

## **ENDTIME ISSUES NEWSLETTER No. 158**

### **“The Sabbath and the Savior”**

**Samuele Bacchiocchi, Ph. D.**

**Retired Professor of Church History and Theology**

**Andrews University**

Adventists are often accused of making the Sabbath their Savior. Perhaps, this perception has been encouraged by the prophetic understanding of the Sabbath as the endtime “Seal of God,” that will protect the Remnant people during the great tribulation caused by the last plagues.

To dispel existing legalistic misunderstanding of the Sabbath, we shall attempt in this Bible study to clarify the redemptive meaning and experience of the Sabbath as found in the OT and NT. We shall see that the function of the Sabbath is not to offer salvation through the observance of the seventh day, but to invite us to stop our work to allow Christ to work in us more fully and freely. Legalists work for their own salvation, but on the Sabbath we do not work for our salvation. We rest in order to allow God’s omnipotent grace to operate more fully and freely in our lives. Thus, genuine Sabbathkeeping is salvation by grace, not by works.

This Bible study explores how the Sabbath has helped Jewish and Christian believers to conceptualize and experience the reality of redemption. Simply stated, we seek to understand how the Sabbath relates to the Messiah to come in the OT and to the Savior who has come in the NT. Our ultimate goal is to understand more fully the religious significance of the act of resting on the Sabbath.

The need for this study arises from the fact that our Adventist theology has largely ignored the redemptive meaning of the Sabbath and the religious significance of the act of resting on the seventh day. Our focus has been on the divine command to rest on the seventh day, without helping people to understand the significance of the act of resting per se. The result is that some Adventists feel that they are observing the Sabbath as long as they do go to church and do not pursue gainful employment on that day.

But, we shall see that there is more to Sabbathkeeping than abstaining from work and going to church. In the Bible the act of resting is

---

---

a faith response to God. It is an act of resignation to our human efforts to achieve salvation through our own works, in order to allow the omnipotent grace of God to operate more fully and freely in our lives. Properly understood and experienced Sabbathkeeping is an antidote to salvation by works, because it invites us to stop our works in order to allow God's grace to work in us more fully and freely. This is what salvation by grace is all about.

These introductory statements offer a preview of our Bible study on "The Sabbath and the Savior." The full version of this study is found in chapter 5 of *Divine Rest for Human Restlessness*, which is entitled "The Sabbath: Good News of Redemption." A shorter version is found in chapter 4 of *The Sabbath Under Crossfire*, which is entitled "The Savior and the Sabbath." For the sake of brevity I have shorten considerably these two chapters. If you wish to read the full version of this Bible study, you are welcome to order these books online at [www.biblicalperspectives.com](http://www.biblicalperspectives.com) or by calling us at 269-471-2915. We guarantee to process your order immediately.

**You can subscribe or unsubscribe in a simple way:**

**To subscribe** simply send us an email at <[sbacchiocchi@biblicalperspectives.com](mailto:sbacchiocchi@biblicalperspectives.com)> saying "subscribe me," or click on this address: [endtimeissues-subscribe@lists.biblicalperspectives.com](mailto:endtimeissues-subscribe@lists.biblicalperspectives.com)

**To unsubscribe** simply send an email at <[sbacchiocchi@biblicalperspectives.com](mailto:sbacchiocchi@biblicalperspectives.com)> saying "unsubscribe me," or click on this address: [endtimeissues-unsubscribe@lists.biblicalperspectives.com](mailto:endtimeissues-unsubscribe@lists.biblicalperspectives.com)

**UPDATE REPORT ON *CRACKING THE DA VINCI CODE***

: The release of the DVD Album *Cracking the Da Vinci Code*, is generating considerable interest and enthusiastic responses from viewers in different parts of the world. At the last two weekend seminars, I have shown part of the DVD lecture *Cracking the Da Vinci Code*, before my afternoon presentation. The response was most encouraging. Many members queued up to purchase the album after the close of the Sabbath.

Three things you will appreciate about the newly released DVD album on *Cracking the Da Vinci Code*:

1) You will appreciate the clarity of the lecture which is delivered with the help of 140 appealing slides in the setting of an impressive virtual studio. The slides are professionally designed to vividly illustrate the concepts discussed.

2) You will appreciate the compelling refutation of Dan Brown's blatant attacks against the fundamental beliefs of the Christian faith. To avoid confusing the viewer with technical scholarly arguments, I have focused on the major false claims of *The Da Vinci Code*, showing how they are totally devoid of biblical and historical support.

3) You will appreciate most of all the insights into the prophetic significance of Dan Brown's neo-pagan false worship of the "sacred feminine" with ritual sex. You will see how this false worship is part of the endtime showdown between the true and false worship of God, portrayed dramatically especially in the book of Revelation.

To facilitate the sharing of the *Cracking the Da Vinci Code* to friends and neighbors, many have requested for a special discount on quantity orders of 10 albums or more. In response to these requests, we decided to offer until November 30, 2006, the DVD album *Cracking the Da Vinci Code* at an unprecedented introductory offer:

**ONE DVD ALBUM for \$35.00 instead of regular price of \$100.00.**

This represents 65% discount.

**THREE DVD ALBUMS for \$50.00 instead of \$300.00.**

This represents about 80% discount.

**TEN DVD ALBUMS for \$100.00 instead of \$1000.00.**

This represents 90% discount.

**The quoted prices include the AIRMAIL expenses to any overseas destination. You can order the DVD albums on *CRACKING THE DA VINCI CODE* in four different ways:**

(1) **Online:** By clicking here: <http://www.biblicalperspectives.com/DaVinci/>

(2) **Phone:** By calling us at (269) 471-2915 to give us your credit card number and postal address.

**(3) Email:** By emailing your order to <sbacchiocchi@biblicalperspectives.com>. Be sure to provide your postal address, credit card number, and expiration date.

**(4) Regular Mail:** By mailing your check to BIBLICAL PERSPECTIVES, 4990 Appian Way, Berrien Springs, Michigan 4990, USA. We guarantee to process your order immediately.

### **YOUR INPUT IS NEEDED!**

**Should we record the highlights of Prof. Jon Paulien's studies on Revelation in FOUR DVD live lectures?**

Prof. Jon Paulien is rightly regarded as a foremost Adventist authority on the book of Revelation. For the past 20 years he has taught the class on "Revelation" to Andrews University Seminary students. Several students have told me that listening to his lectures, is a mind-opening experience.

Until now his popular lectures have been available in five albums, each containing 12 CD disks, for a total of 60 disks (120 lectures). The set is called *The Bible Explorer Series on Revelation*. Hundreds of sets have been sold in different parts of the world, helping many to appreciate the messages of Revelation for today.

The problem with the current *Bible Explorer Series on Revelation* is twofold, namely, the time needed to listen to 120 lectures and the high cost of \$175.00 for the series.

To make Prof. Paulien's lectures on Revelation more readily available to interested persons, I have asked him if he would consider preparing **FOUR POWERPOINT LECTURES** dealing with the major themes and messages of Revelation. These lectures would be video taped at the Media Studio of Andrews University and superimposed on a virtual studio like my latest album *Cracking the Da Vinci Code*. This would give a more professional look to the lectures, which many people could watch in the comfort of their homes.

Prof. Paulien is very supportive of this project. He is willing to spent two/three months preparing the four powerpoint lectures. The cost

---

of the video taping and editing is over \$5000.00. The DVD album with the four lectures would sell for about \$50.00.

Before investing so much time and money, I thought it wise to get your feed back: Would you be interested to watch in the comfort of your living room 4 DVD live powerpoint lectures (60 minutes each) by Prof. Jon Paulien? These lectures are guaranteed to broaden your understanding and appreciation for the real messages of Revelation for today.

Please let me know how you feel about this project. If we receive at least 100 favorable responses, I will encourage Prof. Paulien to proceed without delay. Otherwise we will shelf this project for the time being.

Incidentally, have you seen Prof. Jon Paulien's new CD album, which contains more than a dozen of books and scores of articles he has written during the past 20 years of research? You will find this collection a priceless resource to enrich your understanding and experience of biblical truths. Prof. Paulien examines fundamental biblical beliefs in a profound and yet popular way.

You can order Prof. Paulien's CD album online by clicking here: <http://www.biblicalperspectives.com/PaulienAD/> If you have a problem ordering on line, feel free to call us at 269-471-2915. We guaranty to process your order immediately.

### **YOUR INPUT IS NEEDED ON ANOTHER PROJECT!**

**Would you advise me to make a DVD recording of my *Christian Lifestyle Seminar*?**

Lately several churches have invited me to present my powerpoint *Christian Lifestyle Seminar*. There is growing awareness that many Adventists are loosing their identity by conforming to societal trends in such areas as divorce and remarriage, dress and adornment, social drinking of alcoholic beverages, and rock music for worship.

On each of these areas I have written a major book designed to help us recapture vital biblical teachings for our life today. In my *Chris-*

*tian Lifestyle Seminar* I share the highlights of my research through the following four powerpoint lectures:

### **THE MARRIAGE COVENANT**

*Learn how to build a happy and lasting marriage by following ten biblical principles.* This lecture is based on my book *The Marriage Covenant*.

### **CHRISTIAN DRESS AND ADORNMENT**

*Discover seven biblical principles to guide us in following Jesus through our clothes and appearance.* This lecture is based on my book *Christian Dress and Adornment*.

### **THE CHRISTIAN AND ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES**

*Learn three major reasons why the Bible teaches total abstinence and not moderation in the use of alcoholic beverages.* This lecture is based on my book *Wine in the Bible*.

### **THE CHRISTIAN AND ROCK MUSIC**

*Learn about the nature of rock music and the biblical distinction between sacred music for worship and secular music for entertainment.* This lecture is based on the symposium by seven scholars (6 musicians with doctoral degrees) entitled *The Christian and Rock Music*.

Considerable time and effort have gone into preparing these powerpoint lectures which have been well-received in different parts of the world. In each lecture I present not merely my *feelings*, but primarily the *findings* published in my books. At this time I am debating whether or not to make a DVD recordings of these four lectures.

Since it is a very expensive project (over \$5000.00) to produce a professional DVD album by superimposing each lecture on a virtual studio, I am seeking to find out from you, readers of this *Endtime Issues Newsletter*, if I should proceed with this DVD recording. Tell me how interested are you in a DVD album containing the four lifestyle powerpoint lectures listed above. Your comments will help me decide whether or not I should proceed with this project.

---

---

**IS YOUR CHURCH INTERESTED TO INVITE ME TO PRESENT  
A WEEKEND SEMINAR?**

If your church is interested to invite me next year (2007) to present one of my three powerpoint seminars (Sabbath, Second Advent, and Christian Lifestyle), feel free to contact me at this time. I will be glad to email you the outline of each seminar and the cost, which is basically the refund of my travel expenses.

My calendar of speaking engagements for 2007 has still several open weekends, and I would be glad to reserve one weekend for your church. Feel free to contact me by email or phone: (269) 471-2915.

