

Genesis 2:1-3, the Decalogue, and Sabbatarianism: Exegetical and Theological Thoughts

I. Introduction

Genesis 2:1-3 is a significant battleground passage for groups in Christendom with widely divergent views on the Sabbath and its relationship to the church today. The analysis below will examine whether Genesis 2:1-3, the allusions to it in the Fourth Commandment and related texts, and the reference to Genesis 2:1-3 in Hebrews 4 support the Seventh-Day Adventist¹ position that the Saturday Sabbath is binding upon all people from the moment of man's creation to eternity to come,² the Puritan³ position that the Saturday Sabbath was binding upon all people from creation until the resurrection of Christ, and from the resurrection until the end of the world the Sabbath is transferred to Sunday and the first-day Sabbath is binding upon all people,⁴ the Lutheran⁵ position that

¹ Concerning Seventh-Day Adventist theology, note the resources at <http://faithsaves.net/seventh-day-adventism-and-saturday-sabbath-keeping/>.

² For example, the founder of Seventh-Day Adventism, Ellen G. White, who Adventists believe was a prophetess who produced writings inspired like the Bible, stated:

The Sabbath was hallowed at the creation. . . . [God] gave it to Adam as a day of rest. . . . The Sabbath was embodied in the law given from Sinai; but it was not then first made known as a day of rest. . . . The Sabbath was not for Israel merely, but for the world. It had been made known to man in Eden, and, like the other precepts of the Decalogue, it is of imperishable obligation. . . . So long as the heavens and earth endure, the Sabbath will continue. (Pgs. 281-289, *The Desire of Ages*, Ellen White)

Other Adventist doctrines on the Sabbath, such as the teaching that the Sabbath, not the Holy Spirit, is the seal of God, that the Sabbath is greater than any other of the Ten Commandments, and that Saturday Sabbath-keeping is essential for salvation, will not be examined here. See "Bible Truths for Seventh-Day Adventist Friends" at <http://faithsaves.net/seventh-day-adventism-and-saturday-sabbath-keeping/> for more information.

³ Concerning Puritan and Reformed theology, consider the resources at <http://faithsaves.net/the-reformed-doctrine-of-salvation/>, <http://faithsaves.net/soteriology/>, <http://faithsaves.net/ecclesiology/>, and <http://faithsaves.net/were-the-reformers-heretics/>.

⁴ For example, the Westminster Assembly stated:

As it is of the law of nature, that, in general, a due proportion of time be set apart for the worship of God; so, in his Word, by a positive, moral, and perpetual commandment, binding all men in all ages, he hath particularly appointed one day in seven for a Sabbath, to be kept holy unto him: [Exod. 20:8, 10, 11; Isa. 56:2, 4, 6, 7; [Am. ed. Isa. 56:6] which, from the beginning of the world to the resurrection of Christ, was the last day of the week; and, from the resurrection of Christ, was changed into the first day of the week [Gen. 2:2, 3; 1 Cor. 16:1, 2; Acts 20:7] which in Scripture is called the Lord's day [Rev. 1:10], and is to be continued to the end of the world, as the Christian Sabbath [Exod. 20:8, 10, with Matt. 5:17, 18]. (Philip Schaff, *The Creeds of Christendom, with a History and Critical Notes: The Evangelical Protestant Creeds, with Translations*, vol. 3 [New York: Harper & Brothers, 1882], 648–649)

⁵ Concerning Lutheran theology, consider <http://faithsaves.net/Bible-truths-Lutheran-friends/> and the sources mentioned in the previous footnote.

the Sabbath commandment was given to the Jews alone and does not concern Christians, although rest and worship are still required but not tied to a particular day, or the dispensational view that the Sabbath was for the Jews alone and was fulfilled in Christ, while the Lord's Day, the first day of the week (Revelation 1:10), may follow certain principles of the Sabbath but is not a Christian Sabbath.⁶

A preliminary consideration of various exegetical features of the passage will precede the specific examination of the Sabbatarian question. Genesis 2:1-3 concludes the pericope of Genesis 1:1-2:3 with a narration of the seventh day of the creation week. The use of both “to create,” *bara'* (בָּרָא), and “to make,” *asah* (עָשָׂה), in Genesis 2:3 emphasizes that God not only brought the universe into existence, but also fashioned it exactly according to His own design; His work was completely finished by the seventh day, because He had completed all His creative design. The two verbs also tie Genesis 2:3 back into the earlier portions of 1:1-2:3 and round out the concluding and climactic affirmation of the passage. The following commentators bring out salient features of the passage that are worthy of consideration as one approaches the specific Sabbatarian question examined afterwards.

II. Relevant General Comments from Scholars

Concerning the general structure of Genesis 1:1-2:3, Jewish scholar Umberto Cassuto notes:

In view of the importance ascribed to the number seven generally, and particularly in the story of Creation, this number occurs again and again in the structure of our section [1:1-2:3]. The following details are deserving of note:

(a). After the introductory verse (1:1), the section is divided into *seven* paragraphs, each of which appertains to one of the seven days. An obvious indication of this division is to be seen in the recurring sentence, *And there was evening and there was morning, such-and-such a day*. Hence the Masoretes were right in placing an open paragraph [i.e. one that begins on a new line] after each of these verses. Other ways of dividing the section suggested by some modern scholars are unsatisfactory.

(b–d). Each of the three nouns that occur in the first verse and express the basic concepts of the section, viz *God* [אֱלֹהִים *Elōhīm*], *heavens* [שָׁמַיִם *šāmayim*], *earth* [אֶרֶץ *erets*], are repeated in the section a given number of times that is a multiple of *seven*: thus the name of *God* occurs thirty-five times, that is, five times *seven* (on the fact that the Divine Name, in one of its forms, occurs seventy times in the first four chapters, see below); *earth* is found twenty-one times, that is, three times seven; similarly *heavens* (or *firmament*, רָקִיעַ *rāqīa*) appears twenty-one times.

(e). The ten sayings with which, according to the Talmud, the world was created (Aboth v 1; in B. Rosh Hashana 32a and B. Megilla 21b only nine of them are enumerated, the one in 1:29, apparently, being omitted)—that is, the ten utterances of God beginning with the words, *and ... said*—are clearly divisible into two groups: the first group contains *seven* Divine fiat enjoining the creation of the creatures, to wit, ‘Let there be light’, ‘Let there be a firmament’, ‘Let the waters

⁶ Compare *Perspectives on the Sabbath: Four Views*, ed. Christopher John Donato. Nashville, TN: B & H, 2011.

be gathered together’, ‘Let the earth put forth vegetation’, ‘Let there be lights’, ‘Let the waters bring forth swarms’, ‘Let the earth bring forth’; the second group comprises three pronouncements that emphasize God’s concern for man’s welfare (*three* being the number of emphasis), namely, ‘Let us make man’ (not a command but an expression of the will to create man), ‘Be fruitful and multiply’, ‘Behold I have given unto you every plant yielding seed’. Thus we have here, too, a series of *seven* corresponding dicta.

(f). The terms *light* and *day* are found, in all, *seven* times in the first paragraph, and there are *seven* references to *light* in the fourth paragraph.

(g). *Water* is mentioned *seven* times in the course of paragraphs two and three. *chayyā* [rendered ‘living’ or ‘beasts’] occur *seven* times.

(i). The expression *it was good* appears *seven* times (the seventh time—*very good*).

(j). The first verse has *seven* words.

(k). The second verse contains fourteen words—*twice seven*.

(l). In the *seventh* paragraph, which deals with the *seventh* day, there occur the following three consecutive sentences (three for emphasis), each of which consists of *seven* words and contains in the middle the expression *the seventh day*. . . [In Genesis 2:2-3a the passage] consists of three consecutive, parallel lines, each of which contains *seven* words and is divided into two parts, the first part ending in every case, like a threefold refrain, with the words—*the seventh day*:⁷ . . .

וַיִּשְׁבֹּת בַּיּוֹם הַשְּׁבִיעִי מִכָּל-מְלַאכְתּוֹ אֲשֶׁר עָשָׂה׃
וַיְבָרֶךְ אֱלֹהִים בַּיּוֹם הַשְּׁבִיעִי מִלְּאֲכֹתוֹ אֲשֶׁר עָשָׂה
וַיְבָרֶךְ אֱלֹהִים אֶת-יּוֹם הַשְּׁבִיעִי וַיְקַדְּשׁ אֹתוֹ

*And on THE SEVENTH DAY God finished His work which He had done,
and He rested on THE SEVENTH DAY from all His work which He had done.
So God blessed THE SEVENTH DAY and hallowed it.*

(m). The words in the seventh paragraph total thirty-five—five times *seven*.

To suppose that all this is a mere coincidence is not possible.

This numerical symmetry is, as it were, the golden thread that binds together all the parts of the section and serves as a convincing proof of its unity against the view of those . . . who consider that our section is not a unity but was formed by the fusion of two different accounts, or as the result of the adaptation and elaboration of a shorter earlier version . . . [by] the source P.⁸

Concerning the specific Hebrew structure of Genesis 2:3, and concerning the manner in which the verse binds together the pericope of 1:1-2:3, Cassuto also notes:

As regards the construction of our clause, which contains two synonymous verbs, the second being in the infinitive with the preposition *Lāmedh* [‘to’], compare Psa. 63:3 [E. V. v. 2]: So I HAVE LOOKED UPON THEE *in the sanctuary*, TO BEHOLD [E. V. ‘beholding’] *Thy power and glory*. The second verb comes to elucidate the particular sense in which the first is to be understood. Similarly in our verse: the word *laāśōth* [‘to make’] comes after *bārā* [‘He created’] to specify the kind of creation of which the verse speaks, namely, an act of creation that is also a ‘making’, that is, a wondrous work implying the making of things that never existed before. The closing verse corresponds to the introductory sentence of the section; in both it is written: *God created*. But whereas the word *bārā* alludes to the first verse, *laāśōth* recalls all the ‘makings’ mentioned in the rest of the section. Just as the prologue announces at the outset the main subject-matter of the account that follows, so the epilogue looks back and epitomizes within the limits of one short sentence the content of the preceding narrative, reawakening in the heart of

⁷ The Hebrew text has been added into the quotation with the appropriate words placed in italics. Cassuto’s English translation follows the supplied Hebrew.

⁸ Umberto Cassuto, *A Commentary on the Book of Genesis: Part I, From Adam to Noah (Genesis I–VI 8)*, trans. Israel Abrahams (Jerusalem: The Magnes Press, The Hebrew University, 1998), 13–15, 61.

the reader, by means of this synthesis inherent in its words, the sentiments that were aroused within him in the course of his reading. A truly majestic conclusion to the section.⁹

Cassuto likewise explains how the emphasis upon the words *seventh day* in Genesis 2:1-3 provides a contrast between Israel's Sabbath and the holy days of the heathen nations around Israel:

[T]he question of *the relationship between the Israelite Sabbath and the days resembling it, in name or in order of their incidence, in the religious calendar of the Mesopotamian peoples . . .* [t]he Babylonians and the Assyrians used to call by the name of *šabattu* or *šapattu* the day of the full moon, the fifteenth of the month, which was specifically dedicated to the worship of the moon god, Sin-Nannaru, and of the gods related to it. . . . Of importance to us is only the use of the word to denote the day of the full moon. This day used to be called also *ūm nū libbi*, "day of the rest of the heart," that is, according to the generally accepted explanation, the day of the appeasement of the heart of the gods by means of worship. Germane to our problem are also the seventh, fourteenth, twenty-first and twenty-eighth days of the month, which likewise have a special character in the Mesopotamian calendar. They are connected with the four phases of the moon, and are spaced *seven days* apart from one another, except for the seventh day of the month, which comes eight days after the twenty-eighth day of the preceding month if it is deficient, or nine days after it, if that month is full. These days, to which must be added the nineteenth of the month, which occurs seven weeks after the beginning of the preceding month, were regarded as unlucky days on which a man should afflict himself, eschew pleasures, and refrain from performing important works, for they would not prosper. This system was not just the product of a late development and sophistication, as was thought till a few years ago; nor is it reflected only in the arrangement of the Assyrian calendar, consisting of fifteen tablets, that was drawn up in the seventh century B.C.E. and called *inbu bēl arim* ("the fruit [moon] is lord of the month"), but it is also found in an edition of the calendar belonging to the beginning of the tenth century, which contains much older material. The recension of the seventh century sets down the laws of those days as follows: "'The shepherd of many people' (that is, the king, or possibly one of the high priests) shall not eat cooked meat or baked bread, nor may he change the garment on his body or put on a clean garment; the king shall not ride in a chariot nor shall he speak words of rulership; the seer shall not enquire of his god; the physician shall not attend to the sick; and in general the day is not propitious for doing any desired thing." The version of the tenth century likewise states that the seer shall not enquire of his god, that the physician shall not attend to the sick, and generally that those days are not favourable for doing the thing desired. It adds that anyone doing work on the fourteenth day of the month will lose his money, and that on the twenty-eighth day no one should undertake a journey. There are also other days that it mentions as "unpropitious for doing the thing desired" (*viz* the first, the fifteenth, the twenty-ninth and the thirtieth); but on the first, it rules, the king *may* speak words of rulership and clean his garment. In regard to the ninth, it declares that no one should appear thereon before the judge; and on the twenty-ninth and thirtieth, it prescribes that, just as on the twenty-eighth, no one should set out on a journey. So far the sources.

Many scholars have discussed the question of the relationship between these days and the Israelite Sabbath, and having regard to the highly complicated nature of the problem it is not surprising that their opinions differ; nor is it a matter for wonder that not all of them have been careful to express well-founded views. Some have supposed that the Israelite Sabbath, too, was originally the day of the full moon, but there is no basis for this theory (even the association of the words *new moon* and *Sabbath* does not prove anything); in the final analysis it is based only on the identification of the Israelite Sabbath with the Mesopotamian Sabbath, which itself requires proof, and thus begs the question. The same applies to the view that the 7th, 14th, 21st and 28th days of the month were also called by the Babylonians and Assyrians *šabattu-šapattu*; there is no evidence of this in the sources, and the hypothesis rests on the supposed connection between these days and the Israelite Sabbath: another instance of begging the question! Similarly, the surmise that the

⁹ U. Cassuto, *A Commentary on the Book of Genesis: Part I, From Adam to Noah (Genesis I–VI 8)*, trans. Israel Abrahams (Jerusalem: The Magnes Press, The Hebrew University, 1998), 70.

children of Israel derived the essential idea of the Sabbath and its detailed laws from the Mesopotamian system of “rest days” on the 7th, 14th, 21st and 28th of the month, days “on which work is forbidden,” cannot be correct; it is clear from the regulations governing these days quoted above that they are not “rest days” at all, and that this name was given to them only on the basis of the presumed connection with our Sabbath. Nor, for that matter, is “work forbidden” on these days in the way that it is prohibited on the Sabbath; it is merely stated that important works should not be done on them lest they do not prosper. In truth, the Jewish people also observe days of a similar type and with comparable regulations, and in several respects the resemblance is quite *startling*, but they are not Sabbath days; they are the first nine days of the month of Ab, whose character, of course, is polarically different from that of the Sabbath.

An acceptable solution to the problem must be sought in a different direction. Undoubtedly, the Israelite Sabbath and what we find among the Babylonians and Assyrians have common elements. The name *šabattu* or *šapattu* (be its etymology, on which opinion is divided, what it may), the expression synonymous with it, *ūm nū libbi*, which brings to mind the concept of “Sabbath *rest*” (most scholars have overlooked this point), the special days that occur every month once in seven days—all this is thought-provoking. On the other hand, there are many differences, and they are far more important than the resemblances; the former concern the inner content, whereas the points of correspondence are related to the external aspect. These divergences indicate that the solution to the problem is not to suppose that the children of Israel borrowed the idea of the Sabbath from the peoples of Mesopotamia, but, on the contrary, that the Israelite Sabbath was instituted in *opposition* to the Mesopotamian system. . . . The Torah, it seems to me, purports to say this: Israel’s Sabbath day shall not be as the Sabbath of the heathen nations; it shall not be the day of the full moon, or any other day connected with the phases of the moon and linked, in consequence, with the worship of the moon, but it shall be the *seventh day* (this enables us to understand why this particular name, *the seventh day*, is emphasized here), the seventh in *perpetual* order, independent and free from any association with the signs of the heavens and any astrological concept. It shall not be a day appointed for the worship of the hosts of the heavens, but one sanctified to Him who created the heavenly hosts and the universe as a whole (cf. *but the seventh day is a sabbath to the Lord your God* in the Decalogue), as a memorial to the work of creation; not a day of self-affliction and misfortune, but one of *blessing* (*So God BLESSED the seventh day*; cf. also, in the Ten Commandments, Exod. 20:11: *therefore the Lord BLESSED the sabbath day and hallowed it*); not a day intended to *propitiate the angry godhead*, but one on which the *Divine work was not done*, thus a day that is worthy of serving as an example to humanity upon whom devolves the duty of imitating the ways of God, and that, consequently, is fitted to become a day of *rest for mankind*, who are weary and weighed down by the yoke of hard toil, and also for the brute creatures (cf. Deut. 5:14: *that your manservant and your maidservant may REST as well as you*; Exod. 23:12: *that your ox and your ass HAVE REST, and the son of your handmaid, and the alien, MAY BE REFRESHED*); hence a day that will serve as a memorial to the liberation of the children of Israel from the house of bondage (Deut. 5:15).¹⁰

Concerning the uniqueness of the seventh day, Brian Murphy states:

The uniqueness of the seventh day in the creation narrative is made evident by a number of stylistic observations. These include the facts that: (1) It does not begin with the typical introductory formula (“Then God said”) found in each of the other creation days. (2) It does not close with the typical “evening and morning” concluding formula. (3) It has no true corresponding day in the narrative formula (e.g., days 1 and 4, 2 and 5, 3 and 6). The forming and filling work has been completed. The seventh day stands out as distinct from the creation events. (4) Day 7 stands alone as the only day in which there is no creative activity whatsoever, nor a divine evaluation of the state of creation. This would seem to indicate that the work was completed and now continues perpetually in a state of completion, with no need for anything further to be done to God’s perfect creation. (5) The phrase “the seventh day” (with the definite article) is repeated three times in this passage. This contrasts directly with the way that in each of the preceding days the enumeration (“a second day,” “a third day,” etc.) was merely a statement of conclusion for

¹⁰ U. Cassuto, *A Commentary on the Book of Genesis: Part I, From Adam to Noah (Genesis I–VI 8)*, trans. Israel Abrahams (Jerusalem: The Magnes Press, The Hebrew University, 1998), 65–69.

each individual day's events. (6) The day itself is blessed instead of particular inhabitants. Finally, (7) the day is specifically said to be "sanctified" or set apart as special by God. All of these unique elements within the narrative indicate that the seventh day is indeed a special and climactic day within the creation week.¹¹

Victor Hamilton provides further insight concerning the completion of the creation account on the seventh day:

Indeed, it is correct to say that the Creation account moves to its conclusion on the seventh day, not the sixth day. It is not an appendage. All the preceding days God called either "beautiful" or "very beautiful." This day alone he sanctified. Nothing in the creation context that is connected with space is called *holy*.¹¹ As is well known, the Hebrew verb *qādaš* means "to set apart." By virtue of being sanctified, one day of rest is set apart from six days of activity. It is divine designation alone that marks the seventh day as holy. Humanity does not confer sanctity on this day by abstention from work. In the words of Westermann, "The sanctification of the Sabbath institutes an order for humankind according to which time is divided into time and holy time. . . . By sanctifying the seventh day God instituted a polarity between the everyday and the solemn, between days of work and days of rest, which was to be determinative for human existence."¹²

Concerning the climactic character of the seventh day, Kenneth Mathews notes:

The climactic seventh day is remarkably different from the foregoing six days of creation. First, there is no introductory formula ("then God said") because his creative word is not required. Second, this day does not have the usual closing refrain "evening" and "morning" to indicate its termination. Theologically the absence of the refrain implies that creation was intended to enjoy a perpetual rest provided by God, although that rest was disrupted by human sin. Third, the seventh day is the only day of the week blessed and consecrated by God. Fourth, unlike the creation days, the number of the "seventh" day is repeated three times (twice more by the pronoun "it"). Fifth, the seventh day stands outside the paired days of creation, having no corresponding day in the foregoing creation week. The literary pattern of six plus one (6 + 1) is designed to highlight the seventh and culminating member in the seven-item arrangement.²¹⁹¹³

Claus Westermann notes concerning the blessing of the seventh day:

But what is the meaning of the other sentence, that God blessed the seventh day? There can be no doubt that this third blessing in the course of the creation event is of the same kind as the blessing given to living creatures and to humans, 1:22, 28, where it meant the power of fertility. The meaning is essentially the same here though much more abstract. God's blessing bestows on this special, holy, solemn day a power which makes it fruitful for human existence. The blessing gives the day, which is a day of rest, the power to stimulate, animate, enrich and give fullness to life. It is not the day in itself that is blessed, but rather the day in its significance for the community. In the context of creation it is for the world and humankind. The power of the blessing, i.e., the

¹¹ Pg. 299, *Genesis 1:1-2:3: A Textual and Exegetical Examination as an Objective Foundation for Apologetical and Theological Studies*, Bryan Murphy. Ph. D. Diss, Master's Seminary, 2008.

¹¹ [Footnotes, such as this one, reproduced from within quotations from other sources retain their original numbering and are not indented.] A. J. Heschel, *The Sabbath*, rev. ed. (Cleveland/New York: World, 1952), pp. 9–10.

¹² Westermann, *Genesis*, 1:171.

¹² Victor P. Hamilton, *The Book of Genesis, Chapters 1–17*, The New International Commentary on the Old Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1990), 143.

²¹⁹ See e.g., Cassuto, *Genesis*, 12–13; Kline, "Because It Had Not Rained," 146–57; E. J. Young, *Studies in Genesis One* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1964), 58; S. E. Lowenstamm, "The Seven Day Unit in Ugaritic Epic Literature," *IEJ* 15 (1965): 122–33; and F. R. McCurley, Jr., "'And After Six Days' (Mark 9:2): A Semitic Literary Device," *JBL* 93 (1974): 67–81.

¹³ Kenneth A. Mathews, *Genesis 1-11:26*, vol. 1A, The New American Commentary (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1996), 176.

power of enterprise and success, has its point of departure here.¹⁴

Nahum Sarna also notes concerning the blessing of the seventh day:

God blessed . . . declared it holy Unlike the blessings of verses 22 and 28, which are verbal, specific, material, and relate to living creatures, this blessing is undefined and pertains to time itself. The day becomes imbued with an extraordinary vital power that communicates itself in a beneficial way. That is why the routine day-formula is here omitted. God, through His creativity, has already established His sovereignty over space; the idea here is that He is sovereign over time as well. Through his weekly suspension of normal human activity, man imitates the divine pattern and reactualizes the original sacred time of God, thereby recovering the sacred dimension of existence. Paradoxically, he also thereby rediscovers his own very human dimension, his earthliness, for the Sabbath delimits man's autonomy, suspends for a while his creative freedom, and declares that on that one day each week nature is inviolable.¹⁵

Concerning the sanctification of the seventh day, Westermann notes:

[T]he verb "to sanctify" expresses a cultic idea and cannot be referred to a day destined for God himself, but must in some way or other signify something related to people. God is holy; a holy period of any sort can only be concerned with the person who celebrates it . . . [cf.] Joel 1:14 . . . Gen 2:3 [is] a sort of preparation of the Sabbath, and so a preparation of something holy. G. von Rad writes: "Even more, that God has 'blessed,' 'sanctified' . . . this rest, means that P [While von Rad and Westermann accept the myth that J, E, D, and P documents were combined to form the Pentateuch, the truth is that Moses wrote it.] does not consider it as something for God alone but as a concern of the world[.] . . . The way is being prepared, therefore, for an exalted and saving good. Nothing of that is apparent to the people . . . but once a community and a tabernacle are present, they will be bound to observe this rest of God (Ex 31:12ff.). . . . Thus at creation God prepared what will benefit his people in this life." (*Genesis*, 1972², p. 62). . . . When P says that God blesses and sanctifies the seventh day, then first that must have something to do with humankind; only then can 2:3 really be the goal of the creation account of P. . . .

