

VOLUME II

CHAPTER EIGHT

Is There A Sabbath Ordinance In The Genesis Record?

THE BOOKS OF MOSES AS HISTORY

Adventism is now faced with the Theory of Evolution making inroads into its institutions of higher learning. In 2010 this interesting and paradoxical development reared its ugly head at the La Sierra Campus of Loma Linda University in Southern California. Documentation of this controversy within Adventism's educational system is found in the article, "Evolution Controversy Stirs U.S. Adventist Campus," published in 2010 by the Adventist News Network, which is the official news agency of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. We clarify that the official position of the SDA Church is still that God created the Earth in six days. You can access this article at the following website:

<https://news.adventist.org/en/all-news/news/go/2010-03-31/evolution-controversy-stirs-us-adventist-campus/>

That a few Adventist teaching scientists could take the view that the Theory of Evolution is worth considering comes at a time when the scientific understanding of the insurmountable problems posed by the Synthetic Theory has got Evolutionary scientists backed into a corner and scrambling to find answers to impossible questions. There are many examples of why this is true. As secular scientists study our planet, they see, perhaps for the first time, that many of the features on Planet Earth can only be explained by massive global catastrophes, including floods of global proportions and intense volcanic activity.

It is easy to understand how the Theory of Evolution threatens the very foundation of the Sabbatarian belief model. Almost all such models are dependent on the existence of a Sabbath ordinance in the story of Creation. If the Patriarchs, including Adam, Eve, Noah, and Abraham, did not have a Sabbath to keep, and they will be saved, what foundation is left for a teaching that claims that the Sabbath ordinance was given to all mankind? And if the Books of Moses are not historical, there was no Sabbath given to Israel. Therefore, there would be no basis for a discussion for or against Christian Sabbath-keeping.

Genesis is often viewed by Christians as some kind of a myth because "Science" has supposedly proved that the Earth is millions and billions of years old and took long ages to produce human life. This theory goes along with the idea that at some point, when human beings had evolved and become smart enough to understand right and wrong, God came down and talked to Adam and Eve, whose ancestors had been more primitive and unable to house something like a soul. This view causes impossibly difficult theological problems, so we will take some time to consider whether the Genesis Creation story is myth or history and whether or not the Books of Moses are mythical or historical. First we will look at the scientific questions:

THE SCIENTIFIC QUESTIONS OF GENESIS

There are three principles which make large-scale, macroevolution literally impossible:

One - The probability of the simplest molecule necessary for life coming together by chance represents a probability of less than the numerical ratio represented by one molecule against all the known molecules in the Universe. Henry M. Morris of the Institute for Creation Research explains this principle:

One of the strongest direct evidences for special creation is the existence of innumerable highly complex systems in the universe, systems composed of components occurring in a pattern of "order" rather than disorder. Creationists maintain that highly ordered systems could not arise by chance, since random processes generate disorder rather than order, simplicity rather than complexity and confusion instead of "information."

For example, consider a series of ten flashcards, numbered from one to ten. If these are thoroughly and randomly mixed, and then laid out successively in a linear array along the table, it would be extremely unlikely that the numbers would fall out in order from one to ten. Actually, there are 3,628,800 different ways in which these numbers could be arranged, so that the "probability" of this particular ordered arrangement is only one in 3,628,800. (This number is "ten factorial," written as $10!$, and can be calculated simply by multiplying together all the numbers from one to ten.)

It is obvious that the probability of such a numerically ordered arrangement decreases rapidly as the number of components increases. For any linear system of 100 components in specified order, the probability is one in $100!$, or one chance in 10158 (a number represented by "one followed by 158 zeroes").

A system requiring such a high degree of order could never happen by chance. This follows from the fact that probability theory only applies to systems with a finite possibility of occurring at least once in the universe, and it would be inconceivable that 10158 different trials could ever be made in our entire space-time universe.

Astro-physicists estimate that there are no more than 10^{80} infinitesimal "particles" in the universe, and that the age of the universe in its present form is no greater than 10^{18} seconds (30 billion years). Assuming each particle can participate in a thousand billion (10^{12}) different events every second (this is impossibly high, of course), then the greatest number of events that could ever happen (or trials that could ever be made) in all the universe throughout its entire history is only $10^{80} \times 10^{18} \times 10^{12}$, or 10^{110} (most authorities would make this figure much lower, about 10^{50}). Any event with a probability of less than one chance in 10^{110} , therefore, cannot occur. Its probability becomes zero, at least in our known universe.

Thus, the above-suggested ordered arrangement of 100 components has a zero probability. It could never happen by chance. Since every single living cell is infinitely more complex and ordered than this, it is impossible that even the simplest form of life could ever have originated by chance. Even the simplest replicating protein molecule that could be imagined has been shown by Golay¹ to have a probability of one in 10^{450} . Salisbury² calculates the probability of a typical DNA chain to be one in 10^{600} .

<https://www.icr.org/article/probability-order-versus-evolution/>

TWO - The only way Evolution could possibly happen is through mutation, but within the last 20 or so years Science has known that mutations virtually never result in the synthesis of any truly new information. In fact, mutations are often harmful or fatal and almost always undesirable. This means that the evolutionary development of increasingly complex body and systems design within living organisms is literally impossible. One Creation scientist, Dr. Gary Parker of Answers in Genesis, explains:

Mutations are NOT genetic “script writers”; they are merely “typographic errors” in a genetic script that has already been written. Typically, a mutation changes only one letter in a genetic sentence averaging 1,500 letters long.

To make evolution happen—or even to make evolution a theory fit for scientific discussion—evolutionists desperately need some kind of “genetic script writer” to increase the quantity and quality of genetic INFORMATION. Mutations have no ability to compose genetic sentences, no ability to produce genetic information, and, hence, no ability to make evolution happen at all.

That simple, absolutely foundational fact completely stumped Richard Dawkins, the world’s leading spokesman for evolution as of this writing. In a video production featuring several evolutionist and creationist leaders and skeptics,⁴ Dawkins argued eloquently that millions of years of mutation and natural selection would serve as a “blind watchmaker,”⁵ producing all appearance of design among living things without any help from some supernatural Designer. Then in a quiet, non-threatening voice, not knowing what the answer would be, the narrator asked Dawkins to give an example of a mutation that adds information.

The usually effusive Dawkins gestured, opened his mouth, but stopped before he spoke. With his eyes shifting back and forth as if searching for some answer, he started to speak several times, but always checked himself. Finally, after a long embarrassing silence, the program resumed with Dawkins speaking on a different subject—leaving unanswered the ultimate question, the origin of genetic information.

Yet, molecules-to-man evolution is all about phenomenal expansion of genetic information. It would take thousands of information-adding mutations to change “simple cells” into invertebrates, vertebrates, and mankind. If there were any scientific merit at all to mutation-selection as a mechanism for evolution, Dawkins’ reply should have been enthusiastic and overwhelming, “My three favorite examples of mutations adding information are. . . . Excellent examples among plants are . . . among insects are . . . among bacteria are” His answer, instead, was silence, and with no mechanism to add genetic information, the “evolutionary tree” can’t grow.

<https://answersingenesis.org/genetics/mutations/mutations-yes-evolution-no/>

THREE - Information Only Comes from an Intelligent Source. DNA and RNA are like the paper upon which the text of a book is printed. They cannot invent information any more than the paper of a book can generate the information printed on it. Dr. Parker continues:

The problem with evolution is not some shortcoming in Dawkins, however. The problem is with the fundamental nature of information itself. The information in a book, for example, cannot be reduced to, nor derived from, the properties of the ink and paper used to write it. Similarly, the information in the genetic code cannot be reduced to, nor derived from, the properties of matter nor the mistakes of mutations; its message and meaning originated instead in the mind of its Maker.

As cogently presented by two of the world's leading information theorists,⁶ information comes only from pre-existing information.⁷ Information systems have the "exherent," created kind of design, which can be logically inferred from our scientific observations as explained earlier (Figure 1). Although mutations may corrupt it and selection may sort variations into different environments, it was not a "blind watchmaker" that composed the genetic script for each kind of organism, but a Creator with a plan and purpose and eyes wide open. Dr. Gary Parker, Answers in Genesis, paper, Mutations Yes! Evolution No!

<https://answersingenesis.org/genetics/mutations/mutations-yes-evolution-no/>

In view of the fact that Evolution is impossible, there had to be a literal Creation at some point in the past, whether it was 100,000 years ago, a million years ago, or 6,000 years ago. Therefore, if there was a literal Creation, there is a possibility of a Creation Sabbath ordinance that applies to everyone born into this world.

IS THE HISTORICAL RECORD OF THE BOOKS OF MOSES FACTUAL OR MYTHICAL?

