

HOW TO SURVIVE THE COMING SUNDAY-LAW CRISIS

By Norman R. Gulley

Southern College of Seventh-day Adventists

Recent world events have riveted Christian attention, with breath-taking urgency, on the approach of the second advent. To many, time suddenly seems very short. The end appears to be at hand.

Two ideologies competing for world domination, Communism and Catholicism, have "made history" in very notable ways. In some European countries, Communism has been crashingly overthrown. The Berlin wall has crumbled to bits, and the Soviet Union has established diplomatic relations with the Vatican. More recently, events focusing on the Persian Gulf have found the United States leading a "world coalition" composed of many member states of the United Nations.

Such developments seem to have almost cleared the way for "all the world to wonder after the beast" in fulfillment of Revelation 13 and related Bible prophecies as Seventh-day Adventists understand them. In these prophecies, Seventh-day Adventists have long foreseen that the United States shortly before the second coming would lead out in establishing a new world order—a world order in which, unhappily, the United States would, on behalf of the Vatican, assume the burden of persuading the rest of the world to enforce coercive Sunday observance.

A century ago, when the United States was far from being

a world power, Seventh-day Adventists saw that even then "agencies of evil are [were] combining their forces and consolidating. They are strengthening for the last great conflict." We believed even then that "great changes are soon to take place in our world, and the final movements will be rapid ones."¹ If that seemed true a century ago, what about today?

If indeed the Sunday-law crisis that Adventists see in Revelation 13 is almost upon us, it really is time to ask again, "How will we survive the coming Sunday-law crisis?"

The Sabbath in Crisis

Just off the press (1990) is "Sabbath in Crisis," written by Dale Ratzlaff,² a former Seventh-day Adventist minister.³ D. A. Carson writes the foreword, and Carson was the one who edited *From Sabbath to Lord's Day* (1982),⁴ which was essentially a response to Samuele Bacchiocchi's *From Sabbath to Sunday* (1977).⁵ Ratzlaff's book is a popularized version of the basic thesis found in the more scholarly Carson tome. In order to understand one dimension of the coming Sunday law crisis, it is necessary to grasp the basic arguments in these recent rejections of the seventh-day Sabbath. However, in view of space limitations, only passing reference will be made to them in this article.⁶

As nearly always in Christian history, there are today three basic attitudes toward the Sabbath: (1) Sunday sabbatarianism, which considers Sunday to be the Christian Sabbath (transfer/modification theory), (2) Saturday sabbatarianism, which considers Saturday as the continued Sabbath (reformation/continuation theory), and (3) non-sabbatarianism, which considers the Sabbath to have culminated and ceased in Christ (fulfillment/transformation theory). The Ratzlaff and Carson books subscribe to the non-sabbatarian view. Their thesis is that the fourth commandment Sabbath was given only for Israel,⁷ being essentially different from the creation Sabbath, and was merely a type of the salvation-rest that Christ was to bring. Like the priest-

hood, the sacrifices, and the Messianic prophecies, the Sinaitic Sabbath, they say, met both its reality⁸ and its fulfillment in Christ.⁹ Thus the Sabbath has undergone *transformation* from physical rest to salvation rather than *transference* from Saturday to Sunday.¹⁰

In summary, the major thrust of Ratzlaff's book is that creation Sabbath was a permanent rest (not a literal seventh day), interrupted by sin, acted out by the Sinaitic Sabbath, and restored with Christ's rest. And now that Christ's rest has arrived, the seventh-day Sabbath has been replaced by it. Biblical passages are to be interpreted within this framework.¹¹ For instance, Ratzlaff posits a radical dichotomy between the old and new covenants.

The Deeper Meaning of the Sabbath

Surely there is a deeper meaning to the Sabbath than appears in these recent books—and I believe that that deeper meaning holds the clue to survival in end-time events.

Basically, the Sabbath teaches "the distinction between the Creator and His creatures."¹² and this meaning of the Sabbath is unfolded more and more as we move through the Bible. In this article we will consider some of the key moments in this unfolding process.