[W]hen . . . the works of creation [were] arranged . . . in a seven-day pattern [the author] was not concerned merely with a succession of seven days, but with a whole, with a basic unit of time, which becomes a whole in the climax of the seventh day. It is only then, in the seven-day week as a whole and with the seventh day as the goal, that the importance of the seventh day is properly appreciated. This means that when he arranged the works of creation in the seven-day pattern, P intended to structure a unit of time which consists of two parts: it would not be a whole without the seventh day, which is something different from the six days. Creation is set out on a time scheme comprising days of work and of rest. This is stated explicitly in 2:3. The root שׁדַּשׁ [*qdash*, "to sanctify, hallow"] has the meaning of separation. When God sanctifies the seventh day (i.e., declares it holy), he sets it aside from the works of the six days as something special. The sanctification of the seventh day determines the time which begins with creation as structured time, and within which one day is not just the same as another. The days each have their goal in a particular day which is different from the rest—a day which is holy and apart. Days of work are not the only days that God has created. The time which God created is structured; days of work have their goal in a day of rest. . . . The sanctification of the Sabbath institutes an order . . . according to which time is divided into time and holy time, time for work and time for rest. The work of creation began with three acts of separation. The first was the separation of light and darkness. Its purpose was to determine what time was for humans; the existence of everything created is determined by the polarity of day and night. By sanctifying the seventh day God instituted a polarity between the everyday and the solemn, between days of work and days of rest, which was to be determinative for human existence. . . . People "sanctify" the Sabbath by

¹⁴ Claus Westermann, *A Continental Commentary: Genesis 1–11* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1994), 172.

¹⁵ Nahum M. Sarna, *Genesis*, The JPS Torah Commentary (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1989), 15.

observing it; they desecrate it by doing forbidden work on that day.¹⁶

Concerning God’s cessation of “work” on the seventh day, Leupold notes: “The ‘work’ that He desisted from is described by the term *mela'khah*, meaning a special task He had set for Himself and afterward ‘used regularly of the work or business forbidden on the Sabbath’¹⁷ Exod. 29:9, 10; 35:2; Jer. 17:22, 24 *et al.*”¹⁸ A valid application of God’s creation of the world in seven days is made by Cassuto:

[S]even days are considered a *period* [unit of time]; consequently, the seventh day, following on the six days of creation, completed the first period, and in every subsequent period the first day calls to mind the creation of the light, the second the creation of the heavens, and so forth, and the seventh reminds us of the day on which God did no work at all.¹⁹

Comparing Genesis 2:1-3 with Exodus 20:8-11, Mathews notes:

The Decalogue first directly ties Sabbath observance with the creation rest (Exod 20:8–11; cf. 31:17), furnishing the theological rationale for the Hebrew practice. Much of the decalogue terminology echoes Gen 2:1–3. “Sabbath” in the Fourth Commandment occurs as a synonym for “seventh”; in the direct allusion to Gen 2:3, “Sabbath” is substituted for “seventh”: “Therefore the LORD blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy” (Exod 20:11b). The seventh day of creation as a consequence is viewed as God’s “sabbath”; thus for the Hebrews Sabbath takes on cosmic meaning. By the commemoration of “Sabbath,” God and his creatures share in the celebration of the good creation, and God’s people are enjoined to enter into the rhythm of work and joyful rest. Embracing God’s sabbath rest meant experiencing the sense of completeness and well being God had accomplished at creation in behalf of all human life.²⁰

Mathews likewise notes the allusions to the creation account and the Sabbath in the building of the Tabernacle:

Repetition of creation-sabbath language is found in the construction of the tabernacle: Moses “saw” all the work the people “had done,” and he “blessed” them.²²¹ Linkage between creation-

¹⁶ Claus Westermann, *A Continental Commentary: Genesis 1–11* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1994), 170–172.

¹⁷ Driver quoted by Skinner.

¹⁸ H. C. Leupold, *Exposition of Genesis* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1942), 102.

¹⁹ U. Cassuto, *A Commentary on the Book of Genesis: Part I, From Adam to Noah (Genesis I–VI 8)*, trans. Israel Abrahams (Jerusalem: The Magnes Press, The Hebrew University, 1998), 64.

²⁰ K. A. Mathews, *Genesis 1-11:26*, vol. 1A, *The New American Commentary* (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1996), 179–180.

²²¹ For parallel language see Exod 39:43a (Gen 1:31); 39:32a (2:1); 40:33 (2:2); and 39:43b (2:3a). The same conclusion is echoed at the end of the establishment of the sanctuary in Canaan and the division of the land in Josh 19:51 (suggested by J. Blenkinsopp, “The Structure of P,” *CBQ* 38 [1976]: 275–76).

(A note for this study—not by Mathews.) For ease of comparison, I have placed the texts with linguistic parallelism below:

וַיִּרְא מֹשֶׁה אֶת-כָּל-הַמְּלָאכָה וְהַנְּהַל עָשׂוּ אֱלֹהִים כַּאֲשֶׁר צִוָּה יְהוָה בְּן עֹשֵׂי וַיִּבְרָךְ אֹתָם מֹשֶׁה: Ex. 39:43

וַיִּרְא אֱלֹהִים אֶת-כָּל-אֲשֶׁר עָשָׂה וְהַנְּהַל טוֹב מְאֹד וַיְהִי-עֶרֶב וַיְהִי-בֹקֶר יוֹם הַשְּׁשִׁי: Gen. 1:31

וַתִּכְּל כָּל-עֲבֹדֹת מִשְׁכַּן אֱהִל מוֹעֵד וַיַּעֲשׂוּ בְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל כְּכֹל אֲשֶׁר צִוָּה יְהוָה אֶת-מֹשֶׁה בְּן עֹשֵׂי: Ex. 39:32

וַיִּכְּלוּ הַשָּׁמַיִם וְהָאָרֶץ וְכָל-צְבָאָם: Gen. 2:1

וַיָּקָם אֶת-הַחֹצֵר סָבִיב לְמִשְׁכַּן וְלְמִזְבֵּחַ וַיִּתֵּן אֶת-מִסְדָּ שְׁעַר הַחֹצֵר וַיִּכְּל מֹשֶׁה אֶת-הַמְּלָאכָה: Ex. 40:33

וַיִּכְּל אֱלֹהִים בַּיּוֹם הַשְּׁבִיעִי מְלָאכָתוֹ אֲשֶׁר עָשָׂה וַיִּשְׁבֹּת בַּיּוֹם הַשְּׁבִיעִי מִכָּל-מְלָאכָתוֹ אֲשֶׁר עָשָׂה: Gen. 2:2

sabbath and Moses' tabernacle binds God's first work at creation with his newly directed work among Israel. The rare wording *rúah ʿlōhīm* of 1:2 appears again in Exod 31:3, where Bezalel receives the "Spirit" for the purpose of constructing the tabernacle.²²² This tie between cosmic Creator and Israel's Redeemer who formed them at Sinai explains the special importance given to Sabbath observance by the Hebrew community (Exod 20:8–11; 31:14; 35:2). After the construction of the wilderness tabernacle, the Sabbath was deemed the sign of the covenant between God and the nation (31:13, 17). According to the tabernacle narrative (Exod 25–40), Israel's Sabbath and creation's rest meet in the holy place: the Creator who sanctified the seventh day because of "rest" (2:2–3) is the covenant Lord, who sanctifies his people and tabernacles among them (e.g., Exod 31:12–17).²²³ As with man, made in the *imago Dei*, the earthly tabernacle also followed a "pattern" revealed by God to Moses at Sinai (Exod 25:9, 40; cf. Heb 8:5). Worship then is related to the created order itself, which existed before the formation of Israel and its sanctuary at Sinai.²²⁴ Worship is for all humanity—all those created in the "image of God." The observance of Israel's sacred custom of weekly and annual sabbaths was an expression of and attestation to God's presence as their Creator-Covenant Lord.

As with "seventh day," the same phrase "his work" (in the Hebrew) occurs three times in vv. 2–3 to emphasize that creation was God's work alone. Creation's "work" (*mēlā kā*) has its later human parallel in the construction of the tabernacle by skilled artisans who were inspired by the Lord (e.g., Exod 31:5; 35:29; 36:1–2). "Work" also has the meaning of common, human labor (e.g., Gen 39:11; 1 Chr 27:26). "When the name 'work' is given to God's six days' creation, human work is ennobled to the highest conceivable degree, as being the copy of his model."²²⁵ The same repetition appears for the phrase "he had done,"²²⁶ and the critical term "rested" (*šābat*) occurs twice in vv. 2–3. The repetition underscores that the end of his work was related to the completion of creation, not due to fatigue. There was simply nothing left to do; the created order was whole, requiring only the sustaining grace of God's superintendence. The verb "rested" means "the cessation of creative activity"; it has this same sense in its only other occurrence in Genesis, where God promises the postdiluvian world that the times and seasons "will never cease" (8:22).²¹

Finally, concerning subsequent canonical development of the creation's seventh day and the Sabbath rest, Mathews notes:

The practice of a sacred "seventh" was extended beyond the cycle of the week to sacred years, festivals, and days.²³² The Fourth Commandment therefore united the "word" of creation and the regulating "word" of the religious order for the newly created Israel. Israel's Sabbath, like God's sabbath rest, was sanctified and set apart as a special day of worship and celebration. The seventh

וַיֵּרָא מִנְּשֵׁה אֶת-כָּל-הַמְּלָאכָה וְהִנֵּה עָשׂוּ אֹתָהּ כַּאֲשֶׁר צִוָּהּ בְּן עֶשְׂרִי וּבְרָדָד אֹתָם מִנְּשֵׁה : Ex. 39:43
וּבְרָדָד אֱלֹהִים אֶת-יוֹם הַשְּׁבִיעִי וַיְקַדְּשׁ אֹתוֹ כִּי בּוֹ שָׁבַת מִכָּל-מְלָאכָתוֹ אֲשֶׁר-בְּרָא אֱלֹהִים לַעֲשׂוֹת : Gen. 2:3

²²² See, e.g., M. Fishbane, *Text and Texture: Close Readings of Selected Biblical Texts* (New York: Schocken Books, 1979), 12.

²²³ See H. N. Wallace, "Genesis 2:1–3—Creation and Sabbath," *Pacifica* 1 (1988): 235–50.

²²⁴ Noted by J. Blenkinsopp, *The Pentateuch: An Introduction to the First Five Books of the Bible* (New York: Doubleday, 1992), 218.

²²⁵ Delitzsch, *A New Commentary on Genesis*, 107.

²²⁶ The NIV omits the second occasion of the clause, "which he had done," to avoid redundancy in English. The finale in 2:3b, "from all the work of creating that he had done," differs somewhat from the previous two by the verb "created" (בְּרָא) instead of "done" (עָשָׂה), but the infinitive "by doing, making" (לַעֲשׂוֹת) follows.

²¹ K. A. Mathews, *Genesis 1-11:26*, vol. 1A, The New American Commentary (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1996), 177-178.

²³² These included the sabbath year (Lev 25:1–4) and the "sacred assemblies" (Lev 23:1) known as "a sabbath of rest": Sabbath (Lev 23:3), Feast of Trumpets (Lev 23:24), and the Day of Atonement (Lev 16:31; 23:32). Also the Feast of Weeks (Pentecost) was celebrated seven weeks after the Feast of Unleavened Bread (Lev 23:15–22), and the year of Jubilee occurred at the end of seven cycles of sabbath years (Lev 25).

day then pointed the Hebrew reader to a day of rejoicing over the created work of God. “It is a day on which we are called upon to share what is eternal in time, to turn from the results of creation to the mystery of creation; from the world of creation to the creation of the world.”²³³

Also the Sabbath day was tied by Moses to the redemptive purposes of God for Israel. . . . Deuteronomy’s decalogue presents this second reading of sabbath and relates its observance to the historic deliverance of Israel from Egyptian servitude (Deut 5:15). Sabbath released human and beast from the labors of the week, and likewise the Redeemer released Israel from its slavery. Together the two versions of the Fourth Commandment capture the twofold meaning of the seventh day for Israel: a celebration of God as Creator and Redeemer. The redeeming “work” of God continues as expressed through Israel’s history and the particular ministry of Jesus Christ (e.g., Ps 111; John 5:17; 9:4; 17:4).

The idea of “rest” was later related to the land of promise that lay before Israel. Rest in Canaan was Israel’s destiny (Exod 33:14), but the people failed to enter their rest due to disobedience (Num 14:28–30). The second generation awaited its possession (Deut 3:20; 12:10; 25:19) and eventually obtained it with blessing (Josh 1:13–15). The land experienced its sabbaths and jubilees (Lev 25:4, 11) as a symbolic recognition of the land as God’s provision of rest for Israel. It was God who owned the land of rest, and Israel as aliens entered into that land only at the invitation of God and by the price of redemption (Lev 25:23–24).

Also the theological significance of creation’s “seventh day” is eschatological. The seventh day has no closing refrain “evening” and “morning”; the seventh day has no end and therefore is viewed as eternal. Whereas the human workweek recurs after each Sabbath, the sabbath rest of God is eternal since creation’s work is finished. Sabbath is taken up by the New Testament and interpreted in the context of the “new Moses.” The theology of this perpetual rest was expounded by the writer to the Hebrews, who spoke of a sabbath rest that yet awaits those who are in Christ Jesus (4:3–11). He bound together the two motifs of Canaan’s land of rest (3:7–19), drawing on Ps 95:7b–11, and of creation’s sabbath rest, quoting Gen 2:2 (4:3–11). Just as Moses’ generation had failed to possess their promised rest, the writer forewarned his readers not to commit the same failure through disbelief in Christ.

For the apostle Paul, Sabbath was a foreshadowing of the eternal realities of the Lord and the church (Col 2:16–17). The old signs of circumcision, dietary laws, and sabbath observance were set aside as “boundary markers for the people of the covenant”²³⁴ (cf. Gal 4:10). Christians are circumcised in heart (Rom 2:29), undefiled by foods (John 15:3), and free to treat every day as sacred (Rom 14:5, 12; 1 Tim 4:3–5). Sabbath has given way to the realities of the “Lord’s day”—the resurrection of Jesus Christ (Acts 2:1; 1 Cor 16:1–2). The church set aside the first day of the week as a special day for worship and proclamation.²³⁵ By the first day the Christian community proclaims the new creation, the era of messianic redemption.²²

The exegetical analysis represented in the quotations above supplies valuable information about the content of Genesis 2:1-3 and serves as background for the study that follows.

III. The Climactic Character of Genesis 2:1-3

The blessing and sanctification of the seventh day on account of the rest of God is the climactic event of Genesis 1:1-2:3. The sixth day is also climactic—for man is created as

²³³ A. Heschel, *The Earth Is the Lord’s and the Sabbath* (New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1966), 10.

²³⁴ F. Thielman, *Paul and the Law: A Contextual Approach* (Downers Grove: IVP, 1993), 213.

²³⁵ See D. A. Carson, ed., *From Sabbath to Lord’s Day: A Biblical, Historical, and Theological Investigation* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1982).

²² K. A. Mathews, *Genesis 1-11:26*, vol. 1A, *The New American Commentary* (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1996), 180–181.

the ruler over the good creation of God—but the account is incomplete without the seventh day, for God creates man and the earth under his dominion so that man can enjoy His rest. The articularity of “the sixth” and “the seventh” days,²³ in contrast to the nonarticularity of the other five days, emphasizes this dual climax, with the seventh day being the greater and final culminating point. The entire pericope is building towards the statement in 2:3. Indeed, a major reason for the record of God’s creating the world in seven days appearing in the Biblical text at all was to teach Israel about His blessing and sanctifying the seventh day because of His resting on that day. The climax on the seventh day cannot be disassociated from the events of the sixth day, for the sanctification of the seventh day, while it makes God the focus of the creation account—it is *His* rest, and His blessing and sanctifying of the seventh day—involves man, but 2:1-3 and specifically 2:3 is the point towards which the entire narrative moves.²⁴ While Genesis 2:1-3 demonstrates the broader truth that God is sovereign over time in general and man’s time in particular, the main point lies beyond this fact. The emphasis on the sixth and the seventh day demonstrates that God did not enter into His rest until He created man, and He made man to participate in His rest. After the Fall, man lost that rest, and needs to enter into it through faith in the Messiah. Hence the double purpose of the Sabbath for Israel, pointing back both to the creative rest and to redemption from Egypt, for both the creative rest and the redemptive rest from Egypt pointed forward to the eschatological rest of the people of God. Israel would have pondered such truths when observing her Sabbath.²⁵ Nahum Sarna notes:

The biblical institution of the weekly Sabbath is unparalleled in the ancient world. In fact, the concept of a seven-day week is unique to Israel, as is also, so far, the seven-day cosmogonic tradition. Both these phenomena are extraordinary in light of the widespread use of a seven-day

²³ הַשְּׁשִׁי, Genesis 1:31; הַשְּׁבִיעִי, Genesis 2:2-3.

²⁴ “[T]he fourth commandment evidently intends the inauguration of the Sabbath to be seen as the climax of the creation process as it applied to the human beings who had been formed” (Moises Silva, ed., *International Dictionary of New Testament Theology and Exegesis* [Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2014], vol. 4, 221).

²⁵ The centrality of the Sabbath for the weekly cycle in Israel is seen in the use of *sabbaton* (σάββατον) in the New Testament with the significance *week*. That is, in a text such as Matthew 28:1 “the first *day* of the week” is μίαν σαββάτων, “the first [day] of/after the Sabbath” (the plural “τὰ σάββατα [can refer to] a single Sabbath day,” BDAG). Consider also Mark 16:2, 9; Luke 18:12; 24:1; John 20:1, 19; Acts 20:7; 1 Cor 16:2. This Jewish usage of linguistically dating the week from the Sabbath “is not attested in Greek prior to the NT, but it reflects usage in both rabbinic Hebrew (e.g., *m. Ned.* 8:1) and Aramaic (e.g., הַר בַּשְּׁבִיעִי, “the first day of the week,” *Gen. Rab.* 11.8 on Gen 2:3)” (Moises Silva, ed., *International Dictionary of New Testament Theology and Exegesis* [Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2014], vol. 4, 223). A rabbinic saying affirms: “It (the Sabbath day) has no partner: there is the first of the Sabbath [i.e. week], the second of the Sabbath; the third, the fourth, the fifth, the eve of the Sabbath; but the Sabbath itself remains unpaired” (Bereshith Rabba, xi 8; cited in U. Cassuto, *A Commentary on the Book of Genesis: Part I, From Adam to Noah (Genesis I–VI 8)*, trans. Israel Abrahams [Jerusalem: The Magnes Press, The Hebrew University, 1998], 13).

unit of time, both as a literary convention and as an aspect of cultic observance in the ancient Near East. The wonderment is compounded by additional data. The other major units of time—day, month, and year—are uniformly based on the phases of the moon and the movement of the sun, and the calendars of the ancient world are rooted in the seasonal manifestations of nature. Remarkably, the Israelite week has no such linkage and is entirely independent of the movement of celestial bodies. The Sabbath thus underlines the fundamental idea of Israelite monotheism: that God is wholly outside of nature.²⁶

It is important to remember that Genesis, like the rest of the Pentateuch, was addressed to Israel. While Genesis and the other books of Moses can teach Gentiles a great deal, the chosen nation was the book's original audience. It explains Israel's origin, past history, and future redemption through the Jewish Messiah. For example, Genesis records the origin of Israel's twelve tribes through Jacob, the origin of Israel's enemies, the Moabites and Ammonites (Genesis 19:37-38), the giving of Israel's land to the nation through Abraham, and so on. Consequently, it is reasonable to see Genesis 1:1-2:3 not only as an account of the origin of the world, but also as the account of the origin of Israel's Sabbath, as the account places stress on the seventh day and 2:3 is the concluding climax of the account. The clear allusions in Exodus 20:8-11 to Genesis 2:1-3 are consequently unsurprising. Compare:

וַיְכַל הַשָּׁמַיִם וְהָאָרֶץ וְכָל צְבָאָם :
וַיְכַל אֱלֹהִים בַּיּוֹם הַשְּׁבִיעִי מְלַאכְתּוֹ אֲשֶׁר עָשָׂה וַיִּשְׁבֹּת בַּיּוֹם הַשְּׁבִיעִי מִכָּל מְלַאכְתּוֹ אֲשֶׁר עָשָׂה :
וַיְבָרֶךְ אֱלֹהִים אֶת-יּוֹם הַשְּׁבִיעִי וַיְקַדְּשֵׁהוּ כִּי בּו שָׁבַת מִכָּל מְלַאכְתּוֹ אֲשֶׁר-בְּרָא אֱלֹהִים לַעֲשׂוֹת :

זָכוֹר אֶת-יּוֹם הַשַּׁבָּת לְקַדְּשׁוֹ
שֵׁשֶׁת יָמִים תַּעֲבֹד וְעָשִׂיתָ כָּל-מְלַאכְתְּךָ
וַיּוֹם הַשְּׁבִיעִי שַׁבָּת | לַיהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ לֹא-תַעֲשֶׂה כָל-מְלַאכָה אַתָּה | וּבְנֶתְךָ וּבִתְךָ עַבְדְּךָ וַאֲמִתְךָ וּבַהֲמִלְךָ וְגֵרְךָ אֲשֶׁר בְּשַׁעְרֶיךָ
כִּי שֵׁשֶׁת-יָמִים עָשָׂה יְהוָה אֶת-הַשָּׁמַיִם וְאֶת-הָאָרֶץ וְאֶת-הַיָּם וְאֶת-כָּל-אֲשֶׁר-בָּם וַיִּנַּח בַּיּוֹם הַשְּׁבִיעִי
עַל-כֵּן בִּרְךָ יְהוָה אֶת-יּוֹם הַשַּׁבָּת וַיְקַדְּשֵׁהוּ :

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 he rested on the seventh day from all his work which he had made.
And God blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it: because that in it he had rested from all his work which God created and made.

Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy.
Six days shalt thou labour, and do all thy work:
But the seventh day is the sabbath of the LORD thy God: in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy manservant, nor thy maidservant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates:
For in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day:
wherefore the LORD blessed the sabbath day, and hallowed it.

²⁶ Nahum M. Sarna, *Genesis*, The JPS Torah Commentary (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1989), 14–15.

