

THE SABBATH ISSUE IN A NUTSHELL: AN EXEGETICAL AND THEOLOGICAL APPROACH

by

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Introduction: The seventh-day Sabbath is seen today by many Christians as a mandatory command from God. Sabbatarians and Seventh-day Adventists (SDA) in particular, are very strident (and rightly so) that God's laws ought to be taken seriously. This is indeed commendable. However, as the following summary demonstrates, to insist on the obligatory nature of the seventh-day Sabbath in a post-Calvary setting, is to become a prime Sabbath-breaker. More importantly, it is to greatly depreciate and render virtually useless the cross of Jesus. This I think is an unintentional error of most Seventh-day Adventists, but one none-the-less. Until the tremendous fear and other psychological biases are removed, it remains difficult for many SDA's to see the tremendous beauty of the Sabbath as *rest in Christ*. Thus, although SDA's promote God's law, they continue to depreciate it unintentionally. Please reason with me as I examine how God has magnified His law by transforming the Sabbath from being the observance of a day to the observance of a person- Jesus Christ himself. For further amplification of each point made in this summary, please see my book, *The Person of Jesus: God's Obligatory Sabbath*.

1. Methodology for Bible Study

In order to properly understand the Biblical position on the Sabbath, one must first be clear as to the method of Bible study that he/she is using, given that one's method(s) determines the conclusions arrived at. Two principal methods will summarize the various approaches used. These are, the Proof Text Method and the Exegetical Method.

- i. **The Proof Text Method:** It ignores the various contexts within which the Bible was originally written. It focuses primarily on what the scriptures mean to us today without first focusing on what it meant to its primary audience. It ignores the ancient Biblical languages, cultures, grammatical and linguistic contexts within which the Bible was written. It often times reads one's "right" ideas back into scripture and then have scripture making those ideas. It combines unrelated texts to produce new synthesized ideas, and credits the scripture for making those ideas. As will be demonstrated, this is the key method used by Seventh-day Adventists to support the obligatory nature of the seventh day Sabbath. (*For more detailed discussion on this method, see my [Methods of Biblical Interpretation: Perspectives on Prophecy](#) at www.dikaioma.com or at www.biblicalmri.com*).

ii. **The Exegetical Method:** It considers the primary contexts of the Bible. It recognizes that the Bible was written to peoples thousands of years ago in languages and cultures which are different from our modern languages and cultures. Therefore, it first seeks to understand what the Bible MEANT, before trying to determine what it MEANS. To this end, it considers the various contexts of scripture. For example, the textual, cultural, literary, philosophical, theological and historical contexts. It does not read one's ideas back into scripture, but allows scripture to speak on its own terms. This is the proper method that should be used in interpreting scripture. By this approach, the Sabbath becomes obligatory as a person and not as a day.

2. **What is the Biblical Context of God's laws?** Laws within scripture were always given within the context of covenants. A covenant simply put, is a contractual agreement between two parties. The basis for God's covenant is always a prior mighty act of God that forms the justification for the stipulations of the covenant. This was a common Ancient Near Eastern (ANE) principle involved in covenant contracts. **One is obligated to obey the laws only within the context of the covenant under which one is governed. Therefore, the constitutional basis for obedience in each era of salvation's history is always the particular covenantal act under which God's people find themselves.** These are very important principles not well understood or appreciated by the average SDAs, as they do not form part of their regular discussions. For further amplification, please see my book, *The Person of Jesus: God's Obligatory Sabbath*, Chapter, 2.

3. **There are Five Major Covenants in Scripture. These are:**

- a. The Edenic Covenant
- b. The Noahic Covenant
- c. Abrahamic Covenant
- d. The Sinaitic Covenant (otherwise called the Old Covenant)
- e. The Covenant with Jesus at the Cross (otherwise called the New Covenant)

The Edenic Covenant: Although the word covenant is not used in Genesis 1 and 2 it is now widely acknowledged by scholars that in the thinking of the ANE mind, the creation story is a covenantal phenomenon. The mighty act of God in bringing order out of chaos (ANE understudy of what it meant to create), served as the basis for the commands given to Adam and Eve (Gen 1:1-3, 28-31; 2:15).

Each covenant has its distinctive sign or seal. The observance of a particular sign/seal indicates that all the laws under that covenant are still obligatory.

- a. The seal or distinguishing entity in Eden was the Tree of Knowledge and Good and Evil (Gen 3:3,11). Note: nowhere in Genesis 1 and 2 or the rest of Genesis is the Sabbath ever commanded.
- b. The Seal of the Noahic covenant was the rainbow (Gen 9:12, 13)
- c. The Seal of the Abrahamic covenant was circumcision (Gen 17:10)
- d. The seal of the Sinaitic covenant **was** the 7th day Sabbath (Exo 20:8-11; 31:12-18; Ezk 20:12)
- e. The seal of the New Covenant **is** Jesus or the Holy Spirit (John 6:27; Eph 1:13,14; 4:30; 2Cor 1:21-22; 2Tim 2:19)

Therefore, if one is not under the Old Sinaitic Covenant then one is not obligated to keep its covenant sign or symbol, namely, the 7th day Sabbath. However, let's continue to reason together.

4. Genesis 1 and 2 and the Sabbath:

- i. **The Sabbath was not a creation ordinance.** Nowhere in Genesis is the Sabbath commanded. Yes, Adam and Eve were not commanded to keep it. Please read Gen 2:1-3 carefully for yourself.
- ii. The focus of Gen 2:1-3 is God celebrating his creation, having ceased from His creation activities.
- iii. The 7th day is not called Sabbath (Hebrew, *Sabat*) although the verb (*sabat*) appears in Gen 2:2. Thus, God ceased (*Sabat*) from his creative activities; not rested (as from having gotten tired from labor).
- iv. Theologically, the sanctification and blessing of the 7th day represented the continuous presence of God with his creation. God made holiness, holiness and blessings, blessings (Exo 3:1-6).
- v. The 7th day unlike the other days of creation was not bounded by evenings and mornings. Theologically (not physically), it was an open- ended day. Why? Because God's presence cannot be contained by time. This is the theological context of Genesis 2:1-4.
- vi. Adam and Eve were not commanded to keep it given that they were in a context in which tiresome labor was not an issue, neither could they have modeled or reproduced creation. Thus, there was no need for a command for them to keep a specific day as Sabbath. Furthermore, because they lived in the continuous sinless presence of God, there would have been no need for them to take a day off to commemorate God whose presence was always with them.
- vii. Adam and Eve therefore lived in a perpetual Sabbath (at all times), i.e., the holy presence of God. They broke the Sabbath when they sinned and was therefore driven out from the presence of God (Gen 3:23,24).
- viii. The sanctification and blessings of the Sabbath in Genesis, by the nature of the open-ended quality of the seventh day, represented God's pledge to be with his creation at all times.

- ix. The Sabbath theology of Genesis 2 is that God desires to be with his creation at all times and as such there should be perpetual rest, blessings, security and confidence for all God's creation.
- x. The Edenic Sabbath was a symbol of the redemptive act of Jesus in whom God's presence has again come to be with humanity, irrespective of days.

5. THE SABBATH AND THE TEN COMMANDMENTS

- i. The Sabbath in Exodus 20:8-11 was modeled after the Genesis creation Sabbath. It was a mini-Sabbath, a pledge of God to restore the Genesis Sabbath of God's perpetual presence with his creation for all times.
- ii. The Sabbath in Exodus 20, is like and unlike the Genesis Sabbath. It is like Genesis, in that it was a symbol of God's blessings, sanctification, rest, and of course His creation.
- iii. It is unlike Genesis, in that it allowed for slavery (Exo 20:10), and commanded mankind to cease from regular work on each seventh day. Whereas God *Sabat* (ceased - from his creative activities), Israel was to *Nuah* - rest having gotten tired from physical labor.

6. ARE THE TEN COMMANDMENTS BINDING ON ALL CHRISTIANS?

- i. Seventh-day Adventists and other Sabbatarians are conditioned to see the Ten Commandments as God's **perfect, eternal, all- encompassing moral law, designed for all peoples for all times.** These understandings are derived from the **Proof-text** approach to scripture, and, as will be shown just now, are totally and embarrassingly untenable. These conceptualizations are long-standing traditions which sound true because of their frequency of repetition. However, it is not based on sound exegetical or theological principles. Please, let's reason together quietly in the Spirit.
- ii. **Is it Eternal?** Eternity has to do with existence prior to the creation of our planet, and existence subsequent to the 2nd advent. The Sabbath came at the end of creation week, therefore, it could not have been a requirement in heaven. The commands "You shall not commit adultery," "Honor your mother and your father so that you may enjoy long life in ---- Canaan, or "Have no other gods beside me," would not have been relevant in eternity before sin; neither will we need a Sabbath in the new earth where we will live in the intimate presence of God forever, and where we shall count no time by years. The decalogue is certainly not eternal. It was given within

the context of Israel's escape from Egyptian slavery, and was conditioned and colored by that mighty covenantal act of God (Exo 19: 1-5; 20:1-18; Deut 5: 1-5)

- iii. **Is it all Encompassing?** The Ten Commandments are very limited both in terms of specific principles and precepts. There are no stipulations regarding, anger, malice, benevolence, humility, long-suffering; loving of one's enemies and forgiveness (Matt 5-7; Phil 2:1-8; Rom 12: 1-21). There are no laws to avoid deceit, hypocrisy, envy or slander (1Pt 2:1-5). There are no regulations to be merciful, to be a peacemaker, to be patient, kind, not jealous, not to brag, or not to be arrogant (1Cor 13:1-13) and the list continues.
- iv. **Is it Perfect?** The Sabbath command allowed the Israelites to keep slaves- It states: "You shall not do any work, you nor your man servant or your maid servant." The Hebrew word translated "servant"-- *ebed*, means slave. Here as in several other places in the OT, the Israelites were allowed to keep slaves, just that they were supposed to be kind in allowing them to rest while they also rested on the Sabbath (Exo 20:10). A perfect law does not allow for slavery.
 - a.) "Thou shall not kill," (Exo 20:13) in the primary context this meant, do not kill your fellow Israelite under certain circumstances. However, pertaining to the Canaanites and certain disobedient Israelites, it was perfectly OK to kill them (See Deut 20:16; 7:1-2,16; Josh 10:40; 11:11). This is certainly not a perfect expression of God's will.
 - b.) Exegetically, the command that forbids adultery (Exo 20:14), applied only to Israelite males committing adultery against another man's property. Whereas, contextually the woman was the property of the man, and the man was free to marry more than one wife, or even have concubines along with his wife, adultery was never an act committed against a woman, but against the property of another man. A man could not commit adultery against a woman. He did such only against another man, that is, by violating the man's property. How can we designate a law that denies such a basic right to women as completely perfect or moral for that matter (whatever we define morality to be)?
 - c.) The statement, "You shall have no other gods beside me," (20:2) acknowledged the physical existence of other divine beings like Baal, Marduk, Ea, Enlil and the thousands of other deities in the ancient world. This law simply required that they should not worship them, despite their ontological existence. This practice is called *henotheism*. It pervades most of the early OT. This is certainly not the most perfect expression of God's knowledge base. Thus, the Ten Commandments is not a perfect law of God. It was given as a limited set of laws designed to regulate the behavior of a young nation consisting of a group of

ex-slaves. Again, it emerged from God's mighty covenantal act of liberating Israel from slavery and is hence colored by that context.

