

*The Case
AGAINST
Saturday
Blue Laws*

A 32 page pamphlet covering the subject
of seventh-day Sabbath Blue Laws

VERSES

Sunday Blue Laws.

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Booklet Measurements: 3 3/4 x 5 1/2"

Back Cover

Roland Hegstad, editor of *Liberty* magazine, recently attended a Lord's Day Alliance meeting. During a break in the program he fell into a discussion with one of its leaders over Seventh-day Adventist opposition to Sunday blue laws. The Lord's Day Alliance leader challenged him, "If we were trying to get everyone to keep your Sabbath—Saturday—you'd do everything you could to help us push Saturday blue laws."

"Oh, no, we wouldn't!" the *Liberty* editor replied, but he had no way of demonstrating his conviction.

Now, however, he can, because a leading evangelical editor, Harold Lindsell of *Christianity Today*, shortly thereafter made just such a serious proposal, and Seventh-day Adventists responded in exactly the way Hegstad said they would.

This book delineates the reasons why Adventists reacted as they did, the interesting background to Lindsell's proposal, and the stir it caused in the religious press. Because the authors, as editors of *Ministry* magazine, actively participated in the dialogue, they can provide a first-hand account of the discussion and share their conviction as to its significance.

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The Case AGAINST Saturday Blue Laws



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Southern Publishing Association
SBN 8127-0137-2

This book was
Edited by Richard Coffen
Designed by Dean Tucker

Type set 9/10 Times Roman
Printed in U.S.A.

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Chapter 1

The Case Against Saturday Blue Laws

On page 12 of the May 7, 1976, issue of *Christianity Today*, editor Harold Lindsell proposed in an article entitled “The Lord’s Day and Natural Resources” that for the purpose of conserving energy “all businesses including gasoline stations and restaurants” should close every Sunday. Lindsell expressed his conviction that such a move would accord both with the natural laws that govern man’s well-being and with the “will of God for all men.” Sensing that people are “highly unlikely” to observe Sunday as a rest day through voluntary action alone, he further suggested that the only way to accomplish the dual objectives of Sunday observance and the conservation of energy would be “by force of legislative fiat through the duly elected officials of the people” (*ibid.*).

An editorial in the July issue of *Ministry* stated that Seventh-day Adventists agree with Lindsell that “the sabbath was made for man” ([Mark 2:27](#)) and that there is a natural law involved. *Ministry* also agreed with *Christianity Today* that “the reason Christians should advance to convince unregenerate man to keep the Sabbath is that . . . [men] need it, that it will work

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for their good, and that their failure to keep it is devastating for men and assures them of disaster” (*ibid.*, p. 9).

Adventists, however, take issue with *Christianity Today*’s editor over two major points. One is his insistence that Sabbath observance must be legislated, and the other is his equating Sunday with the Scriptural Sabbath.

However sincere and honest they may be, those who favor laws enforcing the proper use of Sunday or any other day of religious significance do not see that the same intolerance and oppression which have held sway in past ages would again be felt if Sunday legislation is enacted. Much of the world’s population today suffers in the crushing grip of despotic powers that have robbed people of both civil and religious liberty, Will we, through seemingly innocuous legislation, deprive still others of religious freedom under the guise of “effective humanization” (*ibid.*, p. 12)?

Lindsell attempted to lift Sunday observance out of the religious domain in his concluding arguments: “The proper use of the Lord’s Day, wholly apart from any religious implications, can come about by free choice or it can be legislated” (*ibid.*). But can a Christian-oriented nation properly create or use a secular rest day, “wholly apart from any religious implications”? Lindsell’s article certainly failed to show how it can be done. His opening declaration that “in the United States today Sunday observance is virtually

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dead” (*ibid.*, p. 8) is inseparably related to the religious realm. A major part of his theme decried the secularization of Sunday as revealed in the “changing attitude of so many in the Church about the written Word of God” (*ibid.*, p. 8). Words such as “theological liberalism,” “Sabbath keeping,” “denial of any absolutes,” “God’s day,” and “Sabbath observance” punctuated his article. and such terms and phrases cannot be relegated to the secular.