Linguistic connections are everywhere in Genesis 2:1-3 and Exodus 20:8-11, although it should be noted that the word *Sabbath* (שַׁבָּת) does not appear in Genesis 2.²⁷ Exodus 20:11 does identify “the seventh day” (יְוֹם הַשְּׁבִיעִי) with “the Sabbath day” (יְוֹם הַשַּׁבָּת), and the “it” that Exodus 20 specifies was hallowed immediately after creation was “the Sabbath day” (יְוֹם הַשַּׁבָּת) in the phrase : יְוֹם הַשַּׁבָּת וַיְקַדְּשֵׁהוּ. Nonetheless, only the verb *shavath* (שָׁבַת) is found in Genesis, not the noun *shabbath* (שַׁבָּת), and it simply means “cease” with no reference to the Sabbath in its only other appearance in Genesis (8:22). As will be demonstrated below, the Sabbath was sanctified and hallowed on the eighth day—as one discovers only in Exodus, not in Genesis itself—but Genesis 2 only states that the “seventh” day was blessed and hallowed, because the day was blessed and hallowed from creation, but it was not yet the Sabbath. It was not the Sabbath until the time specified in Exodus 16. The situation is comparable to that in which the heavenly bodies were made the fourth day on account of the sacred festivals of Israel, the *mo’adim* (מוֹעֲדִים, Genesis 1:14, KJV “seasons”), although the nation did not celebrate her appointed sacred seasons until they were revealed through Moses at Sinai thousands of years after the events of Genesis 1:1-2:3. Thus, Exodus 20:8-11 does not just reference and exactly parallel Genesis 2:1-3, but it further develops the ideas of the earlier passage. Consider also that the only instance of *qadash* (קָדַשׁ), “to set apart, consecrate, hallow,” the verb for *holiness*, in the entire book of Genesis is in 2:3.²⁸ The verb does not show up again until it appears in Exodus in connection with God’s sanctifying to Himself the firstborn in conjunction with His redeeming Israel through the Passover lamb (Exodus 13:2), and then in connection with the sanctification of the people and of mount Sinai itself in conjunction with the giving of the Law to the redeemed nation (Exodus 19:10, 14, 22-23), and then in the fourth commandment, alluding back to Genesis 2:3 (Exodus

²⁷ Thus, the color-coding above is not exact. Genesis 2:1-3 has the word for “seventh” in red, while in Exodus 20:8-11 both “seventh” and “Sabbath” are in red. Similarly, in Genesis 2:1-3 the verbal form for “cease” or “rest” is in blue, while in Exodus 20:8-11 the noun “Sabbath” is in blue as well as red.

²⁸ The complete list of texts with the verb קָדַשׁ is: Gen 2:3; Ex 13:2; 19:10, 14, 22–23; 20:8, 11; 28:3, 38, 41; 29:1, 21, 27, 33, 36–37, 43–44; 30:29–30; 31:13; 40:9–11, 13; Lev 6:11, 20; 8:10–12, 15, 30; 10:3; 11:44; 16:19; 20:7–8; 21:8, 15, 23; 22:2–3, 9, 16, 32; 25:10; 27:14–19, 22, 26; Num 3:13; 6:11; 7:1; 8:17; 11:18; 17:2–3; 20:12–13; 27:14; Deut 5:12; 15:19; 22:9; 32:51; Josh 3:5; 7:13; 20:7; Judg 17:3; 1 Sam 7:1; 16:5; 21:6; 2 Sam 8:11; 11:4; 1 Kings 8:64; 9:3, 7; 2 Kings 10:20; 12:19; Is 5:16; 8:13; 13:3; 29:23; 30:29; 65:5; 66:17; Jer 1:5; 6:4; 12:3; 17:22, 24, 27; 22:7; 51:27–28; Ezek 20:12, 20, 41; 28:22, 25; 36:23; 37:28; 38:16, 23; 39:27; 44:19, 24; 46:20; 48:11; Joel 1:14; 2:15–16; 4:9; Mic 3:5; Zeph 1:7; Hag 2:12; Job 1:5; Ezra 3:5; Neh 3:1; 12:47; 13:22; 1 Chr 15:12, 14; 18:11; 23:13; 26:26–28; 2 Chr 2:3; 5:11; 7:7, 16, 20; 26:18; 29:5, 15, 17, 19, 34; 30:3, 8, 15, 17, 24; 31:6, 18; 35:6; 36:14.

The noun “holy” (קָדוֹשׁ) appears for the first time in the Pentateuch in Exodus 3:5; within Genesis the קָדַשׁ root only appears, besides the use in Gen 2:3, in Gen 14:7; 16:14; 20:1; 38:21–22 for the city Kadesh and for cult prostitutes “set apart” or “sanctified” to a false god.

20:8, 11; note 31:13-17). Following Exodus 20 the verb occurs frequently in the Pentateuch. Similarly, after appearing in Genesis 2:2-3 and 8:22, *shavath* (שָׁבַת), to “cease” or “rest,” is picked up in Exodus 5:5, where Israel in bondage to Pharaoh did not enjoy rest, and then in Exodus 12:15 in conjunction with the Passover, and finally in Exodus 16:30; 23:12; 31:17; 34:21, and subsequent texts in the Pentateuch of Israel’s Sabbath rest after her redemption from Egypt through the events initiated in the Passover. Furthermore, the verbs *to sanctify* and *to bless*, *qadash* (קָדַשׁ) and *barak* (בָּרַךְ) appear together only in Genesis 2:3 and Exodus 20:11 in the Pentateuch.

God’s sanctifying and blessing the day in Genesis 2:1-3 would of necessity have had respect to man, not to Himself alone with no regard for the human race. Israel would consequently have recognized that by keeping her Sabbath she was reflecting the image of God, for He had rested on the seventh day and they were following His pattern. His chosen, redeemed, and sanctified people were following the pattern of the holy God by themselves regarding as sacred the holy day He had set apart, and by so acting and being like Jehovah were themselves holy as His people:

Speak thou also unto the children of Israel, saying, Verily my sabbaths ye shall keep: for it *is* a sign between me and you throughout your generations; that *ye* may know that I *am* the LORD that doth sanctify [*meqaddishkem*, מְקַדְּשֶׁכֶּם, Piel part. *qds*, קָדַשׁ] you. Ye shall keep the sabbath therefore; for it *is* holy [*qodesh*, קֹדֶשׁ, noun] unto you: every one that defileth it shall surely be put to death: for whosoever doeth *any* work therein, that soul shall be cut off from among his people. Six days may work be done; but in the seventh *is* the sabbath of rest, holy to the LORD: [*shabbath shabbathon*, *qodesh layhowah*, קֹדֶשׁ לַיהוָה, שַׁבְּתוֹן שַׁבְּתוֹן] whosoever doeth *any* work in the sabbath day, he shall surely be put to death. (Exodus 31:13-15)

What is more, *holiness* in the Old Testament (and in the New) is not simply acting virtuously or doing right things. It is directional—a consecration *to Jehovah*, a separation unto Him. It is connected with His elective and redemptive purposes for His people, making them like Himself so that they can receive His blessing, the greatest of which is His giving Himself to them. Israel would learn from Genesis 2:1-3 that it was important for her to keep the Sabbath. It not only reminded her that Jehovah, her God, was the Creator, but also of His redemption of the nation, the reason given in Deuteronomy 5:15, in the second declaration of the Ten Commandments, for her keeping the Sabbath: “And remember that thou wast a servant in the land of Egypt, and *that* the LORD thy God brought thee out thence through a mighty hand and by a stretched out arm: therefore the LORD thy God commanded thee to keep the sabbath day.” In conclusion, Genesis 2:1-3 climaxes the creation narrative, and the dual purpose given Israel for Sabbath-keeping in God’s creative rest and redemptive rest through salvation from bondage from Egypt pointed the nation to the eschatological rest prepared by Israel’s Creator and Redeemer for His people.

IV. Arguments in Favor of A Universally Binding Sabbath

Does Scripture teach that the Sabbath was binding on all men from the time of creation onwards, so that the entire human race was required to observe it and the godly did observe it in the ages before Jehovah brought Israel out of Egypt and gave her the Mosaic covenant at Sinai? Positive arguments for this position, in order from what is likely the weakest to what is likely the strongest, include:²⁹ 1.) Genesis hints at the observance of the Sabbath before Moses in the mention of seven-day weeks (Genesis 7:4; 8:10, 12). 2.) Exodus 20:8 states that the Sabbath is to be “remembered,” so it must have been instituted and practiced by men centuries or millennia earlier and was now simply to be recalled. It could not have been newly instituted.³⁰ 3.) Genesis 2:1-3 records a blessing and sanctification that pertained to man. Therefore, man was bound to observe the Sabbath from creation onwards. 4.) The Ten Commandments are not ceremonial or civil law, but universal moral law that is unchanging in all dispensations. The Decalogue includes the Sabbath commandment; therefore the Sabbath is a universal moral law that is unchanging for all time. These arguments will be examined in order. The first two arguments will be dealt with briefly, while the latter two will receive an extended examination.

V. The Arguments for a Universally Binding Sabbath Examined and Found Wanting

1.) The Argument from Seven-Day Weeks

The Scriptural testimony that men did not observe the Sabbath before the days of Moses is strong. Furthermore, the Biblical evidence against obligatory Saturday Sabbath observance in the church age is conclusive.

It is true that several references to periods of seven days appear in Genesis (7:4;

²⁹ The Seventh-Day Adventist cult also affirms the binding obligation of the seventh-day Sabbath on all men at all times based on the allegedly inspired and infallible writings of their woman preacher and prophetess, Ellen G. White. Since the canon of Scripture is properly the sole authority for the Christian’s faith and practice (2 Timothy 3:16) and Mrs. White was a false prophet, not a true one (see *Bible Truths for Seventh-Day Adventist Friends* at <http://faithsaves.net/seventh-day-adventism-and-saturday-sabbath-keeping/>), her writings ought to receive no consideration whatsoever in determining the truth on this subject.

³⁰ E. g.: “The use of ‘remember,’ in connection with the fourth commandment, implies that the weekly rest day was not a new institution. It was observed before Sinai was reached” (pg. 462, *Source Book for Bible Students*, Ellen White, in part quoting Trumbull [quotation marks removed]).

8:10, 12; 31:23; 50:10). Even certain worshippers of idols speak of a period of seven days (29:27-28; 31:30). However, it is not clear why references to seven days establish pre-Mosaic Sabbath-keeping while references in Genesis to forty days (7:4, 12, 17), one-hundred and fifty days, (7:24), the seventeenth day (8:4), the twenty-seventh day (8:14), the eighth day (17:12; 21:4), one day (33:13), the third day (22:4; 30:36; 31:22; 34:25; 40:12-13, 18-20; 42:17-18), and ten days (24:55), do not establish patriarchal festivals every seventeen, three, twenty-seven, or ten days. Indeed, references to periods of three days outnumber those to periods of seven days, but this fact establishes nothing in terms of patriarchal recognition of religious festivals every three days. Occasional references to periods of seven days, while they are certainly consistent with patriarchal Sabbath-keeping if it is established on another basis, are by no means sufficient evidence to prove it.

2.) The Argument from “Remember” in Exodus 20:8

Furthermore, the word “remember” in Exodus 20:8 by no means proves that men from creation onward were celebrating the Sabbath. First of all, the Decalogue was to be a key element of Israel’s rule of life for many centuries after the events of Sinai, so the command to “remember the Sabbath day” would be something from the past that would need to be recalled for many generations. Second, in anticipation of the events of Exodus 20, the Sabbath was instituted for Israel in Exodus 16, so the Sabbath was a festival that could be recalled as already commanded at the time the words of Exodus 20 were spoken at Sinai. Third, the verb *zakar*, (זָכַר), rendered “remember” in Exodus 20:8, can simply have the idea of and be translated as “make mention” (Jeremiah 20:9), to “call to mind”³¹ without any emphasis upon remembering something from the distant past. Indeed, the thing “remembered” does not have to be in the past at all—it can be something that has not already taken place but is yet future (Ecclesiastes 11:8). Finally, the book context demonstrates that the use of “remember” (זָכַר) in Exodus 20:8 by no means requires a reference to an event instituted in the past which was at the time only to be recalled. Exodus 13:3 contains the appearance of the verb immediately preceding Exodus 20:8. Exodus 13, speaking on the very day that the Passover was first instituted, “the selfsame day” (12:51) or “this day” (13:4), notes that God commanded: “Remember [זָכַר]³² this day, in which ye came out from Egypt, out of the house of bondage” (13:3). Clearly the

³¹ Ludwig Koehler et al., *The Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament* (Leiden; New York: E.J. Brill, 1999), 270.

³² Consider also that both Exodus 13:3 and 20:8 contain the identical form of the verb זָכַר, the infinitive absolute.

Passover festival and Israel's deliverance from Egypt after the death of the Egyptian firstborn was not an event recalled from the distant past; on the very day of the event, the command "remember" is employed. While future generations of Israelites were to think on the past events of Passover, redemption from Egypt, and Sinai, and were to keep the Passover and the Sabbath on that account, the "remember" of Exodus 20:8 no more proves that the Sabbath was commanded for man to observe from the time of creation than the "remember" of Exodus 13:3 proves that the Passover and Israel's deliverance from Egypt took place during the creation week.

3.) The Argument from Genesis 2:1-3: Was the Sabbath Binding on Men Before the Exodus?

Was the Sabbath binding on men before the first mention of the actual noun *shabbath* (שַׁבָּת)³³ in Exodus 16 in conjunction with Israel's deliverance from Egypt and constitution as a redeemed people? Clearly, in the dispensation when Moses wrote the Pentateuch all men, including Gentiles, who wished to truly honor the true God were to trust in Jehovah, unite themselves with Israel, receive circumcision, and keep the Sabbath and the rest of the covenant revealed at Sinai. But is the practice of the Sabbath specifically for the nation of Israel, or is the Seventh-Day Adventist position valid that all men, from creation to new creation, are bound to keep the Sabbath on Saturday as the Jews were bound to at Sinai? What about the position of the Westminster Assembly that the Sabbath commandment is of eternal validity, requiring a sacred Saturday Sabbath of all men from creation to the resurrection of Christ, and requiring a sacred Sunday Sabbath of all men from Christ's resurrection to the end of the world?

John Gill, commenting on Genesis 2:3 and following the suggestion of some Jewish authors, argues that God sanctified the seventh or Sabbath day only in the days of Moses. On this view, Genesis 2:3 is a parenthetical statement of what took place in Moses' day, rather than being a statement about what took place on the seventh day after creation. If Gill's contention stands, the Puritan and Adventist position on the Sabbath is significantly undermined. Gill argued:

Ver. 3. *And God blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it, &c.* A day in which he took delight and pleasure, having finished all his works, and resting from them, and looking over them as very good; and so he pronounced this day a good and happy day, and *sanctified* or appointed it in his mind to be a day separated from others, for holy service and worship; as it was with the Jews

³³ Note the complete list of texts with the word: Ex 16:29; 20:8, 11; 31:14–16; 35:3; Lev 23:11, 15–16; 24:8; Num 15:32; 28:9; Deut 5:12, 15; 2 Kings 11:5, 7, 9; 16:18; Jer 17:21–22, 24, 27; Ezek 46:1, 4, 12; Amos 8:5; Psa 92:1; Neh 10:32, 34; 13:15, 17–19, 22; 2 Chr 23:4, 8.

when they became a body of people, both civil and ecclesiastical: or this is all said by way of prolepsis or anticipation, as many things in this chapter are, many names of countries and rivers, by which being called in the times of Moses, are here given them, though they were not called by them so early, nor till many ages after: and according to Jarchi this passage respects future time, when God *blessed* this day with the manna, which descended on all the other days of the week, an omer for a man, and on the sixth day double food; and he *sanctified* it with the manna which did not descend at all on that day: besides, these words may be read in a parenthesis, as containing an account of a fact that was done, not at the beginning of the world, and on the first seventh day of it; but of what had been done in the times of Moses, who wrote this, after the giving of the law of the sabbath; and this being given through his hands to the people of Israel, he takes this opportunity here to insert it, and very pertinently, seeing the reason why God then, in the times of Moses, blessed the sabbath-day, and hallowed it, was, because he had rested on that day from all his works, Exod. 20:11 and the same reason is given here, taken plainly out of that law which he had delivered to them: *because that in it he had rested from all his work, which God created and made*; which shews, that this refers not to the same time when God blessed and hallowed the seventh day, which was done in the times of Moses, but to what had been long before, and was then given as a reason enforcing it; for it is not here said, as in the preceding verse, *he rested*, but *had rested*, even from the foundation of the world, when his works were finished, as in Heb. 4:3 even what *he created to make*^e, as the words may be here rendered; which he created out of nothing, as he did the first matter, in order to make all things out of it, and put them in that order, and bring them to that perfection he did.³⁴

Furthermore, the book *From Sabbath to Lord's Day* makes the following assertion:

[T]he particle עַל־כֵּן [*al ken*] is used in both Exodus 20:11 and Deuteronomy 5:15, and translated “therefore,” in a majority of cases in the Pentateuch to connect causally an event in the past with a situation some time later . . . hence, it is better translated “consequently now” (in the sense of *post hoc* [“after this”] and *propter hoc* [“on account of this”]).³⁵

One could, on this view, conclude that Exodus 20:11 means, “in six days Jehovah made the heavens and earth in the past; therefore He now, on account of this past action, commands you, Israel, to keep the Sabbath.” One could then argue that the Sabbath was only blessed and sanctified in the days of Moses for the nation of Israel based upon the prior rest of God recorded in Genesis 2. That is, He rested on the seventh day, and later, in the days of Moses, blessed and sanctified the seventh day for Israel.³⁶ Support for this view could be derived from the pluperfective action indicated in the comparison of the (English) perfect tense verb *rested* in Genesis 2:2 and the (English) past perfect in Genesis 2:3:

Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host of them. 2 And on the seventh day God ended his work which he had made; and he rested on the seventh day from all his work which he had made. 3 And God blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it: because that in it he had rested from all his work which God created and made. (Genesis 2:1-3)

^e לעשות ברא - creavit ut faceret, V. L. creaverat ut faceret, Pagninus, Montanus.

³⁴ John Gill, *An Exposition of the Old Testament*, vol. 1, The Baptist Commentary Series (London: Mathews and Leigh, 1810), 13–14.

³⁵ Pg. 38, footnote 43, in “The Sabbath in the Old Testament,” Harold H. P. Dressler, in *From Sabbath to Lord's Day: a biblical, historical, and theological investigation*, ed. D. A. Carson. Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 1999 (prev. pub. Zondervan, 1982).

³⁶ The citation of *From Sabbath to Lord's Day* above does not mean that the authors or editors of that volume took the position set forth in the sentence attached to this footnote.

That is, the “had rested” specifies a completed past action, so the blessing and sanctifying mentioned in v. 3 happened, not on the seventh day itself, but at a later time. The later time is not specified in the text, but, based on Exodus 20:8-11’s usage of ‘*al ken* (עַל־כֵּן), it would have taken place in the days of Moses.

Does sound exegesis support the view that God rested on the seventh day after creation, but blessed and sanctified the day only during Moses’ time? First, Genesis 2:3 does indeed specify that the blessing and sanctifying of the seventh day did not take place on the seventh day itself; the conclusion one would draw from a careful reading of the English of the Authorized Version is correct. A comparison of Genesis 2:2-3 with other passages with similar syntax validates the teaching of the English Authorized Version. The following texts agree with Genesis 2:2-3 by containing several verbs in a row with *waw-conversive* of the same person and number followed by *ki* and a verb in the perfect of the same person and number as the preceding verbs. In each instance, the final perfect verb is properly rendered with the English past perfect:

וַיְכַל אֱלֹהִים בַּיּוֹם הַשְּׁבִיעִי מְלַאכְתּוֹ אֲשֶׁר עָשָׂה וַיִּשְׁבֹּת בַּיּוֹם הַשְּׁבִיעִי מִכָּל־מְלַאכְתּוֹ אֲשֶׁר עָשָׂה :
וַיְבָרֶךְ אֱלֹהִים אֶת־יוֹם הַשְּׁבִיעִי וַיְקַדְּשֵׁהוּ אֵתוּ כִּי בּוֹ שָׁבַת מִכָּל־מְלַאכְתּוֹ אֲשֶׁר־בָּרָא אֱלֹהִים לַעֲשׂוֹת :
וַיִּבֶא אֶל־הֵגֶר וַתַּהַר וַתֵּרָא כִּי הָרְתָה וַתִּקַּל וַתְּבַרְתָּה בְּעֵינֶיהָ :
וַיִּרְדְּהוּ אֶל־כַּפְּיוֹ וַיִּלְדְּ הַלְוִיָּהּ וַאֲכַל וַיִּלְדְּ אֶל־אֲבִיו וְאֶל־אִמּוֹ וַיִּתֵּן לָהֶם וַיֹּאכְלוּ :
וְלֹא־הִגִּיד לָהֶם כִּי מִגִּוְנַת הָאֵרֶז הָרְדָה הַדְּבָשׁ :
וַיִּמְתַּר שְׂאוֹל וַיִּפֹּל מִלֹּא־קוֹמָתוֹ אֲרֻצָּה וַיִּרְא מֵאֵד מִדְּבָרֵי שְׂמוּאֵל :
גַּם־פָּתַל לֹא־תָנִה בּוֹ כִּי לֹא אָכַל לָהֶם כָּל־הַיּוֹם וְכָל־הַלַּיְלָה :

And on the seventh day God ended his work which he had made; **and he rested** on the seventh day from all his work which he had made. **And God blessed** the seventh day, **and sanctified** it: **because that** in it **he had rested** from all his work which God created and made. (Genesis 2:2-3)

And he went in unto Hagar, **and she conceived**: **and when she saw that she had conceived**, her mistress was despised in her eyes (Genesis 16:4).

And he took thereof in his hands, **and went** on eating, **and came** to his father and mother, **and he gave** them, and they did eat: but he told not them **that he had taken** the honey out of the carcase of the lion (Judges 14:9).

Then Saul **fell straightway** all along on the earth, **and was** sore **afraid**, because of the words of Samuel: and there was no strength in him; **for he had eaten** no bread all the day, nor all the night. (1 Samuel 28:20).

The conclusion that the blessing and sanctifying of the seventh day happened after the day ended is, therefore, valid. One reason Genesis 2:3 does not end with “and the evening and the morning were the seventh day” is that the sanctification and blessing of 2:3 did not take place on the seventh day, but after it was over.

