

# The Controversy Over The Covenants - Part 2

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## Dear Members of the Endtime Issues Newsletter:

The War in Iraq, dubbed "Operation Iraqi Freedom," is fast unfolding. The initial indications suggest that this war of liberation of Iraqis from the ruthless regime of Saddam Ussein may be relatively brief, causing only a limited loss of human lives. We can only hope and pray that this conflict will be soon resolved, restoring freedom to the Iraqis and lessening the threat of the use of weapons of mass destruction. It is imperative for us as Christians to pray for peace in the world, especially in the Middle East. Recent demonstrations for and against this war in major cities of the world, together with the divisive debates at the United Nations, have shown how deeply divided is mankind along political and religious lines.

The enormous investment of human lives and resources to liberate the people of Iraq from a dictatorial regime and to protect mankind from the use of weapons of mass destruction, reminds us of the high cost of freedom. The struggle to become and to remain free from external and internal restraints has engaged humanity ever since the Fall. Much blood has been shed, countless lives have been sacrificed during mankind's history, to gain freedom from external oppression and exploitation!

Perhaps an even greater investment of human resources has been made and is presently being put forth to liberate human beings from the internal tyranny of sickness, sorrow and death. God's Good News to mankind is that this struggle for human liberation from both external and internal bondage has been won. It has been won, however, not through efforts of allied military forces, but through divine intervention.

The history of salvation is the story of God's intrusion into human time and life, to liberate His people not only from the physical bondage of Egypt, Babylon or dictators like Saddam Hussein, but also from the spiritual captivity of disobedience and death (I Cor. 15 :54-56). To accomplish this redemptive mission Christ came into this world. He came "to proclaim release to the captives . . . to set at liberty those who are oppressed" (Luke 4:18).

The Christian mandate is to proclaim the Good News of how God has wonderfully delivered humanity from the bondage of sin and death, offering people His marvelous gift of life (1 Pet. 2:9). At a time when world attention is riveted on the outcome of the military "Operation Iraqi Freedom," we are granted a unique opportunity to share the Good News of the unparalleled success of the divine "Operation Mankind Freedom."

Christ's liberating mission on behalf of penitent sinners was accomplished, not through sophisticated guided missiles designed to produce "SHOCK AND AWE," but through His silent, perfect life and atoning death. He "abolished death and brought life and immortality through the gospel" (2 Tim 1:10). "He died for all, that those who live might live no longer for themselves but for him who for their sake died and was raised" (2 Cor 5:15).

Christ's redemptive mission began in a *whisper*, but will terminate with a frightening *shock and awe*. The cataclysmic effects of His coming will greatly surpass the shock and awe caused by unmanned, programmable missiles and the laser-guided bombs that are lighting up the night sky of Baghdad with fire and smoke. Mankind will experience an unprecedented "SHOCK AND AWE" on the Day of Christ's coming, when "the heavens will pass away with a loud noise, and the elements will be dissolved with fire, and the earth and the works that are upon it will be burned up" (2 Pet 3:10).

The Good News of Christ's redemptive mission are to be proclaimed verbally and accepted personally. Symbols such as Baptism, the Lord's Supper and the Sabbath provide vital means to appropriate and experience the blessings of redemption in our personal life. This newsletter continues the study of the Old and New Covenants, by focusing especially on the role of the Sabbath in helping us to conceptualize and internalize the reality of the salvation provided by the Savior.

The Sabbath is an island of peace and tranquility in the tumultuous sea of life. It invites us to experience SHALOM, the peace that passes understanding. It is the peace that comes from living in harmony with God and the world around us. It is the peace that we experience when we accept Christ's invitation to come to Him and find rest in Him. It is the peace that we enjoy when we stop our work on the seventh day to allow Christ to work in us more fully and freely.

The importance of this Bible study on the Sabbath, stems from the fact that in recent years a significant number of former Sabbatarians have joined hands with the Catholic and Protestant "allied forces" to attack the continuity and validity of the Sabbath for Christians today. A common strategy has been to reduce the Sabbath to an Old Covenant institution, given exclusively to the Jews, nailed to the Cross, and consequently no longer binding upon Christians today.

It is unfortunate that an increasing number of former Adventists are embracing this popular view. I was reminded of this sad situation by some of the responses to my last newsletter. A number of concerned parents have shared with me their pain in seeing their children abandoning the Sabbath and leaving the Adventist church, in order to join Sundaykeeping churches. Some of these former Adventists have responded to my last newsletter emailed to them by their parents. Their basic argument is that as New Covenant Christians they no longer need to observe the Sabbath by resting on the seventh day, because they are experience the rest of salvation every day.

This newsletter examines the fallacies of this popular view promoted by the so-called "New Covenant Theology," by focusing especially on the book of Hebrews. We shall see that with compelling clarity Hebrews explains that while on the one hand the Levitical services were set aside and abolished by Christ's coming (Heb 7:18; 8:13; 10:9), on the other hand "A seventh-day Sabbathkeeping has been left for the people of God" (Heb 4:9).

The reason the Sabbath remains for New Covenant Christians is because the Day embraces creation, redemption, and final restoration, the past, the present, and the future, this world and the world to come. The Sabbath remains because it points to the rest and peace that awaits the redeemed in the world to come. Ultimately this is the peace that our world desperately needs. A peace that will be achieved by the SHOCK AND AWE of the purifying fires associated with Christ's coming. He will eradicate the presence of sin and suffering, and establish a "new heaven and a new earth" where peace and righteousness will prevail throughout the ceaseless ages of eternity.

## **SOME SABBATH/SUNDAY DEVELOPMENTS**

Several significant Sabbath/Sunday developments have occurred in recent weeks. The renewed interest for the rediscovery of the Sabbath by ministers and members of different denominations, is causing apprehension on the part of some Sundaykeeping church leaders. Some of them have sponsored Sabbath/Sunday debates, with the intent of challenging the continuity and validity of the Sabbath for Christians today.

One such debate was to take place during this month of March in a university auditorium in Massachusetts. I was urged to participate in this debate by both our local Adventist pastor and by the Sundaykeeping ministers sponsoring the event. Accidentally I deleted all the files with the relevant information about the date and the place. I declined the invitation for two major reasons. First, the date of the debate was already booked in my calendar for a weekend seminar. I cannot cancel an invitation after all the promotional and travel arrangements have been made. Second, previous debates have proven to be rather disappointing, because they tend to degenerate into shouting matches. The desire to win the debate overrides the goal to deepen the understanding of what the Bible teaches about the Sabbath.

In most cases debates are so structured that they do not provide adequate time for presenting comprehensive answers. Often the responses must be limited to one or two minutes. Such brief and simplistic responses hardly satisfy inquiring minds. Thus, I suggested to the organizers of the debate to conduct the discussion on the internet, where the respective positions can be examined in greater depth, without the restraints of time. Furthermore, the internet provides an opportunity for thousands of people around the world to benefit from the exchanges.

When I debated Dale Ratzlaff on the internet, over 10,000 people signed up in few weeks to receive the exchanges. In fact, this is how the ENDTIME ISSUES newsletter began. I found the debate with Ratzlaff on the internet to be far more rewarding than the one hour debate we had in a popular Christian radio talk show in St. Louis, MO, where we were allowed only two minutes for any response.