If one of the major causes of Sunday secularization is located within the church itself, then let it, not the state, remedy the situation, It will be a sad day when the church must seek aid from civil authorities to enforce a holy day upon members.

This brings us to the second issue: Sunday holiness. There is no “unbreakable

command of God” or “obligation resting on the bald notion of the divine authority,” as Lindsell puts it, to honor Sunday (*ibid.*, p. 8). Nevertheless he unfortunately appeals to the authority of Scripture on a subject that has no Scriptural authority. Usage does not determine right or wrong when it comes to religious matters. A Christian’s only authority can be Scripture. Lindsell’s equating Sunday with “Sabbath,” “seventh day,” and “Lord’s day” cannot be supported by Old or New Testament Scriptures, as he himself admits in a later editorial.

Ministry didn’t expect that its editorial exchange would lead to a dialogue with Lindsell, but soon after the editorial appeared, Lindsell called J. R. Spangler,

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editor of *Ministry*. He was cordial throughout the entire conversation but felt that Spangler had missed the point of his article. Lindsell stated that he didn’t care which day was set aside but did feel that the urgent energy crisis demands that we do something about it.

Spangler pointed out, however, that Lindsell’s article mixed religion and secularism in a way that couldn’t be separated. Lindsell then suggested that as far as he was concerned, the day set aside for a national day of rest could be Saturday. Spangler insisted he would oppose that because Saturday would also have definite religious connotations. Then Lindsell admitted that he was probably wrong in approaching the subject of conservation of energy in the way he did.

As a result of this contact and an additional one by D. A. Delafield of the White Publications office, Dr. Lindsell responded to an invitation to visit Adventist headquarters in Washington and to discuss the Sabbath issue. During Dr. Lindsell’s five hours there he spent quite a bit of time in thorough study of the Seventh-day Adventist teachings on the Sabbath and its relationship to last-day events with Delafield and Spangler. As he left, Spangler said to him, “Now remember, we’ve agreed that neither Saturday nor Sunday is the day to be pushed as the day of national rest, but Wednesday could be.”

Lindsell’s parting shot as he left was, “Wednesday it is, then.”

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Imagine the surprise of Adventist leaders when a few days before the appearance of the November 5 issue of *Christianity Today*, Spangler learned from Lindsell in a telephone conversation that the latter was running an editorial entitled “Consider the Case for Quiet Saturdays.” Spangler asked why he was introducing the Saturday issue when he had agreed that Wednesday was the day that would be pushed. Lindsell explained that he had rethought the issue and felt that Saturday was really the best day. He explained his thinking more fully in his November 5 editorial by admitting that the response to his first article “dusted off the old arguments that this was an infringement of the First Amendment. Seventh-day Adventists were upset, especially since, in their eschatology, compulsory religious observance of Sunday will mark the closing days of the age before the second advent of our Lord. It may be small comfort to them that Sunday observance is rapidly losing, not gaining, ground. . . . In 1961 the Supreme Court ruled that ‘insuring the public welfare through a common day of rest is a legitimate interest of government.’ This opens the door to legislation closing all businesses on one day of the week. Claims that such laws would violate church-state separation might therefore be hard to prove before the highest court of the land” (p. 42).

Lindsell then emphasized his previous argument stating that “conservation of dwindling resources is a valid reason for agreeing on a certain day for shutting

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down all business operations. . . . The sticky point is the question of which day; no decision would please everyone.

“We propose that Saturday be set aside as the day of rest for all people. Those who choose to join in corporate worship of God that day could do so. Others could spend the time in their own way” (*ibid.*).