The fact that Genesis 2:3 refers to a blessing and sanctifying that took place after the seventh day was completed does not, however, prove of itself that the blessing and sanctifying of Genesis 2:3 happened thousands of years later in Moses’ time. The blessing and sanctifying could at least as easily have happened on the very beginning of the eighth day. Consequently, if Gill’s interpretation is to be established, the use of ‘*al ken* (עַל־כֵּן) in Exodus 20:11 must conclusively indicate a gap in time between the

original event, the creation of the world in six days, and the blessing and sanctification, which, on Gill’s interpretation, happened only in the days of Moses. However, an examination of texts with ‘*al ken* (עַל־כֵּן) in the Pentateuch³⁷ does not support the presence of a significant time gap in Exodus 20:11. The necessity for Israel in Moses’ day to consider the past event may be emphasized in the texts in question. Nevertheless, at least in the definite majority of cases where verses with ‘*al ken* (עַל־כֵּן) in the Pentateuch refer to customs (whether customary actions or customary names for locations that were extant before the time of Moses), the customs in view always date back to the time of the original event that results in the “therefore/wherefore” or ‘*al ken* (עַל־כֵּן) consequence—at least in no instance can anything else be proven. That is, Exodus 20:11 does not specify, “Because Jehovah created the world in six days, and rested the seventh day, therefore now for the first time in the Sinai generation He blesses and sanctifies the Sabbath day,” but rather “Because Jehovah created the world in six days and rested the seventh day, He therefore blessed and sanctified it immediately afterwards.” While customs mentioned in the Pentateuch and connected with past events by ‘*al ken* (עַל־כֵּן) are indeed brought into view because they are significant for the *sitz im leben* or life-situation of redeemed Israel in Moses’ day and afterwards in the land of Canaan, they did not originate at that time, but trace their origin back to the earlier time in which the past event took place. Consider the complete list of relevant references where the narrator uses ‘*al ken* (עַל־כֵּן) in the Pentateuch:³⁸

Gen. 2:23 And Adam said, This *is* now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh: she shall be

³⁷ The complete list of Old Testament texts with עַל־כֵּן is: Gen 2:24; 10:9; 11:9; 16:14; 18:5; 19:8, 22; 20:6; 21:31; 25:30; 26:33; 29:34–35; 30:6; 31:48; 32:33; 33:10, 17; 38:26; 40:13 (different word for כֵּן); 41:13 (different word for כֵּן); 42:21; 47:22; 50:11; Ex 5:8, 17; 13:15; 15:23; 16:29; 20:11; Lev 17:12; Num 10:31; 14:43; 18:24; 21:14, 27; Deut 5:15; 10:9; 15:11, 15; 19:7; 24:18, 22; Josh 7:26; 14:14; Judg 6:22; 15:19; 18:12; 1 Sam 5:5; 10:12; 19:24; 20:29; 23:28; 28:18; 2 Sam 5:8, 20; 7:22, 27; 18:20; 22:50; 1 Kings 9:9; 20:23; Is 5:25; 9:16; 13:7, 13; 15:4, 7; 16:9, 11; 17:10; 21:3; 22:4; 24:6, 15; 25:3; 27:11; 30:16; 50:7; 57:10; 59:9; Jer 5:6, 27; 10:21; 12:8; 20:11; 29:28; 31:3, 20; 38:4; 44:23; 48:11, 31, 36; 51:7; Ezek 7:20; 22:4; 31:5; 41:7; 42:6; 44:12; Hos 4:3, 13; 6:5; 13:6; Amos 3:2; Jonah 4:2; Hab 1:4, 15–17; Hag 1:10; Zech 10:2; Psa 1:5; 18:50; 25:8; 42:7; 45:3, 8, 18; 46:3; 110:7; 119:104, 127–129; Job 6:3; 9:22; 17:4; 20:21; 22:10; 23:15; 32:6; 34:27; 42:6; Prov 6:15; 7:15; Song 1:3; Eccl 5:1; 8:11; Lam 1:8; 3:21, 24; Esth 9:19, 26; Dan 11:20–21, 38; Neh 6:6; 1 Chr 11:7; 14:11; 17:25; 2 Chr 7:22; 16:7; 20:26.

³⁸ In each of the texts listed below, the underlined word in the text translates עַל־כֵּן. Comments then follow in italics. Texts with כֵּן עַל (Genesis 18:4-5; 19:7-8; 33:9-10; Numbers 10:30-31; 14:42-43; note most instances connect all three words with *maqef*) are omitted, because the addition of כֵּן provides the combination of particles with a different semantic significance. Furthermore, Deuteronomy 15:10-11 & 19:6-7 are not included in the list in the text; each passage deals with a future situation that results in (“therefore”) a present command. In each of those passages, the עַל־כֵּן clause immediately follows a clause commencing with כֵּן.

Other comments relevant to the Sabbath question are also included in the discussion of the verses with עַל־כֵּן in the passage.

called Woman, because she was taken out of Man. **24** Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh. *As the Lord Jesus clearly indicated (Matthew 19:3-9), the pattern for marriage was established immediately after the first marriage took place between Adam and Eve. Men certainly did not for the first time in Moses' day leave their father and mother to cleave to and become one flesh with their wives.*

Gen. 10:8 And Cush begat Nimrod: he began to be a mighty one in the earth. **9** He was a mighty hunter before the LORD: wherefore it is said, Even as Nimrod the mighty hunter before the LORD. *The saying concerning Nimrod would have originated in his day; it certainly did not commence in the days of Moses.*

Gen. 11:8 So the LORD scattered them abroad from thence upon the face of all the earth: and they left off to build the city. **9** Therefore is the name of it called Babel; because the LORD did there confound the language of all the earth: and from thence did the LORD scatter them abroad upon the face of all the earth. *The city was called Babel or "Confusion" (KJV margin) immediately after the confusion of the languages took place.*³⁹

Gen. 16:13 And she called the name of the LORD that spake unto her, Thou God seest me: for she said, Have I also here looked after him that seeth me? **14** Wherefore the well was called Beerlahairoi; behold, it is between Kadesh and Bered. *While there is no reason to doubt that the well was called Beerlahairoi or "the well of him that liveth and seeth me" (KJV margin) in Moses' day, it received its name in the days of Hagar.*

Gen. 19:21 And he said unto him, See, I have accepted thee concerning this thing also, that I will not overthrow this city, for the which thou hast spoken. **22** Haste thee, escape thither; for I cannot do any thing till thou be come thither. Therefore the name of the city was called Zoar. *The little city (Genesis 19:20) for which Lot pleaded received its name of Zoar or "Little" (KJV margin) immediately upon the events of Genesis 19 coming to pass.*

Gen. 25:29 And Jacob sod pottage: and Esau came from the field, and he was faint: **30** And Esau said to Jacob, Feed me, I pray thee, with that same red pottage; for I am faint: therefore was his name called Edom. *While the descendants of Esau were certainly called "Edom" in Moses' day, the name "Edom" or "Red" (KJV margin) pertained to Esau immediately after the events associated with the red soup.*

Gen. 26:32 And it came to pass the same day, that Isaac's servants came, and told him concerning the well which they had digged, and said unto him, We have found water. **33** And he called it Shebah: therefore the name of the city is Beersheba unto this day. *The place that received the name "Beersheba" or "well of the oath" (KJV margin) from Abraham in his day (21:30-31) is again given the name "Beersheba" by Isaac. In both cases the names clearly did not originate in Moses' day, although they had significance "unto this day," the time of the wilderness generation, from the patriarchal period. One can see from this that a customary name or a customary practice can be enacted for more than one reason; here Beersheba receives its name both from the actions of Abraham and from those of Isaac.*

Gen. 31:47 And Laban called it Jegarsahadutha: but Jacob called it Galeed. **48** And Laban said, This heap is a witness between me and thee this day. Therefore was the name of it called Galeed; **49** And Mizpah; for he said, The LORD watch between me and thee, when we are absent one from another. *The place was called Mizpah or Galeed, "heap of witness" in Hebrew and Chaldean (KJV margin), because of the actions of Jacob and Laban. The account explains why the place had its name in the days of Moses, but the name was given in the patriarchal period.*

Gen. 32:31 And as he passed over Penuel the sun rose upon him, and he halted upon his thigh. **32** Therefore the children of Israel eat not of the sinew which shrank, which is upon the hollow of the thigh, unto this day: because he touched the hollow of Jacob's thigh in the sinew that shrank. *There is no reason to think that the custom mentioned did not originate in Jacob's day immediately after the events at Penuel, and that they continued from that time "unto this day," the time of the composition of the Pentateuch by Moses in the wilderness.*

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Concerning the Hebrew structure of this passage with the indefinite subject of the verb in עַל־כֵּן קָרָא שְׁמָהּ בְּיָמָיו, see Gesenius' *Hebrew Grammar* ed. E. Kautsch, trans. A. E. Cowley (London/New York: OUP, 1910; repr. 1966) 144d & P. P. Joüon, *Grammar of Biblical Hebrew*, tr. and ed. T. Muraoka (Rome: Pontifical Biblical Institute, 1947), 155e. Compare Genesis 16:14; 19:22.

Gen. 33:16 So Esau returned that day on his way unto Seir. **17** And Jacob journeyed to Succoth, and built him an house, and made booths for his cattle: therefore the name of the place is called Succoth. *The place was called Succoth or “Booths” (KJV margin) from the time Jacob made booths there for his cattle.*

Gen. 47:21 And as for the people, he removed them to cities from *one* end of the borders of Egypt even to the *other* end thereof. **22** Only the land of the priests bought he not; for the priests had a portion *assigned them* of Pharaoh, and did eat their portion which Pharaoh gave them: wherefore they sold not their lands. *This passage is possibly the only instance in the Pentateuch where a custom or practice that was not extant in Moses’ day is in view, although the temporal continuity of the events connected by “wherefore” is still apparent and it is probable that the priests still possessed their land in Moses’ day. The Egyptian priests did not sell their lands because at that very time they were receiving provision from Pharaoh’s government.*

Gen. 50:10 And they came to the threshingfloor of Atad, which *is* beyond Jordan, and there they mourned with a great and very sore lamentation: and he made a mourning for his father seven days. **11** And when the inhabitants of the land, the Canaanites, saw the mourning in the floor of Atad, they said, This *is* a grievous mourning to the Egyptians: wherefore the name of it was called Abelmizraim, which *is* beyond Jordan. *The place was called Abelmizraim, “The mourning of the Egyptians” (KJV margin), from the time that the mourning took place.*

Ex. 15:22 So Moses brought Israel from the Red sea, and they went out into the wilderness of Shur; and they went three days in the wilderness, and found no water. **23** And when they came to Marah, they could not drink of the waters of Marah, for they *were* bitter: therefore the name of it was called Marah. *From the time that the bitter waters were located the place was called Marah, “Bitterness” (KJV margin).*

Ex. 16:28 And the LORD said unto Moses, How long refuse ye to keep my commandments and my laws? **29** See, for that the LORD hath given you the sabbath, therefore he giveth you on the sixth day the bread of two days; abide ye every man in his place, let no man go out of his place on the seventh day. *The action of giving twice the amount of bread on the sixth day took place because Jehovah had given redeemed Israel the Sabbath. This verse is the first instance of the noun “Sabbath” in Scripture. It is true that it is before the events of Mount Sinai, but one cannot conclude a great deal from this, because it is clearly in anticipation of Sinai and it is after God had purchased Israel to Himself by saving the nation from Egypt in association with the blood of the Passover lamb; after Exodus 16, “Sabbath” next appears in Exodus 20 in the Ten Commandments. Indeed, this is the first time that Israel received food for two days on the sixth day. Something new is taking place in Exodus 16:29—the verse is not an obscure hint that the world was required to keep the seventh-day Sabbath from the time of creation and then throughout the thousands of years before Israel’s exodus. Indeed, apart from general considerations in this matter, the fact that every other time the “therefore” or ‘al ken (אֲלֵ-כֵן) clause specifies something that started from the very time of what is previously mentioned demonstrates that the giving of the bread for two days on the sixth day began from the very time that Israel was given the Sabbath. Since this Saturday was the first time that Israel received bread for two days on the sixth day, this was the first time Israel had received the Sabbath. What is more, on the assumption that the Sabbath was particularly for Israel, it was necessary for God to make it clear which day was the seventh, because nothing in nature would give any indication whatsoever about which was the correct day. Exodus 16:29 specifies that the Sabbath originated the day double manna was first given in the wilderness. It is noteworthy that this Saturday was not the first one since the nation left Egypt—the force of the ‘al ken (אֲלֵ-כֵן) and the first provision of double manna⁴⁰ consequently indicates that not only did nobody keep the Sabbath in patriarchal days, but Israel herself did not celebrate the Sabbath for an entire month even after the nation left Egypt (Exodus 12:2, 6, 51; 16:1).*

Ex. 20:10 But the seventh day *is* the sabbath of the LORD thy God: *in it* thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy manservant, nor thy maidservant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that *is* within thy gates: **11** For *in* six days the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them *is*, and rested the seventh day: wherefore the LORD blessed the sabbath day,

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Israel survived without manna for the first month on food brought from Egypt (cf. Exodus 12:34).

and hallowed it. *This passage indicates that the blessing and hallowing of the Sabbath day took place immediately after Jehovah's resting on that day, that is, immediately after the completion of the first seventh day at the start of the eighth day, in keeping with the pattern of the other 'al ken (אל־כֵּן) texts. Consideration of the usage of 'al ken (אל־כֵּן) and other general contextual features leads to the conclusion that, although the Sabbath was blessed and hallowed on the eighth day after creation (Exodus 20), Israel was first given the Sabbath after deliverance from Egypt (Exodus 16).*

Lev. 17:11 For the life of the flesh *is* in the blood: and I have given it to you upon the altar to make an atonement for your souls: for it *is* the blood *that* maketh an atonement for the soul. **12** Therefore I said unto the children of Israel, No soul of you shall eat blood, neither shall any stranger that sojourneth among you eat blood. *Here allusion is made back to Genesis 9:4, where the life of the flesh is already stated to be in the blood. There the binding requirement was on all the sons of Noah; here it is repeated for Israel. So something binding upon Israel can be binding upon pre-Passover Gentiles or the whole human race, as in the case of Noah, but there is a specific command to that effect in Genesis 9:4, unlike in Genesis 2. As discussed below in greater detail, it is noteworthy even this specific command for the entire human race in Genesis 9—a command for all the sons of Noah, not just for Israel, and binding on all men after the Flood, and, indeed, even before the Flood as nobody ate flesh before that time—is no longer binding in the New Testament. Now one is just to buy and eat whatever meat is sold at the market, or when dining with a pagan neighbor, just to eat whatever one is given, whether it has blood in it or not (1 Corinthians 10:25-27). So even if one granted, for the sake of the argument, the Sabbatarian contention that the Sabbath was binding on all men, Gentiles and Jews, from the time of the first creation onward, the situation may not be the same in the dispensation of grace with the church as an institution of the new creation.*

Consider also that Leviticus 17:11 is a development of the situation in Genesis 9:4, in that the blood is given on the altar in the tabernacle to make an atonement for Israel's sins. The reference to "the altar" is definitely to the altar in the tabernacle, as in the 127 other texts where an altar in the Tabernacle is referred to as "the altar" in the Pentateuch.⁴¹ Thus, in Leviticus 17:11 as in the other 'al ken (אל־כֵּן) texts, there is continuity in the time of the clauses connected by the "wherefore/therefore"; Israel now had the blood given on the altar of the Tabernacle to make an atonement for her sins, and "therefore" they were not to eat blood.

Num. 18:23 But the Levites shall do the service of the tabernacle of the congregation, and they shall bear their iniquity: *it shall be* a statute for ever throughout your generations, that among the children of Israel they have no inheritance. **24** But the tithes of the children of Israel, which they offer *as* an heave offering unto the LORD, I have given to the Levites to inherit: therefore I have said unto them, Among the children of Israel they shall have no inheritance. *The Divine ordination of the lack of inheritance for the Levites and their receiving the tithes from the other tribes were contemporaneous events.*

Num. 21:13 From thence they removed, and pitched on the other side of Arnon, which *is* in the wilderness that cometh out of the coasts of the Amorites: for Arnon *is* the border of Moab, between Moab and the Amorites. **14** Wherefore it is said in the book of the wars of the LORD, What he did in the Red sea, and in the brooks of Arnon, *If the book of the wars of the LORD was composed contemporaneously with the wars it discusses, which appears highly probable from the context, then the 'al ken (אל־כֵּן) clause again is contemporaneous with the clause to which it is attached.*

⁴¹ Ex 24:6; 27:1, 5, 7; 28:43; 29:12–13, 16, 18, 20–21, 25, 36–38, 44; 30:18, 20; 38:3, 7, 30; 40:7, 10, 30, 32; Lev 1:5, 7–9, 11–13, 15–17; 2:2, 8–9, 12; 3:2, 5, 8, 11, 13, 16; 4:18–19, 26, 30–31, 34–35; 5:9, 12; 6:2–3, 5–8; 7:2, 5, 31; 8:11, 15–16, 19, 21, 24, 28, 30; 9:7–10, 12–14, 17–18, 20, 24; 10:12; 14:20; 16:12, 18, 20, 25, 33; 17:11; 21:23; 22:22; Num 3:26, 31; 4:13–14, 26; 5:25–26; 7:1, 10–11, 84, 88; 17:11; 18:3, 5, 7, 17. The sole instances in the Pentateuch where *the altar*, אֲלֹתָיִם, does not refer to the Tabernacle are Gen 13:4; 22:9 (in both instances to an altar built by Abraham, obviously before the Tabernacle's construction) and Num 23:4, where Balaam built seven altars to try to get the Lord to curse Israel. In Numbers 23:4 there is probably an intentional contrast made with God's instituted Tabernacle altar, *the altar*; Balaam's seven altars are not better than the single one God Himself had established.

Num. 21:26 For Heshbon *was* the city of Sihon the king of the Amorites, who had fought against the former king of Moab, and taken all his land out of his hand, even unto Arnon. **27** Wherefore they that speak in proverbs say, Come into Heshbon, let the city of Sihon be built and prepared: *The proverb mentioned would have originated with the event it comments upon.*

Deut. 5:14 But the seventh day *is* the sabbath of the LORD thy God: *in it* thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, nor thy manservant, nor thy maidservant, nor thine ox, nor thine ass, nor any of thy cattle, nor thy stranger that *is* within thy gates; that thy manservant and thy maidservant may rest as well as thou. **15** And remember that thou wast a servant in the land of Egypt, and *that* the LORD thy God brought thee out thence through a mighty hand and by a stretched out arm: therefore the LORD thy God commanded thee to keep the sabbath day. *Here redemption from bondage (which involved a lack of rest, Exodus 5:5) in Egypt is the stated reason for Israel's keeping of the Sabbath. As in Genesis 26:33 and 21:31 two different but complementary events explain the name of the place Beersheba, so Exodus 20 and Deuteronomy 5 provide two different but complementary reasons for Israel to keep the Sabbath, Jehovah's blessing and sanctifying the seventh day after creating the world and His redeeming Israel from bondage in Egypt.*

There is a very significant difference in the 'al ken (עַל־כֵּן) clauses of Exodus 20:11 and Deuteronomy 5:15. Exodus 20:11 specifies that God blessed and sanctified the Sabbath day on the eighth day of creation, but no command to any man to keep the Sabbath is recorded. Deuteronomy 5:15 indicates that at the specific time when Jehovah God brought Israel out of Egypt He "therefore," at that time, commanded Israel to keep the Sabbath. As Exodus 16:28-29 specifies the first time anyone kept the Sabbath as the day when the Lord provided double manna in the wilderness after the Exodus, so Deuteronomy 5:14-15 likewise indicates that the Sabbath was first commanded after Israel was brought out of Egypt. The fact that 'al ken (עַל־כֵּן) connects temporally simultaneous clauses in the Pentateuch provides very strong evidence for the post-Passover origin of the Sabbath festival day, evidence that is by no means contradicted in Exodus 20:11.

Furthermore, both Exodus 20 and Deuteronomy 5 specify Israel, the nation redeemed and brought out of Egypt by Jehovah and at that time in the wilderness, as the recipient of the Ten Commandments (Exodus 20:1-2; Deuteronomy 5:1-5). That is, both Exodus 20 and Deuteronomy 5 connect Israel's keeping of the Sabbath with redemption (Exodus 20:1-2, 8-11; Deuteronomy 5:12-15)—for the entire Decalogue is commanded Israel based on her national redemption (Exodus 20:1-2)—while Exodus 20 alone connects Israel's Sabbath-keeping with creation. If one is to argue that the Sabbath was binding on all men from creation onwards he cannot simply cite the Decalogue, for whatever elements of continuity there are between the Decalogue and God's will for man in general and for His people at other times—and certainly there are elements, very significant elements, of continuity—the actual interpretation of Exodus 20 and Deuteronomy 5 indicates that the Decalogue, including the 4th commandment, is given specifically to Israel. Indeed, Deuteronomy 5:3 explicitly states that the covenant that includes the Decalogue and the Sabbath was not made with the patriarchs, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob,⁴² but with Israel in the wilderness alone. Deuteronomy 5 is by no means a sufficient ground to prove that the Sabbath was binding on Gentiles or on anyone at all before Israel's exodus; on the contrary, normal, literal interpretation of the passage specifically affirms the opposite.

Deut. 10:8 At that time the LORD separated the tribe of Levi, to bear the ark of the covenant of the LORD, to stand before the LORD to minister unto him, and to bless in his name, unto this day. **9** Wherefore Levi hath no part nor inheritance with his brethren; the LORD *is* his inheritance, according as the LORD thy God promised him. *The absence of inheritance and the separation of the tribe were contemporaneous events.*

Deut. 15:14 Thou shalt furnish him liberally out of thy flock, and out of thy floor, and out of thy winepress: *of that* wherewith the LORD thy God hath blessed thee thou shalt give unto him. **15** And thou shalt remember that thou wast a bondman in the land of Egypt, and the LORD thy God

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As in every previous reference in Deuteronomy (1:8, 11, 21, 35; 4:1, 31, 37), so in 5:3 the "fathers" are not the immediate parents of the wilderness generation, but the nation's patriarchs, their "fathers, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob" (1:8).

redeemed thee: therefore I command thee this thing to day. *In this and the following two passages there could be a gap in time, but the continuity of Israel as a nation in the passage undermines the possibility. The “thou” who “wast a bondman” is the group to whom Moses says “I command thee.”*

Deut. 24:17 Thou shalt not pervert the judgment of the stranger, *nor* of the fatherless; nor take a widow’s raiment to pledge: **18** But thou shalt remember that thou wast a bondman in Egypt, and the LORD thy God redeemed thee thence: therefore I command thee to do this thing.

Deut. 24:21 When thou gatherest the grapes of thy vineyard, thou shalt not glean *it* afterward: it shall be for the stranger, for the fatherless, and for the widow. **22** And thou shalt remember that thou wast a bondman in the land of Egypt: therefore I command thee to do this thing.

The instances where ‘*al ken* (עַל־כֵּן) appears on the lips of others, rather than being the specific words of the Pentateuchal narrator, also regularly combine contemporaneous events, although not always.⁴³

In summary, based on the analysis above, the second half of Genesis 2:3 does indeed refer to pluperfective action, demonstrating that the sanctification and blessing recorded in the first half of the verse did not occur on the seventh day itself. However, that fact does not require the explanation that the seventh day was only blessed and sanctified in the days of Moses. The other instances of ‘*al ken* (עַל־כֵּן) strongly support a blessing and sanctification of the seventh day immediately after its conclusion, namely,

⁴³ An examination of most of the passages below will reveal contemporaneity. Passages that provide significant contrary evidence receive brief comment.

Gen. 20:5 Said he not unto me, She *is* my sister? and she, even she herself said, He *is* my brother: in the integrity of my heart and innocency of my hands have I done this. **6** And God said unto him in a dream, Yea, I know that thou didst this in the integrity of thy heart; for I also withheld thee from sinning against me: therefore suffered I thee not to touch her.

Gen. 21:30 And he said, For *these* seven ewe lambs shalt thou take of my hand, that they may be a witness unto me, that I have digged this well. **31** Wherefore he called that place Beersheba; because there they swear both of them.

Gen. 29:33 And she conceived again, and bare a son; and said, Because the LORD hath heard that I *was* hated, he hath therefore given me this *son* also: and she called his name Simeon. **34** And she conceived again, and bare a son; and said, Now this time will my husband be joined unto me, because I have born him three sons: therefore was his name called Levi. **35** And she conceived again, and bare a son: and she said, Now will I praise the LORD: therefore she called his name Judah; and left bearing.

Gen. 30:5 And Bilhah conceived, and bare Jacob a son. **6** And Rachel said, God hath judged me, and hath also heard my voice, and hath given me a son: therefore called she his name Dan.