- d.) A law that for the most part tells you what you must not do, but does not tell you what you ought to do, is certainly not the best expression of God's will. We do not do good by not doing bad. Again, contextually, this law was designed for a group of recently released ex-slaves. It formed the hub of the Old Covenant. A code which Paul called "the ministry of death" (2Cor 3:7). Later we will see that, in Jesus, God raised the bar, and declared- you have heard that it was said, but I (Jesus) am now saying to you (Matt 5-).

v. **Is it Totally a Moral Law?**

- a. Exo 31:13; Ezk 20:12 explicitly state that the Sabbath command is a *sign*. A sign naturally demands a ceremony for its expression. Thus, the Sabbath is "ceremonial." i.e., in terms of commemorating a reality. It points backwards to creation and forwards to the cross (Exo 20:8-11; Col 2:14-16). It was the chief sacrificial day of the week. Twice as many sacrifices were offered on Sabbath as on week days (Num 28:1-10). The Sabbath is also inseparably linked to the sanctuary and its services (Exo 25-31:18; Lev 19:30 & 26:2) See, *Jesus: God's Obligatory Sabbath, Chapter 4*.
- b. As stated above, the sixth commandment forbade only the killing of the fellow Israelite. It is not moral to permit one to kill disobedient children (Lev 20:9; Exo 21:15) or sorceresses (Exo 22:18) or adulterers (Lev 20: 10-12) or blasphemers (Lev 24:16). Certainly, the decalogue is not a complete moral code.

vi. **Is it Always to be Obeyed?**

- a.) In keeping with the culture of corporate personality, the second command stipulates that the iniquities of the fathers would be visited on the children up to the third and fourth generations (Exo 20:4). Note, in the primary context this meant that the children would suffer (or prosper) based solely on the actions of their parents (See for example, Josh 7:24,25 and 6:22,23). It should not be interpreted in our modern scientific understanding of cause and effect, as such would be Proof-texting. Ezekiel informed Israel that this command no longer applied (Ezk 18).
- b.) In 2 Kings 5:17, 18 Elijah gave Naaman the permission to violate the second command which forbade the worship of idols (Exo 20:5).
- c.) In violation of the Sabbath command, God sent the entire nation of Israel to war one Sabbath (Jos 6:3,4,15). (For other violations, see, Chapter 4 of *The Person of Jesus: God's Obligatory Sabbath*).

7. IS THE TEN COMMANDMENT AN INDEPENDENT STAND-ALONE LAW?

ANSWER: NO, IT IS PART OF THE OLD COVENANT

- i. SDA's are wrongly conditioned to consider the decalogue as an independent, stand-alone entity. This is a result of the Proof-text approach to scripture which rips the Ten Commandments from its context. Contextually, the Ten Commandment is the hub of the Sinaitic or Old Covenant. The OT never insists on its observance to the exclusion of the rest of the covenant. We cannot do otherwise, lest we are Proof-texting.
- ii. Additionally, most SDAs are conditioned to think of the Sinaitic or Old Covenant as consisting only of the sacrificial system. However, several places in the Bible explicitly state that the Ten Commandments and the Sabbath in particular, are part and parcel of the Sinaitic or Old Covenant (Exo 34:28; 2Cor 3:1-10). The decalogue was only some of the laws that were given when God came down on Mt. Sinai. Please see, for example, Exo 19; 20:18-28). From an exegetical perspective, the covenant is a complete or wholistic document. It cannot be segmented into moral and ceremonial categories the way Sabbatarians have done it.
- iii. Therefore, to insist on the permanence of the Ten Commandments today is to insist on the permanence of such practices as circumcision, animal sacrifice, the Levitical priesthood- all those laws that SDA's classify as ceremonial and hence abolished. Oh, that the Lord could help us to be consistent. (Please be reminded that SDA pioneers including Ellen White, who bequeathed the Sabbath doctrine to modern SDA's employed the proof-text method of Bible study. They did the best they could with what they had).
 - a. So he declared to you his covenant which He commanded you to perform, that is, the Ten Commandments; and he wrote them on two tablets of stone (Deut 4:13).
 - b. When I went up to the mountain to receive the tablets of stone, the tablets of the covenant which the Lord has made with you, then I remained on the mount forty days and nights... Deut 9:9. See also Exo 40:20; Deut 29:1, 9; 9:9, 11, 15; Deut 9:15; 1Kings 8:9,21; (Exo 31:18; 32:15; 34:28; Deut 4:13; 5:3).
 - c. So the sons of Israel shall observe the Sabbaths, to celebrate the Sabbath throughout their generations as a perpetual covenant. It is a sign between Me and the sons of Israel forever. (Deut. 31:17, 16).

- d. So the sons of Israel shall observe **the Sabbath**, to celebrate the Sabbath throughout their generations as a **perpetual covenant**. It is a sign between me and the sons of Israel forever; Exo 31: 13,16,17. See also Ezk 20:12; 1 Kings 8:9; Ezk 20.12, 20; 1Kings 8:9
- iv. If therefore, the Old Covenant is abolished then the Ten Commandments and for sure its seal, the Sabbath, is no longer a requirement. But does this mean that we are now antinomians, free to do as we please? This a popular SDA question with an apparent sense of fairness. Sadly, it is rather lacking in biblical understanding. Please be patient, the answer will be supplied and amplified, after a few more points regarding the Ten Commandments are dwelt with.

8. ARE THERE MORAL-CEREMONIAL DISTINCTIONS IN THE LAWS OF THE OT?

- i. That there is a moral-ceremonial separation in Biblical laws is a bedrock premise of Sabbatarians, used in defense of the Sabbath. However, as almost all SDA Bible scholars know, it is comprehensively a faulty conclusion, again, derived from the Proof-text approach to scripture. Ancient peoples, including the Israelites knew of no such distinctions of laws, neither does the Bible give any formula for identifying which laws were ceremonial and which laws were moral. The Hebrew word for law used in the OT is *Torah*, and the Greek equivalent is *Nomos*. These are umbrella terms used to designate all laws, not segmentations of law.
- ii. For Israel, all God's laws were moral and were to be obeyed - full stop. It matters not if we today are able to classify some laws as moral and others as ceremonial. The point is, did the Bible writers consider any such designation? Good exegesis demands that we do not read our "right" conclusions back into scripture, and then have scripture make those conclusions. We keep silent and listen to the Bible at all times.
- iii. As seen above in the case of the Sabbath, the Ten Commandments contained 'ceremonial' aspects and those sections of the law, transitionally labeled 'ceremonial' contained many laws which can only be termed as "moral." For example, consider the following texts, 'Do not curse the deaf or put a stumbling block before the

blind' (Lev 19:14) or 'Do not move your neighbor's boundary [marker]' (Deut 19:14). 'One witness is not enough to convict an accused person...but the matter must be established by the testimony of two or three witnesses' (Deut 19:15). 'There should be no sexual relationship with animals' (Lev 20:15). 'If a man has two wives and he loves one but does not love the other, and both bear him sons but the firstborn is the son of the wife he does not love, he must not give the right of the first born to the son of the wife he loves in preference to his actual firstborn' (Deut 21:15-17). 'If a man is caught kidnapping one of his brother Israelites and treats him as a slave or sells him, the kidnapper must die' (Deut 24:7). 'Do not lie with a man as one lies with a woman (Lev 18:22)'.

- iv. The Ten Commandments written on stone, was a representation of the entire covenant; somewhat of a summary of the composition, although not quite. It also represented the permanence of the entire covenant within its designated period. Still we may not know all the reasons why the Ten Commandments were arranged together, but that does not give us license to invent a demonstrable false designation for it, particularly when the Bible is very clear that it is not separate from the Old Covenant.
- v. The New Testament writers knew of no moral ceremonial distinctions. Thus, no NT writer made any point from the premise of moral-ceremonial divide. Paul for example, uses the Greek word *Nomos* (law) approximately 119 times, never in the plural, but always in the singular, thus indicating the inseparable unity of the law.
- vi. The moral ceremonial concept came through the work of the early church fathers, Origen, Tertullian and others in their fight against Gnosticism. They invented these categories by claiming that when Paul spoke positively of the law, he was referring to moral laws and when he spoke negatively of the law, he was referring to ceremonial laws. The tradition got passed down over the centuries to our time.

9. “WRITTEN WITH THE FINGER OF GOD:” DOES THIS MAKE THE DECALOGUE OBLIGATORY FOR ALL TIMES?

- i. “Written with the finger of God,” is better understood as the authority of God, rather than as God’s finger serving somewhat like a lazer beam chiseling words on stone. The term “finger of God” or “the hand of God” occurs throughout the Bible and the basic underlying meaning is the authority of God. See for example, Exo 8:19; 7:5; Psa 8:3; Lk 11:20. There are three major versions of the Decalogue in the Old Testament, and all three versions are different in small and major ways (Exo 20:1-17; Deut 5:6-21; Exo 34:10-28). In fact, the Exo 34:10-28 version actually has about forty commands. All three versions are definitely written after the event at Sinai and were written from later verbal remembrance of Sinai. Note carefully how Exodus 20:1 begins. Additionally, according to Exo 34:28, Moses, and not God, was the one who wrote the Ten Commandments. Therefore, the exegetical point that emerges from the statement “written with the finger of God,” is that the law was authorized by God for the nation of Israel; not that its exact wording came straight from God’s pen and is therefore binding on all peoples in all times and places. (For additional insights see, *Jesus: God’s Obligatory Sabbath*, Chapter 4).