I have asked the ministers who want to debate me to send me whatever they have written and/or published on the Sabbath/Sunday question. I promised to post their arguments together with my response. In the meantime I have emailed them the complete digital text of my book THE SABBATH UNDER CROSSFIRE, which is the outcome of a previous debate. I invited these church leaders to critically examine each chapter and submit their analysis. I will gladly post their analysis together with my response.

I doubt that these ministers, who are eager to debate me publicly, will accept this offer to dialogue through the internet, I have learned from experience that pastors who want to debate the Sabbath/Sunday question publicly, are more interested to impress people with their eloquence than with their knowledge. In most cases they are unfamiliar with the extensive research done on this subject by scholars of various denominations. The result is that ignorance breeds arrogance.

## **A Recent Sabbath/Sunday Debate**

A Sabbath/Sunday debate took place on October 18 and 19, 2002 at the Michell Fine Arts Center of Transylvania University, in Lexington, Kentucky. The debaters were Pastor George Battey, a most distinguished looking gentleman representing the Church of Christ and Pastor Melvyn Hayden II, a bright Adventist pastor, currently serving the Lima Drive SDA Church in Lexington, KY.. I am told that the two sessions of the debate were well-attended.

Pastor Hayden, a former student of mine, gave me a first hand report about the debate when I spoke at his church on Sabbath, March 15, 2003. He told me that he prepared himself for the debate, especially by reading the internet debate I had few years ago with Pastor John T. Lewis, a Sundaykeeping minister. Overall Pastor Hayden felt that the debate went quite well, though he wished that he could have remembered some of the things that he had read.

## **Sabbath/Sunday Discussion in Lexington**

It came as a pleasant surprise for Pastor Hayden to see his former debater, Pastor George Battey, attending every session of my SABBATH ENRICHMENT SEMINAR held on March 14-15, 2003 in the brand new sanctuary of the Lexington SDA Church. Pastor Battey drove seven hours from Atlanta, Georgia, to hear my lectures. He came together with Pastor Richard Bunner of the Church of Christ in Lexington, KY. The two ministers attended every single session, including the presentation I gave at the Lima Drive SDA church during Sabbath School.

When Pastor Battey introduced himself to me on Friday evening as a visitor from Atlanta, GA, I thought he was an Adventist because he was holding two of my books in his hands: *The Sabbath Under Crossfire* and *Wine in the Bible*. He asked me to autograph these books which he had received from Dawid Van Wyck, the former pastor of the Lexington SDA church, who assisted Pastor Hayden in the debate.

It soon became evident that the reading of *The Sabbath Under Crossfire* had caused Pastors Battey and Bunner to do some serious rethinking about the validity and value of the Sabbath. This was reflected in their receptive and appreciative attitude. During the questions/answers period in Saturday afternoon, I invited Pastor Battey to ask any question that was in his mind. He asked the following perceptive question: Why does NT mentions the punishment God will inflict at the end of time upon those who break the commandments regarding idolatry, adultery, and killing, but it never mention any punishment for Sabbathbreaking? The implication of the question was that the commandment to keep the Sabbath is not enforced in the NT like the rest of the nine commandments.

For the next 20 minutes I responded by submitting several lines of evidence indicating the continuity of the Sabbath in the NT. First, I explained that the NT mentions the punishment for breaking some of the commandments only by way of example. There is no intent to be exhaustive. There is no mention, for example, of any punishment for taking the name of the Lord in vain, but this hardly means that the third commandment is no longer binding.

Second, I pointed to the implication of the unusual coverage given to the Sabbath teachings and healings of Jesus in the Gospels. Why do the Gospels tell us so much about what Jesus did and said on the Sabbath? Obviously, because the Sabbath teachings and example of Jesus were important for NT believers. They wanted to know what Jesus said about the Sabbath so that they could follow His example Sabbathkeeping.

Third, I argued that the continuity of the Sabbath is clearly implied by what Jesus taught about the Sabbath. The Saviour taught that the Sabbath is a day “to do good” (Matt 12:12), a day to show “mercy” (Matt 12:8), a day “to save life” (Mark 3:4), a day to “liberate” people from their physical and spiritual bonds (Luke 13:12,16), a day that was made for mankind’s benefit (Mark 2:27). These Sabbath pronouncements reflect Christ’s intent to clarify the meaning of the Sabbath—not to nullify its observance.

Lastly, I discussed the unmistakable declaration of the continuity of the Sabbath that we find in Hebrews 4:9: “So then, there remains a Sabbath rest for the people of God.” The probative value of this text will be discussed in this newsletter. Recent research done by Sundaykeeping scholars shows that “*sabbatismos*,” commonly translated as “Sabbath rest,” is the technical term used in extra-biblical literature for literal seventh-day Sabbathkeeping. Thus, Hebrews clearly distinguishes between the Levitical priesthood and services which are “abolished” (Heb 10:9), “obsolete,” and “ready to vanish away” (Heb 8:13), and “Sabbathkeeping [which] remains for the people of God” (Heb 4:9). The reason Sabbathkeeping remains for God’s people is because the Sabbath points to the rest and peace that awaits the redeemed in the world to come.

The reaction of Pastor Battey and his colleague, Pastor Bunner, was very positive. An indication is the fact that both of them came to the fellowship hall after the meeting to buy most of the 16 books that I have authored, together with the video-album of my Sabbath Seminar. They asked me to autograph the books and promised to study afresh the Sabbath and the other biblical truths examined in my books. Let us pray that the Holy Spirit may enlighten the mind and bring conviction to the hearts of these sincere men who are sincerely seeking to know and to do the will of God.

## **Sabbath Conferences in Belgium, Holland, Indonesia**

The interest for the rediscovery of the Sabbath extends beyond the United States. Few days ago I received a very appreciative message from an Anglican minister in Singapore who read with great interest my research on the Sabbath posted in my website. I look forward to meet him during my next visit to Singapore on July 18-20, 2003.

A Sabbath Conference is planned by the SABBATH SOCIETY for June 7 to 9, 2003 in Belgium and Holland. I have been invited to speak on Friday/Saturday June 6-7 in Rotterdam (Holland), on Sunday June 8 in Antwerpen (Belgium) and on Monday, June 9, in Apeldoorn (Holland). The conference is sponsored by various sabbatarian organizations belonging to the SABBATH SOCIETY. For reasons incomprehensible to me, our local Adventist administrators do not wish to cosponsor or inform our church members about the Sabbath Conference. The reason is not financial, because my travel expenses are paid by the SABBATH SOCIETY.

In a forthcoming ENDTIME ISSUE I will post the detail information about the time and the location of the meetings in Holland and Belgium.. For the time being, feel free to contact for further information two of the organizers: "Frits Nieuwstraten" at <frits@nieuwstraten.nl> or "Niko Koffeman" at <koffeman@wxs.nl> May I encourage our subscribers in Belgium and Holland to inform their fellow believers and friends about this Sabbath Conference. All the lectures will be given with PowerPoint slides which have been enthusiastically received in many parts of the world.