Gen. 42:20 But bring your youngest brother unto me; so shall your words be verified, and ye shall not die. And they did so. **21** And they said one to another, *We are* verily guilty concerning our brother, in that we saw the anguish of his soul, when he besought us, and we would not hear; therefore is this distress come upon us. *This passage is probably the best example of a gap in time between the event that caused the “therefore” and the consequence in the עַל־כֵּן clause.*

Ex. 5:7 Ye shall no more give the people straw to make brick, as heretofore: let them go and gather straw for themselves. **8** And the tale of the bricks, which they did make heretofore, ye shall lay upon them; ye shall not diminish *ought* thereof: for they *be* idle; therefore they cry, saying, Let us go *and* sacrifice to our God.

Ex. 5:16 There is no straw given unto thy servants, and they say to us, Make brick: and, behold, thy servants *are* beaten; but the fault *is* in thine own people. **17** But he said, Ye *are* idle, ye *are* idle: therefore ye say, Let us go *and* do sacrifice to the LORD.

Ex. 13:14 And it shall be when thy son asketh thee in time to come, saying, What *is* this? that thou shalt say unto him, By strength of hand the LORD brought us out from Egypt, from the house of bondage: **15** And it came to pass, when Pharaoh would hardly let us go, that the LORD slew all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, both the firstborn of man, and the firstborn of beast: therefore I sacrifice to the LORD all that openeth the matrix, being males; but all the firstborn of my children I redeem.

on the eighth day immediately following the seventh day. After resting the seventh day, God blessed and sanctified it on day eight.

The conclusion that the seventh day was blessed and sanctified on the eighth day is also strongly supported by a comparison with the other instances of “blessed,” *barak* (בָּרַךְ), in Genesis 1:1-2:3. The sea and air creatures are blessed immediately after their creation (Genesis 1:22) and man is blessed immediately after his creation (Genesis 1:28). This pattern strongly supports the position that the seventh day was blessed immediately after its completion in Genesis 2:3.

Since the seventh day was blessed and sanctified by God on the eighth day, does Scripture teach that the Sabbath was binding on all men from the time of creation onwards, so that the entire human race was required to observe it and the godly did observe it in the ages before Jehovah brought Israel out of Egypt and gave her the Mosaic covenant at Sinai? The answer is no—while the premise is valid, the conclusion drawn from it is invalid.

First, while the sanctification of the day in Genesis does not pertain to God alone, but is intended to instruct mankind, the fact remains that there is no command to anyone to observe the Sabbath before the days of Moses. Genesis has no lack of Divine commands to man, including in 1:1-2:3 (1:28; cf. 2:16-17; 3:17, etc.), but there is no command to keep the Sabbath. While God’s example certainly is to teach man something, Scripture itself, not extrascriptural assumptions, must regulate the normativity of examples. Scripture itself never draws the conclusion that the Sabbath is binding on all men from God’s rest in Genesis 2:1-3; on the contrary, it draws the conclusion that Israel is to keep the Sabbath, and the Sabbath is a sign for that specific nation (Deuteronomy 5:15), from God’s post-creation rest:

1 And God spake all these words, saying, 2 I am the LORD thy God, which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. . . . 8 Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy. 9 Six days shalt thou labour, and do all thy work: 10 But the seventh day is the sabbath of the LORD thy God: in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy manservant, nor thy maidservant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates: 11 For in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day: wherefore the LORD blessed the sabbath day, and hallowed it. (Exodus 20:1-2, 8-11)

12 And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, 13 Speak thou also unto the children of Israel, saying, Verily my sabbaths ye shall keep: for it is a sign between me and you throughout your generations; that ye may know that I am the LORD that doth sanctify you. 14 Ye shall keep the sabbath therefore; for it is holy unto you: every one that defileth it shall surely be put to death: for whosoever doeth any work therein, that soul shall be cut off from among his people. 15 Six days may work be done; but in the seventh is the sabbath of rest, holy to the LORD: whosoever doeth any work in the sabbath day, he shall surely be put to death. 16 Wherefore the children of Israel shall keep the sabbath, to observe the sabbath throughout their generations, for a perpetual covenant. 17 It is a sign between me and the children of Israel for ever: for in six days the LORD

made heaven and earth, and on the seventh day he rested, and was refreshed.⁴⁴ (Exodus 31:12-17)⁴⁵

Furthermore, while Sabbath-breaking is prominently mentioned as a sin that brought Israel under judgment (Leviticus 26:34-35; Nehemiah 13:17-18; Jeremiah 17:21-27; 2 Chronicles 36:21), no catalog of sins anywhere in Scripture condemns Gentiles for not keeping the Sabbath. Within Genesis itself, the Flood destroyed the ungodly world in Noah's day, Sodom and Gomorrah were destroyed by fire from heaven, and other judgments were laid upon the wicked. Within the Pentateuch, judgments from the plagues on Egypt to the extermination of the Canaanites are executed, but Sabbath violation is never mentioned as a reason to punish a non-Jew. Furthermore, various sins of the godly before the Sinai covenant are recorded in Genesis, from Noah's drunkenness to Abraham's lying to Lot's immorality, but not a trace or hint appears of the sin of Sabbath violation. It is true that evidence derived from examples has its limits. However, should not whatever limits are placed upon the negative evidence from the absence of Sabbath keeping in the patriarchal period likewise be placed upon the evidence from the example in Genesis 2:1-3?⁴⁶ It is difficult to see the hermeneutical justification for placing tremendous weight upon one non-commanded example but placing extremely little weight on contrary evidence from other examples. What is more, in other instances where examples carry doctrinal weight, such as Christ's appeal to the Genesis pattern of monogamous, life-long marriage (Mark 10:2-9; Genesis 2:24), examples provide evidence of God's displeasure for violations of the pattern. For example, Genesis indicates that polygamy was instituted by a wicked man (Genesis 4:19), and not a single example of a happy and harmonious polygamous family appears anywhere in Genesis or the rest of Scripture; even godly men who entered into polygamy universally had family troubles. Furthermore, God's hatred of divorce is specifically

⁴⁴ The anthropic focus in Exodus 31:17 is clear from the facts that the verse is the only passage in the Old Testament where "rest" (שָׁבַת) without a qualifying preposition is employed of God and the only text where "refreshed" (נִפְּנָה) is used of God in the Old Testament (the other OT texts are Ex 23:12; 2 Sam 16:14). Jehovah's rest and refreshment serve as a model for Israel to rest and be refreshed.

⁴⁵ Note that in the context of the book of Exodus the reiteration of the Sabbath command in Exodus 31:13-17 concludes the lawgiving event on Sinai. Therefore, the passage fits not only into the immediate context but also into the wider context of the Mosaic covenant, which God made with the people of Israel, and which was summarized on the stone tablets containing the Decalogue. Exodus 31:13-17 specifies that the Sabbath was inaugurated for the people of Israel to be celebrated as a weekly sign of God's covenant with them. It is not viewed as a universal ordinance for all mankind but as a specific institution for Israel. As a sign of the covenant at Sinai it was to last as long as that covenant, that is, until the coming of Christ.

⁴⁶ Seventh-Day Adventists are particularly inconsistent when they make much of the example in Genesis 2:1-3, despite the absence of a specific command, but downplay the many examples of church assembly on the first day of the week in the New Testament (Mt 28:8-10; Mr 16:1-2, 10-11; Lu 24:33-34; Jn 20:19-26; Ac 2; 20:7; 1 Cor 16:2) because many of these passages do not contain a command.

stated (Malachi 2:16) and remarriage is specifically identified as defiling one who engages in it (Deuteronomy 24:4). Nothing at all comparable appears as evidence for pre-Mosaic Sabbath keeping. In Exodus 31:12-17, Scripture draws the conclusion that God's actions in Genesis 2:1-3 prove Israel should keep the Sabbath. Consequently, one ought to conclude from Genesis 2:1-3 that Israel should keep the Sabbath. Scripture never draws the conclusion from Genesis 2:1-3 that all men at all times, or the church in the New Testament, must keep the Sabbath. Consequently, one ought not to draw the conclusion Scripture does not draw, but the one it does draw.

Second, evidence from other things God sanctifies or sets apart validates the fact that God's sanctification of the seventh day in Genesis 2:3 does not prove that men were immediately bound to celebrate a seventh-day Sabbath. God at times sets apart or sanctifies someone or something for a use far before that sanctification is manifested or involves human action. For example, the land of Canaan was set apart for the children of Israel many centuries before they possessed that land (Genesis 12:7; 13:15), in accordance with God's eternal plan for Israel (Romans 11:25-29; Ephesians 1:11). Christ was sanctified or set apart to be the Redeemer of His people far before the Father sent Him into the world (John 10:36), and His elect were likewise set apart in Christ from the foundation of the world (Ephesians 1:3-6). The strong preponderance of evidence supports the position that God set apart the seventh day immediately after the creation week but only required Sabbath-observance of Israel after He brought the nation out of Egypt.

The eternal personal election of believers in the New Testament (Ephesians 1:4; Romans 16:13) demonstrates that the Lord set His love on every one of His saints from the bowels of eternity. All the everlasting elective benefits for the saints derive from Christ, who was set up as Mediator from eternity past (2 Peter 1:20), with His redemptive death and its application to His saints so certain that Scripture can speak of "the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world" (Revelation 13:8) and identify the saints as receiving grace "in Christ Jesus before the world began" (2 Timothy 1:9). Similarly, God's eternal corporate election of the church (Ephesians 3:9-11) demonstrates that He has had from everlasting His new covenant assembly in His glorious eternal plan. In like manner, Genesis 2:1-3 would have taught Israel that her Creator-Redeemer had her calling as a nation, redemption from Egypt, consecration to Himself, and eternal purpose on His heart from the foundation of the world (Jeremiah 31:3). Israel was the apple of Jehovah's eye (Deuteronomy 32:10; Zechariah 2:8). As the Lord directed the course of all nations of the world for the sake of His chosen nation, Israel (Deuteronomy 32:8), so He even created the world in seven days with His redemptive purpose for Israel

and Israel's worship of Him in mind, represented by the proleptic references in Genesis 1:1-2:3 to Israel's preeminent covenant sign, the Sabbath, as well as Israel's other holy festival days.⁴⁷ Since Genesis lays the groundwork in the Pentateuch for Israel's exodus and establishment as a nation, a reference to her post-Passover Sabbath and other festival days in Genesis 1:1-2:3 should not be not more surprising than the numerous predictions in Genesis of Israel's deliverance from Egypt and service of God in Canaan (Genesis 12:1-7; 13:14-15; 15:12-21; 17:7-14; 24:7; 26:3-4). The appearance of God's seventh-day rest in Genesis 1:1-2:3, the prologue to the entire book of Genesis, taught the Israelite reader that the remainder of Genesis and the Pentateuch details the dealings of his God to bring His chosen, covenant people, and the world through them, to that salvation-rest in Himself that He establishes in the promised Seed, the Messiah (Genesis 3:15)—a rest He has prepared for His people even from the foundation of the world. Israel would see Genesis 2:1-3 as evidence of the eternal plan of God to bring His people into redemptive rest, and the exodus as a prominent stage of that eternal plan in time. Indeed, later Biblical texts that refer to salvific election are in a line of continuity with Genesis 2, for God's establishment at creation of a rest for His people evidences His settled purpose of rest for them before creation and before time. What is more, God's purpose for Israel did not limit itself to that nation alone—the Lord elected her to be a blessing to all nations,⁴⁸ both in her national capacity in the legal dispensation inaugurated at Sinai and ultimately in Christ, the second Adam, ultimate Seed of Abraham, and true Israel.⁴⁹ Consequently, God's rest in Genesis 2:1-3 did not just point to the sign of Israel's Sabbath, but to the eschatological rest designed for man in Genesis 1:24-2:3, into which all the elect people of God, Jews and Gentiles, enter into by faith in the Messiah. The sanctification of the seventh day in Genesis 2:1-3 demonstrates God's eternal purpose for His elect nation, Israel, as well as pointing to the eschatological rest prepared for all of His saints. The passage teaches these glorious truths, but it does not demonstrate that a seventh-day festival is binding in all ages on all men.

Third, the actual word *Sabbath* (שַׁבָּת)⁵⁰ only appears in conjunction with Israel

⁴⁷ The *בְּמוֹעֲדֵיהֶם*, the sacred worship seasons of Israel referenced on day four of creation (Genesis 1:14), as discussed below.

⁴⁸ Compare, for instance, how Genesis records the establishment of the covenant with Abraham immediately after the judgment of the nations at Babel (Genesis 11-12), for through the seed of Abraham all nations would be blessed.

⁴⁹ Compare the references in Isaiah to national Israel, spiritual Israel, and the Person of the Messiah as the Servant of the Lord, as well as texts such as Hosea 11:1; Matthew 2:15 for Christ as the true Israel.

⁵⁰ Note the complete list of texts with the word: Ex 16:29; 20:8, 11; 31:14–16; 35:3; Lev 23:11, 15–16; 24:8; Num 15:32; 28:9; Deut 5:12, 15; 2 Kings 11:5, 7, 9; 16:18; Jer 17:21–22, 24, 27; Ezek 46:1, 4, 12; Amos 8:5; Psa 92:1; Neh 10:32, 34; 13:15, 17–19, 22; 2 Chr 23:4, 8.

after the exodus from Egypt and in association with the constellation of events culminating at Sinai. What is more, the same use of ‘*al ken* (עַל־כֵּן)⁵¹ that supports the blessing and sanctifying of the seventh day immediately upon its conclusion in Genesis 2:3 likewise supports the initial giving of the Sabbath to Israel in Exodus 16:29; now that the Sabbath (שַׁבָּת, the first use of the word in Scripture) was given to the nation, Jehovah “therefore” (עַל־כֵּן) was giving them two days worth of manna on the sixth day. Exodus sixteen records the first time such a double portion was provided. Therefore, Israel for the first time has Sabbath observance mandated. So far was the Sabbath from being an eternally binding commandment observed by all the godly from creation onwards that even Israel itself did not celebrate it in the first month after the exodus; only in the second month after their departure was the festival commanded (Exodus 16:1), with its first observance on the same occasion as the first appearance of the word *Sabbath*. Furthermore, Deuteronomy 5:15 leads to the same conclusion as Exodus 16:29; the ‘*al ken* (עַל־כֵּן) clause in 5:15 indicates that the Lord commanded Israel to keep the Sabbath only after He brought Israel out of Egypt. Both the facts that the word *Sabbath* only appears in Scripture in conjunction with Israel in the days of Moses and the usage of ‘*al ken* (עַל־כֵּן) in the Pentateuch indicate that men did not celebrate the Sabbath from the time of creation, but only from the time of Moses.

Fourth, a Mosaic origin of the Sabbath receives support from passages that at face value indicate that the festival was first made known to Israel in the Exodus:⁵²

2 The LORD our God made a covenant with us in Horeb. 3 The LORD made not this covenant with our fathers, but with us, even us, who are all of us here alive this day. . . . 6 I am the LORD thy God, which brought thee out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage. . . . 12 Keep the sabbath day to sanctify it, as the LORD thy God hath commanded thee. . . . 15 And remember that thou wast a servant in the land of Egypt, and that the LORD thy God brought thee out thence through a mighty hand and by a stretched out arm: therefore the LORD thy God commanded thee to keep the sabbath day. (Deuteronomy 5:2-3, 6, 12, 15)

13 Thou camest down also upon mount Sinai, and spakest with them from heaven, and gavest

51 Note the study of this phrase earlier in this analysis.

52 John Bunyan also notes:

[I]f the seventh day sabbath was taught to men . . . from the beginning . . . by a positive precept for to be kept. . . [why then was] the punishment due to the breach of the seventh day sabbath . . . hid from men to the time of Moses; as is clear, for that it is said of the breaker of the sabbath, “They put him in ward, because it was not [as yet] declared what should be done to him” (Num 15:32–36).

But methinks, had this seventh day sabbath been imposed upon men from the beginning, the penalty or punishment due to the breach thereof had certainly been known before now.

When Adam was forbidden to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, the penalty was then, if he disobeyed, annexed to the prohibition. So also it was as to circumcision, the passover, and other ordinances for worship. How then can it be thought, that the seventh day sabbath should be imposed upon men from the beginning; and that the punishment for the breach thereof, should be hid with God for the space of two thousand years! (Gen 2:16, 17; 17:13, 14; Exo 12:43–48, 19). (John Bunyan, *Five Questions About the Nature and Perpetuity of the Seventh-Day Sabbath*, vol. 2 [Bellingham, WA: Logos Bible Software, 2006], 364)

them right judgments, and true laws, good statutes and commandments: 14 And madest known unto them thy holy sabbath, and commandedst them precepts, statutes, and laws, by the hand of Moses thy servant: 15 And gavest them bread from heaven for their hunger, and broughtest forth water for them out of the rock for their thirst, and promisedst them that they should go in to possess the land which thou hadst sworn to give them. (Nehemiah 9:13-15)

10 Wherefore I caused them to go forth out of the land of Egypt, and brought them into the wilderness. 11 And I gave them my statutes, and shewed them my judgments, which *if* a man do, he shall even live in them. 12 Moreover also I gave them my sabbaths, to be a sign between me and them, that they might know that I *am* the LORD that sanctify them. (Ezekiel 20:10-12)

The plain conclusion from these passages is that men did not celebrate the Sabbath before the days of Moses.

Fifth, every reference to the verb *qadash* (קִדַּשׁ) in the Pentateuch relates to Israel after the nation's redemption from Egypt.⁵³ Were Genesis 2:3 a reference to a binding practice on the entire human race from creation onwards, it would constitute the sole exception, the only text where the verb refers to something binding on Gentiles or something pre-Mosaic, out of its seventy-five uses in the Pentateuch. Every other use clearly refers to redeemed, post-Passover Israel. It is not a sufficient counterargument to aver that most of the Pentateuch is written for Israel, so one would expect most uses of *qadash* to speak of that nation. Indeed, not most, but the whole of the Pentateuch, including Genesis 1:1-2:3 and the rest of Genesis, has Israel as its audience, not Gentiles. Genesis is written to teach Israel her background, the origin of her customs, God's dealings with her, and so on. The verb *qadash* appears in Genesis 2:3 and then disappears totally until Exodus 13, immediately after God sets apart or sanctifies Israel to Himself and redeems the nation through the Passover Lamb. From Exodus 13 onwards, *qadash* explodes into extremely frequent usage in the rest of Exodus and Leviticus, the two books that contain the verb more than any other books in the Old Testament. These facts support the view that Genesis 2:3 is explaining why Israel is to keep the Sabbath; God, the Creator, blessed and set apart the seventh day for His chosen nation in association with His sanctifying and setting apart the nation to Himself. His loving purpose for them was firm even at creation (Exodus 20:11), and was revealed to them when He brought them out of Egypt to be their God (Deuteronomy 5:15). That is the conclusion supported by the usage of the words in Genesis 2:3. The view that Genesis 2:3 refers to a blessing and sanctifying of the seventh day that constitutes a binding pattern for the Gentiles or the world for all time is not supported by the immediate or broader context or the words employed in the verse.

⁵³ Gen 2:3; Ex 13:2; 19:10, 14, 22-23; 20:8, 11; 28:3, 38, 41; 29:1, 21, 27, 33, 36-37, 43-44; 30:29-30; 31:13; 40:9-11, 13; Lev 6:18, 27; 8:10-12, 15, 30; 10:3; 11:44; 16:19; 20:7-8; 21:8, 15, 23; 22:2-3, 9, 16, 32; 25:10; 27:14-19, 22, 26; Num 3:13; 6:11; 7:1; 8:17; 11:18; 16:37-38; 20:12-13; 27:14; Deut 5:12; 15:19; 22:9; 32:51.

Sixth, the view that the rest of God on the eighth day was not an indication that the Sabbath was universally binding on Gentiles, but that Sabbath obligation was incumbent only upon the children of Israel, appears in the most ancient extra-biblical Jewish sources. The Jews, studying their own Hebrew Scriptures, believed the Sabbath was binding on their nation alone. For example, the author of Jubilees, somewhere between the early third century and the middle second century B. C.,⁵⁴ stated:

1 And the angel of the presence spake to Moses according to the word of the Lord, saying: Write the complete history of the creation, how in six days the Lord God finished all His works and all that He created, and kept Sabbath on the seventh day and hallowed it for all ages, and appointed it as a sign for all His works. . . . And on the fourth day He created the sun and the moon and the stars, and set them in the firmament of the heaven, to give light upon all the earth, and to rule over the day and the night, and divide the light from the darkness. 9 And God appointed the sun to be a great sign on the earth for days and for sabbaths and for months and for feasts and for years and for sabbaths of years and for jubilees and for all seasons of the years. . . . 16 And He finished all his work on the sixth day—all that is in the heavens and on the earth, and in the seas and in the abysses, and in the light and in the darkness, and in everything. 17 And He gave us a great sign, the Sabbath day, that we should work six days, but keep Sabbath on the seventh day from all work. . . . And He said unto us:⁵⁵ “Behold, I will separate unto Myself a people from among all the peoples, and these shall keep the Sabbath day, and I will sanctify them unto Myself as My people, and will bless them; as I have sanctified the Sabbath day and do sanctify (it) unto Myself, even so will I bless them, and they shall be My people and I will be their God. 20 And I have chosen the seed of Jacob from amongst all that I have seen, and have written him down as My first-born son, and have sanctified him unto Myself for ever and ever; and I will teach them the Sabbath day, that they may keep Sabbath thereon from all work.” 21 And thus He created therein a sign in accordance with which they should keep Sabbath with us on the seventh day, to eat and to drink, and to bless Him who has created all things as He has blessed and sanctified unto Himself a peculiar people above all peoples, and that they should keep Sabbath together with us. . . . 25 He created heaven and earth and everything that He created in six days, and God made the seventh day holy, for all His works; therefore He commanded on its behalf that, whoever does any work thereon shall die, and that he who defiles it shall surely die. 26 Wherefore do thou command the children of Israel to observe this day that they may keep it holy and not do thereon any work, and not to defile it, as it is holier than all other days. . . . 31 And the Creator of all things blessed it, but he did not sanctify all peoples and nations to keep Sabbath thereon, but Israel alone: them alone he permitted to eat and drink and to keep Sabbath thereon on the earth. 32 And the Creator of all things blessed this day which He had created for blessing and holiness and glory above all days. 33 This law and testimony was given to the children of Israel as a law for ever unto their generations. (Jubilees 2:1, 8-9, 16-17, 19-21, 25-26, 31-32)⁵⁶

Jubilees recognized the teaching of Genesis 1:1-2:3 that God put the lights in heaven on

⁵⁴ Jacob Neusner, Alan J. Avery-Peck, and William Scott Green, eds., *The Encyclopedia of Judaism* (Leiden; Boston; Köln: Brill, 2000), 172.