Many, if not most, Sunday-keeping Christians are likely to be not only surprised but also disturbed by his assertion that “for Protestants and Catholics it should prove no theological hardship: apart from the fact that our Lord rose from the dead on the first day of the week, there is nothing in Scripture that requires us to keep Sunday rather than Saturday as a holy day. In the interest of the nation, Protestant and Catholic churches could change their worship services from Sunday to Saturday. Or we could keep Sunday as our sabbath; whatever inconvenience we suffered would be a token of our good will toward a minority whose sensitivities we respect . . .” (*ibid.*)

Although Lindsell rightly concludes that setting aside Saturday as a universal day of rest “should prove no theological hardship” for either Protestants or Catholics, he obviously misses the boat when he adds that “Saturday closing could not possibly be construed as a religious ploy. It would provide no church-state problem. It would serve the larger interests of humanity. Responsible leaders should discuss the possibility” (*ibid.*).

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W. Melvin Adams, director of Public Affairs and Religious Liberty for the Seventh-day Adventist General Conference, issued a press release in response to Lindsell’s proposal: “We strongly disapprove of any attempt to legislate observance of any day of the week. While we believe in the benefits of observing the seventh-day Sabbath and concur with the editors of *Christianity Today* that a day of rest is beneficial. Adventists do not want Saturday legislation any more than we want blue laws which encourage Sunday observance.”

William F. Willoughby, religion editor of the *Washington Star*, commenting on Melvin Adams’ reply to Lindsell, advised his readers, “Don’t get it wrong. The Adventists, who can be very friendly, are not riding Lindsell and *Christianity Today*. They get along just fine; so there’s no real tiff involved. Adams made it a point to commend the magazine editors for their interest in spiritual regeneration. ‘But using the power of civil authority is not the answer.’”

Then, somewhat tongue in cheek, Willoughby concluded, “I think that my friend Harold Lindsell has, in spirit, a splendid idea. But to try to enforce something in these days and under our circumstances of plurality that could happen in Israel millennia ago just isn’t going to work here. After all, God “as directly in charge when the edict was given to Israel. For a while He was the whole show. That is hardly the American say.”

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Dr. K. D. Hurley, the executive secretary of the Seventh Day Baptist General Conference, wrote to executives of fifty-five religious bodies urging them to “prayerfully consider” Lindsell’s proposal that Saturday be set aside as a national day of rest.

”A properly proclaimed universal ‘rest day’ would relieve Americans of the discriminatory ‘blue laws’ and be an effective conservation measure,” he wrote. “It could be the God-ordained, age-old solution to the modern American’s frantic search for meaningful use of his ever-increasing leisure time. Transcending the differences concerning the appropriate day for worship are ecological and sociological considerations, as Dr. Lindsell points out. People need to consider seriously the implications of dwindling natural resources and the dissipation of human resources. They should be given the chance to assess anew the claims of the Sabbath as God’s gift to man of a day of rest. At issue is not the proper day for worship, but whether America will accept, in her need, God’s gift.”

Hurley seems to agree with Lindsell that “Saturday closing could not possibly be construed as a religious ploy.” Yet in a nation where several million people keep the seventh-day Sabbath on Saturday in response to the Biblical fourth commandment, how is it possible to propose legislation enforcing a Saturday rest day without its having religious overtones? How can there help but be church-state implications involved?