Researcher Tim Osterholm, whose paper, "The Table of Nations and the Origin of Races," is posted on an Islamic scholarly website. His work is comprehensive, and it makes a powerful case for the Table of Nations in the Book of Genesis qualifying as an astonishingly accurate historical record. He says:

We can also factually claim that wherever its statements can be sufficiently tested, Genesis 10 of the Bible has been found completely accurate; resulting partly from linguistic studies, partly from archaeology, and, more recently still, from the findings of physical anthropologists, who are, to this day, recovering important clues to lines of migration in ancient historic times. As implied in verse 32 of Genesis 10, this Table includes everybody; meaning that so-called fossil man, primitive peoples (ancient and modern) and modern man are all derived from Noah's three sons, Shem, Ham, and Japheth. Acts 17:26 states, "From one man (or one blood) He made every nation of men, that they should inhabit the whole earth; and He determined the times set for them and the exact places where they should live," a corroboration of Genesis 10. In light of this, findings from anthropology, archaeology, ethnography, ethnohistory, genetics, geology, and sociology substantiate an alternate interpretation of the history of humanity. As archaeologist William Albright noted, "it [the Bible] remains an astonishingly accurate document...and shows such remarkably 'modern' understanding of the ethnic and linguistic situation in the modern world, in spite of all its complexity, that scholars never fail to be impressed with its knowledge of the subject." We can further infer from political histories—kingdoms, empires, and their rulers; also from artists, poets, philosophers, architects

and mathematicians who enriched their individual cultures. Additionally, references from historical records, ancient literature, mythology, burial customs and other sources all provide strong evidences. Tim Osterholm, paper, “The Table of Nations and the Origin of Races,” posted at:

https://docs.google.com/document/d/13x1ZEGcAbJULK8u9JTVo2GFAkL11w8O-N_I5a-AIHF4/edit

Evidence for the Exodus as described by Moses exists, but it is not as strong. Secular historians are always finding ways to discredit the story because it has strong religious implications that suggest that absolute values exist. One evidence for the truth of the story hits at the foundation of the Sabbatarian belief model. We have located what appears to be a fair and balanced assessment of the pros and cons of the evidence for the Exodus summarized by biblical researcher, Andrew Wilson in his paper, “The Historicity of the Exodus.” His primary source is Kenneth Kitchen, a noted Egyptologist:

The Historicity of the Exodus

By Andrew Wilson | Monday 4 March 2013

Recently I came across a superb essay by Kenneth Kitchen, the world-renowned Egyptologist, on the historical reliability of the Exodus story. Given that the challenges to the accuracy of Scripture these days are, as often as not, coming to the Exodus and Conquest stories and not just the Genesis stories, I thought it would be worth summarizing his conclusion here. In brief, Kitchen argues that the Exodus and Sinai stories have a definite historical basis, whether or not one accepts Scripture as divine revelation. He divides his argument for this position into three sections: negative evidence, neutral evidence and positive evidence.

Negatives (that is, reasons to suspect the Exodus did not happen as described):

1. No Egyptian records mention specifically Israelites working in the East Delta (or anywhere else), or a Moses who spoke for such a group, or an exodus by a group of this name (Israel).
2. Nowhere in Sinai has a body of Late Bronze Age people passing through who left explicit traces, still less traces that are labeled as Israelite.
3. The same is true for Qadesh-Barnea, and so on.

Neutrals (factors that need to be considered when assessing the evidence we have available, including reasons why the evidence is so sparse):

1. The Egyptians, quite obviously, would not have kept a record of such a humiliation in any literary or archaeological records.

It is no use asking the pharaohs to blazon their defeat and loss of a top chariot squadron high on temple walls for all to see. Egyptian gods gave only victories to kings – and defeats indicated divine disapproval, not applause!

2. We would not expect to find any administrative records of the Hebrew exodus, since 99% of

all New Kingdom papyri have been irrevocably lost.

3. The few surviving documents we have from the period are clustered in the dry sands of Saqqara and Upper Egypt, a long way from the brickfields of Pi-Ramesse, not the muddy Nile Delta, for obvious reasons.

4. No buildings at Pi-Ramesse – temples, palaces, or anything – are above ground level. Mud and reed slave dwellings, consequently, would not be expected to remain.

5. We should not expect Egyptian artifacts in the Sinai desert, either.

A group of people traveling through Sinai's landscapes would not be burdened with ton loads of clumsy pottery specially to delight archaeologists when they themselves expected to go from Sinai within a year to Canaan.

Positives (factors that support the historicity of the biblical Exodus story):

1. Exoduses happened in the second millennium BC, and the Israelite one is widely attested and strongly emphasized in the Hebrew Bible.

2. Israel, Edom and Moab are all mentioned in Egyptian sources shortly before 1200. We know that they existed, and were known to Egypt, at that time.

3. Semites and others are known to have been present in the cosmopolitan Ramesside Nineteenth Dynasty, from the court of the Pharaoh down to slaves.

4. The biblical narratives contain all sorts of realistic details that could not have been invented in Jerusalem or Babylon centuries later: salt-tolerant reeds, water from rock, habits of quails, kewers, and so on.

5. The instruction not to go north to Canaan fits perfectly with Egyptian presence in the area in the thirteenth century BC.

6. "The tabernacle is an ancient Semitic concept, here with Egyptian technology involved, all from pre-1000, even centuries earlier."

7. The content and shape of the Sinai covenant fit the late second millennium BC, as a comparison with firsthand sources shows, rather than covenants many centuries later.

8. Slaves who made bricks would not have shaped a covenant or treaty like the Sinai one; the story demands an educated, court-level diplomat to have put the whole thing together. Thus "we would be obliged to invent a Moses if one were not already available."

Kitchen happily admits that none of this proves that the Exodus actually occurred as described in the biblical texts; historical reconstruction, particularly in very ancient eras, simply does not work like that. But, he concludes,

their correspondence not just with attested realities (not Sargon-style fantasy) but with known

usage of the late second millennium BC and earlier does favour acceptance of their having had a definite historical basis.

Andrew Wilson, his paper, "The Historicity of the Exodus," posted at:

https://docs.google.com/document/d/13x1ZEGcAbJULK8u9JTVo2GFAKL11w8O-N_I5a-AIHF4/edit

It is Kenneth Kitchen's evidence #7 that poses a serious barrier to the Sabbatarian belief model. In this model, the Sabbath commandment represents no more and no less than an eternal moral law of God that cannot be changed. Elsewhere in the 12th Edition we document how the Ten Commandments are modeled after other treaty-covenants drafted by the rulers of Israel's neighbors. At the time of the Exodus these covenants included a ceremonial requirement that was, by established convention, placed exactly in the middle of the actual requirements of the covenant. In fact in these neighboring kingdoms, this middle ceremonial commandment always had the exact same number of characters before it and those that came after it. Of course this was true only in the original language in which the covenant-treaty was written.

In the Ancient Hebrew language in which the Books of Moses were written, the fourth commandment, the Sabbath commandment, is EXACTLY in the middle of the Ten Commandments verified by character count. This center-positioned ceremony was to be performed by the subjects of the monarch to help them remember who their king was and what his actual requirements were.

Note that Kitchen adds that the fact that the Ten Commandments were modeled after the covenants of Israel's neighbors is especially compelling because even treaties made a few hundred years before and a few hundred years after the Exodus Era incorporated this composition convention.

It appears that the Sabbath commandment was not a moral commandment and that it was intended as a ceremony to remind the Israelites that God was their King and that He had rescued them from Egyptian slavery. In this case, the Sabbath commandment would not apply to any other nation on Earth, and this is a serious problem to the traditional Sabbatarian belief model.

Finally, there is abundant evidence for the Great Flood as told in the Book of Genesis. We find features of our planet which cannot be credibly explained by anything other than massive, global flooding, earthquakes, and volcanism as postulated by the theories of Flood geology.

THE MATHEMATICAL IMPOSSIBILITY OF A SABBATH IN GENESIS

Perhaps the easiest way to understand the impossibilities of a Sabbath in Genesis is through mathematics rather than linguistics. This chapter's emphasis is primarily on linguistics, and it is a shorter version of our more complete chapter on the Hebrew linguistics of the Sabbath in Genesis Question in Volume II of the 12th Edition of the *Lying for God* series. The mathematics of the Exodus Sabbath proves that the fact that the Exodus Sabbath was lunar in design is not negotiable. A fixed week system of holy days would have wreaked havoc in that the various classifications of these sacred days would have "landed" on top of each other. The weekly Sabbaths would have "landed" on top of the New Moon days which were nearly as sacred as the weekly Sabbath. The weekly Sabbath would have sometimes landed on the Day of the

Passover, which always occurred on the 14th day of the month. Additionally, the Sabbath would sometimes “fall” on the 10th day of the Passover month— the day that the Israelites were required to purchase their Passover lambs— thus causing the people to break the weekly Sabbath. A fixed-week weekly Sabbath is incompatible with the Jewish system of holy days as outlined in the Law of Moses, and particularly in Leviticus 23.