⁵⁵ The angels such as the “angel of the presence” of v. 1, who supposedly also keep the Sabbath according to the author of the book of Jubilees; “The two chief orders of angels like Israel observe the Sabbath: apparently the third order, like the Gentiles, do not, as they are inferior to Israel” (Robert Henry Charles, ed., *Commentary on the Pseudepigrapha of the Old Testament*, vol. 2 [Bellingham, WA: Logos Bible Software, 2004], 14)

⁵⁶ Robert Henry Charles, ed., *Pseudepigrapha of the Old Testament*, vol. 2 (Bellingham, WA: Logos Bible Software, 2004), 13–15.

the fourth day to mark out Israel's *mo'adim*, (מוֹעֲדִים, Genesis 1:14),⁵⁷ her appointed ceremonial festivals or sacred seasons such as Passover and the Feast of Tabernacles (Leviticus 23:2, 4, 37, 44), and that He likewise rested the seventh day as a sign that Israel was to keep the Sabbath day. Both the events of the fourth and the seventh day were considered to have special respect to Israel, and the fact that they took place during the creation week was not deemed to prove that the Gentiles were also bound to keep Israel's weekly Sabbath or other ceremonial seasons or *mo'adim* (מוֹעֲדִים).⁵⁸ This ancient Jewish interpretation fits the view of the Sabbath given in Exodus 31:13-17 that "the children of Israel" specifically, as a "sign" of God's covenant with that elect nation, rather than all peoples at all times, were bound to keep the Sabbath, because "in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, and on the seventh day he rested, and was refreshed." Similarly, the Jewish translator of the Pentateuch of the LXX, writing at the very latest in the third century B. C. and very possibly quite some time earlier, supported the initial observance of the Sabbath by Israel in Exodus 16, rather than by all men or by the patriarchs, by adding to the Hebrew text's "for that the LORD hath given you the Sabbath" in Exodus 16:29 the words "this day," affirming, "the Lord has given you *this day* the Sabbath."⁵⁹ As pre-Christian Judaism limited the Sabbath to Israel, so this view

⁵⁷ That is, the word translated "seasons" in Genesis 1:14 is מוֹעֲדִים, a term for Israel's appointed feasts. Allusion to Israel's festivals in the word is recognized by the standard Hebrew lexica. Thus, Brown-Driver-Briggs notes: "It is most probable that in Gn 1:14 . . . the reference is to the sacred seasons as fixed by the moon's appearance" (Francis Brown, Samuel Rolles Driver, and Charles Augustus Briggs, *Enhanced Brown-Driver-Briggs Hebrew and English Lexicon* (Oak Harbor, WA: Logos Research Systems, 2000), 417). Similarly, the use in Genesis 1:14 is placed under the meaning "festival, time of festivity" on pg. 558 of Ludwig Koehler et al., *The Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament* (Leiden; New York: E.J. Brill, 1999). Part of the reason "God made lights, i.e., sun and moon, and stars, in the expanse of the sky" was "as signs for the sacred calendar . . . Gen 1:14" (Willem VanGemeren, ed., *New International Dictionary of Old Testament Theology & Exegesis* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1997), 163). Note that the large majority of references in the Pentateuch to the word *mo'ed* (מוֹעֵד) refer to Israel's festivals, although the other references in Genesis after 1:14 do not (Gen 1:14; 17:21; 18:14; 21:2; Ex 9:5; 13:10; 23:15; 27:21; 28:43; 29:4, 10-11, 30, 32, 42, 44; 30:16, 18, 20, 26, 36; 31:7; 33:7; 34:18; 35:21; 38:8, 30; 39:32, 40; 40:2, 6-7, 12, 22, 24, 26, 29-30, 32, 34-35; Lev 1:1, 3, 5; 3:2, 8, 13; 4:4-5, 7, 14, 16, 18; 6:9, 19, 23; 8:3-4, 31, 33, 35; 9:5, 23; 10:7, 9; 12:6; 14:11, 23; 15:14, 29; 16:7, 16-17, 20, 23, 33; 17:4-6, 9; 19:21; 23:2, 4, 37, 44; 24:3; Num 1:1; 2:2, 17; 3:7-8, 25, 38; 4:3-4, 15, 23, 25, 28, 30-31, 33, 35, 37, 39, 41, 43, 47; 6:10, 13, 18; 7:5, 89; 8:9, 15, 19, 22, 24, 26; 9:2-3, 7, 13; 10:3, 10; 11:16; 12:4; 14:10; 15:3; 16:2, 18-19; 17:7-8, 15, 19; 18:4, 6, 21-23, 31; 19:4; 20:6; 25:6; 27:2; 28:2; 29:39; 31:54; Deut 16:6; 31:10, 14). Similarly, a high proportion of references to the verb *shavath* (שָׁבַת) in the Pentateuch are associated with the Sabbath, but not in Genesis after 2:2-3 (Gen 2:2-3; 8:22; Ex 5:5; 12:15; 16:30; 23:12; 31:17; 34:21; Lev 2:13; 23:32; 25:2; 26:6, 34-35; Deut 32:26).

⁵⁸ The Sabbath (שָׁבַת) is clearly identified as one of the *mo'adim* (מוֹעֲדִים) in texts such as Ezekiel 45:17 and Hosea 2:11.

⁵⁹ The Hebrew reads: רָאָה כִּי־הוֹדָה נָתַן לָכֶם הַשַּׁבָּת. The LXX translates: ἴδετε, ὁ γὰρ κύριος ἔδωκεν ὑμῖν τὴν ἡμέραν ταύτην τὰ σάββατα, adding τὴν ἡμέραν ταύτην, emphasizing the initial observance of the Sabbath in Exodus 16.

was prominent in both the Judaism contemporary with Christ and in post-Christian Judaism. The Talmud testifies that the “Israelites were given . . . Sabbath observance” only after the exodus from Egypt in the wilderness⁶⁰ and went so far as to make the extravagant claim: “A Gentile observing the Sabbath deserves death,” because “the Sabbath is a sign between God and Israel alone.”⁶¹ Thus, “Judaism as a whole considered the Sabbath to be binding on Israel alone. It was not a matter for Gentiles[.]”⁶² The Biblical evidence is strong that the Sabbath was not observed before Exodus sixteen and is required of Israel alone, and this evidence was recognized by the Jewish interpretation of its own Pentateuch.

Lastly, consistency with the argument that God’s rest or *shavath* (שָׁבַת) on the seventh day proves obligatory Sabbath observance for all men at all times would also require the conclusion that Israel’s other ceremonial festivals were binding on all men at all times all ages. Just like the Lord’s rest on the seventh day pointed to Israel’s Sabbath, so God’s creation of the sun and moon on the fourth day pointed to Israel’s sacred seasons or *mo’adim* (מוֹעֲדִים). If the one festival is required of all because of its mention in Genesis 1:1-2:3, so must the others be. On the other hand, recognizing a proleptic reference to the sacred seasons ordained for Israel alone on the fourth day of creation, in a book composed for Israel by Moses’ pen that decrees and regulates those very festivals

⁶⁰ Sanhedrin 56b, in Jacob Neusner, *The Babylonian Talmud: A Translation and Commentary*, vol. 16 (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 2011), 298.

⁶¹ Isidore Singer, ed., *The Jewish Encyclopedia: A Descriptive Record of the History, Religion, Literature, and Customs of the Jewish People from the Earliest Times to the Present Day*, 12 Volumes (New York; London: Funk & Wagnalls, 1901–1906), 623. See Jacob Neusner, *The Babylonian Talmud: A Translation and Commentary*, vol. 16 (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 2011), 309.

⁶² *From Sabbath to Lord’s Day: a biblical, historical, and theological investigation*, ed. D. A. Carson. (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 1999), 128. Compare Walter A. Elwell and Barry J. Beitzel, *Baker Encyclopedia of the Bible* [Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1988], 1877). John Gill explains:

[T]hat the observation of the seventh day, was only designed for the children of Israel, seems manifest from Exod. 31:16, 17 *wherefore the children of Israel shall keep the sabbath, to observe the sabbath throughout their generations, for a perpetual covenant; it is a sign between me and the children of Israel;* and not between him and the rest of the world: and in ver. 14 *ye shall keep the sabbath, for it is holy unto you: on עַמְּךָ, to you, and not to the rest of the nations:* nor did they ever think that the Gentiles were obliged to observe their sabbath, only such who became proselytes to their religion; even those who were proselytes of righteousness: for a proselyte of the gate, was not bound to observe it; for so says [Hilchot Sabbat, c 20. sect. 14] Maimonides, “those who take upon them the seven commandments of Noah only, lo! They are as a proselyte of the gate, and they are free to do work on the sabbath-day for themselves, openly, as an Israelite on a common day.” Yea, they not only say, they were not obliged to keep the sabbath, but that it was not lawful for them to observe it; and that it was even punishable with death for them to regard it; for so they say [Debarim Rabba, sect. 1. fol. 234. 4], “a Gentile that keeps the sabbath before he is circumcised, is guilty of death, because it is not commanded him.” They judged them unworthy of having this precept enjoined them, as being not men, but beasts, and worse than they, and had not the privilege the ass has: hence one of their commentators [Bartenora in Misn. Sabbat, c. 24. sect. 1] says, “concerning the rest of an ass, thou (O Israelite!) art commanded; but concerning the rest of a Gentile, thou art not commanded.” (John Gill, *An Exposition of the New Testament*, vol. 1, The Baptist Commentary Series [London: Mathews and Leigh, 1809], 392–393)

for the newly redeemed nation, also allows for a proleptic reference on the seventh day to the specific Jewish festival of the Sabbath. Just as individual believers were elected from the foundation of the world (Psalm 103:17; Romans 8:30; Ephesians 1:3-5), so the nation of Israel was chosen in eternity past (Jeremiah 31:3-4; Romans 11:28), “being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will” (Ephesians 1:11). Since God elected Israel in eternity past, a reference to her Sabbaths, and beyond them to the antitypical eschatological rest to which they pointed, is entirely reasonable in the record of the creation week penned by Moses in Genesis, the book of Israel’s origins. A consideration of Israel’s place in Jehovah’s comprehensive promise-plan⁶³ and the eschatological significance of God’s post-creation rest makes such a reference entirely reasonable. Such a reference, however, by no means proves that anyone celebrated the Sabbath before the days of Moses.

4.) The Argument from the Character of the Ten Commandments:

Does Everything in the Decalogue Unchangeably and Eternally Bind the Church
As it Bound Israel under Moses?

If Genesis 2:1-3 does not establish that the Sabbath festival practiced by Israel was also binding on all nations in the antediluvian and patriarchal periods, much less does the passage establish that the Sabbath is binding in the church age in which the new creation has been inaugurated through Jesus Christ. Old Testament prophetic typology predicted first day rest in the post-resurrection Messianic age. “Christ risen from the dead” is “the firstfruits of them that slept” (1 Corinthians 15:20), and His resurrection is typified in the feast of the firstfruits in Leviticus 23. The wave offering is offered on “the morrow after the Sabbath,” that is, the first day of the week (Leviticus 23:11), and the meal offering on Pentecost is likewise offered “the morrow after the . . . sabbath” (Leviticus 23:16), on the first day of the week. The Feast of Tabernacles also always featured a “first day” and “eighth day . . . holy convocation,” so that “the first day *shall be* a sabbath, and on the eighth day *shall be* a sabbath” (Leviticus 23:35, 39). These first-day celebrations are “holy convocation[s] . . . solemn assembl[ies] . . . in which ye shall do no servile work” (Leviticus 23:7-8, 21, 25, 35, 36), that is, they are days of rest that followed the pattern of the seventh-day “Sabbath[,] [which] was observed by strict

⁶³ See Walter C. Kaiser Jr., *The Promise-Plan of God: A Biblical Theology of the Old and New Testaments* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2008).

cessation of servile work,”⁶⁴ only here the rest was observed on the first day of the week.

Frame explains:

The Old Testament . . . contains much symbolism concerning the first day, which the New Testament fulfills. . . . Pentecost wave and meal offerings occur on days “after the Sabbath” (Lev. 23:11, 16), that is, on first days of the week. The day of the meal offering is itself a Sabbath, though it is not called that. Israel is to hold a holy convocation on that day and is not to do “any ordinary work” (v. 21). So on this feast of the firstfruits, we are reminded of Jesus, the firstfruits of the dead (1 Cor. 15:20, 23). Like the Lord’s Day, Pentecost celebrates resurrection. . . . In the Feast of Tabernacles as well, there are first- and eighth-day Sabbaths (Lev. 23:35, 39). . . . Now, since Pentecost and Tabernacles each includes two first-day Sabbaths, it is likely that the two Sabbaths in the Passover feast are also on the first day (vv. 6–8). So all three of the annual feasts which look forward to the redemption of Christ feature first-day Sabbaths. . . . The Jubilee is [also] a year following a Sabbath year, culminating the system of years with a first-year symbol: a Sabbath after a Sabbath. . . . The Old Testament symbolism, therefore, tells us that when God fulfills his redemptive purpose, the first day will have some special significance. It will mark a new beginning, a new creation, new life from the dead. When redemption is accomplished, there will be an emphasis on looking back, not only on looking forward.⁶⁵

Old Testament typology supports the presence of first day rest in the Messianic age inaugurated by the resurrection of the prophesied Redeemer.

While the literal content of the other nine commandments in the Decalogue is repeated in specific statements directed to New Testament churches, the Sabbath commandment is not repeated,⁶⁶ for it is fulfilled in Christ (Colossians 2:16-17). Nothing at all in the New Testament states or implies that the Sabbath is binding in the church age. Nor is it surprising that there are no examples in the New Testament anywhere of

⁶⁴ “Feasts,” *Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible*, ed. Merrill Tenney (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1975). During these festivals, “[n]o work was to be done . . . except what was necessary for the preparation of food; on the [regular seventh-day] Sabbath, even this was prohibited (Ex. 35:2, 3)” (Carl Friedrich Keil and Franz Delitzsch, *Commentary on the Old Testament*, vol. 1 [Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1996], 333).

⁶⁵ John M. Frame, *The Doctrine of the Christian Life, A Theology of Lordship* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing, 2008), 567–568.

⁶⁶ 1st Commandment (1 Tim 2:5); 2nd (1 Cor 10:7); 3rd (Jam 5:12); 4th (*nowhere*); 5th (Eph 6:2); 6th (1 Jn 3:15); 7th (Heb 13:4); 8th (Eph 4:28); 9th (Col 3:9); 10th (Eph 5:3). Feinberg explains:

But our legalists protest that we must have some law. Surely you cannot expect us to believe that it is not wrong to steal, kill, or commit adultery in this age, they contend. We do not expect any such thing. God has taken care of this problem also. Every moral principle contained in the ten commandments has been reiterated under grace by the Spirit in the form of an exhortation with the single exception, *Mirabile dictu*, of the commandment to keep the Sabbath. The commandment to have but one God is reiterated in Paul’s statement: “There is one God” [1 Timothy 2:5]. The second commandment is found in the exhortation: “Neither be ye idolaters” [1 Corinthians 10:7]; the third: “But above all things, my brethren, swear not” [James 5:12]; the fourth is *nowhere* in the New Testament; the fifth: “Honour thy father and mother” [Ephesians 6:2]; the sixth: “no murderer hath eternal life abiding in him” [1 John 3:15]; the seventh: “whoremongers and adulterers God will judge” [Hebrews 13:4]; the eighth: “Let him that stole steal no more” [Ephesians 4:28]; the ninth: “Lie not one to another” [Colossians 3:9]; the tenth: “But fornication, and all uncleanness, or covetousness, let it not be once named among you” [Ephesians 5:3]. Does it not show the perversion of thinking of some men that they should lay most stress on the fourth commandment when it is totally done away by God? . . . [One who has] undertaken to keep a part of the law, it being an integral whole . . . is of necessity a debtor to keep the whole law. To exhort Christians to keep the Sabbath . . . is a practice wholly foreign to grace. In short, it is to encourage Christians to fall from grace [Galatians 5:4]. (“The Sabbath and the Lord’s Day,” Charles Lee Feinberg, *Bibliotheca Sacra* 95:378 [April 1938] 186)

churches meeting for worship specifically on Saturday. Indeed, the fact that Paul and his company regularly took the opportunity on the Sabbath to go to the synagogues to evangelize unbelieving Jews and Gentiles there (Acts 13:13-14, 44; 16:13; 17:2; 18:4) shows that the churches did not meet on Saturday. Godly leaders in the apostolic churches did not skip church week after week to go to synagogues instead. They evangelized in the synagogues on Saturday and assembled for Christian worship on the first day of the week. Indeed, of all the days of the week, the first day, when Christ arose, was clearly the most appropriate, while Saturday, the day Christ was dead, was the least appropriate for the church to regularly assemble for joyous worship:

The sabbath was a day of rejoicing [for Israel]; for it was kept in commemoration of God's glorious and gracious works of creation and the redemption out of Egypt. Therefore [Israel was] directed to call the sabbath a delight. But it is not a proper day for the church, Christ's spouse, to rejoice, when Christ the bridegroom lies buried in the grave, as Christ says, Matt. 9:15. "That the children of the bride-chamber cannot mourn, while the bridegroom is with them. But the time will come, when the bridegroom shall be taken from them; then shall they mourn."—While Christ was holden under the chains of death, then the bridegroom was taken from them; then it was a proper time for the spouse to mourn and not rejoice. But when Christ rose again, then it was a day of joy, because we are begotten again to a living hope, by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.⁶⁷

Consequently, while on occasion churches in the New Testament era met every day of the week (Acts 2:47), apart from such special times, every single example in the New Testament of church worship⁶⁸ was on the first day of the week (Matthew 28:8-10; Mark 16:1-2, 10-11; Luke 24:33-34; John 20:19-26; Acts 2; 20:7; 1 Corinthians 16:2), a pattern which demonstrates that the Lutheran doctrine that the day churches meet is a matter of indifference cannot be sustained. "[T]he first day of the week" was "when the disciples came together to break bread" in the Lord's Supper (Acts 20:7).⁶⁹ On the first day of the week, following the Apostolic "order," and command, not suggestion,⁷⁰ the churches in different areas assembled week by week and took up the monetary "collection" (1 Corinthians 16:1-2),⁷¹ because the first day of the week, when Christ rose from the grave

⁶⁷ Jonathan Edwards, *The Works of Jonathan Edwards*, vol. 2 (Bellingham, WA: Logos Bible Software, 2008), 99.

⁶⁸ It should be noted that Christ started the church during His earthly ministry (Matthew 18:20); the church did not start at Pentecost. See *A Word Study Demonstrating the Meaning of the Word Church (Ekklesia), and Consequently the Nature of the New Testament Church*, by Thomas Ross (<http://faithsaves.net/ekklesia-church/>).

⁶⁹ For further examination of Acts 20:7, see "Acts 20:7 and Worship on the First Day of the Week" at <http://faithsaves.net/seventh-day-adventism-and-saturday-sabbath-keeping/>.

⁷⁰ That is, both ποιήσατε and τιθέτω are imperatives, and διέταξα also indicates that an apostolic command that involves first day assembly is in view in 1 Corinthians 16:1-2.

⁷¹ For further examination of 1 Cor 16:1-2, see "1 Corinthians 16:2 and Church on the First Day of the Week" at <http://faithsaves.net/seventh-day-adventism-and-saturday-sabbath-keeping/>.

(Mark 16:9), is the “Lord’s day” (Revelation 1:10).⁷² It was consequently fitting that at the conclusion of the work of redemption, after Christ cried “It is finished!” on Friday,⁷³ He rested in the tomb on the Sabbath, and rose on the first day of the week, inaugurating the first day of the new creation, as in Genesis the original first day inaugurated the first day of the old creation.

Sabbatarians often allege that Mark 2:27 provides New Testament evidence that the Sabbath is binding in the church age. However, the passage does nothing of the kind.

Feinberg notes:

Another passage that is often misapplied is that in Mark 2:27, 28 where Christ says: “The sabbath was made for man, and not man for the sabbath: Therefore the Son of man is Lord also of the sabbath.” It is contended that this surely proves that the Sabbath is for all mankind. But does it? “Man” here is used in a specific sense for Israel, just as “man” refers only to believers when Paul states: “Now if any man build upon this foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble” [1 Corinthians 3:12]. That there was a need for the Lord to remind the Pharisees that the Sabbath was for man and not vice versa, can be seen from some of their regulations concerning the Sabbath. The Talmud teaches that Rabbi Jehudah said: “If a man stepped into loam, he should wipe his feet on the ground and not on a wall.” But Rabha said: “Why should he not do that, because it might be presumed that he plasters the wall and is engaged in building? Nay; this is not ordinary building (but more like field-work). On the contrary: If he wipe his feet on the ground he may perchance smoothen out an incavation, hence he should rather wipe his feet on the wall. For the same reason, he should not wipe his feet on the side of an incavation, lest he smoothen it out.” The rabbis taught that a small man should not wear a large shoe, lest it fall off and he be compelled to carry it on the Sabbath. He may, however, wear a large shirt, since there is no fear of his taking that off and carrying it. A woman should not go out with a torn shoe on the Sabbath, lest she be laughed at and carry the shoe. She also must not accept Chalitza (Deut 25:5–10) in such a shoe; but if she did so, the Chalitza is valid. If a person were in one place, and his hand filled with fruit put forth into another, and the Sabbath overtook him in this position, he would have to drop the fruit, since if he withdrew his full hand from one place to another, he would be carrying a burden on the Sabbath. Women are forbidden to look into a mirror on the Sabbath, because they might discover a white hair and try to pull it out, which act would be a grievous sin. A radish may be dipped into salt, but not left in it too long, since this would be similar to making a pickle. If on the Sabbath a wall had fallen on a person, and it were doubtful whether he were under the ruins, whether he were alive or dead, a Jew or Gentile, it would be duty to clear away the rubbish sufficiently to find the body. If the person were not dead, the labor would have to be continued; but if he were dead, nothing further should be done to extricate the body. And so we could go on (for this is not even one-one thousandth part of the Sabbath regulations), but do not these examples suffice to reveal the urgent reason Christ said the Sabbath was for Israel and not Israel for the Sabbath, as the rabbinical regulations had actually ordained? From the earthly life and ministry of Christ, then, even though He kept the Sabbath, we cannot find proof that it is binding upon us. In short, what He really did was to keep it, so that it would no longer need to be in force.⁷⁴

⁷² Considering “every ecclesiastical writer for the first five centuries . . . *sabbaton* [Sabbath] is never used by them for the first day, [and] *Kuriake* [the Lord’s Day] is never used by them for the seventh day” (pg. 505, *Cyclopedia of Biblical, Theological, and Ecclesiastical Literature*, John McClintock & James Strong, vol. 5).

⁷³ Concerning the day of the week of Christ’s crucifixion, see Harold W. Hoehner, *Chronological Aspects of the Life of Christ* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1977), 65-94.

⁷⁴ “The Sabbath and the Lord’s Day,” Charles Lee Feinberg, *Bibliotheca Sacra* 95:378 [April 1938] 185-187.

Furthermore, the “for” (*dia*, διὰ) in Mark 2:27, “the sabbath was made for man, and not man for the sabbath,” does not mean “binding upon” or “authoritative for” but “for the benefit of.” Indeed, the *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament Based on Semantic Domains*⁷⁵ specifically illustrates the sense *dia* as of “a marker of a participant who is benefited by an event or for whom an event occurs — ‘for the sake of, for, on behalf of, for the benefit of,’” with Mark 2:27; the lexicon renders the verse, “the Sabbath was made for the benefit of mankind and not mankind for the benefit of the Sabbath.” This understanding of *dia* fits the context perfectly (Mark 2:23-26, 28, 3:1-6). Verse 28 (“therefore”) draws a conclusion from v. 27: “The Son of man, because He is Lord of mankind, has the authority to determine the laws and use of the Sabbath which was made to benefit mankind.” Such an understand makes sense of the verse, but “The Son of man has authority over the Sabbath because the Sabbath is binding on all men” does not.⁷⁶ The Sabbatarian declaration that Mark 2:27 requires submission to the Sabbath on the part of every member of the human race actually reverses the point the Lord Jesus made to the Pharisees—He taught man’s priority over the Sabbath, while Sabbatarians make the Sabbath over man. What is more, “man” is used elsewhere in Scripture for particular categories of men, rather than consistently referring to each and every human,⁷⁷ and the Pharisaic regulations imposed on Israelite “man” are clearly under consideration in Mark 2. In addition, the fact that something benefits mankind does not mean that each and every man must participate in it. For example, chemotherapy was invented for the

⁷⁵ Johannes P. Louw and Eugene Albert Nida, *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament: Based on Semantic Domains* (New York: United Bible Societies, 1996), 90:38.