A group of lay-Adventist business men have been working hard for several months to organize a special Sabbath Conference in a major convention center in Jakarta, Indonesia. I am scheduled to speak there on July 10-12, 2003. I am told that it took a lot of efforts to book the convention center in the heart of the city that can seat over 2000 persons. The plan is to conduct a city-wide promotion for the Sabbath Conference. Let us hope and pray that the war with Iraq may not cause such strong anti-American demonstrations that may necessitate the cancellation of this event.

### **Dutch Publication of *From Sabbath to Sunday***

Few days ago I received the exciting news that two Dutch publishers are interested to publish the newly completed Dutch translation of *From Sabbath To Sunday*. The translation was done as a labor of love by a scholarly non-SDA lady who worked on this project for the past three years. I have never met the translator nor the editorial helpers who have been busy checking and correcting the translation. They did not ask or receive any compensation for all their painstaking efforts. The first draft has already been submitted to the managers of two publishing houses. What is exciting is that both managers are now celebrating the Sabbath.

The book should be out by the time of my visit on June 6-9 and will be made available to all those attending the Sabbath Conference. The providential way in which my publications have been translated in Chinese by Lutherans, in French by Dominican monks, and in Dutch by non-SDA scholars, reminds me of Ellen White statement that at the End "the Sabbath will be proclaimed more fully" (EW 33). Indeed, the Lord uses unexpected resources to accomplish His purpose.

## **A NOTE OF THANKS**

Thank you for sharing this newsletter with your friends. As a result of your efforts over 20,000 people are now receiving this newsletter in many parts of the world. Let your friends know that they can receive this newsletter directly FREE OF CHARGE simply by emailing their request to <sbacchiocchi@qtm.net>

## **ANNOUNCEMENTS AT THE END OF THIS NEWSLETTER**

At the end of this newsletter you will find the following important announcements:

- 1) The date and location of my weekend seminars for April and May 2003
- 2) Information on how your church can purchase a state-of-the art HITACHI LCD VIDEO PROJECTORS at over 60% discount of the Factory Suggested Retail price. Few days ago HITACHI's marketing manager agreed to offer their line of outstanding LCD projectors to our Adventist churches and institutions at an incredible discount. Read the announcement at the end of this newsletter.
- 3) A special offer on my books, audio-cassettes, videos, DVDs, and CD-Roms

## **CONTROVERSY OVER THE COVENANTS - Part 2**

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In the last newsletter we examined the organic unity that exists between the Old and New Covenants—a unity which is reflected in the continuity of the Sabbath. Both covenants are part of the everlasting covenant (Heb 13:20), that is, of God's commitment to save penitent sinners. In both covenants, God invites His people to accept the gracious provision of salvation by living in accordance with the moral principles He has revealed. Christ came not to nullify or modify God's moral Law but to clarify and reveal its deeper meaning. Christ spent much of His ministry clarifying how the love principle is embodied in the Ten Commandments, in general, and in the Sabbath, in particular.

### **Objective of this Newsletter**

This newsletter focuses on the teachings of the book of Hebrews regarding the relationship between the Sabbath and the covenants. This study is important for two reasons. First, Hebrews deals with the relationship between the Old and New Covenants more than any other book of the New Testament. Second, Hebrews 4:9 clearly speaks of a "Sabbathkeeping that remains for the people of God." If the reference is to a literal Sabbathkeeping, then this text provides the most compelling evidence of the observance of the Sabbath in the New Testament church.

### **Interpretations of the Sabbath in Hebrews 4:9**

The Worldwide Church of God acknowledges the importance of Hebrews 4:9, saying: "If this passage [Heb 4:9] requires Christians to keep the seventh-day Sabbath, it would be the *only* direct post-resurrection Scriptural command to do so. If it doesn't, then we have no existing proof-text command specifically written to the New Testament church mandating the keeping of the Sabbath. In view of this, it is extremely important that we understand clearly what the verses in question are telling us."<sup>1</sup>

There is no question that "it is extremely important" to understand the meaning of Hebrews 4:9 in the context of the author's discussion of the Old and New Covenants. This is indeed what we intend to do in this newsletter by examining the text in the light of its immediate and larger contexts. The interpretation given by the WCG to the Sabbath in Hebrews can be summarized in a simple syllogism.

#### **First premise:**

Christ made the Old Covenant obsolete.

#### **Second premise:**

The Sabbath was part of the Old Covenant.

#### **Conclusion:**

Therefore, the literal observance of the Sabbath is obsolete.<sup>2</sup>

The WCG interprets the "Sabbathkeeping—*sabbatismos*—that remains for the people of God" (Heb 4:9) as a daily experience of spiritual salvation rest, and not the keeping of the seventh-day Sabbath. "The spiritual rest of salvation into which God's people are entering is a *sabbatismos*—'a Sabbathkeeping.' . . . In summary, the verses in question do not exhort us to keep the Old Covenant Sabbath, but they do admonish us to enter the spiritual 'rest' of God by having faith in Christ."<sup>3</sup> The evaluation of the WCG interpretation of the Sabbath in Hebrews 4:9 is given below in the context of the analysis of Ratzlaff's interpretation, since the two interpretations are similar.

## Dale Ratzlaff's Interpretation of Hebrews

Like the WCG, Dale Ratzlaff attaches great importance to the teachings of the book of Hebrews regarding the covenants and the Sabbath. His reason is clearly stated: "The contextual teaching of this book deals with the very point of our study: how Christians were to relate to the Old Covenant Law. Therefore, we should accept the following statements as having the highest teaching authority."<sup>4</sup>

Ratzlaff's argument is identical to that of the WCG. He argues that the Sabbath was part of the Old Covenant Law which became obsolete and was done away with the coming of Christ. He states his view clearly in commenting on Hebrews 9:1: "Now even the first covenant had regulations of divine worship (Greek word is service) (Heb 9:1). It is unquestionably clear that the Sabbath was one of those regulations of divine worship or service (Lev 23). . . . Let me clarify by reviewing what is said here. First, our author calls the Sinaitic Covenant the 'first covenant' (called old in other places). Then he says that it had regulations for divine worship. He goes on to list the things included in this 'first covenant,' including 'the tables of the covenant'—a clear reference to the Ten Commandments. These are the facts of Scripture in their contextual setting. Thus the 'tables of the covenant,' which include the Sabbath commandment, and the 'Laws for divine worship,' which include the Sabbath, are old and ready to disappear."<sup>5</sup>

### Discontinuity in Hebrews

Ratzlaff is right in pointing out the discontinuity taught by Hebrews between the Old and New Covenant as far as the Levitical services are concerned. These were brought to an end by Christ's coming. But he is wrong in applying such a discontinuity to the moral principles of the Ten Commandments, especially the Sabbath.

There is no question that the author of Hebrews emphasizes the discontinuity brought about by the coming of Christ when he says that "if perfection had been attainable through the Levitical priesthood" (Heb 7:11), there would have been no need for Christ to come. But because the priests, the sanctuary, and its services were "symbolic" (Heb 9:9; 8:5), they could not in themselves "perfect the conscience of the worshipper" (Heb 9:9). Consequently, it was necessary for Christ to come "once for all at the end of the age to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself" (Heb 9:26). The effect of Christ's coming, as Ratzlaff notes, is described as "setting aside" (Heb 7:18), making "obsolete" (Heb 8:13), "abolishing" (Heb 10:9) all the Levitical services associated with the sanctuary.