If you are familiar with traditional Sabbatarianism— the belief that the weekly Sabbath originated at Creation and was based on forever fixed, adjacent weeks of seven days with its starting point being the 7th day of Creation— you can probably see the problem before we even explain it. It is 100% certain that God did not adopt a fixed-week “Creation Sabbath” for Israel because, as we have pointed out, it would have caused holy day pandemonium for the Jews. Please note that there is no possible way around this logistical, mathematical barrier to the idea of fixed-week Sabbaths.

There are no instructions to Israel in the books of Moses regarding what to do when such holy day conflicts would arise, which the Jews later called POSTPONEMENTS when they finally did fix the weeks of their world-wide Jewish calendar in 35THE E9 AD. Hillel II developed a whole set of these postponements to resolve these holy day conflicts when he disassociated the weeks of the Jewish calendar from the four main phases of the Moon.

Therefore, as we look at the Hebrew linguistics of Genesis 2, Exodus 16, and Exodus 20, we would be shocked if our findings were to validate the existence of a fixed-week weekly Sabbath with a 7th day that had no correlation to the 7th day of each of the four phases of the Moon. Furthermore, there is no record in the Books of Moses that God gave instructions to Israel to abandon an “ancient” fixed-week Sabbath for the “NEW” variable week, lunar calendar of the Exodus.

THE ESSENTIAL POSITION OF JUDAISM - NO SABBATH IN GENESIS

The official position of Orthodox Judaism is that there was no Sabbath ordinance until the Giving of the Manna. This position has existed from the beginning of Judaism, and it was formulated at a time when the Hebrews both read and spoke the same language in which the Hebrew Scriptures were “originally” recorded. We find on the *Mishnah* page of the Jewish Virtual Library that the etiology of the Sabbath ordinance is present in Genesis 2 but that the ordinance itself was not introduced until the Giving of the Manna:

“The etiology of Shabbat is given in the first two chapters of the Book of Bereishit (Genesis), although the name of the day does not actually appear there: God worked six days at creating the world on the seventh he ceased working (shavat mi-kol mela'khto), blessed the day, and declared it holy.

“The special status of this seventh day - and its name - were disclosed to the Israelite people in the episode of the manna. God supplied each day's need of manna for five days; on the sixth, a double portion was provided to last through the seventh day, on which no manna appeared. Correspondingly, the Israelites were commanded not to go out at all but to remain at home on the seventh day. Thus they learned that the seventh day was "a Shabbat of the Lord," which they must honor by desisting from their daily food-gathering labor.

“According to the Book of Exodus, work is to cease on the seventh day in order to give slaves and draft animals rest, a statute that must be observed even during the critical plowing and harvest seasons. The Book of Deuteronomy's version embodies this humanitarian motive in its divergent rationale of the Shabbat rest - Israel is to keep the Shabbat so that its slaves might rest, and because God so commanded. God's instructions for building the Tabernacle begins with an admonition to keep the Shabbat, indicating its precedence even over the duty of building the Sanctuary. The Shabbat is then called a sign of both God's consecration of Israel and of His six-day creation.”²

2 See <https://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/what-is-shabbat-jewish-sabbath>

An etiology is not the thing itself, but rather a rationale for it. *Wikipedia* defines “etiology” as follows:

“Etiology is the study of causation, or origination. The word is derived from the Greek αἰτιολογία, aitiología, "giving a reason for" (αἰτία, aitia, "cause"; and -λογία, -logía). More completely, etiology is the study of the causes, origins, or reasons behind the way that things are, or the way they function, or it can refer to the causes themselves. The word is commonly used in medicine, (where it is a branch of medicine studying causes of disease) and in philosophy, but also in physics, psychology, government, geography, spatial analysis, theology, and biology, in reference to the causes or origins of various phenomena.

See <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Etiology>

The seven days of Creation with its pattern of six days of work and one day of rest provided God with a model that He could use to explain how the new Sabbath ordinance would work. As we document elsewhere, the Hebrew slaves in Egypt were accustomed to both a ten-day civil week and a seven-day, lunar-appointed week for Egyptian pagan religious activities. By associating His new Sabbath ordinance with the seven days of Creation, God was able to impart an understanding of the structure of the new ordinance and provide a mnemonic device to help them remember it.

It is also the position of Orthodox Judaism that the Oral Law is secondarily inspired in relation to the Written Law. The Oral Law was partially redacted in the form of the Mishnah around 200 CE and fully redacted by Maimonides in 1200-1300 CE. Maimonides listed all the stewards of the Oral Law in an unbroken chain from Moses to the stewards who were living at the time he completed the Mishneh Torah. His work also included some ancient rabbinical records of legal precedence from Halakhic sources that dated back as far as 500 BCE or earlier. The Oral Law supports the Written Law's position that there was no Sabbath ordinance until the Giving of the Manna.

The popular Sabbatarian teaching that the Sabbath ordinance originated at Creation and, therefore, applies to everyone who is born into Planet Earth is, therefore, an insult to all Jews because it suggests that the Jews cannot understand their own language. This errant teaching also unwittingly suggests that Sabbatarian Christians can understand the books of Moses after

they have been translated into English better than the Jews understood them in ancient times by reading them in the same language they spoke—Biblical Hebrew.

The principle that God gave the Sabbath to the Nation of Israel as an exclusive, distinguishing sign is the “Occam’s Razor” that defines whether Christians should or should not observe it. Much theological grief could be spared if people would pay attention to whom and under what circumstances God spoke the Sabbath commandment.

God told Noah to build an Ark. Christians do not build arks because God told Noah to build one. Neither should they observe the Sabbath just because God told the Nation of Israel to keep it. Jesus told Judas to go out and do what he was going to do (John 13:26-28). Judas went out, betrayed Jesus, and hanged himself (Matt. 27:3-5). Jesus gave these instructions to only one person in the world, and not to everyone.

Similarly, God gave the Sabbath ordinance to one nation—Israel—as a sign of the unique and exclusive relationship between them. This relationship was terminated when the leaders of Israel crucified Christ, just like a marriage contract ends upon the death of one or both parties. The concept of “Israel” no longer exists to be transferred to Christians. The Law of Moses represented a road map of symbolic pathways that pointed forward to the death of Christ as the final propitiation for the sins of the people—a transaction that had been represented by the animal sacrifices on the weekly Sabbath, the monthly New Moon festivals, and the annual sabbaths. There was no “Israel” concept left over to be transferred onto the back of Christians. But let us say, hypothetically, that none of this is true and that there was a concept of Israel to transfer over to Christians. In this case all the rules and regulations of the Law of Moses would apply, including the Sabbath law and all the Sabbath laws that regulate how it is to be kept. Examples of this would be no lighting of fires (Ex. 35:3) and the death penalty for deliberately breaking the Sabbath (Ex. 31:14-15; Num. 15:32-36).

The civil and religious laws of the Nation of Israel as represented by the content of both its written and orally transmitted laws specifically stated that the Sabbath did not originate until the Exodus and that it was off-limits to Gentiles. The Sabbath was to God and Israel like a wedding band to a married man and woman.

So sacred was this exclusive relationship between God and Israel that from the earliest times, the court system of Israel considered its Gentile citizens blasphemers if they violated this clear prohibition. The only way these Gentile citizens could keep the Sabbath like the Jews was to become proselytes to Judaism—something that required compliance with the Ordinance of Circumcision. Evidence that this principle is a powerful concept in Judaism is that God specifically mentioned in Isaiah 56 that eunuchs could become Jewish proselytes if they desired to do so.

An objection to the principle that the Nation of Israel had separate laws for its Jewish and Gentile citizens comes from at least two texts from the Pentateuch:

“The Lord said to Moses and Aaron, “These are the regulations for the Passover meal:
“No foreigner may eat it. Any slave you have bought may eat it after you have circumcised him, but a temporary resident or a hired worker may not eat it.

"It must be eaten inside the house; take none of the meat outside the house. Do not break any of the bones. The whole community of Israel must celebrate it.

"A foreigner residing among you who wants to celebrate the Lord's Passover must have all the males in his household circumcised; then he may take part like one born in the land. No uncircumcised male may eat it. The same law applies both to the native-born and to the foreigner residing among you."

Exodus 12:43–49 (NIV)

"When you prepare a young bull as a burnt offering or sacrifice, for a special vow or a fellowship offering to the Lord, bring with the bull a grain offering of three-tenths of an ephah of the finest flour mixed with half a hin of olive oil, and also bring half a hin of wine as a drink offering. This will be a food offering, an aroma pleasing to the Lord. Each bull or ram, each lamb or young goat, is to be prepared in this manner. Do this for each one, for as many as you prepare.