10. IS THE SEVENTH-DAY SABBATH DIFFERENT FROM THE OTHER OT SABBATHS?

- i. Exodus 20:10 and Deuteronomy 5:15 and several other places in the Hebrew OT refers to the weekly Sabbath without the definite article (Exo 31:15; 35:2; Lev 23:1, 3; Deut 5:14). Thus, Exodus 20:10 and Deut 5:15 correctly reads, “The seventh day is a Sabbath.” This signifies that it is one of the Sabbaths, it is of a Sabbatical quality. (See most versions other than the KJV. These other versions are more faithful to the Hebrew than the KJV at this point)

- ii. There are at least seven other Sabbaths, other than the seventh day Sabbath in the OT. These are: 1) The first and last days of the Feast of Unleavened Bread (Lev 23:7,8); 2) The day of Pentecost (Lev 23:21); 3); The first and last day of the feast of Tabernacles (Lev 23: 32-36; Num 29:12-38); 4) The Day of Atonement (Lev 23:27; Num 29:7-11); 5) The Sabbatical Year (Lev 25:3-7); 6) Jubilee year (Lev 25:8,10) //Trumpet (29:1-6); and; 7) Monthly New Moon Sabbath (Num 28:11-15). From an exegetical perspective, the 7th day Sabbath is inseparably linked to these other Sabbaths. Therefore, from a biblical perspective, what applied to one applied to all.
- iii. All the Sabbaths are referred to as the Lord's appointed times or feasts (Hebrew- *moed*). Please read Leviticus 23 carefully.
- iv. All the Sabbaths pointed to the Genesis creation story. Speaking of the sun, moon and stars, Genesis 1:14 reads, "Let them be for signs and for seasons and for days and years." The Hebrew word translated seasons, *moed* - (מוֹעֵד) must not be understood to mean spring, summer, autumn, winter. Rather, *moed* signifies the designated holy times, like the Sabbath, new moon, Passover, Pentecost, Tabernacles, Day of Atonement, etc., all the special holy times in Israel.
- v. Lev 23:1, 2: The Lord spoke again to Moses saying, Speak to the sons of Israel and say to them, the Lord's appointed times [מוֹעֵדֵי- *moed*] which you shall proclaim as holy convocations - my appointed times are these...Sabbath (v3) the Passover (v5,8); Pentecost (v21); Trumpets (v24, 25)...day of Atonement (v27-32); booths (vs.34-36).
- vi. In concluding the lists of these appointed *moeds*, the author of Leviticus states: So Moses declared to the sons of Israel, these are the appointed *moed(s)* of the Lord (Lev 23:44). For other references see, Deut 31:10 where *moed* is used in reference to the feast of Booths; Num 9:2 where *moed* is used in

reference to the Passover; Exo 23:15, where *moed* signifies the Feast of Unleavened Bread; Ezk 44:24, where *moed* is used in reference to all the Sabbaths of the OT. For additional references, you may also read Num 15:3; 1 Chron 23:31; 2 Chron 2: 4; 8:13; Isa 33:20; Zech 8:19 and Lam 2:6.

- vii. Of course from Exo 20:8-11, SDA's are well aware that the weekly day Sabbath points to creation. However, they are not well aware that the other Sabbaths also point to creation, as indicated in Genesis 1:14. (For additional Information, see *The Person of Jesus: God's Obligatory Sabbath*, Chapter 4)
- viii. All the Sabbaths found their commemoration in Israel's deliverance from Egypt, Exo 20:8-11; 12:1-28; Deut 5:15; Lev 23:33-36).
- ix. All the Sabbaths were days for offering sacrifices. Note, the seventh day Sabbath was a key sacrificial day (Num 28:1-10)
- x. All the Sabbaths found their fulfillment in Jesus and his cross (Col 2: 14-16; Heb 4:3)
- xi. Therefore, from the perspective of the Biblical writers, if the so-called ceremonial Sabbath were abolished, then whereas the seventh day Sabbath served the same functions as these other Sabbaths, then it too must be abolished. Consequently, Col 2:16; Rom 14:5,6; Gal 4:10,11 lump them all together as no longer applicable, having been fulfilled in Jesus.

11. IS THE TEN COMMANDMENTS THE BASIS FOR CHRISTIAN OBEDIENCE – POST-CALVARY?

ANSWER – NO! JESUS IS.

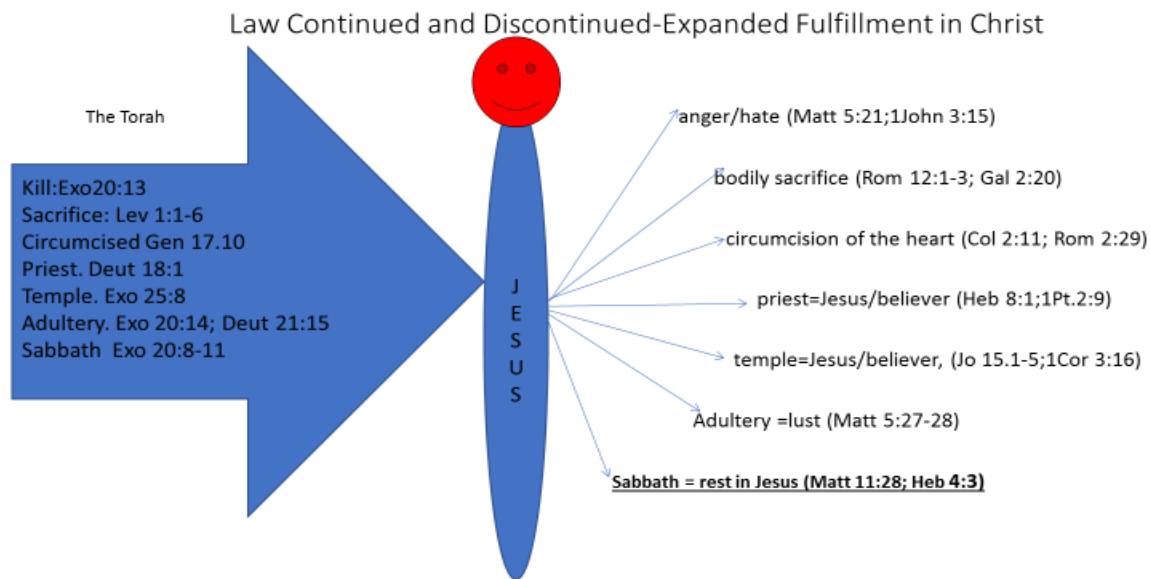
- i. The New Testament demonstrates that the Ten Commandments is not the basis for obedience post-Calvary. The basis for Christian obedience is God's new revelation in Jesus. Mount Calvary supersedes Mount Sinai both in terms of law and Grace. Please read carefully 2 Cor 3:1-18; Heb 1:1-3 and Gal 3:24; 4:21-31; Eph 14,15).
- ii. Jesus is God's new covenantal act and also the law that flows out of this new covenantal act. Yes, Jesus is not only the law giver, he is also the law (Rom 10:4).
- iii. The Torah was described in Jewish tradition as the bread, light, water, way, guide, etc. Jesus declares himself "The bread of life," "The water of life," "The way," "The good Shepherd" (guide) - all the qualities that the OT and Jewish tradition attributed to the Torah (law), the NT writers attributed to the very person of Jesus (John 6:35; 4:10,14; 7:38; 14:6; 10:11, 14).
- iv. Throughout the NT the Christian is encouraged to pattern his/her behavior after God's new revelation in Jesus, and not according to God's revelation at Mt Sinai.
 - a. "You have heard that it was said (OT- Sinai), but I am saying to you" (Matt 5:27, 33,38,43)
 - b. Love one another as I love you (John 13:34)
 - c. Husbands love your wives as Christ love the Church (Eph 5:25)
 - d. Forgive as Christ forgave (Col 3:13)
 - e. Let this mind be in you which was in Christ Jesus (Phil 2:5)
 - f. If you love me keep **MY** commandments, i.e., God laws as laws as they now flow out of me- Jesus (John 14:15).

- g. God who at sundry times and in diverse manner spoke to the fathers through the prophets has in these last days spoken to us through a son whom he appoints heir of all things (Heb 1:1-3)
- v. In the OT, the believer's ethical guide was encased in a code. In the NT, the Christian's guide is encased in a person- Jesus, and fleshed out by his Holy Spirit.
- vi. Walk by the Spirit and you will not carry out the desires of the flesh. But if you are led by the Spirit you are not under the law (Gal 5:16,18).
- vii. **THEREFORE, ONE IS NOT OBLIGATED TO OBEY GOD BASED ON GOD'S REVELATION AT SINAI (TEN COMMANDMENTS - OLD COVENANT). ONE IS OBLIGATED TO OBEY GOD BASED SOLEY ON GOD'S NEW COVENANTAL REVELATION IN JESUS.** The Christian will not kill, steal, commit adultery, be kind, loving, or let's say keep the Sabbath (if it was so demanded) because these laws are found in the Ten Commandments. According to the New Testament he/she is obliged to obey laws because such laws emanate from God's new covenantal act in Jesus. The real question therefore is, "Is the observance of the seventh day a command that emerges out of the person of Jesus?" Let's continue to reason together.

12. JESUS FULFILLED AND RADICALIZED ALL OT LAWS- TEN COMMANDMENTS INCLUDED

- i. The Ten Commandments along with all the laws of the OT were fulfilled in Jesus and by him were radicalized, magnified and transformed. See the diagram below.
- ii. The law pertaining to the priesthood is fulfilled and transformed in that, Jesus is now our priest and by virtue of being in-Christ, all believers are now priests (1Pt 2:5, 9; Rev 1:6). So we obey the priestly law in a totally different manner
- iii. The law pertaining to sacrifices has been fulfilled in Christ, thus He becomes our sacrifice and we now offer spiritual sacrifices (Heb 10; 1Pt 2:5-7).

- iv. The law pertaining to killing has been fulfilled and radicalized in Jesus, in that we not even become angry, and certainly, all exceptions are removed (Matt 5:21,22).
- v. The law pertaining to the worship of other gods (Exo 20:3), is fulfilled and radicalized, to deny the physical existence of any other gods (1Cor 8:5,6).



