

MINISTRY UPDATE | THIRD QUARTER 2018

# SECRETS UNSEALED



*Reflections on a*

# SABBATH DEBATE



Dear *friend* of Secrets Unsealed,

Perhaps some of you were able to watch the debate recently between Doug Batchelor and evangelical radio host Steve Gregg on AFTV. Unfortunately, the debate format did not allow the debaters to articulate fully their arguments. After the debate, Mr. Gregg attempted to rebut Doug's arguments in a two-hour presentation on YouTube and Doug responded with a one hour Q&A of his own.

Mr. Gregg's central argument was that the Sabbath is a Jewish institution that belongs to the Old Covenant. I believe that in the back-and-forth both debaters passed up some very important points. For this reason, I have decided to bring up those points in this newsletter article. I trust that the information will be useful in defending the faith once delivered to the saints.

As you know, Secrets Unsealed is committed to upholding the truths for this time and the Sabbath is one of those vital truths. The expansion of Secrets Unsealed into broadcasting on our SUMtv channels requires significant funding and we are launching out into deep waters by faith. We are thankful for your prayers and financial support that make it possible to spread God's message in these perilous times.

Signs of the times are everywhere. May the Lord keep us faithful in these uncertain times.



In the Master's Service,

Pastor Stephen P. Bohr  
President and Speaker, *Secrets Unsealed*

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## TESTIMONY TIME

*"Not real good about talking about myself, but here goes... I grew up in a blue collar southern Michigan town amongst a semi-worldling family, that is to say my mother thought it would be good if I went to church at our local Baptist church. So she would send me out the door to catch the bus nearly a quarter mile away. There I waited patiently at the bus stop that was marked by the presence of a giant old hickory nut tree. I was five years old at the time and a little unsure of which bus to get on when two buses showed up. Also I was embarrassed to ask the driver if this was the correct bus because of my stuttered speech.*

*Anyhow I got on the bus and went to church nearly all*

*summer long. This lasted until one day when my mother needed to go out to the store for cigarettes, she said, come on Mitchell I will give you a ride up to the bus stop. As we pulled up to the bus stop in the shade of the old tree there was my bus pulling up. So I jumped out of the car and ran off to get on. My mother came bursting out of the car yelling for me, so I stopped and she said Mitchell is this the bus you've been ridding all summer long? I replied yes mother, so when she started whipping me in front of all the other kids I was confused and said to her I thought this is what you wanted me to do? Well it turns out I was ridding the Catholic bus all summer and not the Baptist bus she wanted me to be on. Anyhow life went on I grew up and in my late teens I joined Uncle Sam's Misguided Children the U.S.M.C. After the Marines, I had some very dark days placed in my life and was on the edge of it all after a dear friend a fellow Marine who had led me to the Lord killed himself. Years later though I found sanctuary in this new program that had just started up called Three Angels, so I watched it and learned the truth about the state of the dead. So I decided to join the Seventh-day Adventists, but they would not have me because I worked on Saturday. I respected that view and went on my way. I wish I could say that darkness did not find me again, but that was not the case. As the darkness over took my ramparts I felt confused. I thought I had gotten on the right bus this time for sure. However with child support looming and the world on my back, I plodded on through life because of my lack of faith. During this period of time, I basically forgot about God and let the years roll on as they would. Then one day in an attempt to be frugal I decided to put up an antenna on my house. You guessed it, 3ABN was on my TV screen. So I watched, and this guy named Steve Bohr came on and somehow the Holy Spirit through him made it to me. I have ordered nearly all of Pastor Bohr's materials now and have watched and studied with him for over eight months. My wife and I have been growing a lot. We watch and study every day and we keep the Sabbath, be it at home, we still keep it and honor the Creator. I do believe some day God will have some kind of ministry for us. I like to think of it as trading in the eagle globe and anchor for the angel's globe and anchor! But I know it's much more than that. Thank you Pastor Bohr."*

—MITCHELL & AMANDA FLEMING



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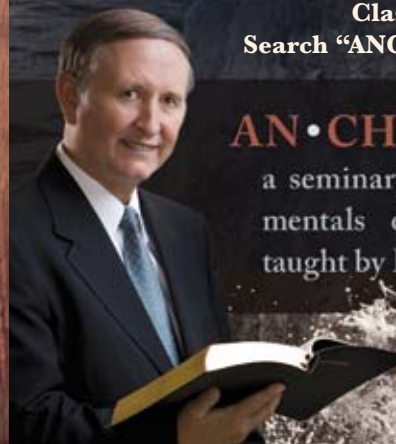
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# Reflections on a SABBATH DEBATE

by Pastor Stephen Bohr

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

At issue is the **integrity and credibility** of Jesus and the New Testament writers.

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 the 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**, 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 **10 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. 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. Six days you shall labor and do all your work, 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. 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: "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 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 as 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...” Isaiah 58:13, 14

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, to establish among them that they should celebrate yearly the fourteenth and fifteenth days of the month of Adar, 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. Who determined its measurements? Surely

*you know! Or who stretched the line upon it? To what were its foundations fastened? Or who laid its cornerstone, 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**: “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]. 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. 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 canvas 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 canvas, 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: “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? 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?”

## 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

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. 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? 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.

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: 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 Com-

mandments (not only the Sabbath) to Israel so the question is, are all the Ten Commandments only for Israel? Is it proper for Chris-

tians 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

Is “Thou shalt not kill”  
only for **Israel**?



*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**— not according to the cove-

*nant 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.

The problem was with the **people**, not the Old Covenant.

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 24 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 the 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. **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)

## 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:** “*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. Therefore the **children of Israel** shall keep the Sabbath, to observe the Sabbath throughout their generations as a **perpetual covenant**. 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.