**ANDREWS UNIVERSITY ARCHITECTURE MISSIONS GROUP  
IS BUILDING AROUND THE WORLD**

It gives me great pleasure to announce in our *Endtime Issues* newsletter the recently formed Andrews University Division of Architecture missions program, called, The Architecture Missions Group (AMG). For me it is encouraging to know that finally Adventist Architects are involved in mission projects by designing churches and schools that are more pleasing to the eye. AMG has been created to respond to the numerous demands for international building assistance. The requests for aid are more than the Division's professors, staff and the student body can handle.

AMG functions as a clearing house for mission projects. One faculty member serves as director and architecture alumni together with other interested professionals are responsible for executing mission projects in different parts of the world. Architecture students are assigned to work with alumni in designing and building the projects.

Let me mention one of their several important projects. Last August 2006, my son, Daniel Bacchiocchi (Andrews University graduate with a B.Arch. '90), traveled at his own expenses to the Philippines with Donald Startlin, President of the Adventist World Aviation Foundation (AWA), to investigate the building an airbase in Puerto Princesa on the Island of Palawan in the Philippines. Throughout the islands there is a great need for teachers, medical support, and supplies. Programs started several years ago have deteriorated due to lack of air support. An airbase will enable projects to re-open and deploy missionaries to help the islanders.

---

---

Thus, the AMG together with its alumni, and architecture students, have agreed to develop a master plan for the airstrip, infrastructure, and building needs.

AMG is providing international mission opportunities for all interested. For example, on October 16, 2006, work began in Acuña, Coahuila, Mexico. A group of approximately sixteen AMG volunteers are building a church for a congregation of about 100 fellow believers, who until now have conducted their services out in the open-air. This Christmas AMG has planned two more mission trips to Mexico. One group of volunteers will build an addition to the Monte Cristal SDA Church, and the other group will build an additional three classrooms onto the Vicente Suarez San Nicholas SDA School.

Volunteers are urgently needed for these projects. Whether skilled or not, you are sincerely urged to consider participating in AMG's upcoming mission projects. Anyone wishing to participate individually or as a family should contact Alexandria Lewis, Executive Missions Coordinator, Monday through Friday 8:30 to 12:30 p.m. EST at (269) 471-9272. Alexandria can also be reached by e-mail at [alewis@keystonedev.com](mailto:alewis@keystonedev.com).

AMG is appealing also for any financial assistance that you can provide. Please note, all donations will be used exclusively to purchase building materials, unless otherwise instructed by the donor. Donations may be made by checks payable to "Andrews University Division of Architecture AMG" and sent to: Alexandria Lewis, Executive Missions Coordinator, Keystone Development of Michigan, Inc. 4975 Appian Way, Berrien Springs, MI 49103.

Donations may also be made by credit card by calling Mary Nell Rosenboom in the Andrews Development Office at (269) 471-3124. If you call Ms. Rosenboom, be sure to inform her that your donation is for the Architecture Mission Group (AMG) of the Division of Architecture. Do not forget to provide your return address in order to receive a tax deductible receipt. Thank you immensely for your prayers, personal participation, and financial support for these worthy mission projects.



---

---

**FORTHCOMING VISIT TO SYDNEY AND BRISBANE, AUSTRALIA**

Our Australian subscribers living in Sydney or Brisbane, will be pleased to learn about my forthcoming visit to their cities. The details of my itinerary are as follows:

**November 17-18: PARRAMATTA SDA CHURCH, SYDNEY**

Location: 77-81 Hammers Road, Old Toongabbie, Sydney NSW 2146  
For information feel free to contact Pastor Rein Muhlberg at (02) 9620 5382 or (02) 9896 3158. I look forward to a great rally. Pastor Muhlberg is a fine pastor who invited me many years ago in Auckland, NZ.

**November 19 (Sunday): SYDNEY CHINESE SDA CHURCH**

Location: 14a Jersey Road, Strathfield, NSW 2135. For information call Pastor Daniel Chong at 02 9745 4035. I will present a mini version of my Sabbath Seminar from 7:00 to 9:00 p. m.

**November 20: Monday 9:00 a. m. – SYDNEY WORKERS' MEETING**

Location: Greater Sydney Conference, 4 Cambridge Street, Epping, NSW 2121, Sydney. For information call the Ministerial Secretary, Pastor Garth Bainbridge at (02) 9868 6522. The meeting is primarily for our GSC workers, but Pastor Bainbridge may be willing to grant you admission, if you first make public confession of all your past sins (Please laugh!).

The plan is for me to present two lectures. The first is entitled "From Sabbath to Sunday: How It Came About." In this powerpoint presentation I will share the highlights of my research on the change of the Sabbath, done in Rome at the Pontifical Gregorian University. The second lecture is entitled "The Mark and Number of the Beast." This powerpoint study examines the various past and present interpretations of the mark and number of the Beast. It is designed to help our pastors and members understand why our Adventist church has moved from the numeric to the symbolic interpretation of 666.

**November 24-26: BRISBANE: SABBATH CONFERENCE**

Location: Brisbane Adventist College, 303A Broadwater Road, Mansfield, QLD 4122. The Sabbath Conference is co-sponsored by the South Queensland Conference and several sabbatarian churches in the

---

---

Brisbane area. For information feel free to contact Pastor Mark Pierce at 0417625884.

**November 27: Monday 9:00 a. m. – BRISBANE WORKERS' MEETING**

Location: 19 Eagle Terrace, Brisbane, QLD 4000. For information call the Conference office at (07) 3218-7777. If you are not a pastor, ask the Conference office for permission to attend. There should be no problem.

**Does Your Church or School in Australia needs an outstanding HITACHI projector at a bargain price? Let me know. I might be able to bring one or two along with me. My email is <sbacchiocchi@biblicalperspective.com>**

**FREE CD/DVD ALBUM OF PROF. GRAEME BRADFORD**

Several pastors have reported to me that after showing to their congregation Prof. Bradford's live DVD lecture on Ellen White, most members were very eager to purchase a copy of the book *MORE THAN A PROPHET* at the special offer of \$5.00 per copy, instead of the regular price of \$25.00.

To make it possible for every Adventist family to benefit from Prof. Bradford's timely book *MORE THAN A PROPHET*, I decided to offer until November 30, 2006, one FREE CD/DVD album of Prof. Bradford, with any order of 2 or more copies of the book *MORE THAN A PROPHET*. The regular price of the CD/DVD album is \$100.00, but you will receive this album free with your order of 2 or more copies of the book. The reason for this offer is the conviction that when your church members and friends view Prof. Bradford's DVD lecture, they will be eager to purchase a copy of his book. For more details and order information, click here: <http://www.biblicalperspectives.com/BradfordOffer/offer.htm> If you have problems to order the book on line, feel free to call us at (269) 471-2915.

*More than a Prophet* is the fruit of twenty years of Prof. Bradford's painstaking research on the prophetic ministry of Ellen White. It is a long-overdue book that clears the air of prevailing misconceptions about Ellen White which have caused thousands of Adventists to leave church.

---

---

It has been encouraging to receive messages from former Adventists who after reading *More than a Prophet*, express the desire to come back to the church.

A dozen of Conferences have already donated a copy of *More than a Prophet* to each of their workers. For example, the Texas Conference ordered 200 copies. Other conferences have ordered fewer copies because of their smaller number of workers. Overseas conferences like the South African Union, ordered 300 copies. Your personal effort to promote this timely book in your church is greatly appreciated.

## **ANNOUNCEMENTS AT THE END OF THE NEWSLETTERS**

A detailed description of the special offers on goods and services is provided at the end of this newsletter. Here is a brief listing of the announcements that are expanded at the end of this newsletter.

**1. CALENDAR OF FORTHCOMING WEEKEND SEMINARS** for the months of November and December 2006. See the details at the end of this newsletter.

**2. DR. BACCHIOCCHI'S DVD ALBUM ON *THE MARK AND NUMBER OF THE BEAST*.** See the details at the end of this newsletter.

**3. DR. BACCHIOCCHI'S PACKAGE OF ALL HIS RECORDINGS.** The package consists of 6 albums (including the latest on *Cracking the Da Vinci Code*), which are offered for only \$150.00, instead of the regular price of \$700.00. See the details at the end of this newsletter.

**4. PROF. JON PAULIEN PUBLICATIONS IN ONE CD ALBUM.** The album contains more than a dozen of books and scores of articles written during the past 20 years of research. See the details at the end of this newsletter.

**5. TAGNET SPECIAL NEW WEB HOSTING OFFER** for Adventist churches and members. TAGnet provides an incredible number of web-hosting services to our churches and members. This newsletter comes to you through their gracious and efficient service. For detail information,

---

---

visit their website at <http://www.netadventist.org> or <http://home.tagnet.org/> You may also call their office 800 - 9TAGNET. They are ready and eager to help you.

**6. SPECIAL OFFER ON HITACHI PROJECTORS:** HITACHI has offered an additional discount to help especially our churches and schools in developing countries. For examples, the special offer for the new 2500 LUMENS PROJECTOR CP-X260 IS ONLY \$1195.00, instead of the previous SDA price of \$2595.00. See the details at the end of this newsletter or call me at 269-471-2915

**7. SPECIAL OFFER ON NEWLY RELEASED TOSHIBA LAPTOP TECRA A8** with dual processor and finger-print security. See details at the end.

**8. REMOTE PRESENTER:** Special offer on the smallest and most powerful REMOTE powerpoint presenter by Honeywell. See the details at the end of this newsletter.

**9. BED & BREAKFAST FACILITIES IN LONDON, ENGLAND**

If your travel plans call for a stop in London, you will be pleased to learn about a most gracious Adventist couple that offer the best accommodation and breakfast I have ever enjoyed. It has become my home away from home when in London. See details at: <http://www.biblicalperspectives.com/Promotions/BED&BREAKFAST.htm>

**“The Sabbath and the Savior”**

**Samuele Bacchiocchi, Ph. D.**

**Retired Professor of Church History and Theology**

**Andrews University**

Many Christians believe the Sabbath is an Old Covenant institution that Christ fulfilled by becoming our Sabbath rest. The way Christ fulfilled the Sabbath, however, is understood differently by different Christians. For some, Christ fulfilled the Sabbath commandment by terminating its observance altogether and by replacing it with an existential experience of salvation-rest available to believers every day. This is essentially the Lutheran position which recently has been adopted by the Worldwide

---

---

Church of God, and former Adventists who have embraced the so-called “New Covenant” theology.

For other Christians, Christ fulfilled and terminated only the *ceremonial* aspect of the Sabbath commandment—namely, the specific observance of the *seventh day* which foreshadowed His salvation rest. However, they believe that the *moral* aspect of the Sabbath commandment, consisting of *one day in seven principle*, was not abrogated by Christ but was transferred to the observance of the first day of the week, Sunday. This is essentially the Catholic and Calvinistic position which has been adopted by churches in the Reformed tradition.