The problem is that Ratzlaff interprets these affirmations as indicating the abrogation of all the Old Testament laws, including the Sabbath. Such an interpretation ignores that the statements in question are found in chapters 7 to 10 which deal specifically with the Levitical, sacrificial regulations. In these chapters, the author uses the terms "Law" (Heb 10:1) and "covenant" (Heb 8:7, 8, 13) with reference to the Levitical priesthood and services. It is in this context—that is, as they relate to the Levitical ministry—that they are declared "abolished" (Heb 10:9). But this declaration can hardly be taken as a blanket statement for the abrogation of the moral Law in general.

Walter Kaiser, a respected evangelical scholar, emphasizes this point: "The writer to the Hebrews clearly shows that what he saw as being abrogated from the first covenant were the ceremonies and rituals—the very items that had a built-in warning from God to Moses from the first day they were revealed to him. Had not God warned Moses that what he gave him in Exodus 25-40 and Leviticus 1-27 was according to the 'pattern' he had shown him on the mountain (e.g., Ex 25:40)? This meant that the real remained somewhere else (presumably in heaven) while Moses instituted a 'model,' 'shadow,' or 'imitation' of what is real until reality came! The net result cannot be that for the writer of Hebrews, the whole Old Covenant or the whole Torah had been superceded"<sup>6</sup>

Ratzlaff ignores the fact that the reference to "the tables of the covenant" in Hebrews 9:4 is found in the context of the description of the contents of the ark of the

covenant, which included “the tables of the covenant.” The latter are mentioned as part of the furniture of the earthly sanctuary whose typological function terminated with Christ’s death on the Cross. However, the fact that the services of the earthly sanctuary terminated at the Cross does not mean, as Ratzlaff claims, that the Ten Commandments also came to an end simply because they were located inside the ark.

I only wish that Ratzlaff could exercise more common sense. While reading Ratzlaff’s book *The Sabbath in Crisis*, time and again I have been deeply distressed by his inability to think rationally and coherently. It is evident that what is in crisis is not the Sabbath—which after all is a divine institution—but Ratzlaff’s common sense which is reflected in his arbitrary methodology. It is unfortunate that during the past 10 years few dozens of Adventist pastors and several thousand Adventist believers have Ratzlaff’s arguments and left the Adventist church. This problem highlights the necessity of teaching to our pastors and members the proper methods of biblical interpretation.

### **Continuity of the Ten Commandments in the New Covenant.**

Hebrews teaches us that the earthly sanctuary was superseded by the heavenly sanctuary where Christ “appears in the presence of God on our behalf” (Heb 9:24). When John saw in vision the heavenly Temple, he saw within the Temple “the ark of the covenant” which contains the Ten Commandments (Rev 11:19). Why was John shown the ark of the covenant within the heavenly temple? The answer is simple. The ark of the covenant represents the throne of God that rests on justice (the Ten Commandments) and mercy (the mercy seat).

If Ratzlaff’s argument were correct that the Ten Commandments terminated at the Cross because they were part of the furnishings of the sanctuary, then why was John shown the ark of the covenant which contains the Ten Commandments in the heavenly Temple? Does not the vision of the ark of the covenant in the heavenly sanctuary where Christ ministers on our behalf provide a compelling proof that the moral principles of the Ten Commandments are still the foundation of God’s government?

It is unfortunate that in his concern to argue for the discontinuity between the Old and New Covenants, Ratzlaff as well as the dispensationalists in general, ignore the clear continuity between the two. The continuity is expressed in a variety of ways. There is continuity in the revelation which the same God “spoke of old to our fathers by the prophets” and now “in these last days has spoken to us by a Son” (Heb 1:1-2). There is continuity in the faithfulness and accomplishments of Moses and Christ (Heb 3:2-6).

There is continuity in the redemptive ministry offered typologically in the earthly sanctuary by priests and realistically in the heavenly sanctuary by Christ Himself (Heb 7-10). There is continuity in faith and hope as New Testament believers share in the faith and promises of the Old Testament worthies (Heb 11-12).

More specifically, there is continuity in the “Sabbathkeeping—*sabbatismos*” which “remains (*apoleipetai*) for the people of God” (Heb 4:9). The verb “remains—*apoleipetai*” literally means “has been left behind.” Literally translated, verse 9 reads: “So then a Sabbath-keeping has been left behind for the people of God.” The permanence of the Sabbath is also implied in the exhortation to “strive to enter that rest” (Heb 4:11). The fact that one must make efforts “to enter that rest” implies that the “rest” experience of the Sabbath also has a future realization and, consequently, cannot have terminated with the coming of Christ.

It is noteworthy that while Hebrews declares the Levitical priesthood and services as “abolished” (Heb 10:9), “obsolete,” and “ready to vanish away” (Heb 8:13), he explicitly teaches that a “Sabbathkeeping has been left behind for the people of God” (Heb 4:9).

## Ratzlaff's Objections to Literal Sabbathkeeping

Ratzlaff rejects the interpretation of "*sabbatismos*" as literal Sabbathkeeping because it does not fit his "New Covenant" theology. He goes as far as saying that *sabbatismos* is a special term coined by the author of Hebrews to emphasize the uniqueness of the salvation rest of the New Covenant. "The writer of Hebrews characterizes this rest as a 'Sabbath rest' by using a word which is *unique* to Scripture. I believe he did this to give it special meaning just as we do when we put quotation marks around a word as I have done with the term 'God's rest.' As pointed out above, the author is showing how much better the new covenant is over the old. I believe the truth he is trying to convey is that the 'Sabbath' (*sabbatismos*, Gr) of the New Covenant is better than the Sabbath (*sabbaton*, Gr) of the Old Covenant."<sup>7</sup>

The truth of the matter is that the author of Hebrews did not have to invent a new word or use it with a *unique* meaning, because the term *sabbatismos* already existed and was used both by pagans and Christians as a technical term for literal seventh-day Sabbathkeeping. Examples can be found in the writings of Plutarch, Justin, Epiphanius, the Apostolic Constitutions, and the Martyrdom of Peter and Paul.<sup>8</sup> The one who is inventing a new meaning for *sabbatismos* is not the author of Hebrews but Dale Ratzlaff himself, in order to support his unbiblical "New Covenant" theology.

Professor Andrew Lincoln, one of the contributors to the scholarly symposium *From Sabbath to the Lord's Day*, a major source used by Ratzlaff, acknowledges that in each of the above mentioned sources "the term denotes the observance or celebration of the Sabbath. This usage corresponds to the Septuagint usage of the cognate verb *sabbatizo* (cf. Ex 16:23; Lev 23:32; 26:34f.; 2 Chron 36:21) which also has reference to Sabbath observance. Thus the writer to the Hebrews is saying that since the time of Joshua an observance of Sabbath rest has been outstanding."<sup>9</sup>

Lincoln is not a Sabbatarian but a Sundaykeeping scholar who deals in a responsible way with the linguistic usage of *sabbatismos*. Unfortunately, he chooses to interpret spiritually the ceasing from one's works on the Sabbath (Heb 4:10) as referring to the spiritual cessation from sin rather than to the physical cessation from work.<sup>10</sup> This interpretation, as we see below, is discredited by the comparison Hebrews makes between the divine and human cessation from "works." The point of the analogy is simply that as God ceased from His work on the seventh day in order to rest, so believers are to cease from their work on the Sabbath in order to enter into God's rest. The analogy excludes the notion of "cessation from sin" simply because on the seventh day God ceased from work, not from sin.