- 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’

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. Six days you shall labor and do all your work, 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. 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 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).

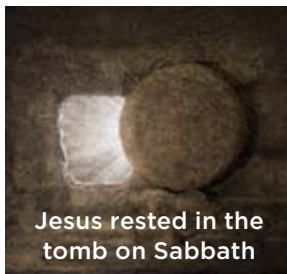
The point is that the same person who delivered Israel from literal bondage in Egypt would deliver those who accepted Him from spiritual bondage to sin. As the blood of the Passover lamb in Egypt marked Israel's deliverance from physical bondage, so Jesus, the true Passover Lamb shed His blood to deliver 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. And the women who had come with Him from Galilee followed after, and they observed the tomb and how His body was laid. Then they returned and prepared spices and fragrant

It **defies logic** to say that **9** of the **10** Commandments apply to everyone but only **1** applies exclusively to Jews.

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



Jesus rested in the tomb on Sabbath

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. 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 Jerusa-

lem 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

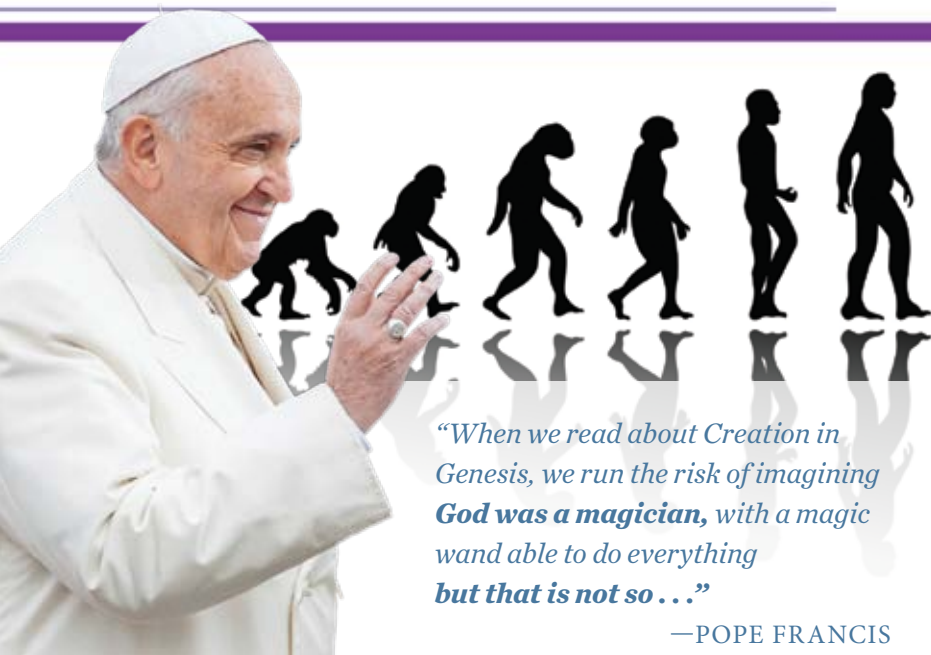
The radio host claimed that because there is no mention of Sabbath observance in the Biblical record between Genesis 2:2, 3 and **Exodus 16**, the Sabbath was not a creation institution. I have never liked arguments from silence because they prove little. The fact that there is no mention of Sabbath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





*“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 . . .**”*

—POPE FRANCIS

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 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?)

The great final test that will divide the world is **not merely a matter of days** but rather of **authority**.

✓ 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!



PASTOR STEPHEN BOHR

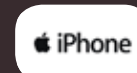
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# Sleep & Caffeine

BY MILTON TESKE, M.D.

*The delicate nerves of the brain are the only channel through which God communicates with man.*

To commune with God, to be filled with the Holy Spirit, to be transformed by the renewing of your mind, you need the neurons of your brain to be functioning correctly. Sleep is absolutely essential if we are to have a clear well-ordered mind and a sound memory. To endure through the time of trouble without sinning by even a thought and be prepared to stand in the presence of Christ at his coming, we will need a fully sanctified mind transformed into His likeness. Such a mind will only be possible through daily communing with God, through opening the door of the mind to His knocking and being daily filled with His Spirit. Total surrender to His will is absolutely essential for this transformation to take place. We know that our will is the

function of an area of neurons in the prefrontal cortex in the brain. Every neuron of the brain must have about eight hours of sound sleep to function at its best the next day.

We used to think that sleep was a time when the brain turned off and shut down, so it could just rest and recover. But now we know that sleep is not a time for the brain to rest but is actually a time of intense activity. Some areas of the brain are 30% more active during sleep than during consciousness. We spend about two thirds of our time carrying out the activities of our conscious life and the other third in sorting through the activities of the day deciding what to save and what to discard, moving essential items to permanent storage, erasing stuff we don't need, organiz-

ing and cleaning up things and getting ready for the next new day. **The brain never sleeps.** It just switches to a different mode of intense activity we call sleep. Much of the rest of the body rests while you are asleep, but not all — the heart keeps beating and the lungs keep breathing. This is the time when growth hormones surge and muscles are doing their regenerative rebuilding and restoring from the damage of the previous day's exercise.