Although the Carson book denies the Sabbath as a creation ordinance,¹³ scholars of the past as well as some recent writers have supported his claim. The fact that the manna did not fall on Sabbaths before the commandments were given at Sinai (Exod 16), and the very term "*remember* the Sabbath" in the fourth commandment (Exod 20:8), both presuppose a Sabbath commandment before Sinai. Evidence supports the Sabbath as a creation ordinance.

Prior to creation week neither marriage, the weekly cycle, nor the Sabbath existed.¹⁴ The creation of each was important to the creation of humanity. "Companionship" is a theme that runs through creation week. (See Gen. 1 and 2.) (1) Creatures provided for companionship for man's enjoyment at the

lowest level. (2) Man and woman were created for each other to be companions at a much higher level. And creation week climaxed in the Sabbath¹⁵ where (3) man can be seen as having been made for God—for companionship at the very highest level.

Being omnipotent (see Job 42:2, Ps 115:3, Isa 43:13, Jer 32:17, Luke 1:37) God could have brought everything into existence instantaneously. But He did not. He chose to take a week to do so in order that, subsequently, man might be able to focus on the ultimate purpose for his creation. When we consider that man was not made merely for fellowship with animals or fellowship with a human partner but for fellowship with God, we can begin to enter the depths of Christ's desire to be with man. We grasp this fact even more thoroughly through re-creation at the cross. At the cross we see that Christ was willing to die in order to have man live with Him forever. Properly understood, then, each Sabbath has this commitment of Christ as its very essence—Christ gave everything in order for man to be able to fellowship with Him. If Christ went to that extent, then the Sabbath, far from being legalistic or tied to one covenant, opens up the very heart of the everlasting gospel.

Adam and Eve spent their first full day of human existence in Sabbath fellowship with Christ. What a vantage point from which to go down into the work-a-day week that followed! Here is an insight into the Christian life: work should issue out of time spent with Christ, never the other way around.

In the same way that creation week has a theme that unfolds to its climax in the Sabbath, the meaning of the Sabbath itself unfolds as we move through the Scriptures. Later passages add to the meaning already found in earlier ones. Further, as the events of creation week help make the purpose of man's creation understandable, so the key events in salvation-history throughout Scripture unfold the fuller meaning of the Sabbath.

Old Testament Examples

With respect to the meaning of the Sabbath, let us consider briefly three major texts, Exodus 20:8-11, Deuteronomy 5:12-15, and Ezekiel 20:12. The first insight into the Sabbath comes in the setting of creation. Exodus 20:8-11 calls us to remember the Sabbath, to keep it holy, in memory of creation. Man is reminded by the Sabbath that he is not God or an emanation from God, but merely a creature. There is an infinite qualitative distinction between the Creator and man. Man's creaturely dependence is fundamental to his very existence. He is totally and forever indebted to Christ's power, outside and beyond Himself, to give Him life. Each Sabbath is a call to remember his dependence, because it is so easy for him to think that he is independent and can make it on his own. The Sabbath reminds the race that there really is no "self-made" man.

Deuteronomy 5 contains a notable reminder of the Sabbath command. In it the Israelites were asked to remember something in addition to creation. "Remember that you were slaves in Egypt and that the Lord your God brought you out of there with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm. Therefore the Lord your God has commanded you to observe the Sabbath day" (Deut 5:15). Here the fourth commandment asks that Israel remember the Sabbath, to keep it holy, in memory of the exodus.

These two presentations of the fourth commandment, in Exodus and Deuteronomy, are complementary. The Sabbath is a memorial of both creation and of the exodus. Although God gave both to Israel, we cannot apply the first to mankind as a whole and limit the second to the "called out" nation. The fact that Christ liberates has as much universal appeal as the fact that He created.

Until the exodus, Sabbaths were only a memorial of creation. But following the exodus, the newly "called-out" people had another divine act to remember. The same prein-

carnate Christ who created mankind (Heb 1:1-3), liberated Jewish slaves from Egypt (Exod 20:2, John 8:58)¹⁶ and, through the exodus, formed a new people, a new nation—the covenant movement through whom He wished to prepare the world for His incarnation. The Sabbath thus took on added meaning. It celebrated two completed works of Christ, creation and exodus, a new creation.

