis 2:2, 3 and **Exodus 16**, the Sabbath was not a creation institution. I have never liked arguments from silence because they prove little. The fact that there is no mention of Sabbath observance

between creation and the Manna episode does not mean that no one kept it! True, there is no direct mention of Sabbath observance between Genesis 2 and Exodus 16, however, in Exodus 16 there are strong hints that the Sabbath existed during this period. In Exodus 16:4, the LORD spoke to Moses in the following words:

Exodus 16:4:

*"I will rain bread from heaven for you and the people shall go out and gather a certain quota every day, that I may test them, whether they will walk in **My law** or not . . .*

When Israel disobeyed the LORD and went out to pick up Manna on the Sabbath and found none, the LORD told them through Moses:

Exodus 16:28

*"How long do you refuse to keep My **commandments** and My **laws**?"*

At this point God had not yet given Israel the Ten Commandments and yet God complained that Israel was violating the Sabbath because they did not keep His commandments and laws. Obviously, the Sabbath law existed before the Manna episode.

Notably, God told Isaac long before the exodus that in Abraham's seed all the nations of the earth would be blessed because "Abraham obeyed My voice and **kept** My charge, My **commandments**, My statutes, and My **laws**." The words 'commandments' and 'laws' are the same that appear in Exodus 16:28!

The Contemporary Papacy and the Sabbath

John Paul II, Francis I

Let us dwell for a few minutes on the papacy's concept of creation. It is a fact that **neither** John Paul II nor Francis I believe that the creation story of Genesis **occurred as it is written**. Both of them have gone on the record saying that the creation story **is symbolic**, that the universe came into existence by a **big bang** and that this **world has evolved** over the course of **millions of years** through the process of macroevolution albeit with the intervention of God at certain critical points in the process.

John Paul in a speech to the **Papal Academy of the Sciences** referred to evolution as ‘more than a hypothesis’ and argued that the various branches of science have presented ‘a significant argument in favor of the theory’:

*“Today, almost half a century after the publication of the encyclical (Pope Pius XII, Humane Generis, 1950 was very cautious about accepting the theory of evolution), **new knowledge** has led to the recognition of the theory of evolution as **more than a hypothesis**. It is indeed remarkable that this theory has been progressively accepted by researchers, following a series of discoveries in various fields of knowledge. The convergence, neither sought nor fabricated, of the results of work that was conducted independently is in itself **a significant argument in favor of the theory.**”*

Pope Francis, with a desire to please the world of academia, affirmed that the papacy endorses the Big Bang as the origin of the world:

*“The **Big Bang**, which today **we hold** to be the origin of the world, **does not contradict** the intervention of the divine creator but, rather, **requires it** . . . Evolution in nature is **not inconsistent** with the notion of creation, because **evolution requires the creation** of beings that **evolve**. When we read about Creation in Genesis, we run the risk of imagining **God was a magician**, with a magic wand able to do everything **but that is not so** . . . He created human beings and **let them develop** according to the **internal laws** that he gave to each one so they would **reach their fulfillment** . . .”*

Devastating Implications

These statements by the popes are **troubling** for the following reasons:

- ✓ The foundation of **heterosexual** marriage between a man and a woman is founded on a literal reading of the creation story.
- ✓ The foundation of **gender identity** as male and female has as its foundation on the literal reading of the creation story.
- ✓ The **Sabbath** as a memorial of creation has as its foundation on a **literal reading** of the Genesis account.
- ✓ Francis I has constantly admonished the strong to help the weak and the rich to help the poor. However, his counsel does not fit with the mechanism of evolution because evolution functions based on the **survival of the fittest** or **natural**

selection where the strong prevail and the weak disappear. If this is true, why should the strong help the weak and the rich help the poor?

- ✓ Even more seriously, the papal view of origins destroys the expectation of a soon coming of Jesus. How many millions of years must we wait for evolution to work out its wrinkles to reach its Omega Point? Furthermore, how long will it take God to make a new heavens and a new earth at the end of human history?

The Character of God

Evolutionary theory mars the beautiful character of God:

- ✓ It is an attack on the omnipotence of God (does not God have the almighty power to create things instantaneously by speaking them into existence?).
- ✓ It is an attack against the omniscience and wisdom of God (Is not God wise enough to create everything perfect from the start without having to use a method of trial and error where there is much suffering and death?).
- ✓ It is an attack on the love and mercy of God (how can a God of love use a method where there is much suffering, cruelty, pain and death? Does this sound like a God who cares for the sparrows and the lilies of the field?).
- ✓ It is an attack against the need for a savior (if the Genesis account is symbolic then the story of the fall is also symbolic and salvation simply means perfecting through the process of evolution).

The Final Test

The great final test that will divide the world is not merely a matter of days but rather of authority. The observance of the Sabbath is a sign of loyalty and obedience to the Creator. The observance of Sunday is the sign of loyalty and obedience to the beast. Thus, the matter of days will test which authority you will obey. The first angel's message commands us to worship the Creator and the third warns us not to worship the beast/little horn who attempted to change God's law. Are we so loyal to God that we will even be willing to die to be faithful to Him?

Holy Week and the Old Covenant

Christians celebrate the events of Passion Week (such as Palm Sunday, Ash Wednesday, and Good Friday) once a year. Why then do they celebrate the

resurrection of Jesus every Sunday? Where is the divine command to observe Sunday in honor of the resurrection on a weekly basis?

In spite of the fact that the Bible, without exception, refers to the seventh day Sabbath as God's day of rest, **Popes John Paul II** (in the Apostolic Letter *Dies Domini*) and **Francis I** (in the encyclical *Laudato Si*) have declared that the seventh day Sabbath is **Jewish** and that **Sunday is the Christian Sabbath**. Yet, as we have seen, the Bible never refers to the Sabbath as Jewish. In every single instance, the Sabbath is God's holy rest day because he made it holy by his rest.

The papacy claims that the Sabbath is a **relic of the Jewish Old Covenant** and yet it continues a plethora of **Old Covenant** practices such as **sacrifices** on altars, the use of holy **vestments**, the sprinkling holy **water**, the burning **incense**, the lighting **candles**, and the building of **shrines** to the saints. By doing this, the papacy **strains the gnat** and swallows the camel. The papacy enjoins all of these practices that God does not command and yet discards God's explicit command to rest on the Sabbath!

The simple fact is that Sunday cannot be holy because **God did not rest on it!** Jesus rested from creation, redemption and will rest from the new creation on Sabbath!



SECRETS UNSEALED

*Secrets Unsealed is a non-profit ministry.
Your prayers and financial support are greatly appreciated.*

SECRETS UNSEALED

5949 E. Clinton Ave.

Fresno, CA 93727

559-264-2300 (EE.UU. & Int'l)

888-REV-1412 (EE.UU.) | 888-738-1412 (EE.UU.)

Email: info@secretsunsealed.org

www.secretsunsealed.org