## **What Happens in the Brain While We Sleep**

Recent research has given us some insight as to what is actually going on in the brain during sleep. An analogy to help us understand is to think of your brain as an office where you do all the business of your life. For the 16 hours of your conscious day, the office is open for business. The hippocampus is like your desktop, everything you do during day ends up on top of your desk. Everything you see, hear, touch, taste and smell is dumped on your desk. All of thoughts from the day are there, whether they are just random discordant musings of a distracted mind or perhaps the carefully ordered results of some intense organized study you engaged in. All are there on the desktop. Think of it as a flash drive or the RAM in your computer — it's all there. But this is temporary. You

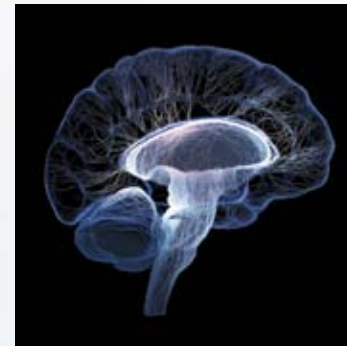
don't plan to leave it there forever. If you did, after a few days or weeks your desk would be piled so high it would be unusable and you would be unable to find anything you had placed there. This desktop is the hippocampus which we often refer to as our short-term memory.

But after about 16 hours closing time comes. Adenosine levels have been building up, you are feeling tired and melatonin is the chime on your circadian clock that

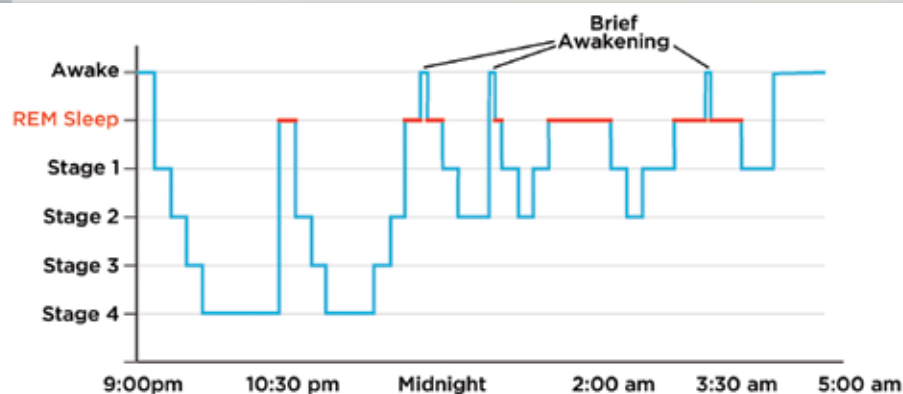
says bedtime. The brain goes into sleep mode. You close the doors and pull down the window shades of your office and hang out the closed sign. But you don't leave, the night shift has just begun! But literally, as far as the outside world is concerned you are closed.

The thalamus is like a major switching station located in the center of your brain. All the sensory input passes through there and now all the switches in the thalamus are turned off. You are shut off from the outside sensory world. You no longer see or hear or feel what is going on out there. You are unaware of what is going on. It would take a very intense stimuli to awaken you and get you to open your door or look out a window now.

So, what goes on inside when the office is closed? The brain goes through a series of stages during a night's sleep. The night shift consists of repeating cycles lasting about 90



minutes each. Each cycle goes through various levels of sleep. We can illustrate these in a diagram we call sleep architecture.



Sleep is either REM sleep, named for Rapid-Eye-Movement because the eyes are darting back and forth in their sockets during this level, or non-REM (NREM) which can be divided into progressively slower and deeper levels. In stage 1 and 2 NREM, the brain waves are slowing down, and certain activities are taking place. But the first couple of sleep cycles each night are characterized by dropping down into very deep, very slow-wave activity referred to as stage 3 and 4 NREM sleep. Brief awakenings can occur during the night, but you will not remember these micro-awakenings the next morning.

### Deep Sleep Cycles

For approximately the first 3 hours, we go through a couple of really deep stage 3 and 4 NREM sleep cycles. During these cycles, we take the important things off of our desktop and file them in the appropriate place in the file cabinet or bookshelf in the office. Scientists looking at the brain waves can actually see little packets

of information being transferred from the hippocampus to the appropriate areas of the cortex. The cortex is where we maintain our permanent information storage — sort of like the hard drive on a computer. If you were practicing a new motor skill during the day, like learning to ride a bike or practicing a new piece on the piano, this would now be transferred to your motor cortex in your parietal lobes. After a good night's sleep, the piece you practiced so hard the day before would now just flow off your fingertips because it is now coming directly from your motor cortex and is coordinated by your cerebellum. It is now in its proper place among all of the other music skills you have learned over the years.

Cognitive information you have learned during the day will also be stored in the appropriate areas of the cortex during these deep stages of sleep early in the night. The deep, slow-wave activity (delta waves) that characterize this deep sleep originate in the frontal lobe of the brain and spread across the brain from front

to back. We now know that it is the executive centers in the prefrontal cortex of the frontal lobes (the same place where you make your decisions and choices during your conscious daytime life) that are controlling and deciding which information to save from your hippocampus to your cortex. Everything you were conscious of during the day was stored there in your hippocampus, but not everything needs to be saved permanently. Where you parked your car while at work is important after work when you go the parking lot to look for your car, but you don't need to remember that for the rest of your life. But, the memory verse you memorized this morning, now the frontal lobe can decide that is something you should move to the cortex. And if you review that daily for a period of time those synapses can become really strong.

### Brain Cleaning

At night is often when the janitorial service comes in and cleans the office, and so it is in the office of your brain. During the day, metabolic waste products can build up as well as other toxic waste matter. Protein fragments like beta-amyloid and tau, if left in the brain can build up into synapse-destroying plaques that can lead to Alzheimer's Disease. During these deep stage 3 and 4 sleep cycles early each night is when the brain gets its deep cleaning. Around the neurons are helper cells called glial cells that have a lot of very important functions to support the neurons, but now they take on the night shift job of washing the brain clean of every bit of waste matter that has accumulated around the neurons during the day.