Ezekiel 20 focuses on the exodus, unfolding again the meaning of the Sabbath. Christ rescued an unrepresentative people from Egypt. Because they were enslaved to false idols as well as to the Egyptians, Christ longed to free them from the greater as well as the lesser slavery. The exodus was a self-revelation of Christ to them. He said, "I had revealed myself to the Israelites by bringing them out of Egypt. Therefore I led them out of Egypt and brought them into the desert. I gave them my decrees and made known to them my laws, for the man who obeys them will live by them. Also I gave them my Sabbaths as a sign between us, so they would know that I the Lord made them holy" (Eze 20:9-12).¹⁷

The word "holy" (*qodesh* in Hebrew and *hagios* in Greek) means "set apart." In the exodus Christ set His people apart from the Egyptians with a view to taking them into Canaan to become a separate nation. The exodus therefore typified historically what Christ longed for His people experientially—separate them from the world so they could become one with Him.

In this context He gave them the Sabbath as the sign of their freedom. They were not set apart merely to be set apart. They were set apart precisely to be with Christ. And only in that relationship with Him could they come to be set apart in reality. In the same way that the Sabbath is time "set apart" from the other six days and Israel was a nation "set apart" from the other nations, each freed slave was "set apart" to Christ—to be sanctified, changed, re-created and thus experience what "being set apart" means. The Sabbath is

“sacred relationship-time” when Christ and the Christian enjoy togetherness, sharing.

In a special sense, the Sabbath is “being” rather than “doing,” but the “being together” moves the Christian to worship. The exuberance of Psalm 92 illustrates the freedom of a “set-apart” person. The Sabbath rest, to such a one, is not merely a cessation from work but also an entering into the good works of adoration, praise, and worship of his Creator-Redeemer in joyful celebration.¹⁸

Unless Sabbath-keeping opens up our deepest expressions of praise, we’re not experiencing its full potential. Nor are we experiencing the full potential of the three angels’ messages, even though we may be Seventh-day Adventists.¹⁹ The coming Sunday law test is, in part, a test of *worship*,²⁰ in relation to *commandment keeping* and unfaltering faith in Christ. (See Rev 14:6-12.)

Ezekiel speaks of the re-creative, inward work that only the Creator can actualize. In the same way that Christ created mankind, only Christ can re-create mankind. This is what sanctification is—a work of God. The Sabbath is a sign of sanctification, because it focuses on the distinction between the Creator who alone sanctifies and the creature who but cooperates with God in receiving His sanctification. The Sabbath is a time for communion with Christ, and 1 Corinthians 1:30 tells us that Christ is our “sanctification.” The Sabbath rest is a sign of sanctification, for it reveals where the source of our sanctification lies: in Him.

New Testament Examples

In announcing His earthly mission, Jesus said that He came to set the prisoners free. (See Luke 4:18, 19; cf. Isa 61:1, 2.) The Jews of His day groaned under a slavery worse than the Israelites, their ancestors, had suffered in Egypt. Bound by the chains of their own traditions, they were attempting to work their way to heaven. Rabbi Johanan states that, post-

exilic Judaism taught “1521 derivative laws,”²¹ laws which were not only numerous but also wearisomely exacting.

Christ strode among those prisoners calling them to a new exodus as real as the first. In order to do so, He exposed their slavery by revealing the truth about the Sabbath. He came to show that “the Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath” (Mark 2:27). He often healed on the Sabbath (Mark 1:21-31, 3:1-5; Luke 13:10-17, 14:1-4; John 5:1-15, 9:1-7) in order to reveal His desire to set men free. Those languishing in “Sabbath-keeping bondage” desperately needed to hear and see His good news. So, to the woman crippled for eighteen years He cried out, “Woman, you are set free from your infirmity” (Luke 13:12). Physical freedom promised spiritual deliverance. He recognized that knowing the truth makes people free. (See John 8:32.)