*"Everyone who is native-born must do these things in this way when they present a food offering as an aroma pleasing to the Lord. For the generations to come, whenever a foreigner or anyone else living among you presents a food offering as an aroma pleasing to the Lord, they must do exactly as you do. The community is to have the same rules for you and for the foreigner residing among you; this is a lasting ordinance for the generations to come. You and the foreigner shall be the same before the Lord: The same laws and regulations will apply both to you and to the foreigner residing among you."*⁵

5 Numbers 15:8–16 (NIV)

Let us hasten to say that contextually, both of these texts are not suggesting that every Gentile was under Israel's Law or the Sabbath. The text in Exodus 12 is talking about the rules and regulations for the Passover Feast. "No uncircumcised person shall eat it" (vs. 48) whether he is a Jew or Gentile. Foreigners, sojourners, and hired servants were forbidden from eating it (vss. 43, 45). Circumcised servants of Jews could have eaten it (vs. 44) and anyone else who wanted to eat the Passover meal had to be circumcised. It is this same law that applied to both Jews and Gentiles who dwelt among the Israelites, and this concept is more clearly understood when the full significance of circumcision is grasped. A foreigner who became circumcised became a proselyte to Judaism.

The Passover instructions are part of the Law of Moses. It seems strange that Sabbatarian Christians have a difficult time accepting the fact that compliance with the Ordinance of Circumcision would not be a requirement for accessing the Sabbath Ordinance. The Ordinance of Circumcision was given to the Children of Israel long before the Sabbath. Its presentation to Abraham as a sign to separate him and his descendants from the other societies in the world took place a very long time before the Sabbath Ordinance was given to Israel during the time of the Exodus. Further evidence that it came first is the fact that Islam does not recognize the Sabbath because they point out that Abraham, to whom they ultimately trace their origin and lineage, was not given the Sabbath ordinance.

Sabbatarians focus, wrongly so, on the Mosaic Covenant, failing to note that the Noachian Covenant and the Abrahamic covenants had specific provisions for the age in which they were given and that neither covenant provided for a Sabbath ordinance.

In turn the giving of the Passover Ordinance came significantly prior to the giving of the Sabbath Ordinance, and the giving of the Ordinance of Circumcision came to Abraham and his descendants, the Children of Israel, long before the Passover. One does not become an Israelite without the head of the household submitting to the Ordinance of Circumcision.

The key event of the Passover is the sacrificing of the Passover lamb. This lamb had to be male and a year old. A lamb was preferred, but in the case of the Passover sacrifice, the offering could be taken from the goats as well. Each family sacrificed a lamb (or a goat) to commemorate the occasion when the destroying angel, sent by God to punish the sins of Pharaoh and the Egyptians, “passed over” the homes of the Israelites that had the blood of the slain Passover lambs brushed onto the doorposts and lintel of their dwellings. The Israelites were sinful also, as people are, but the blood of the Passover lamb covered their sins. Similarly, the Sabbath was a shadowy symbol that pointed forward to the death of Christ on the Cross for the sins of each human being. On every weekly Sabbath, two, and later six, young male spotless lambs were required to be sacrificed by the Law in addition to the normal animal and grain sacrifices offered every day. See Numbers 28 and Ezekiel 46. The institution of the Passover and the institution of the Sabbath, therefore, played identical roles in pointing the worshiper to the soon-coming Messiah and His death, as the Spotless Lamb of God to do away with-- not merely cover up-- their sins.

It is a natural flow of parallel symbolic pathways that work to distinguish the Children of Israel from everyone else in the world. The sign of the Abrahamic Covenant was Circumcision. The Passover set the Children of Israel apart from everyone else in the world, signifying that God's people were circumcised. The Mosaic Covenant distinguished the Children of Israel from everyone else in the world with Circumcision, the Passover, and the Sabbath.

Foreigners living “within your gates” were not to work on the Sabbath in the context of working for a Hebrew. This provision could also be interpreted to mean that no foreigner was to work on the Sabbath if he resided within the gates of an Israelite citizen or an Israelite town.

Similarly, Numbers 15:8–16 is by no means suggesting that Gentiles were under obligation to keep the Sabbath. The context of Numbers 15:16 starts from vs.1 and ends with vs. 21, and again, it is talking about the laws of grain and drink offerings that Jews had to offer to God. If a Gentile dwelling in Israelite towns wanted to make offerings to God, then he had to offer the same things and follow the same custom of the Jews in that regard (vss. 14–16). That is what Num. 15:16 is saying.

When Israel finally arrived at the Promised Land, the Israelites were instructed to wipe out its inhabitants. Thanks to modern archaeological work, we now know that the Caananites were known in the contemporary Middle East for their moral depravity, especially when it came to the sexual abuse of children and child sacrifice. The Israelites failed to follow God's instructions in this regard, and as a result the new Nation of Israel was plagued with a significant population of Heathen inhabitants whose baleful influence was always present to draw the Israelites away from the worship of the True God. If the pagan citizens of Israel chose to live close to or within a community of Israelites, they were subjected to most of the same Sabbath observance laws. It

would seem that this was a policy designed to protect the ability of the Hebrews to keep the Sabbath without Pagan distractions.

Additionally, this law was intended to prevent Hebrew citizens from using the Gentiles to do work for them on the Sabbath that they themselves were not allowed to perform (Ex. 20:10).

It is no mystery, then, why Sabbatarians insist that this purely Jewish ordinance was imposed on Adam and Eve at Creation. If they can convince everyone that the Sabbath started at the beginning of the world, then they can say that the jurisdiction of the Sabbath law applies to everyone in the world, including Christians. If the Sabbath did not begin in the Garden of Eden, then the great patriarchs of old managed to get “saved” without keeping it.

Later we will set forth the civil and religious laws of Israel that are at least as old as the period of the Judges. For the moment, we will examine the Torah itself to see who God was speaking to and under what circumstances He spoke the Sabbath law. Keep in mind as you study these scriptures that the Gentiles were held accountable in Israel only to the Noachian Laws. These loosely codified basic moralistic laws were given to mankind around the time following the Great Flood to govern human behavior. These moralistic principles were also found in the Torah. Only within the boundaries of the Nation of Israel were the Gentiles held to most of the additional Torah laws that governed sexual behavior.

“In the seventh year, in the fifth month on the tenth day, some of the elders of Israel came to inquire of the Lord, and they sat down in front of me.

“Then the word of the Lord came to me: 3 ‘Son of man, speak to the elders of Israel and say to them, “This is what the Sovereign Lord says: Have you come to inquire of me? As surely as I live, I will not let you inquire of me, declares the Sovereign Lord.”

“Will you judge them? Will you judge them, son of man? Then confront them with the detestable practices of their ancestors and say to them: ‘This is what the Sovereign Lord says: On the day I chose Israel, I swore with uplifted hand to the descendants of Jacob and revealed myself to them in Egypt. With uplifted hand I said to them, “I am the Lord your God.” On that day I swore to them that I would bring them out of Egypt into a land I had searched out for them, a land flowing with milk and honey, the most beautiful of all lands. And I said to them, “Each of you, get rid of the vile images you have set your eyes on, and do not defile yourselves with the idols of Egypt. I am the Lord your God.

“But they rebelled against me and would not listen to me; they did not get rid of the vile images they had set their eyes on, nor did they forsake the idols of Egypt. So I said I would pour out my wrath on them and spend my anger against them in Egypt. But for the sake of my name, I brought them out of Egypt. I did it to keep my name from being profaned in the eyes of the nations among whom they lived and in whose sight I had revealed myself to the Israelites. Therefore I led them out of Egypt and brought them into the wilderness. I gave them my decrees and made known to them my laws, by which the person who obeys them will live. Also I gave them my Sabbaths as a sign between us, so they would know that I the Lord made them holy.

“Yet the people of Israel rebelled against me in the wilderness. They did not follow my decrees but rejected my laws—by which the person who obeys them will live—and they utterly desecrated my Sabbaths. So I said I would pour out my wrath on them and destroy them in the wilderness. But for the sake of my name I did what would keep it from being profaned in the eyes of the nations in whose sight I had brought them out. Also with uplifted hand I swore to them in the wilderness that I would not bring them into the land I had given them—a land flowing with milk and honey, the most beautiful of all lands—because they rejected my laws and did not follow my decrees and desecrated my Sabbaths. For their hearts were devoted to their idols. Yet I looked on them with pity and did not destroy them or put an end to them in the wilderness. I said to their children in the wilderness, “Do not follow the statutes of your parents or keep their laws or defile yourselves with their idols. I am the Lord your God; follow my decrees and be careful to keep my laws. Keep my Sabbaths holy, that they may be a sign between us. Then you will know that I am the Lord your God.”⁶

6 Ezekiel 20:1–20 (NIV)

“The ISRAELITES are to observe the Sabbath, celebrating it for the generations to come as a lasting covenant. It will be a sign between me and the Israelites forever, for in six days the Lord made the heavens and the earth, and on the seventh day he rested and was refreshed.”⁷

7 Exodus 31:16–17 (NIV)

“These are the commands, decrees and laws the Lord your God directed me to teach you to observe in the land that you are crossing the Jordan to possess, so that YOU, YOUR CHILDREN AND THEIR CHILDREN AFTER THEM MAY FEAR THE LORD YOUR GOD AS LONG AS YOU LIVE BY KEEPING ALL HIS DECREES AND COMMANDS THAT I GIVE YOU, and so that you may enjoy long life. Hear, Israel, and be careful to obey so that it may go well with you and that you may increase greatly in a land flowing with milk and honey, just as the Lord, the God of your ancestors, promised you.

“Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength. These commandments that I give you today are to be on your hearts. Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up. Tie them as symbols on your hands and bind them on your foreheads. Write them on the door frames of your houses and on your gates.”⁸

8 Deuteronomy 6:1–9 (NIV)

“Now, Israel, hear the decrees and laws I am about to teach you. Follow them so that you may live and may go in and take possession of the land the Lord, the God of your ancestors, is giving you. Do not add to what I command you and do not subtract from it, but keep the commands of the Lord your God that I give you.

“You saw with your own eyes what the Lord did at Baal Peor. The Lord your God destroyed from among you everyone who followed the Baal of Peor, but all of you who held fast to the Lord your God are still alive today.

“See, I have taught you decrees and laws as the Lord my God commanded me, so that you may follow them in the land you are entering to take possession of it. OBSERVE THEM CAREFULLY, FOR THIS WILL SHOW YOUR WISDOM AND UNDERSTANDING TO THE NATIONS, WHO WILL HEAR ABOUT ALL THESE DECREES AND SAY, ‘SURELY THIS GREAT NATION IS A WISE AND UNDERSTANDING PEOPLE. WHAT OTHER NATION IS SO GREAT AS TO HAVE THEIR GODS NEAR THEM THE WAY THE LORD OUR GOD IS NEAR US WHENEVER WE PRAY TO HIM? AND WHAT OTHER NATION IS SO GREAT AS TO HAVE SUCH RIGHTEOUS DECREES AND LAWS AS THIS BODY OF LAWS I AM SETTING BEFORE YOU TODAY.’”⁹

⁹ Deuteronomy 4:1–8 (NIV)

“You must therefore make a distinction between clean and unclean animals and between unclean and clean birds. Do not defile yourselves by any animal or bird or anything that moves along the ground—those that I have set apart as unclean for you. You are to be holy to me because I, the Lord, am holy, AND I HAVE SET YOU APART FROM THE NATIONS TO BE MY OWN.”¹⁰

¹⁰ Leviticus 20:25–26 (NIV)

“On the first day of the third month after the Israelites left Egypt—on that very day—they came to the Desert of Sinai. After they set out from Rephidim, they entered the Desert of Sinai, and Israel camped there in the desert in front of the mountain.

“Then Moses went up to God, and the Lord called to him from the mountain and said, ‘This is what you are to say to the descendants of Jacob and what you are to tell the people of Israel: “You yourselves have seen what I did to Egypt, and how I carried you on eagles’ wings and brought you to myself. Now if you obey me fully and KEEP MY COVENANT, THEN OUT OF ALL NATIONS YOU WILL BE MY TREASURED POSSESSION. Although the whole earth is mine, you will be for me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.” THESE ARE THE WORDS YOU ARE TO SPEAK TO THE ISRAELITES.’”¹¹

¹¹ Exodus 19:1–6 (NIV)

*"And the LORD said to Moses, 'You are to speak to the PEOPLE OF ISRAEL and say, 'Above all you shall keep my Sabbaths, for this is a sign BETWEEN ME AND YOU throughout your generations, that you may know that I, the LORD, sanctify YOU. You shall keep the Sabbath, because it is holy FOR YOU. Everyone who profanes it shall be put to death. Whoever does any work on it, that soul shall be cut off from among his people. Six days shall work be done, but the seventh day is a Sabbath of solemn rest, holy to the LORD. Whoever does any work on the Sabbath day shall be put to death. Therefore the PEOPLE OF ISRAEL shall keep the Sabbath, observing the Sabbath throughout their generations, as a covenant forever. It is a sign forever between me and the PEOPLE OF ISRAEL that in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, and on the seventh day he rested and was refreshed.'""*¹²

¹² Exodus 31:12–18 ESV

*"He declares his word to JACOB, his statutes and rules to ISRAEL. He has not dealt thus with any other nation; they do not know his rules. Praise the LORD!"*¹³

¹³ Psalm 147:19–20 ESV

The concept of Sabbath-keeping for Christians mocks Judaism and the Hebrew language that expresses it. In a paradox of nearly comical proportions, the earlier Ancient Hebrew texts of Genesis 2, Exodus 16, and Exodus 20 go out of their way to clarify, specifically, through a variety of literary conventions and meaning indicators, that there was no Sabbath until the Exodus. Although it is possible to build a Sabbatarian belief model with a Sabbath that does not begin at Creation, to do so requires that it be built on an extremely shaky foundation that lacks credibility and consistency.

THE SABBATH IN GENESIS IDEA IS A CHRISTIAN ONLY IDEA THAT DEVELOPED FROM AN IGNORANCE OF THE HEBREW LANGUAGE, CULTURE, AND BELIEFS

The concept of a Sabbath prior to the Exodus did not come from Judaism. It came instead from Christians studying the writings of Judaism without any real understanding of Judaism's language, beliefs, and practices. More importantly, these Christians study the Hebrew language in the Old Testament without any knowledge of the verbally transmitted "code book" that those who both spoke and wrote in it when the Old Testament was written down in the same language. Rules of interpretation of one's native language are applied to the Hebrew language in regard to grammar and syntax, and this is additionally done without an understanding of the culture that produced what was written, how it was said, and to whom it was spoken.

For example, the *meaning* of these two statements in two different languages is the same. However, how these statements are expressed is meaningful only to the person this language is used. Unless you know both languages, wrong assumptions are easy to make:

ASL is the most widely used Sign Language of the deaf in the United States and

Canada. This statement may be made in this language of the hands: “Today I go store buy present-(give you) [for] your birthday.”

English states the same message as, “I am going to the store today to buy you a birthday present.” Unless you know the rules of syntax and grammar of ASL, this message given in the ASL language can be difficult to understand.

In the same way, Judaism has never entertained the assumption a Sabbath existed prior to the Exodus nor imagined any of the Children of Abraham ever kept track of time in fixed weeks required in the modern Gregorian Solar calendar.

Equally important, Judaism has never believed the Sabbath ordinance was universal in its jurisdiction. Their consistent belief, in which the Sabbath originated at Mt. Sinai as a sign to set Israel apart from all other nations, was codified into Israel’s national laws prior to the rule of Israel’s Judges. (See Exodus 31:13).

A key point to understand is that Israel’s dual court system with its code of civil-religious laws was developed and implemented at a time when these judges spoke the same language in which the books of Moses were written. At this point in time, this language, or this series of developing languages, was not even the Ancient Hebrew language being used in the original writings of Moses. We really don’t know what language Moses used to write his book of the Law. Perhaps, he could have used the Egyptian hieroglyphic system in which he had been schooled.

It is important to understand when the ‘Ancient Hebrew’ language in which the books of Moses were written first evolved into the form in which they are preserved today. Ancient Hebrew did not develop until several hundred years after the reign of King David. The written and oral forms of the Law evolved through a progression of linguistic changes which, over time, created such profound differences that it could be said that a new language had evolved.

Beginning around the sixth century BCE, the time of the Babylonian Captivity, the Jews became familiar with Aramaic, a language that was widely used by their captors, the neo-Babylonians (Nicholas Ostler, *Empires of the Word: A Language History of the World*, Harper Perennial, London, New York, Toronto, Sydney 2006 p. 80).

Aramaic had a long history in the Middle East and eventually became the official language of the Persian Empire. As noted elsewhere, a large majority of the Jews remained in Babylonia after the Captivity, which caused them to reside in the area where Aramaic was widely spoken. *Encyclopedia Britannica* sums it up like this:

<https://www.britannica.com/topic/Aramaic-language>

Aramaic is thought to have first appeared among the Aramaeans about the late 11th century BCE. By the 8th century BCE it had become accepted by the Assyrians as a second language. The mass deportations of people by the Assyrians and the use of Aramaic as a lingua franca by Babylonian merchants served to spread the language, so that in the 7th and 6th centuries BCE it gradually supplanted Akkadian as the lingua franca of the Middle East. It subsequently became the official language of the Achaemenian Persian dynasty (559–330 BCE), though after the conquests of Alexander the Great, Greek displaced it as the official language throughout the

former Persian empire.

Moses' books were likely translated and retranslated as his books evolved from a predominantly hieroglyphic Egyptian rendering through numerous stages of paleo-Phoenician languages to the first Hebrew language, to Biblical Hebrew (Ancient Hebrew). According to the *Wikipedia* article on the Hebrew language:

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Avraham_ben-Yosef

Avraham ben-Yosef, says, "Biblical Hebrew flourished as a spoken language in the Kingdoms of Israel and Judah during about 1200 to 586 BCE.[18] Scholars debate the degree to which Hebrew was a spoken vernacular in ancient times following the Babylonian exile, when the predominant international language in the region was Old Aramaic."