They shrink in size by 60%, creating a lot of empty space around them and the neurons, and then a stream of clear water floods that expanded space. It originates from around the arteries and drains out around the veins taking with it all of the waste products from the brain.

Imagine a city with all of its streets and cross streets. Now imagine every night for 3 hours every building in the city shrinks 60% expanding the street spaces between them. Then a flood of clear clean water washes through the city flushing out every bit of dirt and trash and waste and draining it all off into a river to flow downstream away from the city. Now the city is left sparkling clean, and the buildings expand back to their normal size. This is what God designed into your brain to clean it every night. Totally amazing!

### Freeing Up the Short-term Storage

Later during the night, there are cycles of predominately stage 1 and 2 NREM sleep. So now that we've saved what we needed from the hippocampus during the earlier deep sleep cycles, it is now time to delete and erase all of the non-essential stuff in the short-term memory. It's time to clear all the junk and trash and stuff we don't need off of the desktop and throw it in the trashcan. We use this stage 1 and 2 NREM to clean off the desktop and be ready to start the next day with a clean desk and an uncluttered mind. Erase the flash drive of all the temporary stuff we loaded on it yesterday so we have plenty of new space for the new day. Tear all the old pages off of your notebook and trash



them so you have a fresh new notebook to start recording the activities of the new day.

## Dreaming

REM sleep is when we dream. The wave forms of electrical activity in the brain during REM sleep look just like an awake brain. And during dream sleep we are consciously aware of the dream activity. But with all outside sensory input still cut off by the switches in the thalamus, we now are responding to internal stimuli, the events of the previous day in the hippocampus and past memories stored in the cortex. During REM sleep we are not only cut off from all outside sensory input, but the brain stem also switches off all motor output to the muscles. We become paralyzed and limp and cannot move. This is important so we don't act out our dreams which could be quite dangerous. During your dreams, your brain is actually doing the motor activities you are doing in your dream, but the switch is disconnected so the messages can't actually get to your muscles. (This is why whales don't have REM sleep — they would drown if they were paralyzed.)

What is happening in the brain during these random disconnected events we call dreams? This is when the brain becomes more organized. This is when creativity takes place. This is when seemingly disconnected thoughts can become connected and new insights can occur. Musicians have awoken from a dream and the music in their head became their best and most famous songs. A Russian scientist had been studying the elements having written down the

details of each on some cards trying to understand and see some relationship or order or connection between them. After reviewing and studying these cards for many months, one night in a dream it all came together in a table. He saw the connections, and he awoke and wrote down what he had seen in his dream. With only a few minor corrections, this is now the periodic table of the elements that every chemistry student learns.

## A Clear and Connected Life

I hope you can begin to see how essential sleep is for our conscious life during the day. It is essential for organizing, saving, and consolidating the details of our life, and it is essential for creativity and the uniqueness we each contribute to our world. At the end of a busy day, we stop and turn aside from all outside input and process, organize, and save to our cortex those details that have meaning and importance. Our frontal lobe decision-making center still rules over and directs this process. Then we erase the unessential from the hippocampus so we have a clean notebook to start the next day with. There is time for creativity and looking for new relationships among information in our brains. Then, when sleep's work is done is when we awake to start a new day. We are physically rested and restored from a good night's sleep and the brain is organized and cleared of waste material. Everything is clean and new and ready for the next day, even a new notebook to begin recording our input from the new day.

Can you see why the early morning is the Holy Spirit's favorite time

to come knocking on the door of the heart? Can you see why Jesus would choose this as the time He would spend alone in prayer communing with His heavenly Father? This is the best time for prayer, the best time to meditate on God's word. This is the time to recommit your life in total surrender to God for the new day. This is the time to open the door of your mind for the re-baptism of the Holy Spirit. The neurons and synapses of your mind are at their best. All the old has been cleaned out, and you

are at your best to receive the impressions of the Holy Spirit upon your mind. It is the best time to see clearly what God would like to say to you.

*"Daily He received a fresh baptism of the Holy Spirit. In the early hours of the new day the Lord awakened Him from His slumbers, and His soul and His lips were anointed with grace, that He might impart to others. His words were given Him fresh from the heavenly courts, words that He might speak in season to the weary and oppressed."*  
Christ's Object Lessons, p. 139

## Caffeine and Sleep

**God has given to His people living at the end of time very specific and emphatic instructions to completely avoid the use of coffee and tea.**

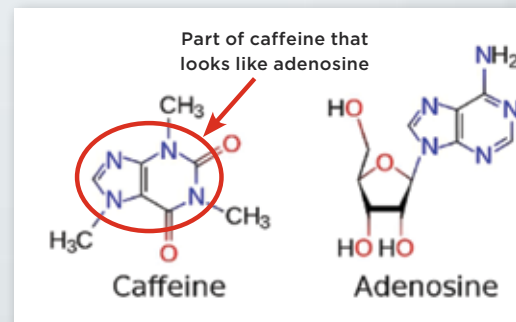


Today we will not look at all of the harmful effects of these drinks but will look only at what happens to our sleep when we disregard this command.

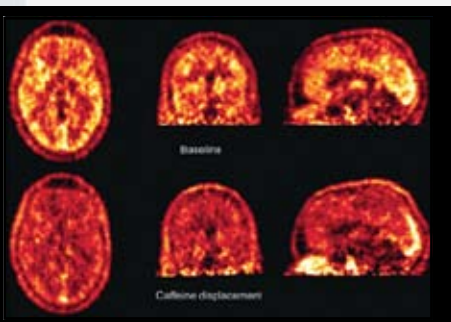
To start we must understand the role of **adenosine** in the brain. In the morning when you get up, your adenosine level is very low. Throughout the day, your level gradually increases in the brain.