Sabbathkeepers appreciate the magnanimous attitude

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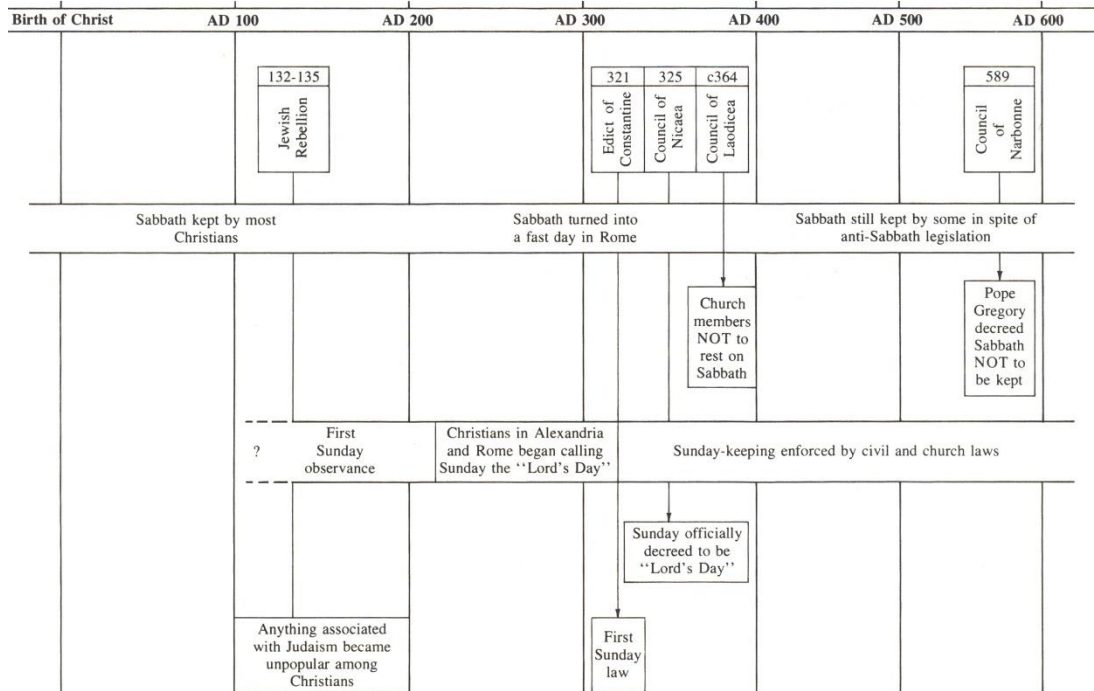
of *Christianity Today*’s editors in declaring that whatever inconvenience Sunday-keepers would suffer from such a move, it would nevertheless “be a token of . . . good will toward a minority whose sensitivities . . . [the editors] respect.” However, regardless of the goodwill represented in such a gesture, as long as it is based on legal compulsion, freedom-loving Americans must reject it. No nation can remain a true democracy if it makes laws that bring hardship on any religious group, and the day of worship has always been an especially sensitive issue.

Thus an editorial in *Ministry* of January, 1977, suggested setting apart Monday as a conservation of energy holiday. giving a long weekend of three days. its benefits would be self-evident and would not in any way be associated with the recognized days of worship —Friday, Saturday, and Sunday.

A significant principle is at stake. Even through seemingly innocuous and beneficial legislation, Americans dare not deprive any segment of the population of their religious freedom. The Constitutional provision that “Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof” must safeguard our nation against intolerance and persecution. To enforce by civil authority any religious practice. no matter how beneficial it may seem to the general welfare of the nation as a whole, breaks down the basic principles that distinguish and assure American freedoms.

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FROM SABBATH TO SUNDAY IN THE FIRST SIX CENTURIES



Chapter 2

“Nothing in Scripture”

Referring to Lindsell’s statement that “there is nothing in Scripture that requires us to keep Sunday rather than Saturday as a holy day,” William Willoughby in his November 13, 1976, article in the *Washington Star* remarked, “It probably would surprise many non-Sabbatarian Christians (at least 99.44 percent of the total) that there is nothing scripturally mandatory about them observing Sunday as their day of worship. The earliest Christians, who were Jews, worshiped in the temple at Jerusalem on the Sabbath, which is, was, and always has been, Saturday —just ask any Adventist. Elsewhere, they worshiped in synagogues or in homes.”