The common denominator of both positions is the belief that Christ fulfilled the typological function of the Sabbath, thus releasing His followers from the obligation of its observance. This prevailing view constitutes a major attack against the validity and value of Sabbathkeeping for Christians today and, consequently, deserves careful analysis.

Our response to Christ’s termination view of the Sabbath, will center around this question: Did Christ fulfill the sabbatical typologies of Messianic redemption by *terminating* the function of the Sabbath, as in the case of the Temple’s services (Heb 8:13; 9:23-28), or by *actualizing* and enriching its meaning and observance through His redemptive ministry?

Surprisingly, our Adventist literature largely ignores this important aspect of the redemptive meaning and function of the Sabbath in the Old and New Testaments. Our focus is primarily the creational origin of the Sabbath and its continuity during the course of redemptive history. Yet, an appreciation for the theological development of the Sabbath, from a memorial of perfect creation to a celebration of complete redemption and of final restoration, can provide believers with a richer understanding and experience of Sabbath observance.

### THE SABBATH AND THE SAVIOR IN THE OLD TESTAMENT

The story of creation is in a sense a redemption story: redemption from disorder into order, from chaos into cosmos. Within the creation

---

---

event, the Sabbath reveals the purpose of God's first redemptive act. It tells us that God created this world not merely for the enjoyment of making something new and beautiful out of formless matter (Gen 1:2) but for the special pleasure of sharing Himself with His creatures.

This truth is reflected especially in the blessing and sanctification of the Sabbath. Since it is the manifestation of God's holy presence that makes a day or a place holy, the sanctification of the Sabbath reveals God's commitment to bless His creatures with abundant life through His holy presence. God "sanctified" or "made holy" the seventh day (Gen 2:3) by setting the day apart for the manifestation of His Holy presence among His creatures. To put it differently, by blessing and sanctifying the seventh day, God revealed His intent to offer mankind not only beautiful things, but also the sweet experience of His fellowship.

### **A Promise of Emmanuel**

When the prospect of a joyous life in the presence of God was shattered by sin, the Sabbath became the symbol of divine commitment to restore broken relationships. From being the symbol of God's initial *cosmological* accomplishments (that is, bringing into existence a perfect cosmos out of chaos), the Sabbath became the symbol of God's future *soteriological* activities (that is, the redemption of His people from bondage into His freedom).

From serving as a symbol of God's *initial entrance into human time* to bless and sanctify human beings with His divine presence, the Sabbath became a symbol of God's *future entrance into human flesh* to become "Emmanuel—God with us." The first as well as the second coming of Christ represents the fulfillment of God's purpose for this world expressed initially through the blessings and sanctification of the Sabbath.

In his book *Toward an American Theology*, Herbert W. Richardson rightly emphasizes the connection between the sanctification of the creation Sabbath and the incarnation of Christ. He writes: "God created the world so that the Sabbath guest, Jesus Christ, might come and dwell therein. That is, the world was created for the sake of 'Emmanuel, God with us.' The incarnation is, therefore, not a rescue operation, decided upon only after sin had entered into the world. Rather, the coming of Christ fulfills the purpose of God in creating the world."

---

To trace how the Sabbath has fulfilled this redemptive function in the Old and New Testaments is not an easy task for three major reasons. First, the Sabbath has provided the basis for constant new reflections. Various strands of sabbatical concepts such as the themes of Sabbath “rest,” “peace,” “delight,” the cosmic week, the liberation experience of the Sabbath years, and the sabbatical structure of time, have all been used to express the future (eschatological) expectations of divine deliverance.

Second, the liberation message of the Sabbath has been applied, as I have shown elsewhere, both to immediate national political restoration and to future expectations of Messianic redemption. This dual application to the same theme readily creates confusion in the mind of an unwarned reader.

Third, the biblical and extra-biblical sources provide us with fragmented information rather than systematic explanation of the various levels of meanings attributed to the Sabbath. Also, certain allusions to sabbatical themes in the Old Testament become clearer in the light of their New Testament interpretation, especially in Hebrews 3 and 4.

For the sake of brevity I will skip the discussion of the Messianic understanding of the Sabbath peace, lights, and delight, and focusing instead on the Sabbath rest, Sabbath liberation, and Sabbatical structure of time.

### **Sabbath Rest**

The theme of Sabbath rest (*menuhah*) which to “the biblical mind,” as Abraham Joshua Heschel explains, “is the same as happiness and stillness, as peace and harmony,” has served as an effective typology of the Messianic age, often known as “the end of days” or “the world-to-come.”

In the Old Testament, the notion of “rest” is utilized to express both national and Messianic aspirations. As a national aspiration, the Sabbath rest served to typify a peaceful life in a land of rest (Deut 12:9; 25:19; Is 14:3) where the king would give to the people “rest from all enemies” (2 Sam 7:1) and where God would find His “resting place” among His people and especially in His sanctuary at Zion (2 Chron 6:41; 1 Chron 23:25; Ps 132:8, 13, 14; Is 66:1).

---

The connection between Sabbath rest and national rest is also clearly established in Hebrews 4:4, 6, 8, where the author speaks of the creation-Sabbath rest as the symbol of the promised entrance into the land of Canaan. Because of disobedience, the wilderness generation “failed to enter” (v. 6) into the land of rest typified by the Sabbath. Even later, when the Israelites under Joshua did enter the land of rest (v. 8), the blessings of the Sabbath rest were not fulfilled because God offered His Sabbath rest again long afterwards through David, saying, “Today, when you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts” (Heb 4:7).

The fact that the blessings of the Sabbath rest were never realized as a political condition of rest and peace challenged God’s people to look for their future fulfillment at and through the coming of the Messiah. In Jewish literature we find numerous examples where the Sabbath rest and the septenary structure of time are used to signify the rest, peace, and redemption of the messianic age.

For example, the Babylonian Talmud says “Our Rabbis taught: at the conclusion of the Sabbath the son of David will come. R. Joseph demurred: But so many Sabbaths have passed, yet has he not come!” The age of the Messiah is often described as a time of sabbatical rest. At the end of the *Mishnah Tamid* we read: “A Psalm, a song for the Sabbath day—a song for the time to come, for the day that is all Sabbath *rest* in the eternal life.”

These few examples suffice to show that the rest experience of the Sabbath nourished the hope and strengthened the faith of the future Messianic peace and rest. The time of redemption came to be viewed, as stated in the *Mishnah*, as “all Sabbath and rest in the life everlasting.”

### **Sabbath Liberation**

The freedom, release, and liberation which the weekly and annual Sabbaths were designed to grant to every member of the Hebrew society also have served as effective symbols of the expected Messianic redemption.

In the Deuteronomic version of the Fourth Commandment, the Sabbath is explicitly linked to the Exodus liberation by means of the



---

---

“remembrance clause”: “You shall remember that you were a servant in the land of Egypt, and the Lord your God brought you out thence with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm; therefore, the Lord your God commanded you to keep the Sabbath” (Deut 5:15).

The connection between the Sabbath and the Exodus deliverance may explain why the Sabbath became ideologically connected with the Passover, the annual celebration of the deliverance from Egypt. In a sense, the Sabbath came to be viewed as a “little Passover” in the same way as many Christians have come to view their weekly Sunday as a “little Easter.”

The Sabbath was a real liberator of the Hebrew society by providing a release from the hardship of life and social inequalities, not only every seventh day but also every seventh year, on the sabbatical year (Lev 25:8), and every “seven sabbaths of years,” on the jubilee year (Lev 25:8). At these annual institutions, the Sabbath truly became the liberator of the oppressed in Hebrew society. The land was to lie fallow to provide free produce for the dispossessed and animals. The slaves were emancipated and the debts owed by fellow citizens were remitted. Though seldom observed, these annual Sabbaths served to announce the future liberation and redemption to be brought about by the Messiah. One reason for the Messianic function of the Sabbath years is found in three significant features they contained.

### Sabbath Release

First, the annual Sabbaths promised *release* from personal debts and slavery. Such a *release* provided an effective imagery to typify the expected Messianic deliverance (Is 61:1-3, 7; 40:2).<sup>26</sup> In his dissertation on the jubiliary theology of the Gospel of Luke, Robert Sloan shows how the New Testament concept of forgiveness (“*aphesis*”) is derived largely from the release from financial indebtedness and social injustices of the annual Sabbaths. These are referred to as “the release,” “the Lord’s release,” and “the year of release” (Deut 15:1,2,9; 31:10; Lev 25:10).

The Lord’s Prayer’s phrase “forgive us our debts” (Matt 6:12) derives from the release from financial indebtedness of the annual Sabbaths. The sabbatical release from financial indebtedness and social injustices

---

---

came to be viewed as the prefiguration of the future Messianic release from the moral indebtedness of sin.

Isaiah 61:1-3 employs the imagery of the sabbatical release to describe the mission of the Messiah who would bring jubilarly amnesty and release from captivity. Christ, as we shall see, utilized this very passage to announce and explain the nature of His redemptive mission.

### **The Trumpet Blast**

A second Messianic feature of the Sabbath years is *the trumpet blast* by means of a ram's horn (*yobel*—from which derives the term “jubilee”) which ushered in the Sabbath years. The imagery of the Jubilee's trumpet blast is used in the Old Testament to describe the Messianic ingathering of the exiles (Is 27:13; cf. Zech 9:9-14) and in the New Testament to announce the return of Christ (1 Cor 15:52; 1 Thess 4:16; Matt 24:31).

### **The Date of the Day of Atonement**

A third Messianic feature of the Sabbath years is *the date* of the tenth day of the seventh month (*Atonement Day*) on which the ram's horn was blown to inaugurate the year of Jubilee (Lev 25:9). It was the cleansing and new moral beginning offered by God to the people on the Day of Atonement (Lev 16:13-19) which inaugurated the sabbatical release of the Jubilee year.

The connection between the Day of Atonement and the Jubilee year was noticed by rabbis who said: “The Lord would forgive Israel's debt on the seventh month, which is Tishri, at the blast of the *shofar*, and just as the Holy One blessed be He has had mercy on Israel in this age at the blast of the *shofar*, also in the future I will have mercy on you through the *shofar* and bring your redeemed ones near.”

### **Sabbatical Structure of Time**

These unique Messianic features of the Sabbath years apparently inspired the use of the sabbatical structure of time to measure the waiting time to the Messianic redemption. Some scholars call this phenomenon “sabbatical Messianism” or “chronomessianism.”

---

The classical place of sabbatical Messianism is found in Daniel 9 where two sabbatical periods are given. The first refers to the 70 years of Jeremiah's prophecy (Jer 29:10) regarding the length of the exile before the *national restoration* of the Jews (Dan 9:3-19) and consists of 10 sabbatical years (10 x 7). The second period is of "seventy weeks (*shabuim*)"—technically "seventy sabbatical cycles"—which would lead to *Messianic redemption* (Dan 9:24-27).