## Ratzlaff's Five Reasons Against Literal Sabbathkeeping.

Ratzlaff submits five reasons to support his contention that *sabbatismos* "cannot be the *seventh-day Sabbath* of the fourth commandment."<sup>11</sup> The first and second reasons are essentially the same. Ratzlaff argues that since Hebrews states that the Israelites at the time of Joshua and, later, the time of David "*did not enter the rest of God*," though they were observing the Sabbath, then, the *sabbatismos* has nothing to do with literal Sabbathkeeping.<sup>12</sup>

This conclusion ignores the three levels of meaning that the author of Hebrews attaches to the Sabbath rest as representing (1) the physical rest of the seventh day, (2) the national rest in the land of Canaan, and (3) the spiritual (messianic) rest in God. Shortly we shall examine these three meanings. The argument of Hebrews is that though the Israelites did enter into the land of rest under Joshua (Heb 4:8), because of unbelief they did not experience the spiritual dimension of Sabbathkeeping as an invitation to enter God's rest (Heb 4:2, 6). This was true even after the occupation of the land because, at the time of David, God renewed the invitation to enter into His rest (Heb 4:7).

The fact that the spiritual dimension of the Sabbath rest was not experienced by the Israelites as a people indicates to the author that “a *sabbatismos*—sabbathkeeping has been left behind for the people of God” (Heb 4:9). It is evident that a proper understanding of the passage indicates that the *sabbatismos*—sabbathkeeping that remains is a literal observance of the day which entails a spiritual experience. The physical act of resting represents a faith response to God.

The third reason given by Ratzlaff is his assumption that “the concept of ‘believing’ is *never* associated with keeping the seventh-day Sabbath in the old covenant.”<sup>13</sup> This assumption is negated by the fact that Sabbath is given as the sign “that you may know that I, the Lord, sanctify you” (Ex 31:13). Is it possible for anyone to experience God’s sanctifying presence and power on the Sabbath without a “belief” or “faith response” to God? Furthermore, does not the prophet Isaiah summon the people to honor the Sabbath by “taking delight in the Lord” (Is 58:14)? Can one delight in the Lord on the Sabbath without believing in Him?

The fourth reason advanced by Ratzlaff relates to the verb “has rested” in Hebrews 4:10 which is past tense (aorist tense in Greek). To him the past tense indicates “that the believer who rests from his works did so *at one point in time in the past*.”<sup>14</sup> In other words the past tense “has rested” suggests not a present weekly cessation from work on the Sabbath but a rest of grace already accomplished or experienced in the past.

This interpretation ignores two important points. First, the verb “has rested—*katepausen*” is past simply because it depends upon the previous verb “*eiselthon*—he that entered,” which is also past. The Greek construction (aorist participle) makes it clear that some have already entered into God’s rest. It is evident that those who “entered” into God’s rest in the past have also “rested from his works” in the past.

Second, the text makes a simple comparison between the divine and the human cessation from “works.” In the RSV the text reads: “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 from His work on the seventh day in order to rest, so believers who cease from their work on the Sabbath enter into God’s rest. If the verb “has rested” referred to the “rest of grace,” as Ratzlaff claims, then by virtue of the analogy God also has experienced “the rest of grace,” an obvious absurdity. All of this shows that the analogy contains a simple statement of the nature of Sabbathkeeping which essentially involves cessation from work in order to enter God’s rest by allowing Him to work in us more fully and freely.

The reason both verbs “entered—*eiselthon*” and “rested—*katepausen*” are past tense (aorist) may be because the author wishes to emphasize that the Sabbathkeeping that has been left behind for the people of God has both a past and present dimension. In the past, it was experienced by those who have entered into God’s rest by resting from their work (Heb 4:10). In the present, we must “strive to enter that rest” (Heb 4:11) by being obedient. Both the RSV and the NIV render the two verbs in the present (“enters — ceases”) because the context underlines the present and timeless quality of the Sabbath rest (Heb 4:1, 3, 6, 9, 11).

## Is the Sabbath Rest a Daily Rest of Grace?

The fifth reason given by Ratzlaff for negating the literal meaning of “*sabbatismos*—Sabbathkeeping” in Hebrews 4:9 is his contention that, since “the promise of entering God’s rest is good ‘today,’” the author of Hebrews is not thinking of the *seventh day* Sabbath rest but of the “rest of grace” experienced by believers *every day*.<sup>15</sup> “The writer of Hebrews stresses the word ‘*today*’ on several occasions. In the New Covenant, one can enter into God’s rest ‘*today*.’ He does not have to wait until the end of the week. . . . The New Covenant believer is to rejoice into God’s rest *continually*.”<sup>16</sup>

It amazes me how Ratzlaff can misconstrue the use of “today” to defend his abrogation view of the Sabbath. The function of the adverb “today—*semeron*” is not to teach a continuous Sabbath rest of grace that replaces literal Sabbathkeeping; it is to show that Sabbathkeeping as an experience of rest in God was not experienced by the Israelites as a people because of their unbelief (Heb 4:6). To prove this fact, the author of Hebrews quotes Psalm 95:7 where God invites the people to respond to Him, saying: “*Today*, when you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts” (Heb. 4:7, cf. Ps. 95:7).

The “today” simply serves to show that the spiritual dimension of the Sabbath as rest in God still remains because God renewed the invitation at the time of David. To argue that “today” means that “New Covenant” Christians observe the Sabbath every day by living in God’s rest is to ignore also the historical context—namely, that the “today” was spoken by God at the time of David. If Ratzlaff’s interpretation of “today” were correct, then already at the time of David, God had replaced the literal observance of the Sabbath with a spiritual experience of rest in Him. Such an absurd conclusion can be reached only by reading into the text gratuitous assumptions. Here is another example of Ratzlaff’s crisis of common sense.

### Three Levels of Interpretation of the Sabbath Rest in the Old Testament

To understand better the preceding discussion about the Sabbath rest in Hebrews 3 and 4, it is important to note three levels of meaning attached to the Sabbath rest in the Old Testament and in Jewish literature. In the Old Testament, as mentioned briefly earlier on, we find that the Sabbath rest refers first of all to the physical cessation from work on the seventh day (Ex 20:10; 23:12; 31:14; 34:21). Second, the Sabbath rest served to epitomize the national aspiration for a peaceful life in a land at 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; cf. 1 Kings 8:5), 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 fact that the Sabbath rest as a political aspiration for national peace and prosperity remained largely unfulfilled, apparently inspired the third interpretation of the Sabbath rest—namely, the symbol of the Messianic age, often known as the “end of days” or the “world to come.” Theodore Friedman notes, for example, that “two of the three passages in which Isaiah refers to the Sabbath are linked by the prophet with the end of days (Is 56:4-7; 58:13, 14; 66:22-24) . . . . It is no mere coincidence that Isaiah employs the words ‘delight’ (*oneg*) and ‘honor’ (*kavod*) in his descriptions of both the Sabbath and the end of days (Is 58:13—‘And you shall call the Sabbath a delight . . . and honor it’; Is 66:11—‘And you shall delight in the glow of its honor’). The implication is clear. The delight and joy that will mark the end of days is made available here and now by the Sabbath.”<sup>17</sup>