Some scholars disagree with the concept that Christ healed on the Sabbath in order to reveal its true meaning. They see His Sabbath miracles as performed either simply to help the needy or as purposely violating the Sabbath with intention to overthrow it.²²

The truth is, He did not heal in order to overthrow the Sabbath but to demonstrate His rejection of the people’s false understanding of it. (Halakah).²³ He repudiated the Jewish misunderstanding of the Sabbath by revealing its true meaning.

The Jews were willing to save life on the Sabbath in an emergency but not to do ordinary works of healing.²⁴ Christ’s placing of human need above human tradition riled the legalists, and presented a recurring problem.²⁵ “The strongest clashes between Jesus and his religious contemporaries were occasioned by disputes over the sabbath.”²⁶ These became one of the factors as to why the Jerusalem leaders turned against Christ,²⁷ though they were not included in the charges they brought against Him at His trial.²⁸

Consider another Sabbath healing miracle. The man at Bethesda’s pool had lain ill for 38 years (see John 5:5), a span

of time beginning some 5 or 6 years before Christ's incarnation. Could not Jesus have waited one more day—until Sunday—to heal him? (The fact that He did not wait until Sunday on this occasion yet rested in His grave until Sunday after Calvary, gives us a special insight into His teaching about the Sabbath.) As Jesus gazed on the emaciated remains of a man on the verge of death, He did not feel it inappropriate to recreate him on the Sabbath. Christ knew that he would always link his miraculous "re-creation" with the Sabbath—and with Himself—and lead to his re-creation.

To be what God intended it to be, the Sabbath must open up to us the presence of Christ and do so in a way that makes a radical difference in our lives. Anything less is not the "Sabbath-experience," even if we do "keep" the seventh day.

Yet another Sabbath passage raises the question, "Why did Christ die on Friday?"

The answer derives from a comparison of creation Friday with crucifixion Friday, both marking an end for the human race—the end of creation and the "it is finished" end of Christ's earthly sacrifice for sin (His re-creation sacrifice). But though they mark historic "ends," these two Fridays also mark two noteworthy beginnings. Man began life on the first Friday, and he began eternal life on the second Friday.

The Sabbath always celebrates a finished work of Christ.

On crucifixion weekend, the Sabbath took on an additional meaning. Subsequently the Sabbath would be a memorial not only of creation and the exodus (both finished works of Christ) but also of the cross, another finished work of Christ, His "once-for-all" blood-sacrifice (Heb 9:26, 27, 22) for mankind.

His crucifixion constituted potentially the greatest exodus ever, making available the re-creation of the world and everyone in it. It was a work, a very costly work, infinitely more expensive than creation and the exodus. If no one else could create or liberate as He did, it is a thousand times more true that no one else could give us life by dying.

Calvary represents the acme of the Sabbath's significance, to be unfolded throughout the limitless reaches of eternity. Christ's "It is finished" calls in question every human work, and His Sabbath rest that followed invites us all to rest in His work alone—to rest in it as completed. The Sabbath always celebrates a finished work of God.

No wonder Hebrews 4 speaks of a seventh-day "Sabbath rest" (a *sabbatismos*) that "remains." Although not primarily concerned with the weekly Sabbath but rather with our resting in Christ,²⁹ it does apply secondarily to weekly Sabbath keeping. (See Heb 4:4; cf. Isa 66:22, 23.)³⁰

Just prior to A.D. 70, the approximate date when the epistle to the Hebrews appeared,³¹ there did remain a Sabbath rest for Christ's followers, for the Sabbath had followed His death some thirty years earlier as surely as it had followed His work of creation at the beginning of the world. (This is why Jesus warned His followers not to flee on the Sabbath during the attack on Jerusalem which was to take place some 40 years after Calvary. See Matt 24:20.) This powerful parallel³² between creation Sabbath and Crucifixion Sabbath is not given its proper place by those who say Sunday has replaced the Sabbath.