The Israelites were likely to have read the books of Moses in their native language, whatever those languages might have been, between the time of the Exodus and the time of the Babylonian Captivity (approximately 598-538 BCE).

This ancient language, Biblical (or Ancient) Hebrew, most likely evolved from proto-Phoenician languages, finally taking shape a few hundred years after the reign of King David, who reigned around 1,000 BCE. Within around 500 years, enough changes had taken place in Biblical Hebrew, including changes to the written characters of the language, to indicate that a new language had resulted— "Modern" Hebrew. "Modern" Hebrew endured for hundreds of years, perhaps alongside of Aramaic. It is noteworthy that Jesus read the scroll of Isaiah to the people in the synagogue in Aramaic— not in Ancient Hebrew or Modern Hebrew.

There is little chance, the judges of Israel failed to understand the explicit wording of Genesis 2, Exodus 16, and Exodus 20-- in whatever language the books of Moses were recorded in at the time of the Judges-- which forbids the notion of a Genesis origin for the Sabbath ordinance and hedges the Sabbath against Gentile participation in a ceremonial observances that were designed to function as barriers that would keep the Hebrews from mixing and associating with the Gentiles.

As the language of Israel evolved from the Ancient Hebrew into Modern Hebrew, and then into Aramaic, only specially-trained rabbinical scholars in these specific languages could read the "original" forms of the books of Moses with a full understanding of it. This situation existed even before the time of Christ since Ancient Hebrew had evolved through Modern Hebrew and then to Aramaic. (Even this is a simplified explanation.) At the same time, this evolution of the language(s) spoken by the Israelites-Jews means that a Jewish scholar is not necessarily a Hebrew linguist. Since Judaism is so broad and deep in both content and concept, the inability of many Hebrew scholars to read Ancient Hebrew with "full" understanding of it can result in statements that vary from the official position of orthodox Judaism that there was no Sabbath prior to the Exodus. Expertise in Hebrew history and culture does not turn a Hebrew scholar into someone who is qualified to speak on the deeply "coded" Ancient Hebrew language in regard to the intent of the author of Genesis 2, Exodus 16, and Exodus 20. We touch on this language problem elsewhere, but at this time we remind the reader that Ancient Hebrew can only be properly understood by a Hebrew linguist who has a deep understanding of the unwritten, verbally-passed-down "code book" that "goes with" the language. The Israelites who spoke Ancient Hebrew received this code book of information verbally through their language

experiences, but it was never written down, and attempting to study written Ancient Hebrew without its knowledge often leads to disastrous interpretations never intended by the writers and translators. We refer to this problem elsewhere in the LFG series.

HOW SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST SABBATH SCHOLARS PROVOKED THE CURRENT WIDER UNDERSTANDING OF THE HEBREW LINGUISTICS OF THE SABBATH QUESTION

When Sabbatarians claim that there was a Sabbath ordinance that began at Creation, they insult the Jews. The implication is that even though Hebrew is known as the language of the Jews, the Jews cannot decipher their own language. At the same time, the reverse implication is true, and that is that Sabbatarians claim that they know more about how to understand the Hebrew language than the Hebrews themselves.

Seventh-day Adventists represent, by far, the largest Sabbatarian denomination in the world. The Seventh-day Adventist Church was officially chartered in 1863, but the assembling of its Sabbatarian belief model began immediately after the Great Disappointment of 1844. Almost none of the pioneers of Adventism were scholars. They did not possess any significant knowledge of Judaism, Hebrew, or Greek. Apparently few of them understood the science of logic, so when these pioneers saw that God gave the Sabbath to Israel to be a sign that would distinguish them from all the other peoples of the world, they assumed that the command applied to those who were called by God. Over the years Adventists devised more and more pathways to “prove” its belief system-- a system based on mutually validating assumptions. Totally convinced, we suppose, that there was no possible argument against their belief in Christian Sabbath-keeping, they were forced to interpret what little they knew about Judaism and the history of the Early Church in such a way that it was both compatible and supportive of Adventism.

It was not very long, however, until a few early Adventists began to realize that they had been deceived. The only known scholar to join up with the Adventist Movement was a man by the name of Thomas Preble. You will find more details of his story in our chapter on the real history of Adventism. In 1845 he published a book supporting Sabbatarianism. In 1867 he left Adventism and published a well-researched book exposing its biblical and historical impossibilities. Then in 1887, D. M. Canright, a top Seventh-day Adventist leader, apostatized and began to publish books against Adventism that revealed not only the biblical and historical impossibilities of Sabbatarianism, but also the deceptions of its prophetess, Ellen G. White.

Canright's work did not accomplish much at the time. Adventism's Sabbath doctrine suffered few if any significant challenges until 1982. In this year, biblical scholar, D. A. Carson published a collection of essays by a team of some of the world's most respected scholars entitled *From Sabbath to Lord's Day*. This book was a direct reply to the Adventist book, *From Sabbath to Sunday*, authored by the late Dr. Samuele Bacchiocchi of the Church's Andrews University-- the seat of its main seminary. Carson and his team addressed each chapter of Bacchiocchi's pro-Sabbatarian book with a corresponding essay of rebuttal. In doing so they provided watertight evidence that there was no Sabbath ordinance until the Exodus. This proof was accomplished largely through a review of the Hebrew linguistics of Genesis 2, Exodus 16, and Exodus 20. Carson's team struck down the ability of Sabbatarians to claim with any degree of credibility that the Sabbath commandment began at Creation. They also struck down every historical theory Bacchiocchi had devised to explain away the fact that the first Christians

abandoned Sabbath-keeping for biblical reasons and did so almost immediately. These theories are explained in other chapters of this book.

Carson's work demonstrated this point so clearly that the leaders of the "sister" Sabbath-keeping denomination to Seventh-day Adventists, The Worldwide Church of God, renounced Sabbatarianism in 1995. Sadly, the leaders at the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists did not follow in the footsteps of its "sister" church. Both organizations share a common ancestry, having evolved from the Millerite movement.

Much information can be lost when one language is translated into another language. This is more true of Ancient Hebrew than other languages due to its primitiveness which, in turn, created a need for a special set of interpretive instructions that its native speakers learned as a part of growing up in a culture that used the language daily. Therefore, when Genesis 2, Exodus 16, and Exodus 20 are read in the earlier ancient Hebrew text by a native speaker, and in ancient times, or by an intensely trained Ancient Hebrew linguist of today, an additional set of meaning indicators "jump out" from "between the lines." When these additional indicators are noted, the question is settled beyond any reasonable doubt that Moses went out of his way to clarify that there was no Sabbath until the Exodus. Genesis 2 restricts the blessing and setting aside of the 7th day to one day in the history of Planet Earth. Exodus 16 clarifies that there was no Sabbath prior to the Giving of the Manna, and Exodus 20 clarifies that the Sabbath ordinance was merely modeled after the events of Creation.

THE GENESIS 1:14 PROBLEM

One barrier to the concept of a Sabbath ordinance in Genesis 2 is a prophecy in Genesis 1:14 that the human race would determine its own times for sacred meetings based on the movements of the two world clocks-- the Sun and the Moon. It would be strange for God to announce in Chapter One that people would be determining their own times for worship and then turn around in Genesis Two and order them to observe a schedule of holy days that He dictates. And one that runs roughshod over the parameters established by the lunar-solar units of time!

According to fixed-week Sabbatarians, a schedule of obligatory worship-rest days began on the seventh day of Creation and runs contiguously down through time. A contiguous week Sabbath ordinance would have created, later on, holy day havoc for the Hebrews. The weekly Sabbath, which required that no work of ANY kind be performed, would sometimes land on top of the New Moon Sabbath, which was the primary day of corporate worship each month and which allowed any work necessary to provide for public worship, including the preparation and serving of food to the worshipers. Furthermore, it would cause additional conflicts, one of which being with the Law of Moses' requirement that the Israelites purchase their passover lambs on the 10th day of Passover month. The weekly Sabbath could land on any day of the month with this conflicting arrangement.

Fixed-week Sabbatarians seek to evade this problem by suggesting that the word translated by the NIV as "sacred times" is not a reference to sacred events. A comprehensive analysis of this question clearly indicates that the NIV is translated correctly according to *Strong's* definition of the word MOED and how its meaning, assemblies and appointed festivals, is used in Scripture.

14 And God said, "Let there be lights in the vault of the sky to separate the day from the night, and let them serve as signs to mark **sacred times, and days and years**, **15** and let them be lights in the vault of the sky to give light on the earth." And it was so. **16** God made two great lights—the greater light to govern the day and the lesser light to govern the night. He also made the stars. **17** God set them in the vault of the sky to give light on the earth, **18** to govern the day and the night, and to separate light from darkness. And God saw that it was good. **19** And there was evening, and there was morning—the fourth day.