Later rabbinic and apocalyptic literature provide more explicit examples of the Messianic/eschatological interpretation of the Sabbath. For example, the Babylonian Talmud says: “Our Rabbis taught that at the conclusion of the septennate the son of David will come. R. Joseph demurred: But so many Sabbaths have passed, yet has he not come!”<sup>18</sup> In the apocalyptic work known as *The Book of Adam and Eve* (about first century A.D.), the archangel Michael admonishes Seth, saying: “Man of God, mourn not for thy dead more than six days, for on the seventh day is a sign of the resurrection and the rest of the age to come.”<sup>19</sup>

How did the Sabbath come to be regarded as the symbol of the world to come? Apparently the harsh experiences, first of the desert wandering and later of the exile, inspired the people to view the Edenic Sabbath as the paradigm of the future Messianic age. In fact, the Messianic age is characterized by material abundance (Am 9:13-14; Joel 4:19; Is 30:23-25; Jer 31:12), social justice (Is 61:1-9), harmony between persons and animals (Hos 2:20; Is 65:25; 11:6), extraordinary longevity (Is 65:20; Zech 8:4), refulgent light (Is 30:26; Zech 14:6, 7), and the absence of death and sorrow (Is 25:8).

This brief survey indicates that both in the Old Testament and in later Jewish literature, the weekly experience of the Sabbath rest served not only to express the national aspirations for a peaceful life in the land of Canaan (which remained largely unfulfilled), but also to nourish the hope of the future Messianic age which came to be viewed as “wholly sabbath and rest.”<sup>20</sup>

### Three Levels of Interpretation of the Sabbath Rest in Hebrews

The existence in Old Testament times of three levels of interpretation of the Sabbath rest as a personal, national, and Messianic reality provides the basis for understanding these three meanings in Hebrews 3 and 4. By welding two texts together—namely, Psalm 95:11 and Genesis 2:2—the writer presents three different levels of meaning of the Sabbath rest. At the first level, the Sabbath rest points to God’s creation rest, when “his works were finished from the foundation of the world” (Heb 4:3). This meaning is established by quoting Genesis 2:2.

At the second level, the Sabbath rest symbolizes the promise of entry into the land of Canaan, which the wilderness generation “failed to enter” (Heb 4:6; cf. 3:16-19), but which was realized later when the Israelites under Joshua did enter the land of rest (4:8). At the third and most important level, the Sabbath rest prefigures the rest of redemption which has dawned and is made available to God’s people through Christ.

How does the author establish this last meaning? By drawing a remarkable conclusion from Psalm 95:7, 11 which he quotes several times (Heb 4:3, 5, 7). In Psalm 95, God invites the Israelites to enter into His rest which was denied to the rebellious wilderness generation (Heb 4:7-11). The fact that God should renew “again” the promise of His rest long after the actual entrance into the earthly Canaan—namely, at the time of David by saying “today” (Heb 4:7)—is interpreted by the author of Hebrews to mean two things: first, that God’s Sabbath rest was not exhausted when the Israelites under Joshua found a resting place in the land, but that it still “remains for the people of God” (4:9); and second, that such rest has dawned with the coming of Christ (Heb 4:3, 7).

The phrase “Today, when you hear his voice” (Heb 4:7) has a clear reference to Christ. The readers had heard God’s voice in the “last days” (Heb 1:2) as it spoke through Christ and had received the promise of the Sabbath rest. In the light of the Christ event, then, ceasing from one’s labor on the Sabbath (Heb 4:10) signifies both a present experience of redemption (Heb 4:3) and a hope of future fellowship with God (Heb 4:11). For the author of Hebrews, as Gerhard von Rad, a well-known OT scholar, correctly points out, “the whole purpose of creation and the whole purpose of redemption are reunited” in the fulfillment of God’s original Sabbath rest.<sup>21</sup>

### The Nature of the Sabbath Rest in Hebrews

What is the nature of the “Sabbath rest” that is still outstanding for God’s people (Heb 4:9)? Is the writer thinking of a literal or spiritual type of Sabbathkeeping? The answer is both. The author presupposes the literal observance of the Sabbath to which he gives a deeper meaning—namely, a faith response to God. Support for a literal understanding of Sabbathkeeping is provided by the historical usage of the term “*sabbatismos*—sabbathkeeping” in verse 9 and by the description of Sabbathkeeping as cessation from work given in verse 10: “For whoever enters God’s rest also ceases from his labors as God did from his.”

We noted earlier that *sabbatismos* is used in both pagan and Christian literature to denote the literal observance of the Sabbath. Consequently, by the use of this term, the writer of Hebrews is simply saying that “a Sabbathkeeping has been left behind for the people of God.” The probative value of this text is enhanced by the fact that the writer is not arguing for the permanence of Sabbathkeeping; he takes it for granted.

The literal nature of Sabbathkeeping is indicated also by the following verse which speaks of the cessation from work as representing entering into God’s rest. “For whoever enters God’s rest also ceases from his labors as God did from his” (Heb 4:10). The majority of commentators interpret the cessation from work of Hebrews 4:10 in a figurative sense as “abstention from servile work,” meaning sinful activities. Thus, Christian Sabbathkeeping means not the interruption of daily work on the seventh day, but the abstention from sinful acts at all times. In other words, “New Covenant” believers experience the Sabbath rest not as a *physical* cessation from work on the *seventh day*

but as a *spiritual* salvation rest *every day*. As Ratzlaff puts it, “The New Covenant believer is to rejoice in God’s rest *continually*.”<sup>22</sup>

To support this view, appeal is made to the reference in Hebrews to “dead works” (Heb 6:1; 9:14). Such a concept, however, cannot be read back into Hebrews 4:10 where a comparison is made between the divine and the human cessation from “works.” It is absurd to think that God ceased from “sinful deeds” on the seventh day. 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 in Hebrews**

The concern of the author of Hebrews, however, is not merely to encourage his readers to interrupt their secular activities on the Sabbath, but rather to help them understand the deeper significance of the act of resting for God on the Sabbath. The recipients of the book are designated as “Hebrews” presumably because of their tendency to adopt Jewish liturgical customs as a means to gain access to God. This is indicated by the appeal in chapters 7 to 10 to discourage any participation in the Temple’s sacrificial services. Thus, these Hebrew-minded Christians did not need to be reminded of the physical-cessation aspect of Sabbathkeeping. This aspect yields only a negative idea of rest, one which only would have served to encourage existing Judaizing tendencies. Instead, what they needed to understand was the meaning of the act of resting on the Sabbath, especially in the light of the coming of Christ.

This deeper meaning of the Sabbath rest 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.

In chapter 4 of *The Sabbath Under Crossfire*, I discuss more fully the meaning of Sabbathkeeping as a faith response to God in conjunction with the relationship between the Savior and the Sabbath. There I show that Hebrews’ deeper meaning of Sabbathkeeping reflects to a large extent the redemptive understanding of the day we find in the Gospels. Christ’s offer of His “rest” (Matt 11:28) represents the core of the “Sabbath rest” available “today” to God’s people (Heb 4:7, 9).