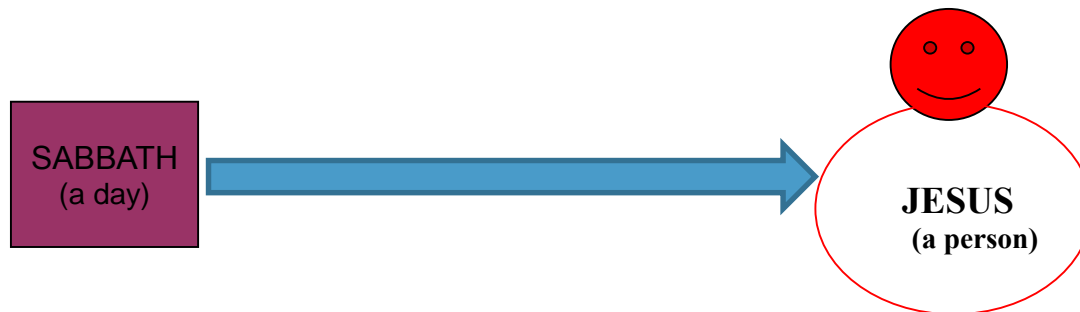
- vi. But how does the Sabbath fit into this pattern?

13. HAS THE SABBATH BEEN FULFILLED IN JESUS? ANSWER, YES.

- i. Since Jesus fulfills all the laws of the OT, it therefore means that He also fulfills the Sabbath. The fact that the Sabbath occurred in the Ten Commandments cannot, and does not place it outside of the range of Jesus to fulfill it. In fact, if Jesus is not the fulfillment of the Sabbath, then it has absolutely no meaning and should not be observed.
- ii. As illustrated in the table below, all that the Sabbath meant in the OT, the NT attributes such meanings never to a day, but always to the person of Jesus. Jesus therefore, is the fulfillment of the Sabbath commandment. More importantly he is the Sabbath. Note the table carefully.

| Sabbath Symbolizes | Jesus is |
|--|--|
| Redemption & Liberation (Deut 5:15) | The Redeemer (1Pet 1:18,19; Rev 5:9; 14:3,4) |
| Creation: (Exo 20: 8) | The Creator (John 1:1-3) |
| Sanctification: (Exo 20:8) | The Sanctifier (Heb 10:10,14) |

| | |
|---|--|
| Social and economic liberation (Lev 23; 25; Isa 56; 58:5) | The Liberator (Lk 4:16-18; Rev 3:21) |
| Seal/sign (Exo 31:13) | Jesus & the Holy Spirit are God's seal (Jo 6:27; Eph 1:13, 14; 4:30) |
| Rest (Exo 20:8-11; Exo 16:22-30; Lev 26:34, 35; 2 Chron 36:21) | Jesus is God's rest (Matt 11:28) |
| Messianic Age (Dan 9:24-25) | Jesus is the Messiah (John 4:26) |
| Justification (Exo 31:13; Ezk 20:12,20) | Jesus is our justification (1Cor 1:30, 31; Rom 5:1) |



iii. The Christian no longer needs a day to point to creation, because Jesus the creator can and does preform a better job of that.

iv. The person in Christ no longer needs a day to represent his sanctification, redemption, rest, or justification. Why? Because Jesus secured these realities at the cross and the resurrected Jesus continues to represent these realities for the Christian (1Cor 1:30, 31; Rom 3:21-31; Gal 2:16; Heb 6:19, 20; 10: 10, 14). A person- Jesus replaces a day- the Sabbath.

v. Having the reality-Jesus, there is no need for the symbol of the same realities. In fact, to insist on the requirement of the symbol while the reality is present, is to deny the full potency of the reality. (Sadly, SDA's deny the very Sabbath, for which they are so zealous).

vi. **That the Christian's Sabbath is no longer a day, but a Person, is not a well-developed theme among Seventh-day Adventists.**

vii. Under the old Covenant, one day out of seven was holy. The fulfilled reality of the Sabbath in Christ means that seven days out of seven is now 100% holy. The law is radicalized and magnified.

viii. Therefore, God's law pertaining to the Sabbath in principle is not "abolished" it has been fulfilled in Christ. However, just like the fulfilled reality of circumcision, or animal sacrifice, or the day of Atonement, renders the old expression of these entries non-obligatory, so likewise the fulfilled expression of the Sabbath renders its old expression - the observance of a specific day- obsolete. **The new expression of Sabbath is now rest in a person, as opposed to the rest on a day.** In a little while we will turn to the practical expression of this rest.

ix. By keeping the Sabbath as expressed in Jesus or by observing Jesus as the Sabbath, the Christian is **not** breaking God's law, he/she is indeed a law keeper at a deeper and more comprehensive level. A level that outstrips Sabbath observance as a specific day—Saturday or Sunday. This is certainly at a level that is more in keeping with God's will.

x. Note, under the new covenant in Christ, the only entity that makes anything holy is the blood of Jesus. One-seventh of your time under the blood, cannot be more holy than 6/7th of your time under the said blood. Therefore, to insist that the 7th day is more holy than the other days is to belittle the cross, it is to embarrass Jesus.

xi. In Jesus, God has de-sacredized one day, by making all days sacred.

xii. The OT teaches the mandatory holiness of the particular. A particular nation (Israel) was more holy than all other nations on earth; a particular tribe within that nation (the Levites) performed more holy functions than the other tribes; a particular family with that tribe (the high priestly family) was more “holy” than the other families of the said tribe; a particular hill within that nation (Mt. Zion) was more holy than the other hills; a particular place on that hill (the temple was more holy than other places on the said hill; a particular place in that temple (the most holy place) was more holy than all other places, and a particular priest (the high priest) more holy than other priests. Within the family, a particular child (the first born) was more holy than the other children of the family. One portion (1/10) of the agricultural produce was more holy than the rest of the produce. In keeping with these degrees of holiness, a particular day of the week was more holy than all other days of the week.

xiii. However, the NT does not teach degrees of holiness for peoples, places, objects or days. This is so, because of the powerful equalizing effect of the blood of Jesus. Anything that it touches becomes 100% holy. The blood of Jesus is an immortal constant and equalizer. Under the blood, one entity cannot be more holy than another entity upon whom the said blood rests. Thus, the seventh day in Jesus cannot be more holy, than the first, second, third, fourth day, etc., in Jesus. Before the actual death on the cross (when salvation was offered in symbols) such could obtain. However, post-Calvary, no such reality can ever be, or is ever so presented in the NT.

xiv. Seventh-day Adventists are accustomed to thinking of the “ceremonial” Sabbaths as all being fulfilled and abolished at the cross. However, if they could only recognize that the seventh-day Sabbath also pointed to the cross, then probably, they would have less trouble understanding that the seventh-day Sabbath in terms of the observance of a day, was also terminated at the cross. Remember as

discussed above, all the Sabbaths in the OT were inseparably linked. Again, the decalogue (Exo 20:10) and many other places speak of the weekly Sabbath as a Sabbath, that is, one of the Sabbaths (Exo 31:15; 35:2; Lev 23:1, 3; Deut 5:14). Additionally, from an exegetical perspective there was no moral and ceremonial Sabbaths. They were simply all Sabbaths.

xv. Even if one wants to forge a moral-ceremonial distinction, then remember the Sabbath, like circumcision was called a sign, this is a “ceremonial” categorization. Thus, the weekly Sabbath is indeed ‘ceremonial’. It points away from itself to the greater reality of Jesus. Again, it was the chief sacrificial day of the Jewish week. It was also inseparably linked to the temple system. (See, *Jesus: God’s Obligatory Sabbath*, Chapter, 4)

xvi. Therefore, just as the Christian’s sacrifice is no longer an animal but a Person, so likewise the Christian’s new Sabbath is no longer a day but the very person of Jesus. What therefore is true Sabbath-keeping? How do we rest in Jesus?

14. WHAT IS THE CONCRETE EXPRESSION OF TRUE SABBATH KEEPING? (THAT IS, OF RESTING IN CHRIST)

1. True Sabbath keeping means to rest in Christ by being Christ-like at all times (Heb 4:3)
2. True Sabbath-keeping means to rest one’s body intermittently throughout the week so as to avoid overwork and stress. Resting for only 24 hours at the end of the week, while working unceasingly throughout the week is the same as eating one meal per week and expecting to be healthy. Overall, it does not make a significant difference in the quality of life.
3. Most Adventists are accustomed to releasing themselves from all secular cares and concern on the seventh day of the week. True Sabbath-keeping means that we are commanded and empowered to be released from all such concerns and burdens for all seven days, every week (Matt 11:28-30). What a beautiful and practical difference!!!

4. True Sabbath-keeping means to express Christ-like behavior of love, compassion, forgiveness, gentleness, humility, kindness every day of the week. It also means to be actively engaged in the relief of human suffering and injustices; it means to feed the hungry, clothe the naked and to care for street people (Luke 4:16-21). True Sabbath-keeping means to use one's talents and gifts to bless humanity. It is the expression of the fruits of love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness meekness, faith, temperance. etc., — against such, there is no law that can convict you of doing wrong (Gal 5:22-23). It is the expression of love that is patient, kind, envies no one, never boastful, nor rude, nor quick to take offense, it keeps no record of wrongs, but knows how to embrace even one's enemies (1Cor 13; Matt 5:44). Indeed, true Sabbath-keeping is being Christ-like, twenty-four sevens.

5. In short, since Jesus is the reality of the Sabbath, whenever one is being like Jesus in practical ways, he is keeping the literal expression of the Sabbath. Not necessarily when he “stops” from physical work on a day, be it Saturday or Sunday. Resting in Christ is true Sabbath-keeping. It emanates from God's greatest revelation of law, namely, Mt. Calvary. It does not emerge from God's previous revelation of law, that is, Mt. Sinai and the Ten Commandments, which is a code that even allowed the Israelites to keep slaves (Exo 20:8-11).

15. THE DEEPER QUESTION

SDA's have been asking and answering to the wrong question; that is, 'Is the Sabbath Saturday or Sunday?' One day versus another day? The deeper question is, 'IS THE SABBATH A DAY OR IS IT A PERSON— JESUS CHRIST HIMSELF?'