The Strong's Hebrew definition of the word, "times," is H4150, or MOED.

Leviticus 23 begins with a statement to the effect that a list of appointed festivals is about to follow.

Leviticus 23 (NIV) - 1 The Lord said to Moses, **2** "Speak to the Israelites and say to them: 'These are my appointed festivals, the **appointed festivals** of the Lord, which you are to proclaim as **sacred assemblies**.'

Note that the same Hebrew word, H4150, is used twice in the first two verses of Leviticus 23. Below is the text of the first few verses of Leviticus 23 from the Bible Hub Hebrew-English Interlinear Bible:

413 [e]	559 [e]	3478 [e]	1121 [e]	413 [e]	1696 [e]	559 [e]	4872 [e]	413 [e]	3068 [e]	1696 [e]	
'ā-lê-hem,	wə-'ā-mar-tā	yiś-rā-'èl	bə-nē	'el-	dab-bêr	lê-môr.	mô-šeh	'el-	Yah-weh	way-dab-bêr	
וְאֵלֵהֶם	וְאָמַרְתָּ	יִשְׂרָאֵל	בְּנֵי	אֶל־	דַּבֵּר	לֵאמֹר	מֹשֶׁה	אֶל־	יְהוָה	וַיְדַבֵּר	
to them	and say	of Israel	the sons	to	speak	saying	Moses	to	Yahweh	And spoke	
Prep 3mp	Conj-w V-Qal-ConjPerf-2ms	N-proper-ms	N-mpc	Prep	V-Piel-imp-ms	Prep-l V-Qal-Inf	N-proper-ms	Prep	N-proper-ms	Conj-w V-Piel-ConsecImperf-3ms	
4150 [e]	1992 [e]	428 [e]	6944 [e]	4744 [e]	853 [e]	7121 [e]	834 [e]	3068 [e]	4150 [e]		
mō-w-'ā-dāy.	hēm	'èl-leh	qō-deš;	miq-rā-'ê	'ō-tām	tiq-rā-'û	'ā-šer-	Yah-weh,	mō-w-'ā-dê		
מוֹעֲדַי	הֵם	אֵלֶּה	קֹדֶשׁ	מִקְרָאֵי	אֲתֵם	תִּקְרְאוּ	אֲשֶׁר־	יְהוָה	מוֹעֲדַי		
My feasts	are	these	holy	convocations	-	you shall proclaim [to be]	which	of Yahweh	the feasts		
N-mpc 1cs	Pro-3mp	Pro-cp	N-ms	N-mpc	DirObjM 3mp	V-Qal-Imperf-2mp	Pro-r	N-proper-ms	N-mpc		
4399 [e]	3605 [e]	6944 [e]	4744 [e]	7677 [e]	7676 [e]	7637 [e]	3117 [e]	4399 [e]	6213 [e]	3117 [e]	8337 [e]
mā-lā-kāh	kāl-	qō-deš,	miq-rā-	šab-bā-tō-wn	šab-baṭ	haš-ša-bī-'ī,	û-bay-yō-wm	mā-lā-kāh	tê-'ā-šeh	yā-mīm	šê-šet
מְלָאכָה	כָּל־	קֹדֶשׁ	מִקְרָא	שַׁבְּתוֹן	שַׁבָּת	הַשְּׁבִיעִי	וּבַיּוֹם	מְלָאכָה	תַּעֲשֶׂה	יָמִים	שֵׁשֶׁת
work	Any	holy	a convocation	of solemn rest	[is] a Sabbath	seventh	but the day	work	shall be done	days	Six
N-fs	N-msc	N-ms	N-msc	N-ms	N-csc	Art Number-oms	Conj-w, Prep-b, Art N-ms	N-fs	V-Nifal-Imperf-3fs	N-mp	Number-msc
			4186 [e]	3605 [e]	3068 [e]	1931 [e]	7676 [e]	6213 [e]	3808 [e]		
			ṭ	mō-wō-ša-bō-tē-kem.	bə-kōl	Yah-weh,	hī	šab-baṭ	ta-'ā-šû;	lō	
			פ	מִוֹשְׁבֵיכֶם	בְּכֹל	יְהוָה	הוא	שַׁבָּת	תַּעֲשׂוּ	לֹא	
			-	your dwellings	in all	of Yahweh	it [is]	The Sabbath	shall you do	not	
			Punc	N-mpc 2mp	Prep-b N-msc	Prep-l N-proper-ms	Pro-3fs	N-cs	V-Qal-Imperf-2mp	Adv-NegPrt	

Strong's Concordance identifies this Hebrew word in Genesis 1, #H-4150, as an appointed time, place, or meeting. There is a strong connection between the use of this word in Genesis 1 and Leviticus 23:

Scroll down to see the chart for H4150.

Strong's H4150**moed: appointed time, place, or meeting****Original Word:** מוֹעֵד**Part of Speech:** Noun Masculine**Transliteration:** moed**Phonetic Spelling:** (mo-ade')**Definition:** appointed time, place, or meeting**NAS Exhaustive Concordance****Word Origin**

from yaad

Definition

appointed time, place, or meeting

NASB Translation

appointed (3), **appointed** feast (3), **appointed** feasts (11), **appointed** festival (2), **appointed** meeting place (1), appointed place (1), appointed sign (1), appointed time (21), appointed times (8), appointment (1), assembly (2), definite time (1), feasts (2), festal assemblies (1), fixed festivals (3), meeting (147), meeting place (1), meeting places (1), season (4), seasons (3), set time (1), time (3), times (1), times appointed (1).

Sabbatarian apologists who defend the fix-week Sabbath ordinance sometimes claim that one cannot attach the meaning of SACRED to the MOED in Genesis 1:14, but this strategy does not work well. Here is an idea that makes this evasive defense strategy still more difficult.

Let us say only for the sake of argument that MOED would not mean SACRED GATHERINGS and that this passage merely represents a prophecy that the human race would use the movements of the Sun and Moon just to make their calendars and determine when government and business meetings would occur. In this case, the months would always have to begin on the day of the New Moon, or the calendar would not be compliant with what God's prophecy indicated. The calendars would still have to be lunar, with the New Moon marking the beginning of each new month. There are four major phases of the Moon, so these weeks that start over at the beginning of each new month would have to be seven day periods of time.

This lunar calendation is exactly the kind that many, if not all, ancient civilizations used for thousands of years. Their religious ceremonies were, as a matter of historical record, scheduled on the day of the New Moon and the day of the Full Moon. No conflicts! The Egyptians and Babylonians observed lunar week 7th day pagan sabbaths. By contrast, if the Hebrews were to have attempted to run fixed-occurring sacred days every seven days linked to a single day in the history of Planet Earth, the Hebrews would still be faced with holy day havoc, since these fixed-week weekly Sabbaths would still land on other specially scheduled sacred days that were appointed by the lunar calendar.

In Scripture, when the Israelite/Jewish system of holy days is mentioned, they reference annual, monthly, and daily ordinances. The order may vary, but this phenomenon is consistent. Even in the New Testament, Paul lists three classifications of Jewish holy days that have been obsoleted by the reality of the coming of Christ in the flesh and the nailing of the Law of Moses to the

Cross. It was this law set that required these ordinances. He lists them in the order of annual feasts, New Moon celebrations, and the weekly Sabbaths.

In summary, Genesis 1:14 established not only the principles of time-keeping for the human race, but represented a precursor of the Israelite/Jewish system of sacred days which were calculated as specified in Leviticus 23 and Numbers 28 from the occurrence of the New Moon.

THE SABBATH WAS PRIMARILY ABOUT PROPITIATION

The Lying for God research team produced the 11th Edition which was released in 2016. Our deep study of the Hebrew linguistics of the “Sabbath in Genesis Question” led us to the discovery that the concept of “sabbath” is inseparably bound with the theme of propitiation. We noted that every weekly Sabbath, from two to six spotless, male, and very young lambs were required to be sacrificed. In Numbers 28, the Law of Moses required that two such lambs be sacrificed. By the time of Ezekiel, God specified that six spotless lambs were to be sacrificed every weekly Sabbath. Perhaps as Israel settled into the Holy Land, livestock became more plentiful and God wished that as the time of the First Advent of Christ and His death on the Cross became a more and more important theme, the number of lambs to be sacrificed was increased from two to six (Ezekiel 46). Every Sabbath day during the time of Christ, the temple worshipers watched as six spotless, male, and very young lambs were sacrificed.

As you will discover as our study continues, the first and primary meaning that the Hebrews associated with the word SABBATH was the concept of propitiation. The word for SABBATH came into Ancient Hebrew from the Semitic word for Propitiation. Any additional meanings that God ADDED to the concept of the Sabbath were merely associations added by Him as *additional concepts* that He wanted the Israelites to think of when they heard the word for SABBATH. These additional associations included the remembrance of God as their Creator and the remembrance that He rescued them from Egyptian slavery.