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 being receptive 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.”<sup>23</sup>

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, on the one hand, reassures his readers of the permanence of the blessings contemplated by Sabbathkeeping and, on the other hand, explains that such a blessing can be received only by experiencing the Sabbath as a faith response to God.

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. Karl Barth puts it eloquently. 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.”<sup>24</sup>

## Conclusion

The preceding study of the Sabbath in its relationship to the New Covenant has shown that there is an organic unity between the Old and New Covenants—a unity which is reflected in the continuity of the Sabbath. Of all the commandments, the Sabbath offers us the most concrete opportunity to show our love to God because it invites us to consecrate our time to Him. Time is the essence of our life. The way we use our time is indicative of our priorities. A major reason why the Sabbath has been attacked by many throughout human history is because our sinful human nature is self-centered rather than God-centered. Most people want to spend their Sabbath time seeking for personal pleasure or profit rather than for the presence and peace of God.

New Covenant believers who on the Sabbath stop their work to allow God to work in them more fully and freely tangibly show that God really counts in their lives. They make themselves receptive and responsive to the presence, peace, and rest of God. At a time when so-called “New Covenant” theology is deceiving many Christians into believing in the “simpler” and “better” principle of love, the Sabbath challenges us to offer to God not just lip-service, but the service of our total being by consecrating our time and life to Him.

## ENDNOTES

1. "Does Hebrews 4:9 Command Us to Keep the Sabbath?" A Bible study prepared by the Worldwide Church of God and posted on their Web page ([www.wcg.org](http://www.wcg.org) – September, 1998), p. 1.
2. "The New Covenant and the Sabbath," a Bible study prepared by the Worldwide Church of God and posted on their Web page ([www.wcg.org](http://www.wcg.org) – September, 1998), pp. 9-10.
3. "Does Hebrews 4:9 Command Us to Keep the Sabbath?" (note 1), pp.8-9.
4. Dale Ratzlaff, *Sabbath in Crisis: Transfer/Modification? Reformation/Continuation? Fulfillment/Transformation?* (Applegate, California, 1990), p. 197.
5. *Ibid.*, p. 198.
6. Walter C. Kaiser (note 31), p. 186.
7. Dale Ratzlaff (note 4), p. 246.
8. Plutarch, *De Superstitione* 3 (Moralia 1660); Justin Martyr, *Dialogue with Trypho* 23, 3; Epiphanius, *Adversus Haereses* 30, 2, 2; *Apostolic Constitutions* 2, 36.
9. Andrew T. Lincoln, "Sabbath, Rest, and Eschatology in the New Testament," in *From Sabbath to the Lord's Day*, ed. Donald A. Carson (Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1982), p. 213.
10. *Ibid.*
11. Dale Ratzlaff (note 4), p. 243.
12. *Ibid.*, pp. 243-244.
13. *Ibid.*, p. 244.
14. *Ibid.*
15. *Ibid.*
16. *Ibid.*, p. 247.
17. Theodore Friedman, "The Sabbath: Anticipation of Redemption," *Judaism* 16 (1967), p. 445. Friedman notes that "at the end of the *Mishnah Tamid* (*Rosh Hashanah* 31a) 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.' The Sabbath, the Gemara asserts, is one-sixtieth of the world to come" (*ibid.*, p. 443).
18. *Sanhedrin* 97a.
19. *The Books of Adam and Eve* 51:1,2 in R. H. Charles, ed., *The Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha of the Old Testament* (Oxford, 1913), vol 2, p. 153. Cf. *Apocalypsis of Mosis* 43:3. A similar view is found in *Genesis Rabbah* 17:5: "There are three antitypes: the antitype of death is sleep, the antitype of prophecy is dream, the antitype of the age to come is the Sabbath." Cf. *Genesis Rabbah* 44:17.
20. *Mishnah Tamid* 7:4. The viewing of the Sabbath as the symbol and anticipation of the Messianic age gave to the celebration of the weekly Sabbath a note of gladness and hope for the future. Cf. *Genesis Rabbat* 17; 44; *Baba Berakot* 57f. Theodore Friedman shows how certain Sabbath regulations established by the school of Shammai were designed to offer a foretaste of the Messianic age (note 53, pp. 447-452).
21. Gerhard von Rad, "There Remains Still a Rest for the People of God," in *The Problem of the Hexateuch and Other Essays* (New York, 1965), p. 94-102.
22. Dale Ratzlaff (note 4), p. 247.
23. John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion* (Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1965), vol. 2, p. 337. Karl Barth keenly observes that by resting on the Sabbath after the similitude of God (Heb 4:10), the believer "participates consciously in the salvation provided by him [God]" (*Church Dogmatic* [Edinburgh, 1961], vol. 3, part 2, p. 50).
24. Karl Barth (note 23), p. 51.

## **UPCOMING WEEKEND SEMINARS**

As a service to our subscribers, I am listing the date and the location of the upcoming seminars for the month of April and May 2003. Every Sabbath it is a great pleasure for me to meet our subscribers who travel considerable distances to attend the seminars.

### **APRIL 4-5: LOS ANGELES: LANCASTER SDA CHURCH**

Location: 43824 North 30th Street West, Lancaster, CA 93536  
For information call Pastor Rockne Dahl at (805) 498-3382 or (661) 298-6148.

### **APRIL 11-12: LOS ANGELES: HOLLYWOOD SDA CHURCH**

Location: 657 West 18th Street, Los Angeles, CA 90016  
For information call Pastor Luis Pena at (714) 562-8928 or (714) 926-5028 or (213) 749-5190.

### **APRIL 18-19: WOODBURY SDA CHURCH**

Location: Barber and Evergreen Avenue, NJ 08096  
For information call Pastor Brian Stevenson at (856) 582 8595 or (856) 217 4443

### **APRIL 25-26: LOS ANGELES; TEMPLE CITY SDA CHURCH**

Location: 9664 East Broadway, Temple City, CA 91780  
For information call Pastor Benjamin del Pozo at (626) 286-5437 or (626) 292-2249

### **MAY 2-3: NEW YORK CITY: EPHESUS SDA CHURCH**

Location: 101 West 123rd Street, New York, NY 10027  
For information call Pastor Philip Wesley II at (516) 538-1317 or (212) 662-5536

### **MAY 16-17: LOS ANGELES: COMPTON COMMUNITY SDA CHURCH**

Location: 1226 West Compton Boulevard, Compton, CA 90220  
For information call Pastor John McCoy at (909) 268 4847 or (909) 629-4899

### **MAY 30-31: NEW YORK CITY: SHILO SDA CHURCH**

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For information call Pastor Winston Stephenson at (718) 771-4103 or (718) 978-4717

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CP-X385W	XGA	2200 Lumens	7 lbs	\$7,995	\$2800.00
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### New CP-S370W Provides Exceptional Brightness and Connectivity in a Quiet, Lightweight Package

BRISBANE, Calif., [www.hitachi.com](http://www.hitachi.com), April 2, 2002 -

Hitachi America, Ltd., a subsidiary of Hitachi, Ltd., Tokyo, Japan (NYSE: HIT), today announced the CP-S370W, a bright ultra-portable projector designed for educators and budget-conscious consumers. In order to capture the interest of today's highly visual and technically savvy students, schools must provide the equipment that supports a varied and creative curriculum, while meeting extremely tight budget constraints. The CP-S370W meets this need with versatile connectivity and brightness that make it a powerful multimedia tool. Its compact, seven-pound body ensures easy transport between classrooms, and its tremendous brightness ensures eye-catching visual support for lessons.