16. JESUS AND THE SABBATH IN THE GOSPELS

Since Jesus kept the Sabbath then, shouldn't all Christians keep the Sabbath? Answer: NO! *Context, context, context, context — a thousand times context. Please consider the cultural and theological context of Jesus and all the New Testament writers and hence what Jesus' actions meant, before making applications to our time.* Consider the following:

1. Jesus was a Jew. He operated within Judaism and observed all the OT Jewish ceremonies. He participated in circumcision, animal sacrifices, feast of Tabernacles, Day of Atonement, Passover, temple worship - all the rituals of the Old covenant (John 5:1; 6:7:2-14, 37,38; Lk 2:21-24; 20:1; 21:37; Matt 5:23; 8:4). Therefore, if one is to insist on Sabbath-keeping because Jesus kept the Sabbath, then one should also insist on male circumcision, animal sacrifices, the observance of the 10th day of the seventh month (Day of Atonement), Feast of Tabernacles - every single OT Sabbath and ritual.
2. So why did Jesus keep the Sabbath? Answer: Jesus' Sabbath-keeping was to demonstrate the redemptive meanings of the Sabbath, not to legislate the continued observance of the Sabbath. By way of background, in the OT, the Sabbath symbolized spiritual, physical, economic and sociological liberation of humanity that should ensue irrespective of days, in the future Messianic age (Deut 5:15; 12:9,10; Isa 58:5-7; 66:23-24; 2Chron 36:21). Jesus as this promised Messiah, by his Sabbath deeds (notice he was always acting on Sabbath), was implementing those redemptive meanings of the Sabbath (Luke 4:16-18; Matt 11:28-12:1-13; Mark 2:27).
3. Jesus was always implementing God's redemptive acts in the week (Luke 7:21-22; Act 10:38). However, the Jewish leaders tried to prevent Jesus from doing those same redemptive acts on Sabbath. Jesus insisted that His redemptive or Sabbatical acts done during the week were also appropriate to be implemented on Sabbath. Thus, he placed the Sabbath on par with the other weekdays.

4. Consider Luke 4:16-21 carefully:

The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, Because He has anointed Me to preach the gospel to the poor, He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to set free those who are oppressed to proclaim the favorable year of the Lord... v21 Today the scriptures have been fulfilled in your hearing.

5. Jesus was here describing his entire ministry using Sabbatical language. The items listed in the verse were things which were supposed to have happened in the Sabbatical or Jubilee year. The Sabbatical year occurred every 7th year. It was a year in which every day was a Sabbath. The Jubilee year occurred every 49/50th year. It too was a year of complete Sabbath, with every day being a Sabbath - they were termed "The year(s) of the Lord's favor" (Isa 61:2; Lev 25:10; Deut 15:1-2, 8-9; 31:10). These were years of spiritual, social, physical and economic release for everyone in Israel. For example, all debts would be cancelled and all male Israelite slaves set free (Lev 25; Deut 15:1-2). Even the very land would experience a release as it would lie fallow all year. Jesus in Luke 4:16-21, was saying that his entire ministry was to demonstrate all that the OT Sabbaths represented. In Luke 7:18-22 he used similar language to describe his entire ministry in the week. So having said that his ministry was to bring release, in 4:33-35, he released the man possessed with demons. In 4:38-39, He healed Simon's mother-in-law from her fever (see also, Lk 6:1-5; John 5:1-30).
6. So the Sabbath deeds of Jesus were to demonstrate that the day found its fulfillment in Him - Jesus, and his entire ministry was to enact what the Sabbath meant.
7. Jesus did the same thing with respect to the Feast of Tabernacles and Passover both of which involved a Sabbath. Attending the Feast of Tabernacles, he declared, "I am the light of the world" (John 8:12). Attending Passover, He proclaimed, "I am the bread of life" (John 6:35). In Jesus' day, bread and light respectively, were the chief symbols of these feasts. Likewise, on the Sabbath, Jesus declared, "Come unto Me all who are weary and heavy-laden and I will give you rest...." (Matt 11:28- 12:1, 2).

8. By attending Passover, Day of Atonement, Tabernacles, and other Jewish festivals, Jesus was not mandating their continued observance for all times and places. So likewise, by participating in Sabbath observance, was he mandating Sabbath observance for all Christians? He was simply participating in his Jewish traditions and customs and demonstrating how these traditions (Sabbath included) found their true meaning in all of his actions.
9. **The gospels writers were concerned to demonstrate that all the OT symbols serve the purpose of illustrating the continued authority of Jesus, not the continued authority of the symbols themselves.**
10. When asked “Why are your disciples doing that which is not lawful to be done on the Sabbath?” Jesus answered, “The Sabbath was made for man and not man for the Sabbath (Mark 2:2). In other words, that which is lawful to be done on Sabbath is that which benefits mankind. In Christ, the Christian is not permitted to do anything at any time that does not benefit humanity (1Cor 10:31; John15:4). Therefore, all Christ-like deeds are sabbatical.
11. On a Sabbath, Jesus declared, “Come unto me and I will give you rest” (Matt 11:28- 12:1). He then demonstrated what that rest meant by defending his disciples’ right to satisfy their hunger on Sabbath. In other words, human needs on Sabbath took precedent over the day. How much more the same applies on the weekdays.
12. In John 5:17, Jesus with respect to His Sabbath activities, taught, “My father works until now, and I myself am working.” Contextually, “My father has been working every day since creation and I am working as well. In John’s gospel, the works of God/Jesus equal the works of redemption which continue irrespective of days. Here, Jesus used the Sabbath to communicate this fact, hence making the Sabbath a symbol of good works which ought to ensue irrespective of days.
13. Contrary to what many SDAs claim, Jesus’ Sabbath healing and deeds were not acts of emergency. They were deliberate acts that in all cases could have waited until sunset (see, **John 5: 1-30; Lk 13:10,11; 4:40**). For a more comprehensive discussion on Jesus and the Sabbath, see my book, *The Person of Jesus: God’s Obligatory Sabbath*, Chapter 6.

17. THE APOSTLES AND THE SABBATH

1. Again, the primary context must first be considered. Generally speaking, there were three main groups of Christians in the early Church. These were: 1) Aramaic speaking Jewish Christians; 2) Hellenistic or Greek-speaking Jewish Christians, and, 3) Gentile Christians (Acts 6:1)
2. **Aramaic-speaking Jewish Christians:** These were most of the early Christians. For example, the apostles and those converted on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2:1-12,22,41-46; 21:20). Being Jews, they continued to live as Jews, by observing the entire Torah, i.e., all the laws of the OT. They continued to worship in the temple where Judaism was practiced (Acts 3:1; 21:24), they circumcised, observed the Jewish laws of clean and unclean, and they also observed all the “ceremonial Sabbaths” (Acts 21:20-26). According to Acts 21:20, they were all very zealous for the entire *nomos*, that is, all the laws of the OT.
3. Jewish Christians continued to observe all the laws of the OT because the *Torah* was still considered by them to be the document of election. That is, that entity which identified the chosen people of God. Note, the Torah had this function from OT times and the OT was essentially still their Bible as many of the NT books were not yet written, and for sure the NT was not yet canonized. These Jewish Christians saw themselves as the new Israel of God and thus continued to live as Jews, just that they now saw Jesus as the meaning of their Jewish practices.
4. **Gentile Christians** were non-Jews who became converted to Christianity. Unlike the Jewish members they had no previous tradition in Torah observance generally, or in Sabbath-keeping in particular. Gentiles were considered *anomos*, that is, without the law. The Torah was strictly a prerogative of the Jews. It was their covenant document, their “wedding band” that identified and distinguished them as God’s chosen people.
5. In order for Gentiles to be a part of Israel, they had to first become Jews, by pledging full allegiance to the Torah. Jewish Christians who saw themselves as the new Israel and thus continued to live as Jews, insisted that Gentiles should become Jews. In the first century the principal way that a Gentile became a Jew, i.e., pledge full allegiance to the Jewish Torah was to: i) circumcise, ii) observe the Jewish food laws, and iii) keep the Sabbath and other Jewish holy days.

6. **Hellenistic Jewish Christians** like Paul, insisted that the Torah or OT law was not binding upon Gentiles (Eph 2: 14, 15; Gal 2:14-16; 3: 24, 25). Thus, Gentiles needed not circumcise (Acts 15: 1-12; Gal 2:1-10; 3:1-5), observe Jewish food laws (Gal 2:11-21; Rom 14:1-6) or observe the Jewish feast days including the Sabbath (Col 2: 14-16; Rom 10:4, 5; Gal 4:10, 11).
7. Paul and others advocated the above position based on the principle of Justification by Faith apart from works of law (Gal 2:14-16). That is, because Jews as well as Gentiles were justified by the grace of God in Jesus, Gentiles needed not become Jews. In short, Torah law with its distinctive identity marker was now replaced by a new identity marker, namely, Jesus and His Spirit.
8. The Jerusalem Council of Acts 15, ruled that Gentiles never had to become Jews, via circumcision. Note: circumcision was not just an act, but it was a representative act; a rite that represented pledging full allegiance to the entire Torah. Thus, by exempting the Gentiles from circumcision, the council was in principle exempting them from obligation to the entire Torah. They however, legislated a few exemptions to this general principle, to facilitate table fellowship of Jewish and Gentile believers. The Sabbath, being a companion sign to circumcision (both were called the sign of the Sinaitic or Old Covenant) was not one of the legislated exemptions. Thus in principle, the Jerusalem council rendered Sabbath observance along with circumcision non-obligatory upon Gentile Christians.
9. The New Testament and early Christian writings outside of the New Testament such as Justin Martyr, The Epistle of Barnabas, Ignatius; the Didache, reveal that early Jewish and Gentile Christians from the time of the Apostles worshipped on Sundays as well as on Saturdays. They worshipped on Sunday, not to recognize Sunday as Sabbath, but as a day of Christian worship, in honor of the new beginning God had wrought in the resurrection of Jesus. Note, every time Jesus appeared to his disciples after his resurrection, it was on a Sunday. Certainly, they were not meeting just to talk about the weather in Palestine. Certainly, they would be worshipping. Note also Acts 20:7. Thus, Sunday worship in Christianity was at least 200 years before the time of Constantine in 325 AD.
10. Constantine's supposed "change" of the Sabbath, from Saturday to Sunday, is therefore beside the point. He was simply exchanging one form of Christian Judaism for another. He too was wrong as Sunday is not the Sabbath. Jesus, approximately 300 hundred years before, had already transformed the Sabbath from being a day to being a person - Jesus Christ himself.
11. Within this context of varied worship in the early Church, Paul declared: One man regards one day above another, another regards every day alike. Each person must be fully convinced in his own mind (Rom 14:5).

12. CONCLUSION: Many of the early Christians kept the Sabbath, but they did so as Jews and chiefly within the context of their Jewish tradition. Not only did they keep the Sabbath, but they also kept all the other laws that modern SDAs consider ceremonial and thus abolished. However, when it came to non-Jews, i.e., Gentile Christians, the ruling was that Gentiles needed not keep the Torah in general, or its specific identity markers, namely, the Sabbath, the food laws and circumcision (Acts 15). The reason being, given that Jews and Gentiles were justified by the faith of Jesus, they now had a new identity marker, Jesus and His Spirit. Therefore, the Sabbath like its companion symbol circumcision, was no longer obligatory. (For a more comprehensive discussion, see, *Jesus: God's obligatory Sabbath*, Chapters 8, 9, 10).