In the Carson volume, A. T. Lincoln admits that "if the hypothesis of the Sabbath as a creation ordinance could be established, then, whatever the temporary nature of the Sabbath as part of the Mosaic covenant, the appeal could still be made to the permanence of the mandate for one day of rest as inherent to humanity made in the image of God."³³ The Bible supports the seventh-day Sabbath as a creation ordinance, given to mankind as a perpetual memorial, to celebrate the finished works of Christ.

In my opinion, the most serious failure of the Carson and Ratzlaff books is their unbiblical dichotomy between the work of Christ as Creator and His work as Redeemer, with the resulting discontinuity between the Sabbath of the Old and New Testaments. They fail to do justice to the everlasting

Gospel revealed throughout scripture and revealed precisely through the Sabbath.

The Real Issue Regarding the Sunday Law

It is important to keep the right day, but it is even more important to have the right experience.

The Jews kept the right Sabbath day but crucified the "Lord of the Sabbath" (Matt 12:8). When the final "loud cry" invitation is given to the world (see Rev 18:1-4), "notwithstanding the agencies combined against the truth, a large number take their stand upon the Lord's side."³⁴ These are Sunday keepers who already have a right relationship with Christ. All they need do is change a day, and God will give them time to do it.

By contrast, there are those who keep the right day but who do not have a right relationship with Christ. To change a day takes a moment; to change a relationship takes much longer. Sabbath-keeping today does not necessarily mean that Sabbath keepers will remain committed to Christ when the Sunday laws come. In fact, we are warned that in that imminent crisis "a greater proportion than we now anticipate will give heed to seducing spirits and doctrines of devils"³⁵ and depart from the church. How many will that be? So many will leave that "the church may appear as about to fall, but it does not fall. It remains, while the sinners in Zion will be sifted out. . . . This is a terrible ordeal, but nevertheless it must take place."³⁶

When Sabbath-keepers face starvation through not being able to buy or sell (see Rev 13:17), and even face death from a universal decree (see Rev 13:15),³⁷ what will lead them to stand true to Christ and His true Sabbath?

Far more than just knowing which day of the week it is! Not until giving up the Sabbath is considered giving up Christ will we be willing to die for the Sabbath (cf. John 14:15). Sabbath keeping is not so much keeping a day as it is being kept by Christ on that day. At its deepest level of significance,

Sabbath-keeping is not something man can do but something Christ does.

God's work is radically different from our work. God brought man into the world; man did not bring himself. And God has patiently and graciously undertaken the responsibility for getting us into His next world. We had nothing to do with being brought into this world, but we do have the choice of accepting or turning down the opportunity of getting into the next world.

As for the question, "How can a person withstand the pressures of a world?" (see Rev 13:3) we should rather be preoccupied with the *who* question, "With whom shall we withstand the pressures of the world?" The answer of course is, *With Jesus*, whom to know aright is life eternal. (See John 17:3.) And the Sabbath was given to provide time for us to get to know Him.

To get to know Him is our responsibility. To get man to heaven is a responsibility God has compassionately taken upon Himself.

It was the job of the three Hebrews' to stand loyal to God on the Plain of Dura, but God assumed the responsibility of keeping them alive in the fiery furnace. (See Dan 3:4 30; cf. 2 Tim 4:16-18, Heb 11:33.)

It is urgent that we know the distinction between the Creator and His creatures. It is imperative to realize that only a resting in Him will carry the remnant through the final crisis. We must rest in Christ's finished work at Calvary—realizing that ever since Calvary He has "ever lived" to save us (Heb 7:25) Realizing too that His death and resurrection irreversibly assure us that this world is His, that human destiny is ultimately under His control, and that eternal life is certain for those who choose daily to abide in Him and by His grace obey His commandments. (See John 17:3.)

Calvary ushered in the great Sabbath rest—a resting in the work of the Creator which guarantees that nothing

whatever in the present or in the future, can separate His people from Him. (See Rom 8:38, 39).

The Conqueror of Calvary enables those who love Him to keep His commandments (See John 14:15), for He "is able to keep" them "from falling and to present" them "before his glorious presence without fault and with great joy" (Jude 24 NIV).