This sabbatical Messianism is found in later Jewish literature such as *The Book of Jubilees* (1:29) and a fragmentary text discovered in 1956 in Qumran Cave II (known as 11Q Melchizedek). Other examples present in rabbinic tradition, are mentioned in my longer studies mentioned above.

**Conclusion.** This brief survey of Old Testament Sabbath themes shows that in Old Testament times the weekly and annual Sabbaths served not only to provide physical rest and liberation from social injustices but also to epitomize and nourish the hope of future Messianic redemption.

Rabbi Heschel captures vividly the Old Testament messianic function of the Sabbath in this way: "Zion is in ruins, Jerusalem lies in the dust. All week there is only hope of redemption. But when the Sabbath is entering the world, man is touched by a moment of actual redemption; as if for a moment the spirit of the Messiah moved over the face of the earth." The sabbatical typologies of messianic redemption we have found in the Old Testament help us to appreciate the relationship between the Sabbath and the Savior in the New Testament.

### THE SABBATH AND THE SAVIOR IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

The existence in the Old Testament of a Messianic/redemptive typology of the Sabbath has led many Christians to conclude that the Sabbath is an Old Testament institution given specifically to the Jews to remind them of God's past creation and of the future Messianic redemption. Calvin, for example, describes the Old Testament Sabbath as "typical" (symbolic), that is, "a legal ceremony shadowing forth a spiritual rest, the truth of which was manifested in Christ." Therefore, Christians no longer need to observe the Sabbath because Christ has fulfilled its Messianic/re-

---

---

demptive typology. As Paul K. Jewett puts it, “by his redemptive work, Jesus sets aside the Sabbath by fulfilling its ultimate divine intent.”

The view that Christ fulfilled the Sabbath by terminating its observance is very popular today among both Catholics and Protestants. Recently this view has been adopted even by former sabbatarians like the Worldwide Church of God and former Adventists. The popular acceptance of this view calls for close examination of the New Testament teachings regarding the relationship between the Sabbath and the Savior.

### **Did Christ Terminate or Expand the Meaning of the Sabbath?**

The basic questions addressed here are these: Did Christ’s redemptive mission fulfill the eschatological expectations inherent in the Sabbath by *terminating* its function and observance, as in the case of the Temple’s services (Heb 8:13; 9:23-28), or by *expanding* its meaning and enriching its observance as the celebration of His redemptive accomplishments? Did Christ view the observance of the Sabbath as the unquestionable will of God for His followers? Or, did Christ regard the obligation of Sabbath-keeping as fulfilled and superseded by His coming, the true Sabbath? Did Christ teach that “New Covenant” Christians are to observe the Sabbath by experiencing the “rest of salvation” every day rather than by resting unto Lord on the seventh day? To find answers to these questions, we briefly examine some Sabbath passages found in Luke, Matthew, John, and Hebrews.

#### **1. The Sabbath in Luke**

**Christ: A Model of Sabbathkeeping.** Luke’s account of the opening scene of Christ’s ministry provides a suitable starting point for our inquiry into the relationship between the Savior and the Sabbath. According to Luke, it was “on a Sabbath day” that Jesus officially inaugurated His ministry in the synagogue of Nazareth, making a programmatic speech. It is noteworthy that Luke introduces Christ as an habitual observer of the Sabbath (“as his custom was”—Luke 4:16). Luke speaks of Christ’s customary Sabbathkeeping in the immediate context of His upbringing in Nazareth (“where he had been brought up”—v. 16). This suggests that the allusion is especially to the custom of Sabbath observance during Christ’s youth.

---

The word “Sabbath” occurs in Luke’s Gospel 21 times and 8 times in Acts. That is approximately twice as often as in any of the other three Gospels. This surely suggests that Luke attaches significance to the Sabbath. In fact, Luke not only begins but also closes the account of Christ’s earthly ministry on a Sabbath by mentioning that His entombment took place on “the day of Preparation and the Sabbath was beginning” (Luke 23:54). A number of scholars recognize in this text Luke’s concern to show that the Christian community observed the Sabbath.

Lastly, Luke expands his brief account of Christ’s burial by stating emphatically that the women “rested on the sabbath in obedience to the commandment” (23:56b—NIV). Why does Luke present not only Christ but also His followers as habitual Sabbathkeepers. This consistent pattern can hardly be construed as insignificant or incidental. The many examples and situations of Sabbathkeeping reported by Luke strongly suggest that Luke intended to set before his readers Christ as “a model of reverence for the Sabbath.” To understand such a “model,” however, it is necessary to study how Luke and the other evangelists relate the Sabbath to the coming of Christ.

**Messianic Fulfillment of Sabbath Liberation.** In His inaugural Nazareth address, Christ read and commented upon a passage drawn mostly from Isaiah 61:1-2 (also 58:6) which says: “The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed, to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord” (Luke 4:18).

The vital function of this passage has been noticed by many scholars. Hans Conzelmann correctly views it as a nutshell summary of the “Messianic program.” The original passage of Isaiah describes by means of the imagery of the Sabbath year the liberation from captivity that the Servant of the Lord would bring to His people. The fact that the language and imagery of the Sabbath years found in Isaiah 61:1-3 (and 58:6) were utilized by sectarian and mainstream Jews to describe the work of the expected Messiah, makes Christ’s use of this passage all the more significant. This means that Christ presented Himself to the people as the very fulfillment of their Messianic expectations which had been nourished by the vision of the Sabbath years.

---

This conclusion is supported by what may be regarded as a brief summary of Jesus' exposition of the Isaianic passage which is recorded in Luke 4:21: "Today this scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing." In other words, the Messianic redemption *promised* by Isaiah through the imagery of the Sabbath year is "now" being *fulfilled*. As Paul K. Jewett aptly comments, "The great Jubilee Sabbath has become a reality for those who have been loosed from their sins by the coming of the Messiah and have found inheritance in Him."

**Promise and Fulfillment.** The theme of *promise* and *fulfillment* recurs in all the Gospels. Many aspects of Christ's life and ministry are presented repeatedly as the fulfillment of Old Testament prophecies. The risen Christ Himself, according to Luke, explained to His disciples that His teaching and mission represented the *fulfillment* of "everything written about me in the law of Moses and the prophets and the psalms" (Luke 24:44; cf. 24:26-27).

How does the Sabbath fit into this theme of promise and fulfillment? What did Christ mean when He announced His mission to be the fulfillment of the sabbatical promises of liberation? Did He intend to explain that the institution of the Sabbath was a type which had found its fulfillment in Himself, the Antitype, and therefore its obligations had ceased? In such a case, Christ would have paved the way for the replacement of the Sabbath with a new day of worship, as many Christians believe. Or did Christ through His redemptive mission fulfill the promised sabbatical rest and release in order to make the day a fitting channel through which to experience His blessings of salvation?

To find an answer to these questions, it is necessary to examine the Sabbath teaching and ministry of Christ reported in the Gospels. So far we have noticed that, according to Luke, Christ delivered His programmatic speech on a Sabbath claiming to be the fulfillment of the Messianic restoration announced by means of the Sabbath years (Is 61:1-3; 58:6).

**Early Sabbath Healings.** Christ's announcement of His Messiahship (Luke 4:16-21) is followed in Luke by two Sabbath healing episodes. The first took place in the synagogue of Capernaum during a Sabbath service and resulted in the *spiritual* healing of a demon-possessed man (Luke 4:31-37; Mark 1:21-28).

---

The second healing was accomplished immediately after the religious service in Simon's house and brought about the *physical* restoration of Simon's mother-in-law (Luke 4:38-39; Mark 1:29-31). The result of the latter was *rejoicing* for the whole family and *service*: "immediately she rose and *served* them" (Luke 4:39). The themes of *liberation*, *joy*, and *service* present in embryonic form in these first healings are more explicitly associated with the meaning of the Sabbath in the subsequent ministry of Christ.

**The Crippled Woman.** The healing of the crippled woman, reported only by Luke, further clarifies the relationship between the Sabbath and the Savior's saving ministry. In the brief narrative (Luke 13:10-17), the Greek verb *luo*, usually translated "to free, to untie, to loose," is used by the Lord *three* times, thus suggesting *intentional* rather than *accidental* usage of the term.

The first time, the verb is used by Christ in addressing the woman: "You are *freed* from your infirmity" (Luke 13:12, emphasis supplied). Twice again the verb is used by Christ to respond to the indignation of the ruler of the synagogue: "You hypocrites! Does not each of you on the Sabbath *untie* his ox or his ass from the manger and lead it away to water it? And ought not this woman, a daughter of Abraham whom Satan bound for eighteen years, be *loosed* from this bond on the Sabbath day?" (Luke 13:15-16; emphasis supplied).

Arguing from a minor to a major case, Christ shows how the Sabbath had been paradoxically distorted. An ox or an ass could be legitimately *untied* on the Sabbath for drinking purposes (possibly because a day without water would result in loss of weight and, consequently, of market value), but a suffering woman could not be released on such a day from the shackles of her physical and spiritual infirmity.

Christ acted deliberately against prevailing misconceptions in order to restore the day to God's intended purpose. It should be noted that in this as well as in all other Sabbath healings, Christ is not questioning the *validity* of the Sabbath commandment; rather, He argues for its true values which had been obscured by the accumulation of traditions and countless regulations.

---

**Sabbath Redemption.** The imagery of loosing on the Sabbath a victim bound by Satan's bonds (Luke 13:16) recalls Christ's announcement of His mission "to proclaim *release* to the captives . . . to set at *liberty* those who are oppressed" (Luke 4:18; emphasis supplied). Does not Jesus' act of freeing a daughter of Abraham from her physical and spiritual bonds on the Sabbath exemplify how the Messianic liberation typified by the Sabbath was being fulfilled (Luke 4:21)?

The connection between the redemptive typology of the Sabbath and Jesus' healings on the Sabbath is recognized, for example, by Sunday-keeping scholars like Paul K. Jewett who rightly observes that "We have in Jesus' healings on the Sabbath, not only acts of love, compassion, and mercy, but true 'sabbatical acts,' which show that the messianic Sabbath, the fulfillment of the Sabbath rest of the Old Testament, has broken into our world. Therefore, the Sabbath, of all days, is the most appropriate for healing."

This fulfillment by Christ of the Old Testament Sabbath does not imply, as argued by the same author, that "Christians therefore are . . . free from the Sabbath to gather on the first day," but rather that Christ by fulfilling the redemptive typology of the Sabbath made the day a fitting memorial of His redemptive mission. The redemptive meaning of Christ's Sabbath healings can be seen also in the spiritual ministry Jesus provides to those whom He heals (cf. Mark 1:25; 2:5; Luke 13:16; John 5:14; 9:38).

Acts of healing people such as the crippled woman are not merely acts of love and compassion but true "sabbatical acts" which reveal how the Messianic redemption typified and promised by the Sabbath was being fulfilled through Christ's saving ministry. For all the people blessed by Christ's Sabbath ministry, the day became the memorial of the healing of their bodies and souls, the exodus from the bonds of Satan into the freedom of the Savior.