As your adenosine level gets high later in the day, you start to feel tired. The higher it gets, the sleepier you feel. And if you try to stay up late into the night past your bedtime, it is the high adenosine level that makes it so hard for you to stay awake. The neurons in your brain have adenosine receptors, and it is the adenosine attaching to these receptors like a key fitting in a lock that causes the feeling of sleepiness. When melatonin is released by the pineal gland signaling bedtime, it is the adenosine that switches the cellular activity from awake mode to sleep mode. It is the adenosine that makes the cells sleep.

Caffeine is similar to adenosine in its molecular structure. Notice the similarities, but yet notice that there are significant differences too.



Caffeine can fit into the adenosine receptors. It is like different keys made on blanks with the same grooves that can fit into a lock, but only the key with the notches cut in the right pattern can turn and open the lock. Caffeine fits into the keyhole perfectly, but it cannot turn the switch on. Only adenosine can fit into the keyhole and turn the switch. But caffeine displaces adenosine from the receptors. If a caffeine key is in the keyhole, you can't put an adenosine in the same keyhole at the same time. In fact, the caffeine can actually push the adenosine out of the receptor and take its place.



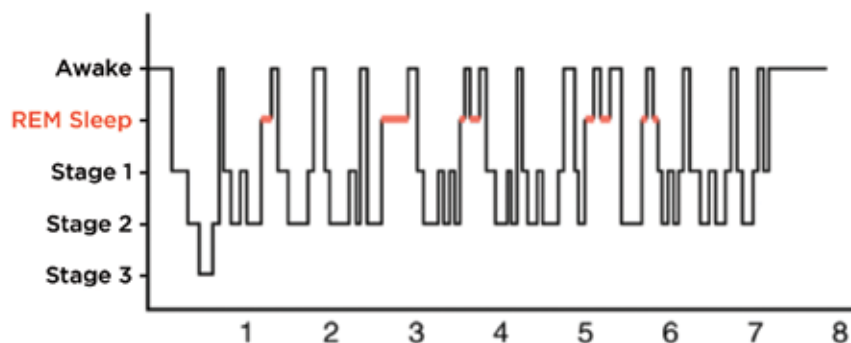
The images in the top row show the activity of adenosine on the brain. The cells are lighted up and bright showing that they are actively doing

the sleep activities that adenosine told them to do. The bottom row shows the same brain with a dose of caffeine. The adenosine has been pushed out of the receptors by the caffeine, so there is no normal adenosine activity going on. Since adenosine causes a feeling of sleepiness, that drink of Pepsi now completely takes away that sleepiness and you feel energized and not sleepy anymore.

Caffeine has a half-life of about seven hours. This means in seven hours it is half gone. So in 14 hours 25% is still there, and 21 hours later there is still 12% hanging around pushing adenosine off of its receptors. So even a cup of coffee in the morning will affect your sleep the following night and a Dr Pepper in the afternoon for an energy boost will definitely be altering your sleep architecture that night.

So what effect does caffeine have on our sleep? Here is a diagram of the sleep architecture of a brain on caffeine.

Compare this with the previous diagram of normal sleep architecture. Notice the almost complete loss of the deep stage 3 and 4 NREM sleep early in the night. This means a serious loss of ability to learn and transfer information to the cortex for permanent



recall later. The value of Bible study and scripture memorization will definitely take a hit here. There is some stage 1 and 2 NREM which means we will still be deleting (forgetting) what we learned the day before (including stuff we didn't want to forget since it has not been transferred to the cortex from the hippocampus yet). It will be like deleting your flash drive before saving all your important files.

And look at the REM sleep — almost none. So, there will be very little if any ability for integrated connected creative thought, of linking together connected ideas and concepts. Notice the frequent micro-awakenings throughout the night. You may not remember them the next morning, but you will definitely not wake up feeling rested. And with the loss of the deep sleep cycles early in the night, we also lose the deep cleaning that that takes place then. So we get up with a foggy brain still full of the toxic byproducts of the day before. This would include the adenosine that didn't get washed out during the night as it should have. Now we are starting our day with an elevated adenosine level so we are already tired and the only way we can get alert and start our day is to displace all that adenosine

*Sleeping pills will turn off the brain and make you unconscious, but they do not turn on real sleep. They sedate the brain in the same way that a general anesthetic does, but there will be no normal sleep architecture. All of the night shift organizing and cleaning work will not get done.*

with another cup of coffee. And so the cycle goes on.

But the cycle can be broken. With your cooperation the Holy Spirit can come into your heart, and with Christ abiding in you all sins may be overcome. Self can die (and there may be some caffeine withdrawal pains associated with that death), but Christ can live His victorious life in you. And every morning with a clear mind and a clear conscience you can commune with God and daily become more and more transformed into His likeness. You can be ready to meet him when he comes.

*"Tea and coffee drinking is a sin, an injurious indulgence, which like other evils injures the soul." Counsels on Diet and Foods, p. 425*



MILTON TESKE, MD



*If you would like to take a deeper look into what happens during sleep, I would highly recommend Matthew Walker's new book just released this last year Why We Sleep. From one of the foremost researchers on sleep comes this fascinating look at what goes on during sleep and why it is so essential for life.*





# The MUSTARD SEED

## and OTHER LESSONS FROM AGRICULTURE

### LESSON 24

Matthew 13:31-32; Mark 4:30-32; Luke 13:18-19;  
Christ's Object Lessons, pp. 76-89

In this lesson we will study the Parable of the Mustard Seed which is one of several recorded in Matthew 13. We will also study various Bible texts which employ agriculture to teach spiritual lessons. Ellen White has repeatedly stated that agriculture should be one of the main subjects in the curriculum of our Seventh-day Adventist schools. This lesson will help us understand better why the Lord's servant felt so strongly about this. Let's begin our study by taking a look at the people to whom the parable was particularly addressed.