Lindsell and Willoughby are correct. The church at its inception was a Jewish-Christian church, concentrated for the most part in Jerusalem, living in a communal style and daily worshiping and “breaking bread” ([Acts 2:44-47](#); [4:32-34](#)). Early Christians met together in the Temple and in the homes of believers ([Acts 5:42](#); [12:12](#)), apparently following a specific routine of daily worship ([Acts 3:1](#)). It also seems that Christians everywhere kept the Sabbath in the synagogues as long as they were allowed to do so

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([Acts 13:5](#), [14, 15, 44](#); [14:1](#); [17:1, 2, 10, 17](#); [18:4, 19](#); [19:8](#)) or in other gathering places where the Jews met on the Sabbath ([Acts 16:13](#)).

New Testament literature refers to the controversy that raged over circumcision in the early church. Paul wrote his epistle to the Galatians primarily to establish that Gentile

Christians did not have to follow the Jewish practice of circumcision. When we consider how much argument brewed over the matter of circumcision, we can imagine how great the controversy would have been if a change in the day of worship had been introduced in the early Christian church.

Not only is there no evidence from the New Testament Scriptures that Sunday replaced Saturday as a new day for Christian worship, but also the matter-of-fact way in which the New Testament does refer to worshipping on the seventh-day Sabbath clearly indicates the absence of controversy over this point.

Drs. C. Mervyn Maxwell, Kenneth A. Strand, and Samuele Bacchiocchi, of the Andrews University Theological Seminary in Berrien Springs, Michigan, have shared the benefit of their many years of study on the substitution of Sunday for Saturday.

Strand states, “Perhaps the most observable feature regarding Sabbath and Sunday in the second century (at least, until near the end of the century) is the general lack of information—or perhaps rather, the basic silence—about them. From only two localities, Alexandria and Rome, is there evidence. The earliest

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witness is the so-called Barnabas, who may have written from Alexandria about AD 130, and his remark is only a passing mention within a fairly long letter in which he endeavors allegorically to interpret Old Testament teaching. . . .

“The first clear witness to Christian Sunday observance was Justin Martyr, who wrote from Rome about AD 150. In his famous *Apology* he describes rather briefly to the Roman emperor and Roman senate the Christian Sunday services: ‘And on the day called Sunday, all who live in cities or in the country gather together to one place, and the memoirs of the apostles or the writings of the prophets are read. . . . In the same context he refers to administration of communion at the gathering, with the emblems being also taken by deacons to absent members’” (*Ministry*, January, 1977, p. 12).

Strand further informs us that not until the end of the second century do we have our first example of a church father, Clement of Alexandria, clearly using the term “Lord’s Day” for the weekly Sunday. “From the end of the second century (or early third century) onward the evidence for a weekly observance of Sunday throughout Christendom becomes more apparent and is more widespread. Two fifth-century historians, Socrates Scholasticus and Sozomenus, refer to weekly gatherings to celebrate communion on *both* Sabbath and Sunday generally throughout Christendom, except at Rome and Alexandria” (*ibid.*)

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where by this time Sunday keeping had become almost universal.

Strand concludes: “The historical data suggest the following pattern for the transition from Sabbath to Sunday: In the New Testament the Sabbath was the weekly day for Christian worship. During the second century Sunday began to supplant the Sabbath in such places as Rome and Alexandria, although the seventh day was still observed in the rest of the Christian world. In the third through fifth centuries Sunday observance spread much more widely, and considerable controversy arose as to how to keep the Sabbath and as to whether to keep the Sabbath at all” (*ibid.*, p. 15).

Not until the fourth century did both church and state enforce Sunday observance with significant legislation. Constantine in his edict of AD 321, the first civil Sunday law we have record of, stated, “All judges and city people and the craftsmen shall rest upon

the venerable day of the sun. Country people, however, may freely attend to the cultivation of the fields. . . In AD 325 at The Council of Nicaea, Pope Sylvester imposed the title “Lord’s Day” on Sunday. And at the Council of Laodicea about AD 364 the church prescribed Sunday worship and proscribed Saturday worship. Canon 29 specified that “if possible” no work should be done on Sunday, the Lord’s Day, but that Christians “shall not Judaize and be idle on the Sabbath but shall work on that day.”