18. WAS COLOSSIANS 2:14-16 REFERRING TO THE WEEKLY SABBATH?

Therefore let no one judge you in regard to food or drink or in respect to a festival or new moon or Sabbath(s). These are shadows of what is to come but the reality (body) is of Christ (Col. 2:16-17)

Seventh-day Adventists teach that the Sabbaths here referenced have to do with the ceremonial Sabbaths, and not the seventh day Sabbath. It is now common knowledge among most SDA Bible scholars that this conclusion is wrong. It is one derived from Proof-texting, and not from basic exegesis. Points to consider are:

1. There is no moral-ceremonial distinction of laws in the Bible. No Jew ever thought within those categories. Therefore, the writer of Colossians was not making any point from a moral-ceremonial standpoint.
2. The designation festival or new moon or Sabbath(s) was a typical formula for describing all the Sabbaths of the Old Testament. In the Old Testament and also in extra-biblical Jewish literature, the Sabbaths were categorized as: i) weekly, ii) monthly, and iii) yearly Sabbaths. A weekly Sabbath was the seventh day Sabbath; then there was the monthly Sabbath or the new moon Sabbath, and a yearly Sabbath, for Sabbaths like Passover, Pentecost, Day of Atonement, The Sabbatical and Jubilee year. Therefore, by using the formula, festivals, New Moon and Sabbaths, Paul was here speaking of all Sabbaths, including the seventh day Sabbath.
3. Throughout the OT whenever the words new moon and Sabbaths occur together, it is always the weekly Sabbath that is meant.

1 Chron 23:31: And to offer burnt offerings to the Lord, on the *Sabbaths, the new moons and fixed festivals* in the number set by the ordinances concerning them, continually before the Lord.

2 Chron 2:4: Behold I am about to build a house for the name of the Lord my God, dedicating it to Him, to burn fragrant incense before Him and to set out the showbread continually, and to offer burnt offerings morning and evening, on *Sabbaths and new moons and on the appointed feasts* of the Lord our God, this being required forever in Israel.

2 Chron 31:3: He also appointed the king's portion of his goods of the burnt offerings, namely, for the morning and evening burnt offerings, and the burnt offerings for *the Sabbaths and for the new moons and for the fixed festivals*, as it is written in the law of the Lord.

Neh 10: 33: For the continual grain offering, for the continual burnt offering, the *Sabbaths, the new moon, for the appointed times*.

Ezk 45:17: It shall be the princes part to provide the burnt offerings, the grain offerings and the drink offerings, at the feasts on the *new moons and on the Sabbaths at all the appointed feasts* of the house of Israel.

Ezk 46:1,3: It shall open on *the Sabbath* day and open on the *day of the new moon* . . . the people of the land shall worship . . . the Lord on the *Sabbaths and on the new moons*.

Hosea 2:11: I will put an end to all her gaiety, her feasts, her *new moons, her Sabbaths and all her festal assembles*.

4. The above arguments regarding Colossians 2:16 can also be applied to Gal 4:10, 11, where a similar three-tiered construction of Sabbaths is used.

You observe days and months and seasons and years. I fear for you that perhaps I have labored over you in vain (4:10,11)

5. To the Roman Christians, Paul wrote:

One person regards one day above another, another regards every day alike. Each person must be fully convinced in his own mind. He who observes the day, observes it to the Lord, and he who eats, does so for the Lord, for he gives thanks to God, and he who eats not, for the Lord he does not eat, and give thanks to God (Rom 14:5, 6)

6. In terms of a command, Paul never spoke of the Sabbath, except in a negative way and like the rest of the New Testament it is never commanded in his writings.

7. Traditional SDA argument advances that the Sabbath was well known among Christians and hence there was no need for the NT writers to issue a specific command regarding its observance. This is totally unfounded as, 1) in the ancient world, Judaism was the only religion that had a weekly workshop service on a sacred day. Such was never a tradition among Gentile religions from which many early converts to Christianity would have come. 2) close to 50% of the Roman world were slaves and there was no weekly rest day for slaves. Converted slaves and their masters would therefore need some instructions and encouragement regarding Sabbath keeping. 3) Paul and other NT writers, counseled regarding sins or virtues irrespective of whether or not they were well known. Therefore, common knowledge of an issue would not have disqualified it from being a subject on which to offer counsel. For Paul not to command Sabbath-keeping in such a context, plus to be always speaking negatively regarding its observance, betrays the fact that he did not consider it a requirement for the early Christians. Silence regarding commanding the Sabbath in such a context equals being vocal on indicating its non-binding nature.
8. Israel had the Sabbath for centuries, yet the prophets of the OT continually counseled the nation regarding Sabbath observance (Isa 56:2; 58:13; Jer 17:21,22; Ezk 45:17; Hos 2:11). How strange that Gentiles who had no prior background in Sabbath-keeping needed no counsel regarding a command which was supposed to be the seal of God - the test case command, so to speak. Furthermore, every time Paul counseled on the Sabbath, it was in a negative light that pivoted towards its non-observance.
9. The NT books have several lists of sins and virtues. Sabbath-breaking is never mentioned in the lists of sins or in the lists of virtues. For sin-lists, see for example, Rom 1:18-32; Gal 5: 19-21; Eph 4:17-32; Col 3:5-9. For lists of virtues, see, Gal 5: 22, 23 Rom 12; 1 Cor 13; Eph 6:10-23. It is too much to claim that the NT writers thought Sabbath-keeping a requirement and yet ignored or forgot to mention it so consistently in so many books. Certainly, they did not believe that the sign of the Old Covenant (the Sabbath) was still binding upon New Covenant believers (who now have Jesus and the Holy Spirit as their covenant sign, Eph 1:13, 14).
10. **Conclusion:** Contrary to the traditional SDA claim, Col 2:14-16; Rom 14:5,6 and Gal 4:10,11 all refer to the seventh-day Sabbath and definitely teach that it is no longer a requirement for Christians. This is so because the Sabbath has lost its status as a covenantal sign or seal, that is, that entity that identified the chosen people of God. The justifying grace of God in Jesus indicates that Jesus and his Holy Spirit has now taken over that function. As such, Paul and other apostles saw the Sabbath as a shadow pointing to Jesus, the reality. Because it is a symbol, no one should pass judgment upon another person with regard to its observance or non-observance. To do so is to belittle the cross and the function of the resurrected Jesus.

19. JUSTIFICATION BY FAITH AND THE SABBATH

1. IS THERE ANY CORRELATION BETWEEN JUSTIFICATION BY FAITH AND THE SABBATH?

A basic understanding of the NT's presentation on Justification by faith renders the Sabbath non-obligatory as the observance of a particular day. Chapter 8 of my book *The Person of Jesus: God's Obligatory Sabbath* treats this concept to a great extent.

2. Justification or righteousness by faith, has to do with the fact that humanity is by nature and by actions sinful (Rom 7: 7-25). However, God made the person of Jesus mankind's righteousness and consequently all who accept Jesus, have His full 100% righteousness credited to them, hence they are saved now in the present with a guarantee of eternal salvation at the return of Jesus. Of course, all this happens within the relationship with Jesus (1Cor1:30, 31; Rom 3:20-27; 5; 6; 8:1-3; Gal 2:14-16).
3. Because we are sinners by nature and more-so, by our deeds, law-keeping can never be the meritorious cause of our justification before God (Rom 7: 14-25). Our justified status is always based on the grace of God manifested in the cross of Jesus (Rom 5:1).
4. This means that, that which serves as the indicator, or reality that anyone is, and will ultimately be saved, is the very person of Jesus Himself. Note, the very person of Jesus Himself - not a doctrine about Jesus, not anything God/Jesus is accomplishing in, by, or through us, or any other reality relating to Jesus like a day, but the physical person of the resurrected Jesus now living in heaven. **That the person of Jesus is the only indicator of our salvation can be appreciated when we remember that our salvation was secured at the cross and only in the physical person of the resurrected Jesus does the full potency of the cross continue to exist (1Cor 1:23; 2:2; Heb 8-10).**
5. **Note: The full potency of the cross i.e., the means of our salvation, can only exist in the resurrected Jesus and there is absolutely nothing that humanity can, or is required to do, in order to add to this function of Jesus. Jesus is all sufficient for this particular function of His, and it is virtually sinful for humans to try and supplement it (Gal 5:4).**

6. Hardly any SDA will doubt that the resurrected Jesus is our righteousness. However, once this truth is conceded, it means that the Sabbath can no longer be obligatory as the observance of a specific day. Let's continue to reason.
7. In the OT one of the key symbols that served as the sign or indicator that the Israelite was a sanctified or saved person was the Sabbath (Exo 31:13-18).
8. It therefore means that the resurrected Jesus now occupies that function which the Sabbath used to occupy. Since there is absolutely nothing we can do to supplement this salvific function of Jesus, it means that it is wrong to demand the sacredness of the specific seventh day, as then we would be legislating a human duty to symbolize or add to a function that Jesus is doing on our behalf and for which he has instructed us that we cannot and should not do anything to complement that said function (Gal 5:4). Remember, prior to Jesus, the Sabbath served to symbolize Israel's salvation, but now the resurrected Jesus is carrying out that function.
9. Again, not only is the resurrected Jesus carrying out the role of representing our salvation before God, but it is presumptuous for humans to try and supplement that role by good deeds. In other words, we no longer need a day to symbolize our redemption, our sanctification, our liberation, our justification, we now have a Person - the resurrected Jesus himself, to represent these realities for us. Just as we no longer need a lamb to represent our forgiveness, so likewise we no longer need a day to represent our salvation. Christ has fulfilled and hence replaced the Sabbath.
10. What God is saying to the Christian, is, "Whereas I gave Israel a day (Sabbath) to demonstrate that I the Lord sanctified or saved them" (Exo 31:13), I am now giving you - Christian, a person to guarantee the fact that you are saved now and will be saved ultimately (Heb 10:10, 14; 1Cor 1:30,31). What a glorious assurance of salvation this is? It is therefore shameful to insist that a day must be observed for the same function.
11. Again, whereas Jesus is all sufficient for that which he represents, it is a depreciation of Jesus and his cross to insist that unless one observes a day for the same function then one is sinning against God. SDAs really need to re-examine their attitude.
12. True Sabbath-keeping therefore becomes the observance of a person (Jesus) not the observance of a day- the seventh day Sabbath or Sunday.
13. This is the reason why Paul likens the Sabbath to a shadow, and then insists that the reality is to be found in Jesus.
14. This does not mean that it is wrong to worship on Saturdays. It means that it is wrong to insist that if a person does not keep the Sabbath, or if he congregates for worship on another day, then that person is sinning.