⁷⁶ Compare also “thank God for having created the world, with all things therein, for the sake of [*dia*] man” (χαριστῶμεν τῷ Θεῷ ὑπὲρ τε τοῦ τὸν κόσμον ἐκτικέναι σὺν πᾶσι τοῖς ἐν αὐτῷ διὰ τὸν ἄνθρωπον, Justin Martyr, “Dialogue of Justin with Trypho, a Jew,” in *The Apostolic Fathers with Justin Martyr and Irenaeus*, ed. Alexander Roberts, James Donaldson, and A. Cleveland Coxe, vol. 1, The Ante-Nicene Fathers [Buffalo, NY: Christian Literature Company, 1885], 215), which clearly means “for the benefit of man,” but can hardly indicate that all things in the world are ordinances binding upon man to which he must submit. Or consider the *Apocalypse of Sedrach*: “Sedrach saith: And why didst Thou make the sea? . . . The Lord saith to him: For man’s sake” (λέγει Σεδράχ: Καὶ διὰ τί ἐποίησας τὴν θάλασσαν; . . . λέγει ὁ κύριος: Διὰ τὸν ἄνθρωπον, Allan Menzies, ed., “The Apocalypse of Sedrach,” in *The Gospel of Peter, the Diatessaron of Tatian, the Apocalypse of Peter, the Visio Pauli, the Apocalypses of the Virgil and Sedrach, the Testament of Abraham, the Acts of Xanthippe and Polyxena, the Narrative of Zosimus, the Apology of Aristides, the Epistles of Clement (Complete Text), Origen’s Commentary on John, Books I-X, and Commentary on Matthew, Books I, II, and X-XIV*, trans. Andrew Rutherford, vol. 9, The Ante-Nicene Fathers [New York: Christian Literature Company, 1897], 177 [3:5-6]). The sea is hardly a binding authority over all men, but it does exist to benefit the part of the human race that gathers fish and other goods from it.

⁷⁷ For example, Ezekiel 34:30-31 calls the nation of Israel “man,” the singular אָדָם being employed, as it is throughout the Old Testament, and John 7:51 speaks of judging “man” when a very particular man is in view (Μὴ ὁ νόμος ἡμῶν κρίνει τὸν ἄνθρωπον, ἐὰν μὴ ἀκούσῃ παρ’ αὐτοῦ πρότερον καὶ γινῶ τί ποιεῖ;); note that both John 7:51 and Mark 2:27 employ the generic article on ἄνθρωπος.

benefit of man, but it certainly is not for every member of the race. Snowplows are for the benefit of man but not relevant to those living in the tropics. For that matter, the very Judaism that affirmed that the Sabbath was for Israel alone likewise stated that “the Sabbath was given to man, not man to the Sabbath,”⁷⁸ “The Sabbath is delivered to you [Israel], and not you to the Sabbath.”⁷⁹ Christ taught that man, who was created long before the Sabbath’s appointment for Israel, was not to be enslaved to that ordinance. Mark 2:27 should be understood as affirming that the Sabbath was made for the benefit of members of the category *man*—namely, those in that category who were Israelites—rather than as an affirmation that the Sabbath is binding upon every single individual in the category *man*. Modern Sabbatarians must impose the latter conclusion upon the verse, since neither the grammar nor the context of Mark 2:27 affirm it.

In addition to the examination of specific proof-texts, the Sabbath question must be evaluated against the background of the broader question of the Law’s continuity and discontinuity for the church after the coming of Christ. Not a single one of the 2,300 references to the word *Israel* in the Old and New Testaments equate *Israel* with the *church*. Indeed, the Jewish people are specifically distinguished from the church as an entirely different entity (1 Corinthians 10:32). Therefore, no valid basis exists for concluding that a sign given to Israel binds the church. The church is not a new Israel, and sound hermeneutics do not allow for the assumption that everything commanded Israel automatically binds the church also.

The presence of the Sabbath ordinance in the Ten Commandments also does not automatically prove that Israel’s Saturday worship festival is binding on the church. Ceremonial elements that pertained specifically to Israel alone are clearly present in the Decalogue. Israel only was brought out of slavery in Egypt (Exodus 20:1; Deuteronomy 5:15) and was present at Horeb (Deuteronomy 5:2). Israel only received a promise of a long life in Canaan for obedience to the fifth commandment (Exodus 20:12; Deuteronomy 5:16); the literal application of the text cannot possibly apply to Gentiles who neither live in that country nor have even visited it. Indeed, the Sabbath commandment was intimately connected with regulations clearly pertinent only to Israel,

⁷⁸ *Mek. Šabbata* §1 [on Ex 31:14], cited in C. A. Evans, “Old Testament in the Gospels,” ed. Joel B. Green and Scot McKnight, *Dictionary of Jesus and the Gospels* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1992), 580. Brackets in the source quotation have been removed, and the generic term “man” instead of the modern gender-neutral “people” has been employed.

⁷⁹ R. T. France, *The Gospel of Mark: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Carlisle: W.B. Eerdmans; Paternoster Press, 2002), 147, citing *b. Yom.* 85b; see Jacob Neusner, *The Babylonian Talmud: A Translation and Commentary*, vol. 5a (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 2011), 333.

from Sabbath sacrifices to the civil penalty of death for Sabbath violations.⁸⁰ This entire package was involved in the understanding of the original Jewish audience in the wilderness when they considered the command to keep the Sabbath, and there is no solid exegetical basis to divide it into an eternal moral portion pertinent to all men and a temporally bounded portion limited to Israel alone. What is more, a consideration of ancient Near-Eastern treaty formats explains the presence of the ceremonial ordinance of the Sabbath within the Ten Commandments:

Archaeology helps us to understand why in the midst of the covenant Decalogue [one] find[s] a ceremonial law. In the covenant treaties of the Great Kings in the Ancient Near East, a ceremony would be given in the midst of the treaty to act as a sign of covenantal obedience and submissiveness by the vassal slave to the conquering king. . . . The structure of the Decalogue is like the treaties of the Great Kings.⁸¹ The Sabbath was the sign of Israel's covenantal obedience and submission (Exodus 31:12–17; Isaiah 56:4–[7]).⁸²

God, the suzerain or Great King, established the Sabbath at Sinai as a sign of covenantal obedience for His vassal, Israel. Such a sign for Israel is by no means automatically binding on non-Israelites. The simple presence of the Sabbath within the Ten Commandments does not establish its binding character on all people of all time.

More fundamentally, not the prophets only, but the law also prophesied of the Messiah, Jesus, and not prophetic predictions only, but the law also was fulfilled in Him (Matthew 5:17; Luke 24:44; John 1:45). Rather than dividing the law into moral, ceremonial, and civil portions, an idea that is by no means clearly laid out in Scripture itself, however pedagogically useful it may be, saints in the church age are to recognize the entire law as pointing to and fulfilled in Christ.⁸³ The New Testament nowhere

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Feinburg notes:

Many in their zeal to keep the Sabbath forget that it is not an isolated factor in a religious code, but is an integral part of a legal system. The infringement of this law in any particular meant the penalty of death. In Numbers 15:32–36 we read of the incident where a man who gathered sticks on the Sabbath was stoned to death. This would have been the penalty for one lighting a fire on the Sabbath [Exodus 35:3]. Can modern Gentile Sabbath-keepers evade this issue and declare their innocence before the law? They do make a distinction between what is called the “moral law” and the “ceremonial law.” Suffice it to say that Scripture knows of no such distinction. Nor does this relieve them of their difficulty because, granted that the regulations for punishment were ceremonial, how about the sacrifices God commanded (Numbers 28:9, 10) to be brought on the Sabbath? If these are also declared to be ceremonial, then what was there left in the Sabbath observance to be called “moral”? (“The Sabbath and the Lord’s Day,” Charles Lee Feinberg, *Bibliotheca Sacra* 95:378 [April 1938] 183)

81

Meredith Kline, *The Treaty of the Great King* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans: 1963), 27–44.

82

Robert A. Morey, *Is the Sabbath for Today?* (Orange, CA: Research/Education Foundation, 1995)

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An appeal to Christ’s keeping of the Sabbath during His earthly ministry does not establish its binding character for the New Testament church. Christ perfectly kept every aspect of Israel’s law, and if His pattern establishes the continuing authority of the Sabbath, it establishes the continuing authority of every last one of Israel’s ceremonial regulations also. Feinberg notes:

It is to the earthly life and ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ that many go for their proof that the law and its Sabbath are still in force today. Such a position fails to grasp the truth of the different dispensations, Jewish and Christian, the one on this side of the cross and the other on the other side. Besides, none of the New Testament had been written during the earthly life and ministry of Christ, so that the rule of life for the

exempts the Ten Commandments as a portion of law distinguished from the rest which is not fulfilled in Christ. On the contrary, the New Testament is so far from stating that those laws “written and engraven in stones” are immutable and unchanged by the coming of Christ that they are specifically called a “ministration of death” that is “done away” and “abolished,” only the life-giving “spirit” of which remains; “tables of stone” are set aside, “fleshy tables of the heart” alone remain (2 Corinthians 3). The Ten Commandments were not given to the Gentiles (Ephesians 2:12; Deuteronomy 4:13), and Christians are explicitly said to not pertain to Mount Sinai and the covenant given there (Exodus 19:12-19; Deuteronomy 4:10-13; 5:22-26; Hebrews 12:18-25). The manner in which anything in the Old Testament is considered binding on the New Testament Christian must be determined by the grid of fulfillment in Christ;⁸⁴ the new era of the new creation in Christ results in a radical re-visioning of the revelation of the old covenant around the culminating entrance into history of Christ and the inauguration of the Messianic age. The new creation will climax in the eternal eschatological new heaven, new earth, and new Jerusalem in which those who receive a new birth and new heart will dwell eternally. This new creation was inaugurated in the incarnation of Christ, the second Adam and new man. In Christ’s human nature the first sinless creation entered the old fallen world, and the New Covenant saints united to Christ through regeneration belong to the new eschatological creation. Thus, Scripture delineates distinct eras in which the manner of God’s relation to men undergoes striking changes. At the least, striking changes pertain to the cessation of God’s working when creation was complete (Genesis 2:1-3), the “it is finished” when redemption was complete and salvation

believer had not yet been given. This is later found in detail in the Epistles. Moreover, those who would keep the Sabbath fail to realize in what role, as it were, Christ ministered upon earth. Paul tells us plainly: “Now I say that Jesus Christ was a minister of the circumcision for the truth of God, to confirm the promises made unto the fathers” [Romans 15:8]. So we see that we cannot find our rule of life under grace in Christ’s keeping of the law. He said: “Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfill. For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled” [Matthew 5:18-19]. These verses are often quoted to substantiate the keeping of the Sabbath. In the first place, it should be noted that Christ is here stating what He came to do and not what He would have us to do. He came to fulfill all the law, because carnal man could not. He came to pay the penalty of the law, so that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us by the Spirit [Romans 8:4], “for if righteousness come by the law, then Christ is dead in vain” [Galatians 2:21]. Of what vital importance was the death of our precious Lord Jesus! (“The Sabbath and the Lord’s Day,” Charles Lee Feinberg, *Bibliotheca Sacra* 95:378 [April 1938] 184)

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It is noteworthy that there are suggestions in Jewish tradition that the Messianic age would be one in which the Law would lose its central position, the Messiah becoming the center. Thus, following “two thousand years of Torah, two thousand years of the time of the Messiah” would come (b. Sanh. 97b, in Jacob Neusner, *The Babylonian Talmud: A Translation and Commentary*, vol. 17b [Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 2011], 34). The “religious duties” of Israel’s ceremonies would be “nullified in the age to come” (b. Nid. 61b, in Jacob Neusner, *The Babylonian Talmud: A Translation and Commentary*, vol. 22d [Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 2011], 296). Compare R. N. Longenecker, *Paul: Apostle of Liberty* (New York, NY: Harper, 1964) 131.

promised moved to salvation accomplished (John 19:30), and the “it is done” when the new heavens and new earth are complete, history ends, and eternity begins (Revelation 21:6).⁸⁵ Thus, the church does not pertain to the old creation, but to the new creation (Colossians 3:10; 2 Corinthians 5:17; Revelation 21:1; Titus 3:5 & Matthew 19:28). Consequently, even if one were to grant for the sake of argument that the Sabbath was binding, not on Israel alone, but also on Gentiles or on all men from the time of the first creation onward, it would not prove that observance of the festival of seventh-day rest remains binding on the church which participates in the second or new creation in Christ. Circumcision was clearly pre-Mosaic, clearly practiced by the patriarchs, and even called for a death penalty for its neglect (Genesis 17:9-14), but in the new age in Christ being spiritually circumcised (Romans 2:28-29; 1 Corinthians 7:18-19) through union with Christ (Colossians 2:11) is what counts; requiring the Divinely ordained and key patriarchal ordinance of physical circumcision is a “yoke of bondage” (Galatians 5:1-6) and those who still affirm its binding character are “dogs,” “evil workers,” and the “concision” or mutilation (Philippians 3:1-3). Similarly, the distinction between clean and unclean animals was known even in the days of Noah (Genesis 7:2, 8; 8:20) and was strictly enforced in the law (Leviticus 11), but in Christ for those who have entered the new age through union with Him all foods are clean (Mark 7:17-19; 1 Corinthians 10:27; Acts 10:13-15), and imposing the dietary restrictions incumbent from hoary antiquity is to “depart from the faith” following “doctrines of devils” (1 Timothy 4:1-5). Both circumcision and the distinction between clean and unclean animals are fulfilled in Christ despite their pre-Sinai origin and patriarchal practice. They are not binding in the way they were in pre-Christian dispensations, but are authoritative for Christian practice only in the sense the New Testament says that they are so—that is, they present the need to become a new creation through receiving a circumcised heart and they show the need to be holy and separate from all that is morally unclean. Likewise, in the new creation in Christ the Sabbath ordinance, even if one granted that it was not for Israel only but was an integral part of the old creation itself, is nevertheless fulfilled in the One who has brought in true salvation-rest in Himself so that pre-Christian Sabbath practice is no longer binding on Christ’s church. The Sabbath is explicitly called a shadow that is fulfilled in the Lord Jesus (Colossians 2:16-17),⁸⁶ and its celebration is not required (Romans 14:5-6) because it points to the salvation-rest in Jesus Christ entered into by

⁸⁵ Compare Walter C. Kaiser Jr., *The Promise-Plan of God: A Biblical Theology of the Old and New Testaments* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2008), 41.

⁸⁶ Note the study on Colossians 2:16-17 at <http://faithsaves.net/seventh-day-adventism-and-Saturday-sabbath-keeping/>.

those who believe, not those who assemble for worship on Saturday (Hebrews 3:7-4:13). Paul feared that people were not truly saved when they started keeping the sabbath and other Jewish festivals (Galatians 4:10-11). Since the Sabbath was a type of Christ, it has been fulfilled and does not continue in the church age.⁸⁷ The Lord's Day is not the Sabbath transferred from Saturday to Sunday, because all types were restricted to the Old Testament, and none are initiated or continue in the New Testament church. Not the prophets only, but the law also prophesied of Christ (Matthew 11:13), and not the prophets only, but the law also is fulfilled as a whole in Him (Matthew 5:17). In the era of fulfillment the only binding aspect of the Sabbath ordinance is that which the Redeemer has commanded for His church in the New Testament, namely, the need to enter into God's rest by faith (Hebrews 3:7-4:13).

When the New Testament hermeneutical grid of fulfillment in Christ is employed in deriving ethical obligations from the Old Testament, what are some of the results? "Thou shalt not kill" (Exodus 20:13; Deuteronomy 5:17) requires that the Christian abstain from unjust anger and hatred (Matthew 5:21-22). "Thou shalt not commit adultery" (Exodus 20:14; Deuteronomy 5:18) requires that he not have even a lustful thought (Matthew 5:27-28). The law about cities of refuge for murders (Numbers 35:6-15) calls on men in the dispensation of grace to find refuge in Christ from eternal death (Hebrews 6:18). The law forbidding the muzzling of oxen requires churches to provide financially for their ministers (Deuteronomy 25:4; 1 Corinthians 9:9-10; 1 Timothy 5:17-18). The Passover ceremony (Exodus 12) calls men to be saved through Christ's blood,

⁸⁷ See Lewis Sperry Chafer, *Systematic Theology* (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publications, 1993), 308-309 for a concise overview of Biblical typology. The key New Testament words for the doctrine are *typos* (τύπος), *antitypos* (ἀντίτυπος), *upodeigma* (ὑπόδειγμα), *deigma* (δείγμα) and *skia* (σκιά). The three word groups are tied together in Hebrews 8:5's association of τύπος, ὑπόδειγμα, and σκιά. Types include persons such as Adam (Romans 5:14), things such as the tabernacle (Acts 7:43; Hebrews 9:23-24), regulations such as the dietary laws (Colossians 2:16-17), events such as the Flood of Noah (1 Peter 3:20-21), the destruction of Sodom (Jude 7), or the exodus from Egypt and the wilderness wanderings (1 Corinthians 10:1-11; Hebrews 4:11), festivals such as the new moons and Sabbaths (Colossians 2:16-17), and institutions such as the priestly orders of Melchizedek and Aaron, the sacrificial system, and the entire Old Covenant law (Hebrews 8:5; 10:1). All types are found in the Old Testament and are not practiced in the New Testament church; therefore, the Sabbath, as a type, does not continue in the church. The objection that the Sabbath existed before the Fall, and therefore cannot be a type (e. g., J. H. Waggoner, *The Truth Found* [Battle Creek, MI: Steam Press, SDA Publishing Association, 1883] 11-12) fails, because Scripture clearly identifies the Sabbath as a type (Colossians 2:16-17); Scripture never limits types to after the Fall; and Scripture specifically states that Adam was a type, and he clearly existed before the Fall, as did other types such as the tree of life. Nor is it valid to argue that since the Sabbath is not totally fulfilled until the final rest of the New Jerusalem, a Sunday Sabbath continues in the church today (e. g., pg. 47, "A Sabbath Rest Still Awaits the People of God," Richard B. Gaffin, Jr., in *Pressing Toward the Mark*, ed. C. G. Dennison and R. C. Gamble [Philadelphia, PA: The Orthodox Presbyterian Church, 1986] 33-51). No Old Testament type whatever continues in the church, and other types which point to yet future events, such as the Feast of Tabernacles, which points forward to Millennial and ultimately eternal rest (Zechariah 14:16-19), are not celebrated in the New Testament church.

to live holy lives, and to support a holy church, separated from iniquity and the unrepentant ungodly (1 Corinthians 5:7-8). What about “Remember the sabbath day” and God’s creation rest (Exodus 20:8-11; Genesis 2:1-3)? They call men in the church age to enter into salvation-rest through persevering faith in Jesus Christ (Hebrews 3:7-4:13).

Thus, the New Testament is clear that God’s rest on the seventh day of creation points forward to that rest in Christ entered into by faith and prepared for the elect people of God from the foundation of the world. This salvation-rest is the true Sabbath-observance or *sabbatismos* (σαββατισμός)⁸⁸ of New Testament saints (Hebrews 4:9).

⁸⁸ There is no extant evidence of pre-Christian use of the word *sabbatismos* (σαββατισμός). Paul specifically employs the word in Hebrews to make his point about the Sabbath being fulfilled in Christ. Compare the uses of the word below in early Christendom, which were almost certainly dependent on the use in Hebrews 4:9. Justin Martyr:

“But if we do not admit this, we shall be liable to fall into foolish opinions, as if it were not the same God who existed in the times of Enoch and all the rest, who neither were circumcised after the flesh, nor observed Sabbaths, nor any other rites, seeing that Moses enjoined such observances; or that God has not wished each race of mankind continually to perform the same righteous actions: to admit which, seems to be ridiculous and absurd. Therefore we must confess that He, who is ever the same, has commanded these and such like institutions on account of sinful men, and we must declare Him to be benevolent, foreknowing, needing nothing, righteous and good. But if this be not so, tell me, sir, what you think of those matters which we are investigating.” And when no one responded: “Wherefore, Trypho, I will proclaim to you, and to those who wish to become proselytes, the divine message which I heard from that man [a Christian who was encountered earlier by the sea shore]. Do you see that the elements are not idle, and keep no Sabbaths? Remain as you were born. For if there was no need of circumcision before Abraham, or of the *observance of Sabbaths* [σαββατισμός], of feasts and sacrifices, before Moses; no more need is there of them now, after that, according to the will of God, Jesus Christ the Son of God has been born without sin, of a virgin sprung from the stock of Abraham. For when Abraham himself was in uncircumcision, he was justified and blessed by reason of the faith which he reposed in God, as the Scripture tells. Moreover, the Scriptures and the facts themselves compel us to admit that He received circumcision for a sign, and not for righteousness. So that it was justly recorded concerning the people, that the soul which shall not be circumcised on the eighth day shall be cut off from his family. And, furthermore, the inability of the female sex to receive fleshly circumcision, proves that this circumcision has been given for a sign, and not for a work of righteousness. For God has given likewise to women the ability to observe all things which are righteous and virtuous; but we see that the bodily form of the male has been made different from the bodily form of the female; yet we know that neither of them is righteous or unrighteous merely for this cause, but [is considered righteous] by reason of piety and righteousness. (Justin Martyr, “Dialogue of Justin with Trypho, a Jew,” ch. 23, in *The Apostolic Fathers with Justin Martyr and Irenaeus*, ed. Alexander Roberts, James Donaldson, and A. Cleveland Coxe, vol. 1, The Ante-Nicene Fathers [Buffalo, NY: Christian Literature Company, 1885], 206)

Likewise, note the use in the *Acts of the Holy Apostles Peter and Paul*:

The Jews . . . came . . . saying . . . Peter . . . has destroyed all the bulwarks of our law; for he has prevented the *keeping of Sabbaths* [σαββατισμός] and new moons, and the holidays appointed by the law. And Paul, answering, said to them . . . if his teaching be true, supported by the book and testimony of the Hebrews, it becomes all of us to submit to him. (Alexander Roberts, James Donaldson, and A. Cleveland Coxe, eds., “Acts of the Holy Apostles Peter and Paul,” in *Fathers of the Third and Fourth Centuries: The Twelve Patriarchs, Excerpts and Epistles, the Clementina, Apocrypha, Decretals, Memoirs of Edessa and Syriac Documents, Remains of the First Ages*, trans. Alexander Walker, vol. 8, The Ante-Nicene Fathers [Buffalo, NY: Christian Literature Company, 1886], 478–479)

Concerning the term *sabbatismos* and its appearance in Plutarch’s *Moralia* 166a, note:

[A] “sabbath observance” (σαββατισμός). The latter term, used in place of *κατάπαυσις*, appears [in Hebrews 4:9] for the first time in Greek literature. . . . The word appears in Plutarch *Superst.* 3(166A) in a list of superstitious practices: *πηλώσεις, καταβορβορώσεις, σαββατισμούς, ρίψεις ἐπὶ πρόσωπον, αἰσχράς προκαθίσεις, ἀλλοκότους προσκυνήσεις*, “smearing with mud, wallowing in filth, sabbath observances, casting oneself down with face to the ground, disgraceful besieging of the gods, and uncouth prostrations”

This is the rest which all who trust in Christ alone enter into (Hebrews 4:3), while those who rest every Saturday, but do not trust in the Messiah,⁸⁹ have never and will never enter into that rest but will suffer everlastingly under God’s wrath (Hebrews 4:7-8). The death penalty prescribed in the Old Testament for not keeping the Sabbath (Exodus 31:14-15; 35:2) in the Messianic New Testament era of fulfillment represents the everlasting spiritual death of those who fail to believe on Christ and so come short of His promised rest (Hebrews 4:1-11; cf. Matthew 11:28-30). Genesis 2:1-3, for those partaking of the inaugurated although not fully realized new creation in Christ, binds Christian practice not in the manner the Old Testament connected it with the practice of Israel but in the way the New Testament connects it to the practice of the church. The New Testament, in its only quotation from Genesis 2:1-3 in Hebrews 4:4,⁹⁰ affirms that the creation rest of God and the Sabbath rest of the Old Testament point to the eschatological salvation-rest Christian saints have in union with Jesus Christ. Therefore, the abiding binding significance of the Old Testament Sabbath ordinance in the New Testament age is to rest in Christ for salvation and so enter into the rest of His coming earthly kingdom and His eternal rest in the New Jerusalem following the Millennium. The requirement to celebrate a seventh-day holy festival is gone, swallowed up with the old age through the coming of Christ.