Endnotes

- 1 Ellen G. White, *Testimonies for the Church*, 9: 11.
- 2 Dale Ratzlaff, *Sabbath in Crisis* (Applegate, Calif.: Life Assurance Ministries, 1990).
- 3 Ratzlaff, p. 310.
- 4 D. A. Carson, ed. *From Sabbath to Lord's Day: A Biblical, Historical and Theological Investigation*. (Grand Rapids, Mich: Zondervan, 1982). That same year the Seventh-day Adventist Church published its own contribution: Kenneth A Strand, ed., *The Sabbath in Scripture and History*. (Washington, D.C., Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1982). These contributions make no reference to each other, but some of the arguments found in *From Sabbath to Lord's Day* are answered in *The Sabbath in Scripture and History*.
- 5 Samuele Bacchiocchi, *From Sabbath to Sunday: A Historical Investigation of the Rise of Sunday Observance in Early Christianity* (Rome: Pontifical Gregorian University Press, 1977).
- 6 Because of space limitations, the fuller evaluation of these books is held over for a separate article, to be published later.
- 7 Ratzlaff, p. 41. The Sabbath originated in Israel (Carson, pp. 23-24), was not a creation ordinance (p. 34, cf. pp. 349, 350), and is transcended by Christ (p. 364).
- 8 Ratzlaff, pp. 267-68; Carson, pp. 84, 126; cf. pp. 215, 376, 377.
- 9 Ratzlaff, pp. 223-36, 293; Carson, pp. 113, 369, 373, 374.
- 10 Ratzlaff, pp. 265; Carson, pp. 134-35, 214, 216, 374; cf. p. 282. Those denying any connection between Sunday and the fourth commandment include Tyndale, Peter Heylyn, J. A. Hessey, and Willy Rordorf. Among those accepting Sunday as connected to the fourth commandment are Roger Beckwith and Wilfrid Stott. See Roger T. Beckwith and Wilfrid Stott, *The Christian Sunday, A Biblical and Historical Study*, (Grand Rapids, Mich: Baker Book House, 1980), pp. vii-x.
- 11 For example, Ratzlaff, p. 135.
- 12 Ellen G. White, *The Great Controversy*, pp. 437, 438; cf. *Sabbath in Crisis*, pp. 245, 263-64.
- 13 Though the Carson book, pp. 34, 351, denies the Sabbath as a creation ordinance.
- 14 Genesis, marriage, the weekly cycle, and the Sabbath did not exist. Years are determined by the sun's rotation, months by the moon's rotation, but the weekly cycle is dependent upon the Sabbath. This day was instituted in Eden.
- 15 Cf. Karl Barth, *Church Dogmatics*, (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1958), 3/1, p. 223.
- 16 "It was Jesus Christ, the second person of the Godhead, who was the 'God' of the Israelites throughout their history (Ex 32:34; John 1:1-3, 14; Heb 1:1-3; Rev 1:17, 18)." F. D. Nichol, ed., *Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, Washington

D.C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1954) 1:601; Ellen G. White, *Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 366.

17 This has roots in Exod 31:12-18, where the Sabbath is designated as a sign between God and Israel from the giving of the Decalogue on Sinai.

18 "Nowhere does the OT express its sheer joy in sabbath worship more exuberantly than in Psalm 92, which has the title "A Song for the Sabbath," as quoted in *Baker Encyclopedia of the Bible*, p. 1876.

19 The first angel's message, experientially, is worshiping Christ as Creator, and can only issue out of a heart/mind that keeps the distinction between the Creator and creatures uppermost. Worship wells up in the heart/mind of one who knows the "worth" of the One he worships. "Fear God and give him glory, because the hour of his judgment has come. Worship him who made the heavens, the earth, the sea and the springs of water" (Rev 14:7 NIV).

20 The three angels' messages describe the two groups of mankind in the end-time as those who worship Christ (see Rev 14:7) and those who worship the beast (see Rev 14:9). The historical examples in Daniel, that give insight into the eschatological confrontation, indicate worship as a key factor. For example, (1) worshiping the golden image in Daniel 2, and (2) worshiping King Darius in Daniel 6. The three Hebrew worthies in the fiery furnace and Daniel in the lions' den represent those who will stand true in their worship to Christ in the coming Sunday-law test. Genuine Sabbath keeping will see them through, as we will note in the final section of this paper.