Bacchiocchi discusses a change in interpretation

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among Roman Catholic scholars on how Sunday observance came about.

Traditionally the Catholic Church has claimed to have changed the day of worship. Now, however, some Catholic scholars argue that the change from Sabbath to Sunday observance took place in Jerusalem, the mother church of Christendom, with the apostles themselves instigating the change. Bacchiocchi sharply disagrees with this new interpretation, pointing out that Sunday observance could not have Originated in the primitive Christian community of Jerusalem.

“At the first Christian ecumenical council held in the year AD 49, 50 in the city of Jerusalem, James, the presiding officer, remarked that the Gentile-Christians were receiving instruction from Moses in every city, ‘for he is read every sabbath in the synagogues’ ([Acts 15:21](#), RSV). . . . Obviously the problem of a new day of worship had not come up; the total silence of the council on the topic indicates that it was not an issue.

...

“About ten years later Paul paid his last visit to Jerusalem. James and the elders, who appear to have been the governing body of the church there, again showed their deep loyalty to Jewish religious legal traditions. They informed Paul that the many thousands of converted Jews were ‘*all zealous for the law*’ ([Acts 21:20](#), RSV), and they also confronted him with a report that he was telling the Gentiles ‘not to circumcise their children or observe the customs’ (verse 21). . . . Because they lived in such a climate of profound

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attachment to Jewish religious observances, it is inconceivable that they should even think of abrogating such a longstanding and cherished custom as Sabbathkeeping in favor of a new day of worship” (*ibid.*, p. 16).

However, in AD 135 “Emperor Hadrian destroyed the city [Jerusalem] and expelled not only the Jews but also the Judeo-Christians. What survived of the city was repopulated by foreigners, and only Gentile-Christians, not Jewish-Christians, were allowed to enter. . . .

“These historical facts make it difficult for us to see how the Jerusalem church prior to AD 135 could have been the champion of liturgical innovations such as Sunday worship” (*ibid.*).

“The Church of Rome, unlike most Eastern churches, was composed of predominantly Gentile converts ([Romans 11:13](#)). . . .

“It was also in Rome that the Sun cults became dominant. Presumably they got official encouragement because they were associated with the cult of the emperors . . .

“We might add that the Bishop of Rome was the only one with enough prestige to influence the rest of Christianity to adopt such a radical new liturgical practice as a weekly Sunday rest day or a yearly Easter Sunday” (*ibid.*, p. 18).

In addition to Strand's and Bacchiocchi's development, Maxwell provides a unique and interesting suggestion

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as to why the change came about. He insists that those second- and third-century Christians who preferred Sunday to the Sabbath did so largely because they loved the Lord, "The Gospels show plainly that in Christ's day the Sabbath had been so encrusted with man-made regulations that it no longer reflected the beauty of God's original creation. Jesus Himself fearlessly defied these traditions. and it is little wonder that many early Christians felt there was a sharp contrast between Sabbath keeping as practiced by the Son of God and as it was kept by the Jews of their era. Viewed from this standpoint, those Christians who gave up the Sabbath (many did not give it up and others kept both days) did not abandon the Sabbath of the Ten Commandments but the Sabbath of contemporary legalism. Sunday, with its joyous resurrection, seemed a vastly superior memorial of their Saviour's love" (*ibid.*, p. 10)

Maxwell then mentions that Martin Luther's appeal for a return to "the Bible. and the Bible only" vigorously challenged Sunday keeping. "Some of these brave Christians who were so deeply grateful for Luther's new insights soon began to wonder if the good professor himself were following his convictions to their logical conclusions. Andreas Fischer and Oswald Glait, who asked whether Christians had any basis in *sola scriptura* for observing the first day of the week instead of the seventh, both ultimately died for their faith" (*ibid.*).