20. IS THE SABBATH THE SEAL OF GOD?

1. **Answer: The Sabbath was the seal of God in the OT (Exo 31:13; Ezk 20:12) but it is no longer so.**

Nowhere in the NT is the Sabbath ever presented as being the seal of God. The NT repeatedly presents Jesus and His Spirit as the only seal of God (John 6:27; Eph 1:13, 14; 4:30). Let's continue to reason. This is of course in keeping with the above truth of Justification by faith of/in Jesus.

2. **What is a seal?** A seal in the ancient world was an instrument (figuratively or literally) that served to demonstrate ownership, security, guarantee, authority, inviolability and ratification. In some cases, it may contain the elements of name, title, and dominion. However, this was not always the case, as sometimes it was an instrument, like a ring that bore the characteristic mark of a person (a small picture or icon) who had some authority or claim to an entity. In short, a seal was an identity marker, a means of demonstrating ownership and belonging.

3. In the OT the Sabbath among other things served to demonstrate that Israel belonged solely to Yahweh and not any other deity.

4. In the NT, the only means of demonstrating that one is God's, is based on what Jesus has done on the cross, which as discussed above, remains resident in the resurrected Jesus. Whereas the cross/resurrected Jesus is mediated through the Holy Spirit, the Holy Spirit along with Jesus is presented as the seal of God (John 6:27; Eph 1:13, 14)

i. On him [Jesus] the Father, God, has set His seal (John 6: 27).

ii. In Him, you also after listening to the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation—having also believed, you were sealed in Him with the holy spirit of promise, who is given as a pledge of our inheritance, with the view to the redemption of God's own possession to the praise of his glory (Eph 1:13,15).

iii. Now he who establishes us with you in Christ and anointed us is God, who also sealed us and gave us the spirit in our hearts as a pledge (*arrabon* - 2 Cor 1:20, 21).

5. Notice how throughout the book of Acts that which identified the early believers as belonging to God was the Holy Spirit. Everything was done with the stamp of the Holy Spirit (Acts 1; 2; 6: 3-6; 8:18-21; 10: 44; 11:15, 18, 28; 13: 1-3; 15: 8,9).

6. A day cannot demonstrate that anyone belongs to God. It did so symbolically for Israel under the Old Covenant, just as a lamb represented their means of atonement and a human priest their access to God. The reality of salvation, Jesus, as communicated throughout His Holy Spirit is the only entity, that can truly signify that one belongs to God, and is hence, saved, sanctified, redeemed, justified, etc. Since the Sabbath has lost its status as a seal, it has also lost its significance as a symbol of redemption, sanctification, liberation, justification, salvation, et cetera as these meanings are just another way of communicating the idea of the seal.

Therefore, to admit that the Sabbath is no longer the seal of God (as an increasing number of SDA academicians are now doing- there is no way around this) is to admit that it no longer has its OT salvation meanings, and hence is no longer a requirement for Christians. Since the day no longer has these salvific meanings then it is just another day. Its observance becomes optional. Again, an increasing number of SDA Bible scholars now acknowledge this truth. Sadly, it is not filtered down to the members in the pew.

One cannot be saved without having the seal of God. Therefore, to insist that the Sabbath is the seal of God, post Calvary, is to preach that only Sabbath keepers can be saved. Interestingly, in the early days of the Adventism (1844-1851/2) this was

exactly what this church taught. It was called the Shut Door doctrine, and early Adventists were known as the Sabbath and Shut Door People. As a person's childhood experience influences their adulthood, so likewise the childhood experience of the organization continues to influence it in its later years.

21. IS SUNDAY WORSHIP THE MARK OF THE BEAST?

Answer: No. Absolutely not.

The symbol of complex beasts is used throughout the Bible to represent the forces of evil. They go with such names as Leviathan, Lotan, Rahab, Behemoth, dragon, etc. (Job 7:12; 9:13; 26:12; 41:1-32; Psa 74:13, 14; 104:26; Isa 27:1, 51:9). In Revelation, the mark of the beast represents the fact that one belongs to, and worships Satan (Rev 13: 4, 8, 12, 15, 16-18). Just as the seal of God represents the fact that one belongs to God, so likewise the seal or mark of the beast represents the fact that one belongs to the beast or Satan. Just as a day cannot indicate that one is of God, so likewise, in reality, a day cannot indicate that one belongs to Satan. Stated another way, whereas the seal of God is not a day, its opposite cannot be another day. Revelation is concerned with **WHO** one worships, not **WHEN** one worships. The word Sabbath never appears in the book of Revelation. For a detailed discussion, see Chapter 15 of *Jesus: God's Obligatory Sabbath*.

22. IS THE SDA CHURCH THE REMNANT CHURCH?

Answer: No! If any particular denomination is the remnant church then salvation is completely by works, and Jesus died to absolutely no avail. The word translated 'remnant' in the NT is the Greek *loipoi*. *Loipoi* means the remaining ones, not necessarily the smaller number or entity. In many cases in the NT, it indicates the larger number. (See, for example, Mk 16:12; 2 Cor 12:13; Lk 8:10; 18:9.11; 24:9f).

1. Rev 12: 17 is the key SDA Proof-text to identify the SDA church as the remnant: It reads:

And the Dragon was wrath with the woman and went to make war with the remaining ones (τῶν λοιπῶν- *tōn loipōn*) of her seed, those who keep the commandments of God, and hold the testimony of Jesus.

2. In Revelation 12, the woman has two seeds. The first seed, Jesus, was caught up to God and hence escaped the dragon (12:1-3). Having failed to conquer Jesus, the dragon, then went after the remaining ones (*tōn loipōn*) of her seed, namely, “those who keep the commandments of God and hold the testimony of Jesus.” In Revelation, and the rest of the Johannine writings, the commandments of God do not equal Ten Commandments, but faith in Jesus and love for each other (John 13:34, 35; 14:15, 21; 15:10, 12-14; 1 John 2: 8-11; 4:20, 21).
3. From the grammatical context, the testimony of Jesus (Greek subjective genitive), equals Jesus’ testimony about himself. Thus the “remaining ones” are those who have faith in Jesus (keep the commandments) and are motivated by the Testimony borne by Jesus concerning himself. Resident in the latter, is the entire cross experience and the resurrected Jesus. These remaining ones (*tōn loipōn*) stand in contrast to those who worshipped the beasts and Satan. From the immediate context and also in the rest of the Revelation, this seed (*tōn loipōn*) is the Christian Church, not a particular denomination within Christianity. They are otherwise called the saints (11:18; 13:10), “those who dwell in heaven” (1:6; 5.9-10; 13:6), “the great multitude,” etc. (7:9)
4. Yes, in Revelation John does describe anti-God entities using religious language. However, these powers are never **Christian religious powers or denominations**, they are always **non-Christian religious entities** (13; 17). A key marker is that they worship the beast or Satan (13:11-18). Thus, the remaining ones are all Christians who worshipped God, as opposed to the anti-Christian powers who worshiped the beasts and Satan. No one denomination within Christianity who worships God and accept salvation by grace (the testimony of Jesus), can claim exclusive or special remnant status based on this and other texts in Revelation.
5. If the SDA or any church is the remnant church, then the question must be asked, when did such a church start to keep, not pledge allegiance to, but actually keep all the commandments of God, in a way that no other Christian group has ever done? Note: “Commandments of God,” must be defined by the context of Revelation, in which it equals love and faith in Jesus. But even if one wants to define it incorrectly as the Ten Commandments, the question still stands. When did the SDA church start keeping all the Ten Commandments?

Here are some historical facts. For decades in its early history, the SDA church believed in salvation by works. (The Ten Commandments are based on salvation by grace - Exo 20:1). Additionally, for decades the SDA church did not believe in the Trinity. It preached the shut door doctrine (1844-1852) and practiced racism, among many other violations of God’s

commandments. If while preaching these false doctrines, (not keeping all the commandments) the SDA could qualify as the remnant, how is it that other denominations that also “broke” or are “breaking the commandments” do not qualify as the remnant? Isn't it sinful (breaking the commandments) to accept the grace of God and at the same time deny it to others?

6. The only grounds upon which one qualifies as belonging to God is through the justifying blood of Jesus. One person or group upon whom the blood rests cannot be “*more*” a child of God than another person or group upon whom the same blood rests. Therefore, correct doctrines or behavior do not qualify a church to be the remnant. For a denomination to designate itself as the exclusive remnant is to be preaching (knowingly or unknowingly) careless salvation by works. It is to qualify one's denomination by what that denomination happens to be doing as compared to what another denomination is, or is not doing at different points in their respective histories. But we can never qualify to be God's children or even qualify to embark on any task for God, based on correct doctrines or on what we do, or do not do. Needless to say, such would be salvation by works.
7. Jesus has called his children to be separate from the world, not from others who are in Christ. His prayer is that all his followers may be one (John 17:22). Sadly, many denominations, SDA included, interpret this prayer to mean that all members of their church may be one, instead of, may all followers of Jesus be one.
8. Whereas, the remnant are all those who are *in-Christ*, then it is OK for each Christian group to designate itself as **a** Church of the remnant, but never as **the** Remnant Church. This latter designation is frankly not even sensible salvation by works.

23. SABBATH ON A ROUND WORLD.

1. There is absolutely no way of knowing which was the original Sabbath on a round world. The sun and moon that delineate day and night as we now know it, were not created until the fourth day (Gen 1:14-19). The second creation story in Genesis 2 has a different sequence of events than the first creation story in Genesis 1. In Genesis 1 creation was accomplished in seven days, in Genesis 2, it was done in one day (2:4). In Genesis 1, Adam and Eve were created after the animals and with both Adam and Eve being created at the same time. In Genesis 2, Adam was created before the animals, then the animals and finally Eve, when no match could be found among the animals for Adam (2:18-22).

2. Additionally, there are other sequential, literary and theological qualities of both creation accounts which alert us to the fact that the author of the creation story in Genesis was not concerned with the specific chronological sequencing of days, but with the theological point that Yahweh and not any of the other deities of the Ancient Near East was the creator. Thus, the author simply used an arrangement of seven days, as it was the culture of his day, to represent a great task as having been accomplished in seven days. In Chapter 3, of *Jesus: God's Obligatory Sabbath*, I demonstrate in much details that Genesis 1 is a literary seven, not a literal seven. Thus, a theological point regarding seven days can be made, but not a literal historical point.