Christ chose to heal the crippled woman not *in spite of* the Sabbath but *rather because* the day provided a most fitting occasion. The physical and spiritual freedom that the Savior offered to that sick woman on the Sabbath represents a token manifestation of Christ's proclaimed fulfillment of the Sabbath liberation (Luke 4:18-21), which had dawned with His coming.



---

---

How did the woman and the people who witnessed Christ's saving interventions come to view the Sabbath? Luke reports that while Christ's "adversaries were put to shame; all the people rejoiced" (Luke 13:17) and the woman "praised God" (Luke 13:13). Undoubtedly for the healed woman and for all the people blessed by Christ's Sabbath ministry, the day became the memorial of the healing of their bodies and souls, of the exodus from the bonds of Satan into the freedom of the Savior.

## 2. The Sabbath in Matthew

**The Savior's Rest.** Matthew does not introduce any Sabbath episode until almost halfway through his Gospel. Then he relates two Sabbath pericopes (Matt 12:1-14) which he connects *temporally* to Jesus' offer of His rest: "Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me; for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light" (Matt 11:28-30). To understand the nature of the Savior's rest, it is important to look at the wider and immediate context.

In the wider context, Jesus' offer of His rest is sandwiched between several accounts of rejection or opposition: the doubting of John the Baptist (11:1-6), the rejection by an unbelieving generation (11:7-19) and by the Galilean cities (11:20-24), the plotting of Pharisees (12:14), the rejection of Christ's healing by Pharisees (12:22-37), the rebuke to an unbelieving generation (12:38-45), and the misunderstanding by His relatives (12:46-50). In this context of unusual opposition and misunderstanding, Jesus disclosed His Messianic identity by proclaiming Himself to be "the Son" who "knows" and "reveals" "the Father" in a unique way (11:27). To support this Messianic claim, Christ offered the Messianic rest typified by the Sabbath (11:28-30).

We noted earlier that the Sabbath rest in Old Testament times served to nourish the hope of Messianic redemption. The messianic age was expected to be "wholly Sabbath and *rest* in the life everlasting." In the light of the existing Messianic understanding of the Sabbath rest, it appears that Christ, by offering His rest immediately after His Messianic disclosure intended to substantiate His Messianic claim by offering what the Messiah was expected to bring—namely, the peace and rest typified by the Sabbath.

---

**The Savior's Rest and the Sabbath.** The connection between Jesus' rest and the Sabbath is also indicated in Matthew by the placement of the former (11:28-30) in the immediate context of two Sabbath episodes (12:1-14). The two are connected, as noted by several scholars, not only *structurally* but also *temporally* by the phrase "at that time" (12:1).<sup>53</sup> The time referred to is a Sabbath day when Jesus and the disciples went through a field.

The fact that, according to Matthew, Christ offered His rest on a Sabbath day suggests the possibility that the two are linked together not only *temporally* but also *theologically*. The theological connection between the two is clarified by the two Sabbath episodes which serve to explain how the Messianic rest offered by Jesus is related to the Sabbath. The first story about the disciples plucking ears of corn on a Sabbath (Matt 12:1-8) interprets Jesus' rest as redemption-rest, especially through Christ's appeal to the example of the priests who worked intensively on the Sabbath in the Temple and yet were "guiltless" (Matt 12:5). The second story about the healing of the man with the withered hand interprets Jesus' rest as restoration-rest, especially through Christ's illustration of the rescuing of a sheep from a pit on the Sabbath (Matt 12:11-12).

Why were the priests "guiltless" though offering more services and sacrifices on the Sabbath (Num 28:8, 9)? Certainly it was not because they took a day off at another time during the week. No such provision is contemplated in the Old Testament. The absence of such a provision constitutes a direct challenge to the *one-day-in-seven principle* so greatly relied upon by many Christians to justify Sunday observance on the basis of the Sabbath commandment. Donald Carson, editor of the scholarly symposium *From Sabbath to the Lord's Day*, acknowledges that "if the Old Testament principle were really 'one day in seven for worship and rest' instead of 'the seventh day for worship and rest,' we might have expected Old Testament legislation to prescribe some other day off for the priests. The lack of such confirms the importance in Old Testament thought of the *seventh* day, as opposed to the mere one-in-seven principle so greatly relied upon by those who wish to see in Sunday the precise New Testament equivalent of the Old Testament Sabbath."

The priests performed activities on the Sabbath which per se were rightly condemned by the commandment; yet they were guiltless because

---

---

they were fulfilling the purpose of the Sabbath, which is to supply the spiritual needs of the people. But, how could Christ defend His actions as well as those of His disciples by this example of the service performed by the priests on the Sabbath, when neither He nor His disciples were fulfilling the divine law of sacrifices on that day? The answer is found in the subsequent statement Christ made: “I tell you something greater than the temple is here” (Matt 12:6).

**Christ and the Temple Sabbath Services.** The symbolic function of the temple and its services had now found its fulfillment and were superseded by the service of the *True High Priest*. Therefore, on the Sabbath, and even by preference on the Sabbath, Christ also must intensify His “sacrificial offering,” that is to say, His ministry of salvation on behalf of needy sinners; and what He does His followers, the new priesthood, must do likewise. In John 7:22-23 Christ expresses the same concept. As the priest on the Sabbath extends the blessing of the covenant to the newborn through the act of circumcision, so Christ on the Sabbath must work for the salvation of the entire person.

Christ finds in the redemptive work performed typologically by the priests on the Sabbath a valid basis to justify His own Sabbath ministry because He views it as “something greater than the temple” (12:6). The redemption offered *typologically* through the Temple services and sacrifices performed by the priests is now being provided *realistically* through the saving mission of the Son of Man, the Messiah. Therefore, just as the priests were “guiltless” in performing their Sabbath services in the Temple, so were Jesus’ disciples in serving the One who is greater than the Temple.

The Temple and its services provide Jesus with a valid frame of reference to explain His Sabbath theology. This is because their redemptive function best exemplified both His Messianic mission and the divine intended purpose for the Sabbath. In fact, by identifying His saving mission with the Sabbath, Christ reveals the ultimate divine purpose of the commandment, namely, fellowship with God. Through Christ’s redemptive ministry, the Sabbath becomes a time not only to commemorate God’s past creation but also to experience the blessings of salvation by ministering to the needs of others.

---

The humanitarian dimension of the Sabbath unfortunately had largely been forgotten in Christ's day. The claims of rituals had taken the place of the claims of service to human needs. In the statement reported by Matthew, Christ openly attacks this perversion of the Sabbath, saying, "If you had known what this means, 'I desire mercy and not sacrifice,' you would not have condemned the guiltless" (Matt 12:7). For Christ, the disciples are "guiltless" though they had contravened the Sabbath law of complete rest because the true meaning of the commandment is "mercy and not sacrifice."

**The Man with the Withered Hand.** Christ's proclamation of lordship over the Sabbath is followed immediately by a second healing episode of the man with the withered hand (Matt 12:9-21; cf. Mark 3:1-6). The function of this healing was to demonstrate how Christ exerted His lordship over the Sabbath by offering Messianic healing and restoration on that day.

Jesus finds Himself in the synagogue before a man with a paralyzed hand, brought there in all probability by a deputation of Scribes and Pharisees. They came to the synagogue, not to worship, but to scrutinize Christ and "see whether he would heal him on the sabbath, so that they might accuse him" (Mark 3:2). According to Matthew, they ask Christ the testing question: "Is it lawful to heal on the sabbath?" (Matt 12:10). Their question is not motivated by a genuine concern for the sick man, nor by a desire to explore how the Sabbath is related to the healing ministry. Rather, they are there as the authority who knows all the exemptions foreseen by the rabbinic casuistry and who wants to judge Christ on the basis of the minutiae of their regulations.

Christ reading their thoughts is "grieved at their hardness of heart" (Mark 3:5). He accepts the challenge and meets it fairly and squarely. First, He invites the man to come to the front, saying, "Come here" (Mark 3:3). This step is possibly designed to waken sympathy for the stricken man and at the same time to make sure all are aware of what He is about to do. Then He asks the experts of the law, "Is it lawful on the sabbath to do good or to do harm, to save life or to kill?" (Mark 3:4). To bring this question into sharper focus, according to Matthew, Christ adds a second question in the form of a parabolic saying: "What man of you, if he has one

---

---

sheep and it falls into a pit on the sabbath, will not lay hold of it and lift it out? Of how much more value is a man than a sheep?" (Matt 12:11,12).

**The Sabbath: A Day to Show Concern.** The original purpose of the Sabbath and its related institutions is to emphasize the importance of loving one's neighbor, especially the defenseless. In the various versions of the Sabbath commandment, for instance, a recurring list of persons appears to whom freedom to rest on the Sabbath is to be granted. The ones particularly singled out are usually the manservant, the maidservant, the son of the bondmaid, the cattle, and the sojourner and/or alien. This indicates that the Sabbath was ordained especially to show compassion toward defenseless and needy beings. "Six days you shall do your work, but on the seventh you shall rest; that your ox and your ass may have rest and the son of your bond-maid and the alien may be refreshed" (Ex 23 :12).

This original dimension of the Sabbath as a day to honor God by showing concern and compassion to fellow beings had largely been forgotten in the time of Jesus. The Sabbath had become the day when correct performance of a ritual was more important than a spontaneous response to the cry of human needs. Our story provides a fitting example of this prevailing perversion by contrasting two types of Sabbath-keepers.

On one side stood Christ "grieved at the hardness of the heart" of his accusers and taking steps to save the life of a wretched man (Mark 3:4-5). On the other side stood the experts of the law who, even while sitting in a place of worship, spent their Sabbath time looking for faults and thinking of methods to kill Christ (Mark 3 :2,6). This contrast of attitudes may well provide the explanation to Christ's question about the legitimacy of saving or killing on the Sabbath (Mark 3:4); the person who is not concerned for the physical and spiritual salvation of others on the Sabbath is automatically involved in destructive efforts or attitudes.

By healing the man with the withered hand, Christ not only clarified the intent of the Sabbath commandment but also demonstrated how He fulfilled the Messianic restoration which had been nourished by the celebration of the Sabbath. These intentional healing acts performed by Christ on behalf of incurable persons serve to clarify the relationship between the Savior's rest and the Sabbath.

---

Summing up, in Matthew the Old Testament Sabbath rest is seen as being actualized by Christ who offers to His followers the Messianic rest. The two Sabbath episodes reported by Matthew qualify the meaning of the Sabbath rest, first as Messianic *redemption* through its references to mercy and to Sabbath services performed by priests, and second, as Messianic *restoration* through the example of the Sabbath rescuing of a sheep and the restoring to health of a sick man. In the light of this redemptive/Messianic understanding of the Sabbath, how was the Sabbath observed in the Matthean community and in the apostolic church as a whole? This question is addressed below in the final section of this chapter dealing with the manner of Sabbathkeeping in the Apostolic Church.