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Maxwell concludes that those who substituted Sunday-keeping for the early Christian practice of keeping the seventh-day Sabbath "were unwittingly misled by their teachers and their own hearts," which led them to look "appropriately into Christ's empty grave but not closely enough at His written Word" (*ibid.*, p. 11).

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Chapter 3

Christ's Rest of Redemption

Many Christians suppose that somehow Jesus' death and subsequent resurrection have done away with the obligation to keep the seventh-day Sabbath. However. the Sabbath commandment, instead of being part of the ceremonial ordinances, which pointed forward to Christ's sacrifice and so fell into obsolescence among Christians, was one of the ten great commandments given at Sinai and originated with God's blessing and sanctifying action on the very first seventh day of the week as recorded in [Genesis 2:1-3](#).

The yearly festival sabbaths of the Jews, which could fall on any day of the week, did have a typical meaning, but the seventh-day Sabbath was instituted before sin marred our world. The fourth commandment itself points back to the institution of the Sabbath as a memorial of Creation. Since the inception of sin, the Sabbath has taken on added significance as a memorial of redemption and a "sign" of sanctification ([Exodus 31:12-17](#); [Ezekiel 20:12, 20](#)). It symbolizes our complete allegiance to God. Obviously, then, as

long as it is essential for us to stand in this relationship to God, the seventh-day Sabbath will continue to function as the memorial of our belonging.

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Some earnest Christians who accept this fact without hesitation still feel confused as to which day is the seventh day. Two observations will help answer that question:

First, the Israelites have kept the Sabbath ever since God reinstated it at Mt. Sinai and are still keeping it today. For nearly four thousand years their weekly practice has testified that the Sabbath begins at sundown on Friday night and continues until sunset on Saturday night. That was the Sabbath Jesus kept (see [Luke 4:16](#)).

Second, on every Easter weekend Christians memorialize Christ's death in their Good Friday services and His resurrection by their Easter Sunday services, thus tacitly admitting that the day in between —Saturday— is the day on which Jesus rested in the tomb and on which His followers “rested the sabbath day according to the commandment” ([Luke 23:56](#)).

Dr. Lindsell speaks of Adventists as those “whose legalistic attachment to Saturday as the sabbath binds them in a way we are not bound” (*Christianity Today*, November 5, 1976, p. 42). There is a distinction between Saturday-keepers, who keep Saturday in an effort to save themselves by their own works, and Sabbathkeepers, whose observance of God's rest day revolves around resting in God's finished work of redemption in their lives. The latter think it important that Jesus completed His work of redemption by dying on the cross on the sixth day of the week, Friday.

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Just as He rested on the Sabbath in honor of the completion of His work of Creation, so He rested on the Sabbath to memorialize the completion of His work of redemption. Therefore when we enter into the Sabbath rest of redemption, we rest in the finished work of our Lord.

[Hebrews 3:1 to 4:13](#) develops a similar thesis. It demonstrates the superiority of Christ our High Priest over Moses and Joshua, for Jesus can do that which neither of them could. He was able to lead God's people into the true rest of God. Central to the Hebrew religion was the idea of the Sabbath rest, but the author of Hebrews makes the point that true Sabbath rest can be realized only in its inmost meaning through Jesus Christ.

In chapter 3, verses 1-6, Jesus as the Son of God is said to be the builder of God's house and is thus superior to Moses, who was merely a faithful servant in the house of God. Through trust and confidence in our Lord we become part of God's house. Verses 7-19 repeat God's continual invitation to hear His voice and enter His rest, but they plainly indicate that Israel in the wilderness hardened their hearts and that God had to swear, “They shall never enter my rest.”

Chapter 4 indicates that even those who entered the land of Canaan under Joshua still did not actually enter the rest God promised. And through David, as illustrated by Psalm 95, God had to appeal to them

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again not to harden their hearts but to enter His rest. He is still appealing to His people to enter the kind of rest that comes from full surrender of a life to the purpose of God. [Hebrews 3 and 4](#) clearly indicate that this kind of rest is the rest of redemption and

suggest the following means of entering:

[Chapter 3:1](#) —“Consider” Jesus.