## The Original Recipients

1. What particular group was Jesus speaking to in the parable of the mustard seed? *"In the multitude that \_\_\_\_\_ to Christ's teaching there were many \_\_\_\_\_."* (COL 76)

2. What question did the Pharisees have in mind concerning Jesus? *"Without \_\_\_\_\_, power, or \_\_\_\_\_, how was he to establish the new \_\_\_\_\_."* (COL 77)

3. What could the people see as Jesus told this parable? *"As Jesus spoke this parable, the mustard plant could be \_\_\_\_\_ far and near, lifting itself above the \_\_\_\_\_ and grain, and waving its \_\_\_\_\_ lightly in the air. \_\_\_\_\_ flitted from twig to twig, and \_\_\_\_\_ amid the leafy foliage."* (COL 77)

## Earthly Kingdoms

1. With what could Jesus not compare His kingdom and why? *"No \_\_\_\_\_ society could afford Him a symbol. ... Its \_\_\_\_\_ of development are the \_\_\_\_\_ of those that rule the kingdoms of this world."* (COL 77)

2. What method do earthly kingdoms employ to gain and keep power? With what does the Holy Spirit compare them? *"Earthly governments prevail by physical \_\_\_\_\_; they maintain their dominion by \_\_\_\_\_. ... The Holy Spirit represents \_\_\_\_\_ kingdoms under the symbol of fierce \_\_\_\_\_ of prey."* (COL 77)

NOTE: Daniel 7 is a prime example of fierce beasts being used as symbols of ravenous earthly kingdoms. On the other hand, the principles of God's kingdom are illustrated by the domestic beasts used in the sanctuary service.

3. What type of kingdom did the Jews of Christ's day look for? *"The Jews looked for the kingdom of God to be established in the \_\_\_\_\_ way as the kingdoms of the world. To promote righteousness they resorted to \_\_\_\_\_ measures. They devised methods and \_\_\_\_\_."* (COL 77)

4. When Jesus fed the five thousand with five loaves and two fishes, what did the Jews attempt to do? *"When Jesus therefore perceived that they would come and take Him by \_\_\_\_\_, to make him a \_\_\_\_\_, he departed again into a mountain himself alone."* (Jn. 6:15)

5. THOUGHT QUESTION: Is there a parallel between the type of kingdom the Jews wished to establish and the kind of kingdom that the religious right wants to implant in the United States? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_



## Christ's Kingdom

1. What is symbolized by the seed? *"The seed is the \_\_\_\_\_ of God."* (Lk. 8:11)

2. How is true righteousness established in Christ's kingdom? *"But Christ \_\_\_\_\_ a principle. By \_\_\_\_\_ truth and righteousness, He \_\_\_\_\_ error and sin."* (COL 77)

3. Where must Christ's kingdom be established before it can cover the world? *"The kingdom of God cometh not with \_\_\_\_\_: Neither shall they say, Lo here! or, lo there! For behold, the \_\_\_\_\_ of God is \_\_\_\_\_ you."* (Lk. 17:21)

NOTE: When Jesus implants the principles of His kingdom in the hearts of His subjects, the result will be peace on earth and good will toward men. What cannot be gained by force will be gained by the silent work of the Holy Spirit upon the heart.

4. What did Jesus once say to Pontius Pilate? *"My kingdom is not of this \_\_\_\_\_. If my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants \_\_\_\_\_, that I should not be delivered to the Jews; but \_\_\_\_\_ is my kingdom not of this world."* (Jn. 18:36)

5. Which other parable of Jesus teaches the same lesson about the kingdom? The parable of the \_\_\_\_\_ (Mt. 13:33)

6. What corporate lesson is illustrated by the smallness of the mustard seed and the largeness of the bush? *"When Christ spoke this parable, there were only a \_\_\_\_\_ Galilean peasants to represent the new \_\_\_\_\_. ... But the mustard seed was to \_\_\_\_\_ and spread forth its branches throughout the whole \_\_\_\_\_."* (COL 78)

NOTE: The apostle Paul told the Colossians that the gospel was "preached to every creature under heaven" (Col. 1:23). In a matter of a few decades, the gospel which began with a humble carpenter and twelve unlettered peasants, had spread to the whole world.

7. What individual lesson does the parable of the mustard seed teach? *"So the work of \_\_\_\_\_ in the heart is \_\_\_\_\_ in its beginning. A word is spoken, a ray of light is shed into the \_\_\_\_\_, and influence is exerted that is the beginning of the new life; and who can \_\_\_\_\_ its results?"* (COL 78)

8. Which four persons are referred to by Ellen White as examples of the growth of the mustard seed and why? (COL 78-79)

› \_\_\_\_\_ › \_\_\_\_\_  
› \_\_\_\_\_ › \_\_\_\_\_

Why? \_\_\_\_\_

9. Where are the special truths for this time found? *"As in earlier ages, the special truths for this time are found, not with the \_\_\_\_\_ authorities, but with men and women who are not too \_\_\_\_\_ or too \_\_\_\_\_ to believe the word of God."* (COL 79)

10. When will the parable of the mustard seed reach its glorious and complete fulfillment? *"And in this \_\_\_\_\_ generation the parable of the mustard seed is to reach a signal and triumphant fulfillment. The little \_\_\_\_\_ will become a \_\_\_\_\_."* (COL 79)

## Divine Power and Human Effort

1. How does agriculture teach the law of divine-human cooperation? *"There can be no reaping unless the \_\_\_\_\_ hand acts its part in the sowing of the \_\_\_\_\_. But without the agencies God provides in giving \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_, dew clouds, there would be no \_\_\_\_\_."* (COL 82)