### 3. The Sabbath in John

In John's Gospel, the relationship between the Sabbath and Christ's work of salvation is alluded to in two Sabbath miracles: the healing of the paralytic (John 5:1-18) and of the blind man (John 9:1-41). The two episodes are examined together since they are substantially similar. Both healed men had been chronically ill: one an invalid for 38 years (John 5:5) and the other blind from birth (John 9:2). In both instances, Christ told the men to act. To the paralyzed man He said, "Rise, take up your pallet, and walk" (John 5:8); to the blind man, "Go, wash in the pool of Siloam" (John 9:7).

Both of these actions represent breaking rabbinical Sabbath laws, and thus both are used by Pharisees to charge Christ with Sabbath-breaking (John 5:10, 16; 9:14-16). In both instances, Christ repudiated such a charge by arguing that His works of salvation are not precluded but rather contemplated by the Sabbath commandment (John 5:17; 7:23; 9:4). Christ's justification is expressed especially through a memorable statement: "My Father is working until now and I am working" (John 5:17; cf. 9:4).

**Negation or Clarification of the Sabbath?** What did Christ mean when He formally defended Himself against the charge of Sabbath-breaking by appealing to the "working until now" of His Father? Did He use the example of His Father to rescind the obligation of Sabbathkeeping both for Himself and for His followers or to clarify its true nature and meaning? To put it bluntly, does Christ's statement represent a *negation* or a *clarification* of the Sabbath law?

---

**The Adverb “Until Now.”** Traditionally, the adverbial phrase “until now” has been interpreted as the *continuous* working of God (whether it be in creation, preservation, or redemption) which allegedly overrides or rescinds the Sabbath law. But the adverb itself (“until”), especially as used in Greek in its emphatic position before the verb, presupposes not *constancy* but *culmination*. The latter is brought out by some translators through the use of the emphatic form “even until now.”

This adverbial phrase presupposes a beginning (*terminus a quo*) and an end (*terminus ad quem*). The former is apparently the initial creation Sabbath (Gen 2:2-3) and the latter the final Sabbath rest envisaged in a similar Sabbath pronouncement as the “night . . . when no one can work” (9:4). What Jesus is saying, then, is that though God rested on the Sabbath at the completion of creation, because of sin He has been “working until now” to bring the promised Sabbath rest to fruition.

**The Verb “Is Working.”** The meaning of the verb “is working” until now of the Father is clarified by John’s references to the working and works of God which are repeatedly and explicitly identified, not with a continuous divine creation nor with a constant maintenance of the universe, but with the saving mission of Christ.

Jesus explicitly states: “This is the *work* of God, that you *believe* in him whom he has sent” (John 6:29, emphasis supplied). And again, “If I am not doing the *works* of my Father, then do not *believe* me; but if I do them, even though you do not *believe* me, *believe the works*, that you may know and understand that the Father is in me and I am in the Father” (John 10:37, 38; cf. 4:34; 14:11; 15:24; emphasis supplied).

The redemptive nature of the works of God is evident in the healing of the blind man since the act is explicitly described as the manifestation of “the works of God” (John 9:3). This means then that God ended on the Sabbath His *works of creation* but not His *working, in general*. Because of sin, He has been engaged in the work of redemption “until now.” To use the words of A. T. Lincoln, one might say, “As regards the work of creation God’s rest was final, but as that rest was meant for humanity to enjoy, when it was disturbed by sin, God worked in history to accomplish his original purpose.”

---

**Theological Implications.** Christ appeals to the “working” of His Father not to nullify but to clarify the function of the Sabbath. To understand Christ’s defense, one must remember that the Sabbath is linked both to *creation* (Gen 2:2-3; Ex 20:11) and *redemption* (Deut 5:15).

While by interrupting all secular activities the Israelite was remembering the Creator-God, by acting mercifully toward fellow-beings he was imitating the Redeemer-God. This was true not only in the life of the people, in general, who on the Sabbath were to be compassionate toward the less fortunate, but especially in the service of the priest who could legitimately perform on the Sabbath works forbidden to other Israelites, because such works had a redemptive function.

On the basis of this theology of the Sabbath admitted by the Jews, Christ defends the legality of the “working” that He and His Father perform on the Sabbath. In John, Christ appeals to the example of circumcision to silence the echo of the controversy over the healing of the paralytic (John 7:22-24). The Lord argues that if it is legitimate on the Sabbath for the priests to care for one small part of man’s body (according to rabbinic reckoning, circumcision involved one of man’s 248 members) in order to extend to the newborn child the salvation of the covenant, there is no reason to be “angry” with Him for restoring on that day the “*whole body of man*” (John 7:23).

For Christ, the Sabbath is the day to work for the redemption of the *whole* man. This is borne out by the fact that in both healings, Christ looked for the healed men on the same day and, having found them, He ministered to their spiritual need (John 5:14; 9:35-38). Christ’s opponents cannot perceive the redemptive nature of His Sabbath ministry because they “judge by appearances” (John 7:24). For them, the pallet and the clay are more important than the social reunion (5:10) and the restoration of sight (John 9:14) which those objects symbolized. It was necessary therefore for Christ to act against prevailing misconceptions in order to restore the Sabbath to its positive function.

In the Sabbath healing of the blind man recorded in John 9, Christ extends to His followers the invitation to become links of the same redemptive chain, saying: “We must work the works of him who sent me, while it is day; night comes, when no one can work” (v. 4). The “night”



---

---

apparently refers to the conclusion of the history of salvation, a conclusion which we found implied in the adverbial phrase “until now.” Such a conclusion of divine and human redemptive activity would usher in the final Sabbath of which the creation Sabbath was a prototype.

To bring about that final Sabbath, the Godhead “is working” for our salvation (John 5:17); but “we must work” to extend it to others (John 9:4). The foregoing considerations indicate that the two Sabbath healings reported by John substantiate the redemptive meaning of the Sabbath we found earlier in Luke and Matthew—namely, a time to experience and share the blessings of salvation accomplished by Christ.

#### 4. The Sabbath in Hebrews

The redemptive meaning of the Sabbath we found in the Gospels is reflected in Hebrews 4:1-11 where the author draws upon existing eschatological understandings of the Sabbath rest to relate God’s rest of the seventh day of creation (Heb 4:4) to all the rest and peace God intends to confer on His people. The discussion of the Sabbath in Hebrews is crucial to our study because it reveals how Sabbathkeeping was understood and experienced by the New Testament church.

Elsewhere I have shown how the Sabbath in Hebrews relates to the discussion about the Old and New Covenants. At this juncture, our concern is to establish if the meaning of Sabbathkeeping in Hebrews reflects the same redemptive meaning of the Sabbath we have found in the Gospels.

The relationship between the Sabbath and the Savior is established by the author of Hebrews by linking together Genesis 2:2 with Psalm 95:7,11. By means of these two texts the writer of Hebrews explains that the Sabbath rest offered at creation (Heb 4:4) was not exhausted when the Israelites under Joshua found a resting place in Canaan, since God offered again His rest “long afterwards” through David (Heb 4:7; cf. Ps 95:7). Consequently, God’s promised Sabbath rest still awaited a fuller realization which has dawned with the coming of Christ (Heb 4:9). It is by believing in Jesus Christ that God’s people can at last experience (“enter”—Heb 4:3,10,11) the “good news” of God’s rest promised on the “seventh day” of creation (Heb 4:4).

---

**Literal or Figurative Sabbathkeeping?** What inference can be legitimately drawn from this passage regarding the actual observance and understanding of the Sabbath among the recipients of Hebrews? The position of the majority of commentators is that this passage provides no indication that these “Hebrew” Christians actually observed the Sabbath or that the author intended to give a Christian interpretation to such an observance.

This argument fails to recognize that the recipients of the Epistle (whether Gentiles or Jewish-Christians) were so attracted to Jewish liturgy (of which the Sabbath was a fundamental part) that it was unnecessary for the author to discuss or to encourage its actual observance. What those “Hebrew” Christians actually needed, tempted as they were to turn back to Judaism, was to understand the meaning of Sabbath observance in the light of Christ’s coming.

**Obsolete or Remaining?** Does Hebrews teach that the Sabbath, like the temple and its services, lived out its function with the coming of Christ? Or did the Sabbath acquire fresh meaning and function with His coming? Our study of the Sabbath material of the Gospels shows that Christ fulfilled the typological and eschatological Messianic Sabbath rest and release, not by annulling the actual observance of the day, but by making it a time to experience and share His accomplished salvation.

Let us now look at what Hebrews has to say on this point. There is no question that the author clearly teaches that Christ’s coming has brought about “a decisive discontinuity” with the sacrificial system of the Old Covenant. In chapters 7 to 10, the writer of Hebrews explains at great length how Christ’s atoning sacrifice and subsequent heavenly ministry have replaced completely the typological (“copy and shadow” — Heb 8 :5) function of the levitical priesthood and its Temple. These services Christ “abolished” (Heb 10:9). Thus they are “obsolete” and “ready to vanish away” (Heb 8:13).

**The Sabbath Remains.** But, does the writer of Hebrews place the Sabbath in the same category, viewing it as one of the “obsolete” Old Covenant institutions? This is indeed the conclusion that many have drawn, but it can hardly be supported by a careful study of the passage.

---

The “*sabbatismos*—Sabbath rest” is explicitly and emphatically presented, not as being “*obsolete*” like the Temple and its services, but as being a divine benefit that still “*remains*” (Heb 4:9). The verb “*remains—apoleipetai*” is a present passive tense which literally translated means “has been left behind.” Thus, literally translated, Hebrews 4:9 reads as follows: “So then a Sabbath-keeping has been left behind for the people of God.”

The contrast between the Sabbath and the sanctuary services is obvious. While the latter are “obsolete,” the former is “left behind” and, therefore, is still relevant. A similar contrast is found in the Gospel of Matthew. There the rending of the Temple curtain in conjunction with Christ’s death (Matt 27:51) indicates the termination of the Temple services. On the other hand, Christ’s warning about the possibility that the future flight out of the city might occur on a Sabbath (Matt 24:20) takes for granted the permanence of its observance.

**Literal or Spiritual Sabbathkeeping?** What is the nature of the “Sabbath rest” that is still outstanding for God’s people (4:9)? Is the writer thinking of a literal or spiritual type of Sabbathkeeping? The passage provides two important indications that support a literal understanding of Sabbathkeeping as a faith response to God. Since we have already discussed at some length both of these indications elsewhere, we only briefly mention them in this context.