"The education market continues to be an important part of Hitachi's customer base," said Pete Denes, director of sales for Hitachi America, Ltd., Computer Division, Multimedia Presentation Products. "The CP-S370W gives teachers the brightness and features they desire, at a price point that doesn't break the school bank."

#### Bright, Vivid Image

The CP-S370W features an impressive 2,200 lumens, ensuring a bright, vibrant image for ease of viewing, even from the rear of the classroom. Whether projecting simple data slides or high-definition video, the CP-S370W enables educators to present lessons with strong visual supplements that help engage students' attention. At the same time, the CP-S370W's SVGA resolution allows schools to meet the multimedia needs of its students at an affordable cost, making the most of limited budgets.

#### Exceptional Connectivity

The CP-S370W features two RGB inputs, as well as component, composite and S-video inputs, ensuring maximum flexibility for presentations. This connectivity enables presenters to use a variety of multimedia equipment, including PCs, DVD players and more, providing an enhanced educational experience for students. The multiple inputs help minimize transition time for reconfiguration, to help keep students focused. The CP-S370W also features an RGB output, allowing teachers to view presentations on a desktop monitor, without turning away from the classroom. This wealth of connectivity is even more impressive given the compact, seven-pound chassis, which is easily transported between classrooms.

#### Quiet Operation

The CP-S370W features Hitachi's Whisper Mode, a standard on all new Hitachi projectors, allowing users to reduce the fan noise to near-whisper levels, with a slight reduction in brightness. This feature strengthens the projector's suitability for classrooms, where distractions such as ambient noise need to be kept to a minimum. The CP-S370W operates at 34 decibels in Whisper Mode, reduced from 40 decibels in standard mode.

Priced at \$6,995, the CP-S370W is now available through Hitachi's network of nationwide resellers. For more information, or to locate a dealer near you, please visit <http://www.hitachi.com/mmpp>, or call 1-800-225-1741.

#### About Hitachi

Hitachi America, Ltd., Computer Division, supplies high-performance computer storage products and multimedia products to OEMs, value-added resellers, system integrators and distributors. The division's products include high-capacity hard disk drives, LCD/LCOS projectors, CRT monitors, color laser beam printers and flat panel and plasma displays. Hitachi America, Ltd., a subsidiary of Hitachi, Ltd., markets and manufactures a broad range of electronics, computer systems and products, consumer electronics and semiconductors and provides industrial equipment and services throughout North America. For more information, visit <http://www.hitachi.com>.

#### Key Features and Specifications

- Native SVGA Resolution (800 x 600 color pixels)
- Versatile connectivity - Component, Composite, S-Video, two RGB inputs; one RGB output
- High Contrast Ratio - 350:1
- Digital Keystone Correction
- Brightness - 2,200 lumens (1,760 lumens in Whisper Mode)
- Quiet Operation - 40 decibels (34 decibels in Whisper Mode)
- Lightweight - 7 pounds
- HDTV-ready
- Anamorphic 16:9 aspect ratio
- FCC Class B Compliant
- Wireless Remote Control
- Built-in Speaker (1W x 2 stereo)
- Warranty - 3 years parts and labor, 90 days for the lamp

## **SPECIAL OFFER FOR *THE SABBATH UNDER CROSSFIRE***

During the past two years numerous Adventist churches have sponsored copies of *THE SABBATH UNDER CROSSFIRE* to the local ministers of various denominations. The results have been very encouraging. Baptist, Methodist, Pentecostal, Church of God, Salvation Army, and Messianic congregations have moved their services from Sunday to Saturday.

To support this outreach ministry, we offer *THE SABBATH UNDER CROSSFIRE* by the case of 32 copies for only \$190.00, postage paid, that is, \$5.90 per copy, instead of the regular price of \$20.00. We supply a cover letter to be attached to copies mailed to ministers.

You can order single copies or a case of this book simply by calling us at (269) 471-2915 or by emailing us your credit card number, expiration date, and your address. If you prefer to pay by check, mail your check to: BIBLICAL PERSPECTIVES, 4990 Appian Way, Berrien Springs, Michigan 4990, USA. We guarantee to process your order immediately.

## **SPECIAL OFFER ON THE NEWLY RECORDED SABBATH SEMINAR**

To make it possible for Adventist churches in different parts of the world to benefit from my popular SABBATH ENRICHMENT SEMINAR, few months ago the TEXAS MEDIA CENTER made a fresh recording of the seminar I presented at the First Fort Worth SDA Church in Texas. We spent several days preparing this new recording where I use about 100 PowerPoint slides for each presentation. The response has been very gratifying. Church leaders in different parts of the world are expressing appreciation for the blessings of these timely Sabbath messages. Your personal effort to share them with your congregation is much appreciated.

The new SABBATH SEMINAR consists of a total of 8 one-hour lectures covering the following topics: the gripping story of my search for the Sabbath at a Vatican University in Rome; the discoveries I made in Vatican libraries on how the change came about from Sabbath to Sunday in early Christianity; practical principles on how to keep the Sabbath to experience Christ's rest and peace in our lives; an update report on the most recent Sabbath/Sunday developments; and a sacred concert with two outstanding tenors entitled THE SABBATH IN SONGS. The concert was recorded in a television studio in South Bend, Indiana.

This new SABBATH ENRICHMENT SEMINAR is now available in THREE FORMATS:

1. 8 AUDIO cassettes,
2. 4 VIDEO tapes,
3. 3 DVD disks.

Each of them come in a nice plastic album with an artistically designed jacket. Your SPECIAL OFFER is as follows:

**1) SABBATH SEMINAR IN 8 AUDIO CASSETTES** at the special offer of only \$30.00, postage paid, instead of the regular price of \$60.00. The 8 audio cassettes come in a nice album with an artistically designed color jacket.

**2) SABBATH SEMINAR IN 4 VIDEO TAPES** at the special offer of only \$60.00, postage paid, instead of the regular price of \$120.00. The price is the same for both the American and the overseas PAL system. Specify which system you need. The 4 video tapes come in a nice album with an artistically designed color jacket.

**3) SABBATH SEMINAR IN DVD DISKS** at the special offer of only \$70.00, postage paid, instead of the regular price of \$170.00. The DVD disks are compatible with all TV systems overseas. No conversion is necessary. The 3 DVD disks come in a nice triple Jewel case with an artistically designed color jacket.

The easiest way to order the new AUDIO cassettes, VIDEO tapes, or DVD disks, is with your credit card. You can order by calling us at (269) 471-2915 or by emailing us your credit card number, expiration date, and your address. If you prefer to pay by check, mail your check to: BIBLICAL PERSPECTIVES, 4990 Appian Way, Berrien Springs, Michigan 4990, USA. We guarantee to process your order immediately.

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Until April 30, 2003, you can order all my books and recordings at special offer of \$280.00, instead of the regular price of \$825.00.

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