[Chapter 3:7](#) —Listen to His voice.

[Chapter 4:2](#) —Exercise faith in Him.

[Chapter 4:10](#) —Cease from your own efforts to earn salvation.

[Chapter 4:16](#) —Draw near the throne of grace. The passage seems to develop a sequence that the Christian follows as he enters Christ’s rest.

The fact that God’s rest is already in existence is evidenced in the giving of the seventh-day Sabbath, as we see in [verses 3 and 4 of chapter 4](#). The Sabbath, then, becomes a symbol of all that is entailed in Christ’s rest. Running consistently through this section of Scripture is an implied promise that God’s people will eventually enter both the physical and spiritual rest of God in the fullest sense.

With this background in mind we can better understand [chapter 4, verse 9](#). It reads this way in the King James version. “There remaineth therefore a rest [“keeping of a Sabbath,” margin] to the people of God.” *The Amplified New Testament** translates this verse,

*From *The Amplified Bible and New Testament*. By permission of The Lockman Foundation.

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“So then, there is still awaiting a full and complete Sabbath rest reserved for the [true] people of God.”

The word for “rest” throughout these two chapters is the Greek word *katapausin*. But in [verse 9](#) the writer introduces a word not found anywhere else in the New Testament — *sabbatismos*. He may even have coined it, as it is apparently a Semitic-Greek compound. Even those who do not know Greek can see that this word, which we might refer to as “a Sabbatism,” applies to the Sabbath rest.

[Verse 10](#) adds, “He that is entered into his rest, he also hath ceased from his own works, as God did from his.” Those who enter Christ’s rest of redemption cease trying to earn their salvation but accept what Christ has already accomplished for them.

The Sabbath day’s rest, therefore, remains not merely as a symbol of the memorial that God gave to man in the Garden of Eden, but specifically as a symbol of our entrance through Christ into the rest of redemption. The Sabbath thus becomes the continuing symbol of creation, redemption, and sanctification for God’s people today. In reality, then, true Sabbath-keeping becomes the sign or seal of salvation by faith alone through Jesus Christ.

A Sabbath rest remains, but to the people of God it is founded in loving service —the rest of faith and grace. Here we come full circle back to Dr. Lindsell’s original suggestions. Seventh-day Adventists recognize

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the benefits of observing the seventh-day Sabbath and fully concur with the editor of *Christianity Today* that such a rest benefits all, both spiritually and physically; yet Seventh-day Adventists do not want to encourage Saturday legislation any more than they want to encourage Sunday blue laws.

Sabbath observance can never be a matter of human or legal compulsion. It does not mean a thing just to keep Saturday. We truly observe the Sabbath only when we feel

compelled to do so by the overmastering love of Christ working in our lives and hearts. No external force can lead the Christian to rest in Jesus. The genuine Sabbath rest means a cessation from our own works and a trusting, confiding acceptance of all that He has done and is doing for us as we join Him weekly in a foretaste of basking in His presence in the earth restored.

Today —while it still is today— the writer of Hebrews invites us to enter the Sabbath rest of Christ —not just in symbol but in actual experience, finding in Him complete liberation from sin and the assurance of eternal life. In this way His chosen day — Saturday— becomes a seal of His acceptance of us as His chosen people, When we keep holy the seventh-day Sabbath, we signify our gratitude for salvation by grace alone.

When Jesus was here, He illustrated by seven Sabbath miracles of healing that the Sabbath is the day when souls “whom Satan has bound” are to be “loosed” or “freed” and to receive His rest of

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forgiveness, healing, and full restoration as God’s sons and daughters. *Today* He lovingly invites us, “Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden” —all who have been attempting to work out your own righteousness. “Come unto me, . . . and I will give you rest” ([Matthew 11:28](#)).



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