The first indication is the usage of the term “*sabbatismos*—Sabbath-keeping” found in Hebrews 4:9. Though the term occurs only in Hebrews 4:9 in the New Testament, it is used in secular and Christian literature as a technical term for literal Sabbathkeeping. Incidentally, I failed to find the use of “*sabbatismos*” in extra-biblical literature. But Prof. A. T. Lincoln from St. John’s College in Nottingham, found it in five different sources. In each of these instances the term clearly refers to Sabbath observance (*From Sabbath to the Lord’s Day*, p. 213). Consequently, the usage of “*sabbatismos*—Sabbathkeeping” in verse 9 makes it abundantly clear that the writer of Hebrews is thinking of a literal Sabbath observance.

The second indication is the description of the Sabbath rest as cessation from work which is found in verse 10: “For whoever enters God’s rest also ceases from his labors as God did from his” (Heb 4:10).

---

---

The point of the analogy is simply that as God ceased on the seventh day from His creation work, so believers are to cease on the same day from their labors. This is a simple statement of the nature of Sabbathkeeping which essentially involves cessation from works.

**The Meaning of Sabbathkeeping.** Is the author of Hebrews merely encouraging his readers to interrupt their secular activities on the Sabbath? Considering the concern of the writer to counteract the tendency of his readers to adopt Jewish liturgical customs as a means to gain access to God, he could hardly have emphasized solely the physical “cessation” aspect of Sabbathkeeping. This aspect yields only a negative idea of rest, one which would only serve to encourage existing Judaizing tendencies. Obviously, then, the author attributes a deeper meaning to the act of resting on the Sabbath.

The deeper meaning can be seen in the antithesis the author makes between those who failed to enter into God’s rest because of “*unbelief—apeitheias*” (Heb 4:6, 11)—that is, faithlessness which results in disobedience—and those who enter it by “*faith—pistei*” (Heb 4:2, 3)—that is, faithfulness that results in obedience.

The act of resting on the Sabbath for the author of Hebrews is not merely a routine ritual (cf. “sacrifice”—Matt 12:7), but rather a faith-response to God. Such a response entails not the hardening of one’s heart (Heb 4:7) but the making of oneself available to “hear his voice” (Heb 4:7). It means experiencing God’s salvation rest not by *works* but by *faith*, not by *doing* but by *being* saved through *faith* (Heb 4:2, 3, 11). On the Sabbath, as John Calvin aptly expresses it, believers are “to cease from their work to allow God to work in them.”

**The Sabbath rest that remains for the people of God (4:9) is not a mere day of idleness for the author of Hebrews, but rather an opportunity renewed every week to enter *God’s rest*—to free oneself from the cares of work in order to experience freely by faith God’s creation and redemption rest.**

The Sabbath experience of the blessings of salvation is not exhausted in the present, since the author exhorts his readers to “strive to enter that rest” (Heb 4:11). This dimension of the future Sabbath rest

---

---

shows that Sabbathkeeping in Hebrews expresses the tension between the “already” and the “not yet,” between the present experience of salvation and its eschatological consummation in the heavenly Canaan.

This expanded interpretation of Sabbathkeeping in the light of the Christ event was apparently designed to wean Christians away from a too materialistic understanding of its observance. To achieve this objective, the author of Hebrews on the one hand reassures his readers of the permanence of the blessings contemplated by the Sabbath rest and, on the other hand, explains that the nature of these blessings consists in experiencing both a present salvation-rest and the future restoration-rest which God offers to those “who have believed” (Heb 4:3).

**It is evident that for the author of Hebrews, the Sabbathkeeping that remains for New Covenant Christians is not only a physical experience of cessation from work on the seventh day, but also a faith response, a yes “today” response to God. As Karl Barth eloquently explains it, the act of resting on Sabbath is an act of resignation to our human efforts to achieve salvation in order “to allow the omnipotent grace of God to have the first and last word at every point.”**

Hebrews’ interpretation of the Sabbath rest reflects to a large extent the redemptive understanding of the day we found earlier in the Gospels. Christ’s great promise to have come to offer the expected sabbatical “release” (Luke 4:18) and “rest” (Matt 11:28) represents the core of the “Sabbath rest” available “today” to God’s people (Heb 4 :7, 9). Similarly, Christ’s assurance that He and His Father are “working until now” (John 5:17) to realize the final Sabbath rest is reflected in the exhortation to “strive to enter that rest” (Heb 4:1).

The fact that Hebrews 4 reflects the gospel understanding of the Sabbath as a time to experience the blessings of salvation, which will be fully realized at the end of our earthly pilgrimage, shows that the Sabbath was understood in the Apostolic Church as a time to celebrate God’s creative and redemptive love.

## 5. The Manner of Sabbathkeeping

How did New Testament believers observe the Sabbath in the light of its expanded redemptive meaning derived from Christ’s ministry? Initially,

---

---

most Christians attended Sabbath services at the Jewish synagogue (Acts 13:14, 43, 44; 17:2; 18:4). Gradually, however, Christians established their own places of worship. Matthew suggests that the process of separation had already begun at the time of his writing, because he speaks of Christ entering “*their* synagogue” (Matt 12:9). The pronoun “*their*” suggests that the Matthean community as a whole no longer shared in Sabbath services at the Jewish synagogue by the time the Gospel was written. Presumably, they had organized their own meeting places of worship by then.

The distinction in Sabbathkeeping between Christian and Jewish communities soon became not only *topological* but also *theological*. The various Sabbath pericopes reported in the Gospels reflect the existence of an ongoing controversy between the Christian congregations and the Jewish synagogues which, in some cases, may have been located across the street from one another. The controversy centered primarily on the manner of Sabbathkeeping in the light of Christ’s teachings and example. Was the day to be observed primarily as “sacrifice,” that is, as an outward fulfillment of the Sabbath law? Or was the Sabbath to be observed as “mercy,” that is, as an occasion to show compassion and do good to those in need? (Matt 12:7).

**A Day to Do Good.** To defend the Christian understanding of Sabbathkeeping as a day to celebrate Messianic redemption by showing “mercy” and doing “good” to those in need, the Evangelists appeal to the example and teaching of Jesus. For example, in the healing of the crippled woman, Luke contrasts two different concepts of Sabbathkeeping: that of the ruler of the synagogue versus that of Christ. For the ruler, the Sabbath consisted of rules to obey rather than people to love (Luke 13:14). For Christ, the Sabbath was a day to bring physical and spiritual liberation to needy people (Luke 13:12, 16).

Christ challenged the Ruler’s misconception by appealing to the accepted customs of watering animals on the Sabbath. If the daily needs of animals could be met on the Sabbath, how much more the needs of “a daughter of Abraham whom Satan bound for eighteen years”! Shouldn’t she “be loosed from this bond on the sabbath day?” (Luke 13:16).

This humanitarian understanding of the Sabbath is also expressed in the episode of the healing of the man with the withered hand, reported

---

by all the three Synoptics (Mark 3:1-6; Matt 12:9-14; Luke 6:6-11). In this instance, Jesus responds to the testing question posed by a deputation of Scribes and Pharisees regarding the legitimacy of healing on the Sabbath by asking a question of principle: “Is it lawful on the sabbath, to do good or to do harm, to save life or to kill?” (Mark 3:4; Luke 6:9).

It is noteworthy that in both Mark and Luke, Christ substitutes for the verb “to heal” (*therapeuein*), used in the question, the verbs “to do good” (*agathopoiein*) and “to save” (*sozein*). The reason for this change is Christ’s concern to include not one type but all kinds of benevolent activities within the intention of the Sabbath commandment. Such a broad interpretation of the function of the Sabbath finds no parallel in rabbinic concessions.

**A Day of Benevolent Service.** According to Matthew, Christ illustrated the principle of Sabbathkeeping as a time of benevolent service by adding a second question that contains a concrete example: “What man of you, if he has one sheep and it falls into a pit on the sabbath, will not lay hold of it and lift it out? Of how much more *value* is a man than a sheep!” (Matt 12:11-12). Both by the question of principle and by its illustration, Christ reveals the *original value* of the Sabbath as a day to honor God by showing concern and compassion for others. The believer who on the Sabbath experiences the blessing of salvation automatically is moved “to save” and not “to kill” others.

Christ’s accusers, by failing to show concern for the physical and spiritual well-being of others on the Sabbath, revealed their defective understanding and experience of God’s Holy Day. Rather than celebrating God’s goodness on the Sabbath by being involved in a saving ministry, they engaged in destructive efforts, *looking for faults* and devising methods *to kill* Christ (Mark 3:2-6).

The new Christian understanding of the Sabbath as a time of active, loving service to needy souls, rather than of passive idleness, represents a radical departure from contemporary Jewish Sabbathkeeping. This is attested to also in an early document known as the *Epistle to Diognetus* (dates between A. D. 130-200), where the Jews are charged with “speaking falsely of God” because they claim that “He [God] forbade us [Christians] to do what is good on the Sabbath-day—how is not this impious?” This

---

---

positive humanitarian understanding of Sabbathkeeping is rooted in Christ's fulfillment of the redemptive typology of the Sabbath, which is brought out in the Gospels.

### Conclusion

The preceding study of the relationship between the Sabbath and the Savior shows that both in the Old and New Testaments the Sabbath is closely linked to Christ's redemptive mission. In the Old Testament, various themes—such as Sabbath peace and prosperity, the Sabbath rest, the Sabbath liberation, and the sabbatical structure of time— indicate that, in Old Testament times, the weekly and annual Sabbaths served to epitomize and nourish the hope of Messianic redemption.

In the New Testament, the coming of Christ is seen as the actualization, the realization of the redemptive typology of the Sabbath. Through His redemptive mission, Christ offers to believers the expected sabbatical "release" (Luke 4:18) and "rest" (Matt 11:28). In the light of the Cross, the Sabbath memorializes not only God's creative but also His redemptive accomplishments for mankind. Thus, "the Sabbath rest that remains for the people of God" (Heb 4:9) is not only a physical cessation from work to commemorate God's perfect creation, but also a spiritual entering into God's rest (Heb 4:10) made possible through Christ's complete redemption. The physical act of resting becomes the means through which believers experience the spiritual rest. We cease from our daily work on the Sabbath to allow God to work in us more freely and fully.

In the New Testament, the Sabbath is not *nullified* but *clarified* and *amplified* by Christ's teaching and saving ministry. Viewing the rest and redemption typified by the Old Testament Sabbath as realized by Christ's redemptive mission, New Testament believers regarded Sabbathkeeping as a day to celebrate and experience the Messianic redemption-rest by showing "mercy" and doing "good" to those in need. This means that for believers today, the Sabbath is the day to celebrate not only God's creation by resting, but also Christ's redemption by acting mercifully toward others.

In an age when the forces of chaos and disorder increasingly appear to prevail—when injustice, greed, violence, corruption, crime, suffering, and



---

---

death seem to dominate—God through the Sabbath reassures His people that these destructive forces will not triumph because “there remains a sabbath rest for the people of God” (Heb 4:9). Through the Sabbath, God reassures us that He is in control of this world, working out His ultimate purpose. God tells us that He conquered chaos at creation, that He has liberated His people from the bonds of sin and death through the saving mission of His Son, and that He “is working until now” (John 5 :17) in order to establish a New World where “from sabbath to sabbath all flesh shall come to worship before God” (Is 66:23). In that final Sabbath, as eloquently expressed by Augustine, “we shall rest and see, see and love, love and praise.”