2. What great truth did the apostle Paul utter to the Corinthians? *"We are \_\_\_\_\_ together with \_\_\_\_\_."* (I Cor. 3:9)

3. How does divine-human cooperation in the natural realm illustrate divine-human cooperation in the spiritual realm? *"Thus it is in \_\_\_\_\_ things, in the formation of the \_\_\_\_\_, and in every line of Christian work. We have a part to \_\_\_\_\_, but we must have the power of \_\_\_\_\_ to unite with us, or our efforts will be in vain."* (COL 82)

4. How does the importance of human effort compare with the importance of divine power? *"Immeasurably \_\_\_\_\_ is the part which the human agent sustains; but if he is \_\_\_\_\_ with the divinity of Christ, he can do \_\_\_\_\_ things through the strength that \_\_\_\_\_ imparts."* (COL 82)





5. **THOUGHT QUESTION:** How do the stories of Sampson, the conquest of Jericho and the battle of David and Goliath and the miraculous fishing expedition illustrate the importance of divine human cooperation? Can you think of other Biblical stories which illustrate the same principle? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

## Child Training

1. What can we learn from the gradual development of a plant? *"The gradual development of the plant from the \_\_\_\_\_ is an object lesson in \_\_\_\_\_ training."* (COL 82)

2. Who's life does the development of a plant perfectly exemplify? *"But at each \_\_\_\_\_ of His \_\_\_\_\_ He was perfect, with the simple, natural \_\_\_\_\_ of a sinless life."* (COL 83)

3. What must parents not do with their children? *"It is not wise to give them special \_\_\_\_\_, and repeat their clever \_\_\_\_\_ before them. Vanity should not be \_\_\_\_\_ by praising their \_\_\_\_\_, their \_\_\_\_\_, or their actions. Nor should they be \_\_\_\_\_ in an expensive and showy manner."* (COL 83)

NOTE: Some parents complain that Ellen White goes overboard with this counsel. They state that children should be publicly recognized and exhibited in order to bolster their self-esteem or selfimage. What would you say to such parents?

4. What special care should be taken in the education of children? *"The little ones should be educated in childlike \_\_\_\_\_. ... Childhood answers to the \_\_\_\_\_ in the parable, and the blade has a beauty peculiarly its own. The children should not be \_\_\_\_\_ into a precocious \_\_\_\_\_ but should retain as long as possible the freshness and \_\_\_\_\_ of their early years."* (COL 84).

NOTE: What do you think this tells us about the age at which the little ones should be sent to school? Do you think that parents are perhaps rushing their children into formal education before their physical and mental skills are ready for it? How important do you think it is for mom to stay at home and cultivate her small children?

5. How much does God expect of little children? *"The little children may be \_\_\_\_\_, having an experience in accordance with their \_\_\_\_\_. This is all that God expects of them."* (COL 84)

## The Law of Sowing and Reaping

1. What unerring law of nature applies also to spiritual things? *"In the laws of God in nature, \_\_\_\_\_ follows \_\_\_\_\_ with unerring certainty. ... So in spiritual things; the faithfulness of every worker is \_\_\_\_\_ by the results of his work"* (COL 84)

2. What did Paul express this unerring law? *"Be not \_\_\_\_\_; God is not mocked; for whatsoever a man \_\_\_\_\_, that shall he also \_\_\_\_\_."* (Gal. 6:7)

3. In the end, who is responsible for the destruction of the wicked? *"God \_\_\_\_\_ no man. Everyone who is destroyed will have destroyed \_\_\_\_\_. Everyone who stifles the admonitions of \_\_\_\_\_ is sowing seeds of \_\_\_\_\_ and these will produce a sure harvest."* (COL 84)

4. How did this law apply to the experience of Pharaoh? *"By \_\_\_\_\_ the first warning from God, Pharaoh of old \_\_\_\_\_ the seeds of obstinacy, and he \_\_\_\_\_ obstinacy."* (COL 85)


5. How does this law apply in our relationships with others? *"In our relation to others, this law holds true. Every \_\_\_\_\_, every \_\_\_\_\_, is a seed that will bear fruit. Every deed of thoughtful \_\_\_\_\_, of obedience, or of self-denial, will \_\_\_\_\_ itself in others, and through them in still \_\_\_\_\_."* (COL 85)

## The Lesson of Liberality

1. What other great lesson is taught in seed sowing? *"\_\_\_\_\_ both is spiritual and in temporal things is \_\_\_\_\_ in the lesson of seed sowing."* (COL 85)

2. How did the apostle Paul express this great principle? *"This I say, He which soweth sparingly shall \_\_\_\_\_ also sparingly; and he which soweth \_\_\_\_\_ shall reap also bountifully."* (II Cor. 9:6)



 3. Does liberality impoverish the giver? “The sower \_\_\_\_\_ his seed by casting it \_\_\_\_\_. So it is with those who are faithful in \_\_\_\_\_ God’s gifts. By imparting they \_\_\_\_\_ their blessings. God has promised them a sufficiency that they may \_\_\_\_\_ to give.” (COL 86)

4. What did Luke have to say about the law of liberality? “Give, and it shall be \_\_\_\_\_ unto you; good measure, pressed down, and \_\_\_\_\_ together, and running \_\_\_\_\_, shall men give into your bosom.” (Lk. 6:38)

5. What happens when we distribute our temporal blessings? “As we distribute God’s temporal blessings, the \_\_\_\_\_ of our love and sympathy awakens in the receiver gratitude and \_\_\_\_\_ to God. The soil of the heart is \_\_\_\_\_ to receive the seeds of \_\_\_\_\_ truth.” (COL 86)