3. Genesis one presupposes a flat earth, resting on pillars. In such a context, night and day happened everywhere at the same time. In reality, however, we know that night in the West is daytime in the East. Consequently, there was no original specific universal 12 hours of sunlight or darkness on the planet. Thus, there is no way of knowing which period of time thousands of years ago, was exactly the seventh day globally. In fact, there could have been none literally. Saturday presently could well be the first day of the week, and Sunday the seventh day of the week. In the North and South poles, the sun does not rise or set for some six months at a time. How is a seventh day, delineated by sunset and sun rise to be identified and observed in such a context? There is no need however, as the Sabbath was only a symbol of Jesus.

4. But what about the historic Jesus and the observance of the seventh day? Answer. Jesus simply observed the culture as it existed in his day. He spoke “unscientifically” 52 times of the sun setting. Furthermore, as discussed above, he did not prescribe the Sabbath as a universal rule.

24. ELLEN WHITE AND THE SABBATH

The average Seventh-day Adventist has a problem understanding the above discussion because the Church’s prophetess, Ellen White gave very strong support for the observance of the seventh-day Sabbath. However, a number of key points, well published in SDA literature, but unfortunately not very current among the lay membership, will release the minds of the average member so he/she can feel safe to accept the Bible objectively without the interpreting lens of Ellen White. I’ll list the points. A detailed discussion can be found in my book, *Jesus: God’s Obligatory Sabbath*, Chapter 17.

1. Ellen White’s writings must be studied in light of the Bible, not the Bible in light of Ellen White’s writings. Therefore, the exegetical findings from the Bible is final *vis-a-vis* Ellen White.
2. She understood scripture basically the way the people of her time understood it.
3. She said opposite things on the same issue depending on the context.
4. She changed her mind on issues as she grew in her understanding of scripture.
5. Her writings were basically an application of scripture, not an exegetical interpretation of scripture in its primary context.

6. Like all prophets, she made mistakes. She made mistakes even with regards to her visions.

7. Ellen White wrote in a particular time and context which is different from our time and context. She lived and functioned in the 19th century, a world which, according to Fritz Guy, in terms of technological and cultural change is as far removed from our time as the 19th century was removed from the first century AD. (Fritz Guy, "Confidence in Salvation: The Meaning of the Sanctuary," *Spectrum*, vol. 11. no.2 (Association of Adventist Forum, 1980), 44).

8. It is therefore wrong to use her to veto exegetical conclusions from scripture. As acknowledged by many SDA scholars, her writings should only be used as personal devotional readings. That is what they are best suited for. For a detailed discussion, see *Jesus: God's Obligatory Sabbath*, Chapter, 17.

25. CONCLUSION

Modern Sabbatarians continue to insist on the obligatory nature of the Sabbath, because their rationale is built upon a number of false premises which are not found in the Bible, but which emanate from the flawed Proof-text approach to scripture. The concluding statements summarize and reaffirm the refutation of these false premises. The premises are printed in black and their refutation in pink.

Among these false premises are:

1. Genesis presents the Sabbath as a creation ordinance, commanded for Adam and Eve and consequently for the human race to keep. **Nowhere in the book of Genesis is the Sabbath commanded for Adam and Eve or for humanity on a whole. To preach the Sabbath as a requirement from Genesis 1 and 2 is an argument completely from silence which ignores the entire theological context of the chapters.**
2. The Ten Commandments is God's eternal, perfect, all-encompassing moral law that is binding upon all believers for all times and places. **The Ten Commandments are not eternal, perfect, all-encompassing or totally moral. It is a limited set of commands used to represent the Sinaitic or Old Covenant. It was never given as a stand-alone law, but it is so much a part of the Sinaitic or old covenant, that is called, 'the covenant' (Exo 34:28). The Sabbath as its seal was also called the covenant. The NT teaches that Christians are no longer under the Old covenant and the Ten Commandments in particular (Gal 3:24-25; Eph 2:13-16). The Ten Commandments is termed an instrument of death and a slave guide (*paidagogos*) by Paul, which although was glorious, has been superseded by much more glory - God's revelation in Jesus (2 Cor 3: 6-18).**

The Christian's guide is not a code, but a person, Jesus Christ himself. Jesus is not only the grace of God, He is also the demand of God. God's laws revealed in Jesus (for example in Matt 5-7; Rom 12, far supersede God's law as revealed at Sinai in the Ten Commandments. Christians will live ethical lives, not because such ethics are prescribed in the Ten Commandments, but because such ethics flow out of God's new revelation in the life and teaching of Jesus.

3. There is a clear distinction and separation between the moral and ceremonial laws in the OT, with the moral law consisting of the Ten Commandments as binding and the ceremonial laws, consisting of all other laws, being fulfilled in Jesus and hence no longer binding. There is absolutely no such distinction in scripture. As discussed above, the Sabbath is explicitly stated as being a sign- and that's a "ceremonial" designation. That section of the law that is dubbed ceremonial has dozens of commands that can only be seen as moral. See discussion above. Thus, the Bible writers made no point from this platform.
4. **The Sabbath continues to be the seal of God and hence is obligatory.** Nowhere in the NT is the Sabbath presented as being the seal of God. The NT knows only of Jesus and the Holy Spirit as being the seal of God. Only Jesus and his spirit can truly identify an individual as belonging to God. Prior to Jesus, the Sabbath, like circumcision, symbolically served this function. Now that the reality has come, there is no more need for the symbol. To advance the Sabbath as the seal of God is to be vocal where the NT is silent, and to be silent where the NT is exceptionally vocal. Since the Sabbath is no longer the seal of God, it has lost all its OT meanings and is simply just another day; it is consequently not a requirement for Christians. Again, one cannot be saved without having the seal-ownership- of God. Therefore, to insist that the Sabbath is the seal of God, post Calvary, is to preach that only Sabbath keepers can be saved. Classic salvation by works.
5. **Jesus and the early Apostles kept the Sabbath therefore it should be kept.** The fact that Jesus and the early Jewish Apostles kept the Sabbath is absolutely no basis for continued Sabbath observance today. Jesus and the early Apostles were all Jews who practiced all the Jewish rituals. They kept all the so-called ceremonial Sabbaths as well. Jesus' Sabbath keeping was to demonstrate the Messianic fulfillment of the Sabbath in himself and consequently to exemplify it as being Christ-like deeds of love, to be done irrespective of days. Jesus is the Sabbath. To be Christ-like is to be a Sabbath-keeper in the literal sense of the word.
6. **The Sabbath will be kept in the new earth therefore we should begin to keep it now.** Nowhere in the Bible is this taught. Isaiah 65 & 66 is only a mistaken Proof-text. In the very presence of God, where we will count no time by years, it will be perpetual holiness at all times. Hence, only the current continuous Sabbath rest, irrespective of days, can give us any form of preparation for that new existence.

7. **Colossians 2:14-16; Romans 14:5,6 and Galatians 4:10,11 do not refer to the seventh-day Sabbath, but to the ceremonial Sabbaths.** Colossians 2:14-15, Romans 14:5,6 and Gal 5:10,11 all include the seventh-day Sabbath. In Colossians and Galatians, the designation used such as festivals, new moon and Sabbaths or days, seasons and years, was the common OT formula for referring to weekly, monthly and yearly Sabbaths — all Sabbaths of the Jewish sacred calendar. Contextually, Romans 14:5,6 also included the Sabbath, as it was the day that was an issue between some Jewish and Gentile Christians. Many SDA Bible scholars now admit that these passages refer to the Seventh-day Sabbath as well.
8. **That Justification by Faith does not abolish any OT law or the Sabbath in particular.** This is absolutely not true, as it is only on the basis of what God did in Jesus that the Old Covenant and its laws are no longer binding on Christians. SDAs designate laws as being obligatory or non-obligatory based on their so-called moral or ceremonial status. This however, is classic Proof-texting. The NT's basis for rendering laws as obligatory or non-obligatory is what God did in Jesus' life, death, and resurrection. Said another way, the justifying grace of God in Jesus, renders some laws obligatory and some not obligatory. Whereas Jesus has fulfilled the Sabbath, he has become all that the day represents. Yes, the resurrected Jesus continues to be our righteousness, our sanctification, our redemption, our justification, our rest, our creator. Indeed, he has become all the realities of our salvation. Prior to Jesus assuming these roles, a day, the Seventh day, symbolized these entities for Israel. Now that the reality has come, here is absolutely no need to hold on to the shadow. In fact, to insist on the obligatory nature of the shadow (the seventh-day) while the reality -Jesus- is available, is to deny the full potency of Jesus Himself. It is to depreciate the cross. It is to deny the true Sabbath of resting in Jesus 24 sevens. The one who advances that the Seventh-day is still a requirement is belittling God's laws, by failing to see that, whereas 1/7 of our days was holy, it is now 7/7 of our days that is 100 percent holy.

Thus, the law is magnified. This Sabbath rest gains expression in practical Christ-like deeds of the Spirit at all times. Indeed, the **Christian Sabbath is no longer a day it is now a person.** When SDAs insist that the seventh day must be kept, they are denying that those who are in Christ have met the full requirement of the Sabbath. It is like insisting that one is sinning by not offering an animal sacrifice, even though that individual accepts Jesus as his sacrifice. Thus, SDAs are not fully Sabbath-keepers as they continue to deny the true meaning of Sabbath-keeping.

Indeed, the *Christian Sabbath is no longer a day, it is a Person.* This gives the most glorious peace, rest and assurance of salvation that one could ever imagine. Why not accept Jesus as your Sabbath instead of a day? The NT renders the entire Old Covenant, non-obligatory based on God's new revelation in Jesus. Thus, we no longer need an animal for sacrifices, because Jesus is our sacrifice, we no longer need a human priest because Jesus is our great high priest, we no longer need to be circumcised because Jesus is our circumcision. One may continue to practice some of these symbols based on one's customs, as did some early Jewish Christians (Act 16:3; 18:19; 21:20-26). However, the Apostles never made these

symbols of salvation and the Sabbath in particular, a test of faith for the early Church (Rom 4; 14:5, 6; Gal 5:2-4; Col 2:14-16). We dishonor their legacy and more importantly, the meaning of the Cross, when we insist that they are obligatory. Why not accept the great freedom in Christ, which is at the same time, a deeper and more profound keeping of the law of God? Indeed, His yoke [of obedience] is easy, and His burden is light (Matt 11:28-30). Please, accept Jesus as your Sabbath.