### **UPCOMING WEEKEND SEMINARS**

As a service to our subscribers, I am listing the date and the location of the upcoming seminars for the months of November and December 2006. I wish to extend my personal, warm invitation to all who are able to attend one of the followings rallies.

#### **NOVEMBER 3-4: CALGARY: GARDEN ROAD SDA CHURCH**

Location: RR7, Site 17, Box 5, Calgary T2P 2G7, Canada. For information call Pastor Ishmael Ali at (403) 532-2932.

#### **NOVEMBER 10-11:MINNEAPOLIS: SOUTHVIEW SDA CHURCH**

Location: 5750 Wentworth Avenue, Minneapolis, MN 55419. For information call Pastor Jim Hiner at (218) 841-0353 or Elder Tim Denniston at (952) 888-8160

#### **NOVEMBER 17 TO 28: AUSTRALIA, See above.**

#### **DECEMBER 8-9: LOS ANGELES: SPANISH-AMERICAN SDA CHURCH**

Location: 1815 Bridge Street, Los Angeles, California 90033. For information call Pastor Guillermo Quiroz at (714) 522-0296

#### **DECEMBER 15-16: HAMILTON MOUNTAIN SDA CHURCH**

Location: 284 Concession Street, Hamilton, ON L9C 7N7, Canada. For information call Pastor Wesley Torres at (905) 304-9024. :

---

---

**ANNOUNCEMENTS OF SERVICES AND PRODUCTS****SPECIAL OFFER ON THE NEW DVD ALBUM ON *THE MARK AND NUMBER OF THE BEAST***

The DVD album consists of two disks which contain the live recording recently done at the Andrews University Towers Auditorium. The marathon lecture lasted over two hours and was delivered with the help of 175 powerpoint slides. The lecture was introduced by Prof. Jon Paulien and Prof. Ranko Stefanovich, two foremost Adventist experts on the book of Revelation.

You will be thrilled by this passionate lecture that will help you understand what the mark and number of the beast are all about. This prophecy is not about external markings, barcodes, biochips, or pope's titles, but rather about the internal control of the mind of every human being. It is a battle over who will people worship in the final showdown: the true God or Satan. This visual presentation will help you to see the role of the Sabbath in the battle over worship in the endtime showdown.

At the end of the second DVD disk, there is a separate powerpoint file with all the 195 slides and accompanying script. This should prove to be a valuable resource for evangelists, pastors, and anyone engaged in sharing the prophetic message of Revelation. They can use some of the stunning pictures for their own presentation.

**How to Order the DVD Album**

**The special introductory offer on the DVD Album on *The Mark and Number of the Beast*, is only \$50.00, instead of \$100.00.** The air-mailing expenses to any foreign country are included in the special price. You can order the DVD album in four different ways:

**(1) Online:** By clicking here: <http://www.biblicalperspectives.com/BeastAD/>

**(2) Phone:** By calling us at (269) 471-2915 to give us your credit card number and postal address.

---

**(3) Email:** By emailing your order to <sbacchiocchi@biblicalperspectives.com>. Be sure to provide your postal address, credit card number, and expiration date.

**(4) Regular Mail:** By mailing a check for \$35.00 to BIBLICAL PERSPECTIVES, 4990 Appian Way, Berrien Springs, Michigan 4990, USA. We guarantee to process your order immediately.

### **SPECIAL OFFER ON THE 6 ALBUMS CONTAINING ALL OF DR. BACCHIOCCHI'S PUBLICATIONS AND RECORDINGS**

In occasion of the release of the new DVD album on *Cracking the Da Vinci Code*, I am pleased to offer you **the complete package of all my DVD and CD recordings, consisting of 6 Albums, for only \$150.00**, instead of the regular price of \$700.00. This is a one-time incredible offer.

**You can see the picture of all the SIX ALBUMS and read a detailed description of them**, just by clicking at this URL address:  
<http://www.biblicalperspectives.com/holidayoffer.htm>

You can order **the complete package of 6 DVD and CD Albums for only \$150.00**, instead of the regular price of \$500.00, in four different ways:

**(1) Online:** By clicking here: <http://www.biblicalperspectives.com/holidayoffer.htm>

**(2) Phone:** By calling us at (269) 471-2915 to give us your credit card number and postal address.

**(3) Email:** By emailing your order to <sbacchiocchi@biblicalperspectives.com>. Be sure to provide your postal address, credit card number, and expiration date.

**(4) Regular Mail:** By mailing a check for \$100.00 to BIBLICAL PERSPECTIVES, 4990 Appian Way, Berrien Springs, Michigan 4990, USA. We guarantee to process your order immediately.

---

---

**CD-ROM WITH PROF. JON PAULIEN BOOKS & ARTICLES**

Prof. Jon Paulien is one of the most respected Adventist scholars. Besides serving as the chairman of the New Testament at Andrews University Theological Seminary, he writes and lectures extensively in many parts of the world.

Until now Prof. Paulien books and articles were available only in a printed form, often unavailable at local ABC stores. In view of my indebtedness to Prof. Paulien's scholarship, I have offered to help him to place all of his books and articles on a CD disk. This makes it possible with the ACROBAT global search, to locate immediately what he has written on biblical texts or current topics.

The newly released CD-ROM contains more than a dozen of books and scores of articles written by Prof. Paulien during the past 20 years of research. You will find in this collection a priceless resource to enrich your understanding and experience of biblical truths. Prof. Paulien examines fundamental biblical beliefs in a profound and yet popular way. He is a recognized expert on the book of Revelation. Several of his books will help you to unlock the secrets of Revelation.

The special introductory offer of the newly released CD-ROM ALBUM with all of Prof. Paulien books and articles is only \$35.00 instead of the regular price of \$50.00. The price includes the airmailing expenses to any overseas destination.

To order the newly released CD ALBUM with all of Prof. Paulien books and articles, simply click here: <http://www.biblicalperspectives.com/PaulienAD/>

If you have a problem ordering online, email us your order at <[sbacchiocchi@biblicalperspectives.com](mailto:sbacchiocchi@biblicalperspectives.com)>, giving us your address, credit card number, and expiration date. You can also order by phone, calling us at (269) 471-2915. We will take your order by phone.

**INCREDIBLE NEW OFFERS ON HITACHI PROJECTORS**

Lately HITACHI has given an additional discount on their projectors to help especially our churches and schools in developing countries.

---

---

This is the special offer on the following four models:

**CP-X250 HIGH RESOLUTION 2000 LUMENS - Only \$1095.00**

Previous SDA price for the 2000 lumens was \$1900.00.

**CP-X260 HIGH RESOLUTION 2500 LUMENS - Only \$1195.00**

Previous SDA price for the 2500 lumens was \$2595.00.

**CP-X444 HIGH RESOLUTION 3200 LUMENS - Only \$1895.00**

Previous SDA price for the 3200 lumens was \$3295.00.

**CP-X1250 HIGH RESOLUTION 4500 LUMENS - Only \$3895.00**

Previous SDA price for the 4500 lumens was \$4900.00.

**WARRANTY:** The above prices include a 3 years 24/7 replacement warranty that is worth about \$285.00. You can order these projectors in four ways:

**You can order the HITACHI projectors in four ways:**

(1) **Online:** By clicking here: <http://www.biblicalpherspectives.com/bpprojectors/>

(2) **Phone:** By calling us at (269) 471-2915 to give us your credit card number and postal address.

(3) **Email:** By emailing your order to <[sbacchiocchi@biblicalpherspectives.com](mailto:sbacchiocchi@biblicalpherspectives.com)>.

(4) **Regular Mail:** By mailing a check to BIBLICAL PERSPECTIVES, 4990 Appian Way, Berrien Springs, Michigan 4990, USA. We guarantee to process your order immediately.

**NEW TOSHIBA LAPTOP TECRA A8-EZ8312**

This is the latest TOSHIBA laptop that was first released on June 27, 2006. These are the specifications: Duo processor 1.66Hz, Memory size 512MB, Monitor size 15.4", Resolution 1280x800, Hard drive 60GB, Optical drive CD-RW/DVD-Rom, Wireless, 3-USB ports, Microsoft

---

---

Office and Microsoft Works software. The special price is \$895.00, plus shipping expenses.

**You can order the TECRA A8-EZ8312 in four ways:**

**(1) Online:** By clicking here: <http://www.biblicalperspectives.com/Toshiba/Notebooks.html>

**(2) Phone:** By calling us at (269) 471-2915 to give us your credit card number and postal address.

**(3) Email:** By emailing your order to <[sbacchiocchi@biblicalperspectives.com](mailto:sbacchiocchi@biblicalperspectives.com)>.

**(4) Regular Mail:** By mailing a check to BIBLICAL PERSPECTIVES, 4990 Appian Way, Berrien Springs, Michigan 4990, USA. We guarantee to process your order immediately.

**THE MOST POWERFUL REMOTE PRESENTER**

If you are looking for an outstanding REMOTE for your PowerPoint presentations, you will be pleased to know HONEYWELL has just come out with the smallest and most powerful remote in the market.

The size of the transmitter is smaller than a credit card. You can stick it inside the palm of your hand and nobody can see it. I tested the remote in an open environment, and the radio signal can go up to 400 feet of distance. IT IS INCREDIBLE! The transmitter has three buttons: forward, backward, and laser.

You can order online the new POWERPOINT PRESENTER simply by clicking here: [http://www.biblicalperspectives.com/Merchant2/merchant.mvc?Screen=CTGY&Store\\_Code=bookstore&Category\\_Code=RP](http://www.biblicalperspectives.com/Merchant2/merchant.mvc?Screen=CTGY&Store_Code=bookstore&Category_Code=RP)

If you have a problem ordering online, simply call us at (269) 471-2915. We will take your order by phone.

You can also email us your order at <[sbacchiocchi@biblicalperspectives.com](mailto:sbacchiocchi@biblicalperspectives.com)>, giving us your address, credit card number, and expiration date.

---

---

**DOES YOUR CHURCH OR SCHOOL NEED A SCREEN?**

If your church/school is looking for a screen, the DA-LITE SCREEN COMPANY, the largest manufacture of screens in the world, has agreed to offer their line of screens to our Adventist churches and schools at a about 30% discount.

The procedure is very simple. Visit the DA-LITE SCREEN COMPANY website at <http://www.da-lite.com>. You will see hundreds of models of screens with their respective prices. Once you find the screen that you need, give us the model number by phone (269) 471-2915 or email your request <[sbacchiocchi@biblicalperspectives.com](mailto:sbacchiocchi@biblicalperspectives.com)> We will forward your order immediately to DA-LITE that will ship the screen directly to your address. You will receive the screen at about 30% discount.