## Death Which Leads to Life

1. What great truth did Jesus seek to teach regarding Himself in John 12:24? “So the death of Christ will result in \_\_\_\_\_ for the kingdom of God. In accordance with the law of the \_\_\_\_\_ kingdom, life will be the result of His death.” (COL 86)

2. What experience must we share with Christ? “And all who would bring forth \_\_\_\_\_ as workers together with Christ must first fall into the \_\_\_\_\_ and die. ... Self-love, self-interest, must \_\_\_\_\_. But the law of \_\_\_\_\_ is the law of self-preservation.” (COL 86)

3. What other lesson is taught by the death and germination of the seed? What text does Ellen White provide to corroborate her statement? “The seed dies to spring forth into new life, and in this we are taught the lesson of the \_\_\_\_\_.” (COL 87)

## The Importance of Agriculture

1. List 5 lessons that parents and teachers can share with children from the science of agriculture: (COL 87)

- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_



## IN MEMORY OF

**Don Oltman**  
from his wife, Jeanne Oltman

**Ron Chamberlin**  
from Jeanne Oltman

**Carroll Monroe Shoffner**  
from his wife, Mrs. JoDee Shoffner

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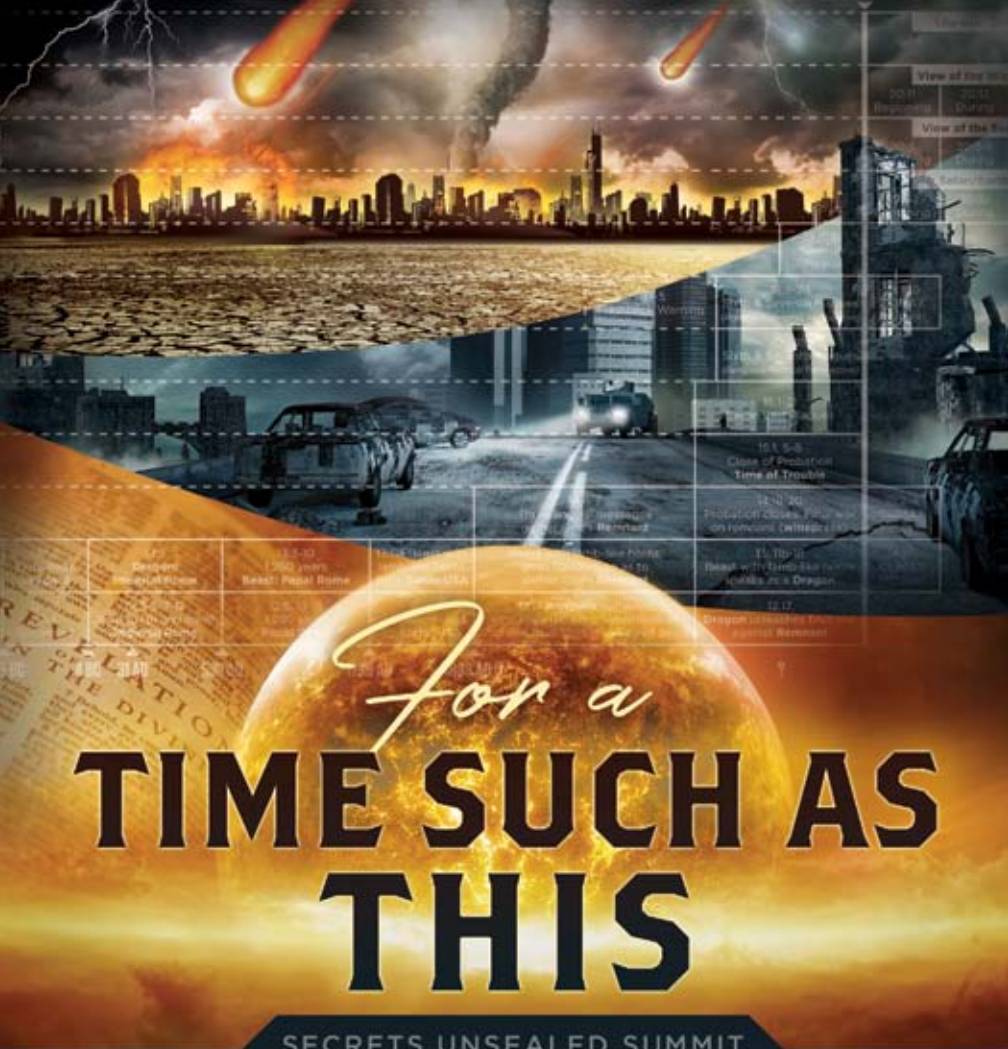
2. How vital is the science of agriculture in our schools? “They [the youth] should be taught to till the soil. It would be well if there were, connected with \_\_\_\_\_ school, lands for cultivation. Such lands should be regarded as God’s own \_\_\_\_\_. The things of nature should be looked upon as a lesson \_\_\_\_\_ which His children are to study, and from which they may obtain knowledge as to the culture of the \_\_\_\_\_.” (COL 88)

## The Importance of Hard Work

1. What lesson can we learn from the hard work of tilling the soil? “Earnestness, diligence, and persevering \_\_\_\_\_ are to be put forth in treating the soil \_\_\_\_\_ to sowing the seed. So it is in the \_\_\_\_\_ work in the human heart.” (COL 88)

2. What is the ultimate lesson we can learn from tilling the soil? “While the human sower is planting the seed to sustain our \_\_\_\_\_ life, the Divine Sower will plant in the soul the seed that will bring forth \_\_\_\_\_ unto life everlasting.” (COL 89)





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