Clearly, the New Testament explicates in Hebrews 3-4⁹¹ a theme already found in the Old Testament theme of *rest*—God’s rest in Genesis 2:1-3 points forward to the

(Loeb 2.461, modified). Bentley’s emendation (Loeb 2.460) of the text to βαπτισμούς, though widely accepted, is unnecessary, since Plutarch knows of and castigates the superstitious Jewish observance of the Sabbath. Cf. *Superst.* 8(196C). . . . As both etymology and later attestations [such as the Christian works Justin *Dial.* 23.3; *Ap. Const.* 2.36.2; Epiphanius *Pan.* 30.2.2] indicate . . . it . . . designates more comprehensively sabbath observance. . . . A foretaste of the eschatological sabbath festivity may be actualized in . . . the community. (Harold W. Attridge and Helmut Koester, *The Epistle to the Hebrews: A Commentary on the Epistle to the Hebrews*, Hermeneia—a Critical and Historical Commentary on the Bible [Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1989], 130–131)

⁸⁹ Such as those who believe in the false gospel of salvation by works taught by Ellen White and Seventh-Day Adventism; see <http://faithsaves.net/Bible-truths-for-seventh-day-adventist-friends/>.

⁹⁰ Consider also that *shavath* (שָׁבַת), found twice in Genesis 2:2-3 and translated “rest” each time in that passage, can equally be rendered as “cease,” as it is in Genesis 8:22 and in the majority of its appearances in the Old Testament. Thus, Genesis 2:2-3 could legitimately be rendered: “And on the seventh day God ended his work which he had made; and he ceased on the seventh day from all his work which he had made. And God blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it: because that in it he had ceased from all his work which God created and made.” Compare Genesis 2:2-3 with Hebrews 4:10: “For he that is entered into his rest, he also hath ceased [καταπαύω, the verb translating שָׁבַת in Genesis 2:2-3, LXX] from his own works, as God *did* from his.”

⁹¹ The eschatological emphasis in the theme of Biblical *rest* is developed in other texts also. Since Hebrews 3-4 is the only passage quoting Genesis 2:1-3 in the New Testament, it receives the focus in the following analysis.

eschatological rest He has prepared for His people.⁹² The Sabbath was an eschatological, proleptic sign of future rest; God’s creative activities flowed into a universal rest period. Man was the climactic creation on day six, and the rest of the seventh day was God’s rest, a rest in which He intended man to participate. God did not rest on the seventh day for His own benefit (cf. John 5:17), but to offer man His own rest, a rest the race possessed before the Fall, lost through Adam’s transgression, and has restored to it through Christ’s redemption. Through Christ believers enter into rest now by coming into saving union with Him, and through Christ their ultimate entry is secured into the eternal rest of the people of God. Israel was to learn from the fact that the seventh day of creation does not have an “evening and morning” attached to it that God’s promise of rest is perpetually offered to men through the Messiah. God created man the sixth day, gave him specific commands in 1:28, but did not command man to enter into His rest on the seventh day because, in his unfallen condition, he already participated in that Divine rest. The purpose of God’s perfect creation, described in days one through six, is for that creation to possess rest in fellowship with God its Creator. Redeemed creation will do so eternally, and saints possess that rest in part now in Christ, and will possess it in full in the consummated new creation. Furthermore, since the seventh-day rest of God at the end of the completed creation was designed for man, even after the Fall God would work for man to be able to participate in it; hence the book of Hebrews draws the conclusion that from the foundation of the world God’s rest was offered to men (Hebrews 4:4-10). Before Christ the saints had that rest secured to them by faith (Hebrews 4:4-7; 11), and so in the dispensation of grace those who believe, not those who turn from Christ back to Judaism and take the yoke of bondage of the Sabbath and the law, are those who enter into God’s eschatological rest.

Israel recognized “the world that is to come” as “wholly Sabbath rest for eternity,”⁹³ the “Sabbath of the future bliss,”⁹⁴ “the day which is wholly Sabbath (rest), in which there is no eating or drinking, buying or selling; but the righteous will sit there with crowns on their heads and delight in the radiance of the *sh^ekhina* [glory of God].”⁹⁵

⁹² Concerning the broader Biblical theme of God’s rest, see Walter C. Kaiser, Jr., “The Promise Theme and the Theology of Rest,” *Bibliotheca Sacra* 130 (April-June 1973): 135-50, elec. acc. <http://faithsaves.net/eschatology/>. Alternatively, see Walter C. Kaiser, Jr., *The Uses of the Old Testament in the New* (Chicago, IL: Moody Press, 1985) 153-175.

⁹³ *M. Tamid* 7:4, in Jacob Neusner, *The Mishnah: A New Translation* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1988), 873.

⁹⁴ *Gen. Rab.* 17:7.

⁹⁵ Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, and Gerhard Friedrich, eds., *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964-) 34, citing H. L. Strack and P. Billerbeck, *Kommentar zum NT aus Talmud und Midrasch*, 1922 ff.

Westcott notes:

The Jewish teachers dwelt much upon the symbolical meaning of the Sabbath as prefiguring “the world to come.” . . . [For example]: “The people of Israel said: Lord of the whole world, shew us the world to come. God, blessed be He, answered: Such a pattern is the Sabbath” (*Jalk. Rub.* p. 95, 4). In this connexion the double ground which is given for the observance of the Sabbath, the rest of God (Ex. 20:11) and the deliverance from Egypt (Deut. 5:15), finds its spiritual confirmation. The final rest of man answers to the idea of Creation realized after the Fall by Redemption.⁹⁶

Paul identifies God’s rest eschatologically in Hebrews 3-4 in keeping with this correct interpretation of the Old Testament data regarding God’s rest. The *sabbatismos* that remains for the people of God is the salvation-rest that is entered into by those who believe. They currently by faith have rest in Jesus Christ, having come to Him and received rest from Him (Matthew 11:28-30),⁹⁷ and they have a certain future rest when the kingdom of God is ultimately established at Christ’s second coming, after which they will possess millennial and then eternal rest in the New Jerusalem (Hebrews 12:22-24) with the Old Testament saints who believed to the saving of their souls and consequently manifested their faith by perseverance (Hebrews 10:38-12:2). That is, the Apostle’s point in Hebrews 3:7-4:13 is that “we which have believed do enter into rest” (Hebrews 4:3), that rest that remains to the people of God (Hebrews 4:9). Genesis 2:1-3, as interpreted by the infallible text of the book of Hebrews, teaches that people in the church age need to enter into God’s rest by believing on Jesus Christ.

Consequently, the *sabbatismos* for the church in the Messianic age is not Saturday worship but “the eternal sabbath celebration of salvation.”⁹⁸ To conclude from Hebrews 4:9 that the Jewish Saturday Sabbath festival is binding on the New Testament church is to radically misread the passage, which does not have a specific day in view.⁹⁹ First, if

⁹⁶ Brooke Foss Westcott, ed., *The Epistle to the Hebrews the Greek Text with Notes and Essays*, 3d ed., Classic Commentaries on the Greek New Testament (London: Macmillan, 1903), 99–100.

⁹⁷ Consider in the context of Matthew’s Gospel that Christ’s promise of rest for believers in Matthew 11:28-30 is placed immediately before the Lord’s conflict with the Pharisees over Sabbath practices in Matthew 12.

⁹⁸ Horst Robert Balz and Gerhard Schneider, *Exegetical Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1990–), 219, art. σαββατισμός.

⁹⁹ If one were to (incorrectly) read the passage as a discussion of a day of worship, the one day that could not be mandated for the church would be Saturday. The rest of Hebrews 3:7-4:13 was yet future in the days of King David, when many were keeping the Saturday Sabbath (Hebrews 4:7). The rest pertains to “another day,” a different one from that practiced by Old Testament Israel under Joshua (Hebrews 4:7-10). The *rest* of the pericope in Hebrews has nothing to do with establishing a specific festival of weekly rest for the church, but if it did, Saturday would be excluded by necessity.

Furthermore, an examination of the texts where the verb *sabbatidzo* (σαββατίζω) appears in the LXX (Ex 16:30; Lev 23:32; 26:34–35; 2 Chr 36:21; 1 Esdr 1:55; 2 Mac 6:6) demonstrates that the verb is employed not only for the Saturday Sabbath (Exodus 16:30) but also for the yearly Sabbath associated with the Day of Atonement (Leviticus 23:32). If the use of the noun *sabbatismos* (σαββατισμός) in Hebrews 4:9 is to prove the binding nature of the Saturday Sabbath in the dispensation of grace, it would also prove the binding character of the Sabbaths associated with ceremonial festivals such as Israel’s Day of Atonement.

Paul had intended to say that the Sabbath festival remained for the church to observe, he would have used the actual word *Sabbath* (σάββατον). By either newly coining or adopting the extremely rare word *sabbatismos* (σαββατισμός) instead and identifying the *sabbatismos* with God’s “rest” (*katapausis*, κατάπαυσις)¹⁰⁰ into which believers enter by faith, the Apostle clearly indicated that an antitypical salvation-rest, not a Saturday festival day, remained for the New Testament church. The actual word *Sabbath* appears sixty-eight times in the New Testament.¹⁰¹ Paul could have easily stated: “The Sabbath festival remains for the people of God,” but he did not. On the contrary, he specified that the Sabbath was a “shadow” and a type of Christ that is now done away (Colossians 2:16-17). Second, the “rest,” the *katapausis* or *sabbatismos* that Paul speaks of in Hebrews 3:7-4:13, was not entered into by unsaved Jews who kept the Sabbath in the wilderness (Hebrews 4:5; Psalm 95:7-11).¹⁰² If people who kept the Jewish Sabbath nevertheless never entered into the *rest* or *sabbatismos* of which Paul speaks, clearly the *sabbatismos* is not the celebration of the Saturday holy day. Third, having a hard heart keeps one from entering into the “rest” under consideration (Hebrews 4:7-8). Many Jews keep the Sabbath and many in Christendom worship on the Lord’s Day while still possessing hard hearts, so the adoption of a specific day of worship cannot be the *rest* in question. Fourth, the *sabbatismos* is not entered into by bringing Judaism’s Sabbath into the church, but by believing the preached gospel: “Unto us was the gospel preached, as well as unto them: but the word preached did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in them that heard *it*. For we which have believed do enter into rest” (Hebrews 4:2-3). On the other hand, “they to whom it was first preached entered not in because of unbelief” (4:6), despite celebrating the Saturday Sabbath. Since one enters into the *sabbatismos* “rest” in Hebrews 3-4 by faith, and one fails to enter into it by unbelief, the *sabbatismos* is self-evidently the salvation-rest possessed by all the true people of God, not a Jewish festival transferred into the church age. Fifth, the use of the Greek aorist for

¹⁰⁰ The complete list of texts with the word is: Acts 7:49; Heb 3:11, 18; 4:1, 3, 5, 10–11. In each instance God’s rest is in view, a rest into which His people enter by faith.

¹⁰¹ Matt 12:1–2, 5, 8, 10–12; 24:20; 28:1; Mark 1:21; 2:23–24, 27–28; 3:2, 4; 6:2; 16:1–2, 9; Luke 4:16, 31; 6:1–2, 5–7, 9; 13:10, 14–16; 14:1, 3, 5; 18:12; 23:54, 56–24:1; John 5:9–10, 16, 18; 7:22–23; 9:14, 16; 19:31; 20:1, 19; Acts 1:12; 13:14, 27, 42, 44; 15:21; 16:13; 17:2; 18:4; 20:7; 1 Cor 16:2; Col 2:16.

¹⁰² Of course, the “if they shall enter” (Εἰ εἰσελεύσονται) of the Authorized Version in Hebrews 4:5 reflects a Greek idiom and means “they shall not enter”; thus, Hebrews 3:11 translates Greek identical to Hebrews 4:5 as “they shall not enter.” It is a “Hebraistic [phrase] in oaths, like אֵין . . . amount[ing] to a strong negation, *certainly not* (cp. Ps 7:4f; Gen 14:23) . . . εἰ εἰσελεύσονται *they shall certainly not enter*” (William Arndt, Frederick W. Danker, and Walter Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 278, art. εἰ). Compare Psalm 95:11, : אֵין-לִּמְנוּחָתֵינוּ אֵין, LXX Εἰ εἰσελεύσονται εἰς τὴν κατάπαυσίν μου.

those who “have believed . . . entering” the rest (Hebrews 4:1, 3)¹⁰³ demonstrates that the rest is entered at one point in time.¹⁰⁴ The eschatological rest is entered into at the point of faith, and its final consummation is entered into at the point of eternal glory. The point action described is not what one would expect were the *rest* that is to be entered a recurring festival-day that one is to practice over and over again on successive weeks.¹⁰⁵ Sixth, a warning that one can “seem to come short” of “entering into [God’s] rest” (Hebrews 4:1) is reasonable if salvation-rest is in view, and professing Hebrew Christians needed to examine themselves to be sure that they were genuinely converted and were manifesting perseverance in the faith. It is difficult to make Hebrews 4:1 mean anything that fits the context if the rest is forced to refer to the Saturday Sabbath. Seventh, Jews who had knowledge of truths about Jesus Christ, but were considering turning from Him back to Judaism, which would manifest an unregenerate state, were the subject of this warning passage in Hebrews (3:7-4:13), along with the other warning passages in the epistle (Hebrews 2:1-4; 6:4-12; 10:26-39; 12:25-29). These Jews were exhorted to diligent care¹⁰⁶ to truly believe and persevere (Hebrews 4:11), to “take pains” and “make every effort,”¹⁰⁷ to “give diligence¹⁰⁸ to make [their] calling and election sure” (2 Peter 1:10) in order that they might enter God’s presence and eternal rest rather than “fall[ing] after the . . . example of unbelief” manifested by the wilderness generation in Moses’ day (Hebrews 4:11). They needed to be sure to “believe to the saving of the soul” instead of “draw[ing] back unto perdition” (Hebrews 10:39). If they apostatized and returned to post-Christian Judaism they would be keeping the Sabbath with the other Jews. A

¹⁰³ Φοβηθῶμεν οὐκ ἔστι ποτε καταλειπομένης ἐπαγγελίας εἰσελθεῖν εἰς τὴν κατάπαυσιν αὐτοῦ, δοκῆ τις ἐξ ὑμῶν ὑστερηκέναι. . . . εἰσερχόμεθα γὰρ εἰς τὴν κατάπαυσιν οἱ πιστεύσαντες.

¹⁰⁴ Consider also the perfect tense in Hebrews 4:1’s δοκῆ τις ἐξ ὑμῶν ὑστερηκέναι; “any of you should seem to come short of it.” Were the recurring practice of Saturday Sabbath-keeping under consideration, a present tense verb would be expected; since the danger of never coming to a point of true conversion and consequently failing to enter God’s rest is in view, the perfect tense is natural.

¹⁰⁵ The present tense of εἰσερχομαι is certainly a live option in the New Testament, appearing in Matt 7:13; 10:12; 15:11; 23:13; Luke 10:5, 8, 10; 11:52; 17:12; 21:21; John 10:1–2; Heb 4:3; 6:19; 9:25; 10:5. Indeed, Paul in Hebrews 4:1 uses the aorist of εἰσερχομαι to specify the definitive point of entering into God’s rest, while employing the present tense in 4:3 to illuminate the already/not yet tension of the believer’s present entrance into the eschatological rest that will not be fully consummated until the *parousia*, in keeping with the picture in Hebrews 3-4 of the church as a wilderness-congregation awaiting her entrance into the antitypical Canaan. Believers are entering God’s consummated rest now and will finally enter it at the end.

¹⁰⁶ σπουδάσωμεν, rendered “let us labour” in the KJV. Consider its other appearances in the New Testament: Gal 2:10; Eph 4:3; 1 Th 2:17; 2 Tim 2:15; 4:9, 21; Titus 3:12; Heb 4:11; 2 Pet 1:10, 15; 3:14.

¹⁰⁷ William Arndt, Frederick W. Danker, and Walter Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 939, art. σπουδάζω.

¹⁰⁸ σπουδάζω.

warning to not return to Judaism but to cleave to Christ in persevering faith and so enter into His salvation-rest, the antitype of the Old Testament Sabbath type, clearly fits the context and makes sense of the passage. The Christian Hebrews were not to reject the antitype of Christ's salvation-rest for the Saturday Sabbath type and the remainder of the Law that had passed away. Hebrews 4:11 is unintelligible on the notion that the Apostle is exhorting the audience of Hebrews to maintain Saturday worship in common with the Jews to whom Paul is exhorting them not to return. The conclusion is clear: Hebrews 3:7-4:13 by no means establishes that the Jewish Sabbath festival is binding for the New Testament church. On the contrary, the passage indicates that the Sabbath was a type fulfilled in Christ, and now the antitype, salvation-rest in union with the Lord Jesus, must be entered into by faith, not by practicing the ceremonies of a Judaism that is no longer pleasing to God.

5.) Summary and Applications from the Study Above

The study above has demonstrated that both the Saturday Sabbatarian position of Seventh-Day Adventism and the Sunday Sabbatarianism of much of English Puritanism and the Scottish Reformed tradition are in error. The Lutheran position that the day of worship in the New Testament is a matter of indifference is also in error. Scripture teaches that Christ's church in the dispensation of grace is to follow the New Testament pattern and gather for worship on the first day of the week, the Lord's Day. However, the Lord's Day is not a Christian Sabbath, because the Sabbath is fulfilled in Christ. As the inspired book of Hebrews teaches, in the Messianic age between the first and second comings of Christ the Sabbath commandment teaches the church to enter into God's rest through the instrumentality of saving faith in Christ. This kind of faith will persevere in fidelity to Him rather than rejecting Him and returning to the Sinaitic Law, which would be to reject the fulfillment to embrace the shadow. Therefore, believers ought to reject false Sabbatarian views, recognize the fulfillment of the Sabbath in Jesus Christ, and assemble for worship on the Lord's Day, the first day of the week.

Unbelievers need to recognize that the Sabbath was a type pointing to the eternal rest found in Jesus Christ for all believers. Consequently, if they believe a false gospel of salvation by works and Sabbath-keeping, they need to reject their false gospel, reject their idea that Jewish Sabbath-keeping is the way of salvation, and enter into rest by faith alone in Christ alone. It is "we which have believed" who "enter into rest" (Hebrews 4:3), and those who observe the Jewish Sabbath but reject justification by faith alone in Christ actually are rejecting the Divine intention for the Sabbath and will receive eternal

punishment for their rebellion.

Believers also ought to learn from the intricate design of Genesis 1:1-2:3, and its emphasis on Israel's Sabbath, the profound concern God has for His worship. If Jehovah took six days to create the world, and rested the seventh, to teach Israel about the Sabbath, how important must God consider true worship! All the glories of the created order—the amazing complexities and life-supporting properties of light and water; the earth with its beautiful mountains and forests to the far-flung galaxies with their billions of stars; the amazing beauties of the plant kingdom, from the astonishing complexities of its smallest cells to the towering beauty of its greatest trees; the intricate design features of birds, from the eagle to the penguin to the ostrich; the breathtaking design of the sea creatures from the whale to the fish to the octopus; the cold-blooded and warm-blooded land animals, from lions to dinosaurs to moles to sheep; all are subordinated in importance to the culminating creation of the sixth day, man, and the pattern for Israel's worship and rest on the seventh day. The Lord created the heavenly bodies with Israel's sacred festivals in mind, and rested the seventh day as a pattern for her Sabbath—the created order itself is but a means to the end of her seasons of solemn worship. Therefore, in comparison to the infinite glory and goodness of God, all the astonishing glory and goodness of the creation shrivels to nothing. His people ought, therefore, to recognize the priority of praise and worship exemplified even in the creation week itself and fear, love, and prize the holy service of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit as far above the value of all the world as the Creator exceeds in value His creation. As Israel was to “remember” the Sabbath, the New Testament Christian should call constantly to his mind the blessed times of God's worship; the Lord's great mercies every day and moment; the rest he currently possesses by constant trust in Christ; and the incomprehensibly blessed and eternal rest that is to come, blessed because in it he will enjoy perfect fellowship with his Creator and Redeemer Himself. The rest of God was the culmination of the first creation and His eternal purpose for man, which will be realized by the redeemed race in the new heavens and earth. Let the saints set their hearts upon this rest, rejoicing in He who has prepared it for them out of His eternal love.

Thus, believers ought also to treasure the blessed and eternal rest their Redeemer has laid up for them even from the foundation of the world. Jehovah created the cosmos with no lesser purpose in mind than for His people to enter into His own rest and fellowship through Jesus Christ by the Spirit. Do the saints experience sorrows and trials in this present world? They are permitted in sovereign love by their heavenly Father, who employs the troubles of this life to bring them to an exceeding and eternal weight of glory in the blessed and joyous rest in the world to come. Do temptations arise to value

this perishing world over the imperishable one that is to come? Such temptations fade when the saints turn their thoughts to what Christ has laid up in heaven for them, the infinite glories purchased at the cost of His very life's blood. Does the world oppose, revile, and hate the saints? God has loved them with an everlasting love, a love arising simply from His own nature, a love that led God to set His heart on them and give Christ for them even from eternity past; a love that certainly secures its end in glory through their predestination, justification, sanctification, eternal security, perseverance, and final glorification, through all of which none of them is lost. What joy, also, it is to the saints to see the grace and glory of God exalted in providing the immeasurable abundance of these gifts merely to faith—and, indeed, even seeing faith itself as a gift from His hand (Philippians 1:29)! The rest of God is not entered by those who do enough good works, so bringing glory to themselves; nor to those who claim to save themselves with God's synergistic help—no—everlasting felicity and rest is laid up for those who, renouncing all merit and all ability to earn or help earn their own salvation, simply trust in Christ alone. The creation week itself teaches those bedrock fundamentals of the new creation—*sola gratia, sola fide, solo Christo, soli Deo Gloria, in nomine Patris, et Filii, et Spiritus Sancti!* Hallelujah—Amen!