21 "The multitude of meticulous and casuistic regulations (according to Rabbi Johanan there were 1521 derivative laws) produced to guard the Sabbath, turned the observance of the day into a legalistic ritual"; Bacchiocchi, *From Sabbath to Sunday*, p. 33.

22 Jean Daniélou, *Bible and Liturgy* (South Bend, Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 1956), p. 226; W. Rordorf, *Sunday: The History of the Day of Rest and Worship in the Earliest Centuries of the Christian Church* (Philadelphia, Pa.: Westminster Press, 1968), p. 70.

23 Cf. *Baker Encyclopedia of the Bible*, 2: 1877.

24 See Alfred Edersheim, *The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah* (Grand Rapids, Mich: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1986), p. 60.

25 See George R. Beaseley-Murray, *The Gospel of John*, in *Word Biblical Commentary* (Waco, Texas: Word Books, 1987), p. 72.

26 Donald Guthrie, *New Testament Theology* (Downers Grove, Ill.: IVP, 1981), p. 942.

27 Merrill C. Tenney, *John*, vol. 9 in *The Expositor's Bible Commentary* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan, 1981) p. 62.

28 Such a religious charge based on Jewish legal tradition was of no interest to Roman law. But the charge about destroying the temple, which the Romans had helped to build, carried clout.

29 *Katapausis* is not the word used in Hebrews 4:9. *Sabbatismos* is used. For further study see F. F. Bruce, *Hebrews*, p. 77, 78.; Morris, p.43; A. T. Robertson, *Word Pictures in the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Book House, 1960), 1:362; and John Calvin, *Institutes*, p. 340: 2-8-30.

30 See A. B. Davidson, *Hebrews* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, n.d.), p. 97; W. S. Plummer, *Commentary on the Epistles of Paul: The Apostle to the Hebrews* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Book House, 1980), p. 156; Simon J. Kistemaker, *Hebrews*, in *New Testament Commentary* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Book House, 1984), p. 114.

31 See Bruce, pp. xlii-xliv.

³² Henry M. Morris, *The Genesis Record: A Scientific and Devotional Commentary on the Book of Beginnings* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Book House, 1979), speaks of a rest that followed the two Fridays of Christ's finished work.

³³ Carson, p. 346.

³⁴ Ellen G. White, *The Great Controversy*, p. 612.

³⁵ Ellen G. White, *General Conference Bulletin*, 1891, p. 257.

³⁶ Ellen G. White, *Selected Messages*, 2: 380.

³⁷ The test will be as worldwide as the Sabbath command itself. It will be seen that the Sabbath is a "creation ordinance" and "loyalty test" for the race as was the tree in Eden. Both the Sabbath and the tree have universal implications, far beyond any national significance that might be confined to Israel.

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THE ROLE OF THE LAW IN SALVATION

By Lewis R. Walton
Attorney

Seventh-day Adventists believe that the law has a vital role to play in the process of salvation. Implicit in our denominational name and explicit in our preaching is the assumption that the law—particularly our understanding of the Sabbath—will become the end-time test that will one day bring the world to judgment. One writer, in a thought-provoking essay, has put it this way:

Even though salvation is now accorded to many persons of many churches despite their wide and conflicting array of beliefs, we [Adventists believe that we] will set the house of truth in order so decisively that salvation will eventually be confined exclusively to those who embrace our beliefs. Our message will thus emerge as a universal test of truth and of character. . . . With complete effectiveness we will one day serve as instruments of both salvation and judgment for the entire planet.¹

Such a perspective is not unique to this one writer. In a similar (if less articulate) way, most "mainline" Seventh-day Adventists agree that our message will challenge the world with a final, catastrophically important decision about obedience or rebellion. And therein lies an irony: there is little present evidence that we are anywhere near accomplishing our objective. The writer just quoted insists urgently that "by no projection of current trends can such a future be seen for the Advent movement. We are simply one denomination