We noticed that serious theological problems would inevitably be created by a Sabbath ordinance which was instituted prior to the Fall of Man, since the concept of Propitiation is about atonement for sin by one means or the other. When the word for SABBATH came into the Ancient Hebrew from the Semitic, the atonement was based on appeasing the anger of their pagan Gods. When the Sabbath ordinance eventually was given to Israel, one of its key associations was the theme of propitiation as represented by the deaths of these spotless lambs. God changed the way the Israelites thought about Propitiation by reversing the direction of the propitiation. This Propitiation was to be achieved, not by Man, but by God. This reversal of the direction of the propitiation was illustrated in part by God’s requirement that the Israelites sacrifice two very young, spotless, and male lambs on every weekly Sabbath day in addition to their normal daily sacrifices. The death of these lambs represented the death of a soon-coming Redeemer. It is seemingly impossible that the propitiative Sabbath ordinance would have been given to all mankind before there was any propitiation needed. No sin. No propitiation.

When Jesus died on the Cross, the Jews, unlike the Christians of today, had spent their lifetimes witnessing these Sabbath and Passover sacrifices. The Israelites surely recognized the symbolic connection between the death of these innocent lambs and the death of their soon-coming Messiah (Isaiah 53). Paul could say in Colossians 2 that the death of Christ nailed the Law of Moses to the Cross and made the Sabbath an obsolete ordinance. The annual sabbaths, the monthly New Moon celebrations, and the weekly Sabbaths all required the sacrificing of innocent lambs that pointed forward to Christ.

The Jubilee Sabbath provided the Israelites with a very clear picture of Propitiation provided by God and by the death of a soon-coming Redeemer. When Jesus read from the scroll of Isaiah in the synagogue, He declared His role of Propitiator by announcing that He was the Jubilee Sabbath. Following every 49 years (7 x 7) the 50th year was the Year of the Jubilee. On the first day of this Jubilee Year, all the slaves were set free and all the debts of the people to their creditors were canceled. No merit was part of the forgiveness. The death of Jesus on the Cross would release the believer from the bondage of sin while totally wiping out his or her debt of sin. The slaves who were set free and the debtors whose loans were canceled did nothing at all to earn it or even deserve it. Jesus, then, made it clear that He was the Great Propitiator. His death on the Cross would not simply cover the sins of the people like the blood of the sacrificial Sabbath lambs. His blood would blot out the sins of the believer and destroy any record or remembrance of their sins, as represented by God's promise that His forgiveness would cast our sins into the depths of the Sea. (See Colossians 2:13-14)

The understanding that the fundamental concept of the word SABBATH in the Ancient Hebrew was that of Propitiation gives strong support for the idea that Christ literally IS our Sabbath. It explains why Paul said in Colossians 2 that the annual sabbaths, the New Moon celebrations, and the weekly Sabbaths were obsolete shadows of the Reality of Christ. The associations of Sabbath rest in compensation for the Hebrews having had no rest while they were slaves in Egypt and that of a reminder that God rescued them from that Egyptian slavery apply to no other people but the Israelites. The covenant relationship between God and Israel that provided for the Sabbath ordinance was destroyed when Jesus was put to death at the Cross. While it is always good to remember that God created the Earth, the most important thing to remember now is the Resurrection. The New Covenant emphasizes the Resurrection while not minimizing the importance of remembering that Christ was also the Creator of the World.

WHO SPEAKS WITH THE MOST AUTHORITY ABOUT SABBATH ORIGINS?

There are unauthorized spokespersons for Judaism, just like there are for the Catholic Church and the Seventh-day Adventists. There were unauthorized Jewish Christians following after Paul, telling Gentiles they had to keep the Law. Along this same line, some Jewish rabbis, not specially trained in the Ancient Hebrew, will sometimes express the idea that the Sabbath started at Creation. Just like the official teachings of Adventism are expressed in its 27 Fundamental Beliefs statement prepared by the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, so the official position of Judaism on the origin and proper implementation of the Torah's Sabbath laws is spelled out in the *Mishnah*, which was redacted around 200 AD, and the *Mishneh Torah* which was redacted between 1200 and 1300 AD by Maimonides.

We will discuss the *Mishneh Torah* a little later, as it is material from this later redaction that we quote in regard to the Jewish view of Gentiles keeping the Sabbath.

The Oral Law is the Jewish record of the legal precedence of their court system from the earliest times. The Jews believe the Oral Law began as oral instruction from God to Moses on Mt. Sinai and was augmented by the judges who governed Israel prior to the Kings, as well as by the Judges of Israel throughout the history of the Nation of Israel. One of the reasons why Orthodox Judaism takes this point of view is that non-canonical Jewish records include documentation of the names of every steward of the Oral Law from the time of Moses to the final redaction of the Oral Law by Maimonides around 1200 to 1300 AD.

The first redaction of a major portion of the Oral Law was accomplished around 200 AD by a group of rabbinical scholars who interviewed the few remaining stewards who were responsible for committing the Oral Law to memory and passing it on to the next generation's oral stewards. Once this first redaction was completed, the part of the document that had been the actual Oral Law itself was called the *Mishnah*. The various commentaries on the Oral Law that had been orally transmitted over time were also included. The total collection of the Oral Law with its various commentaries was called the Talmud. Therefore, in the Talmud the Oral Law itself is included; the commentaries on the Oral Law, and commentaries on the commentaries. The only component of the Talmud that is the original Oral Law itself is the Mishnah when we are talking about the Talmud and restricting our discussion to the redaction that was completed around 200 AD.

Thanks to the work of Messianic Jewish scholar, Reb Yhoshua, we know that Jesus taught from the same Oral Law that was later redacted into the *Mishnah* and the *Mishneh Torah* and that both Old and New Testament writers referenced it in their writings.¹⁴ (14 Reb Yhoshua, *The Oral Torah and the Messianic Jew*. [Internet Reference](#).)

From Mt. Sinai through the period of the Judges and Kings of Israel, the Oral Law and the Written Law evolved together through the various languages of the Canaanitish family into the Ancient Hebrew language which first came into existence several hundred years after the reign of King David. However, once the Written Law was recorded in Ancient Hebrew, the Hebrew language continued to evolve, but the “original” language in which the Written Law was recorded did not. The Written Law was translated, subsequently, into the next phase of the Hebrew language, which was Modern Hebrew, and then into Aramaic, which became the common language of the Jews at the time of Christ. (This explanation is oversimplified in this place but explained in greater detail elsewhere.) Reviewing these facts again, the Ancient Hebrew language evolved into “Modern Hebrew, and then into Aramaic, which became the common language of most Palestinian Jews. (Recall that Jesus read from the Aramaic in the synagogue.) Meanwhile, the Greek language came to be widely spoken by the Jews as a result of the process of the Hellenization of Judaism. What happened is that over time the Hebrew people could not read the Written Law in their own language. As time went on, only specially trained rabbinical scholars could read the books of Moses, including the Creation story, in its earlier renderings.

By contrast the Oral Law evolved right along with the spoken language of the Hebrew people, with each generation of oral stewards transmitting the correct meaning of it in the language at each stage along the way in its evolution from Biblical Hebrew to Aramaic. This is one reason why scholars think that orally transmitted traditions are likely to be more accurately maintained than written records.

Since Orthodox Judaism accepts the Oral Law as inspired, and since the Oral Law supports the Torah in the teaching that the Sabbath is exclusive to Israel and off-limits for all Gentiles with the exception of those who have become circumcised proselytes to Judaism, this principle represents one of the foundational beliefs of Judaism.

“Rabbinic Judaism has long held the Oral Law to be of divine origin. The divinity and authoritativeness of the Oral Law as transmitted from God to Moses on Mount Sinai, continues to be universally accepted by Orthodox and Haredi Judaism as a fundamental precept of Judaism.”¹⁵

¹⁵ William Gaventa (2012), *Jewish Perspectives on Theology and the Human Experience of Disability*. Routledge. Pp.109–112.

For clarification, the Pharisees, whose teachings Jesus commanded the people to obey, rejected all the commentaries on the Oral Law and all the commentaries on the commentaries on the Oral Law, as being nothing but the teachings of men. Thus, it would appear that Jesus validated only the Oral Law itself and not the many commentaries upon it.

WHO WROTE THE BOOK OF GENESIS?

As we mentioned earlier, the earliest form we have of the Books of Moses is recorded in Ancient Hebrew—a written language that had not developed until around three hundred years after the reign of King David. We know this to be true because the writings found in cities that flourished during the reign of King David are written in characters that are only somewhat similar to those used in Ancient Hebrew. But an even more fundamental question is, Who wrote the Book of Genesis?

Since the definitive work of P. J. Wiseman in the 1930's, informed conservative scholars have understood that the Book of Genesis was almost certainly assembled by Moses from a heritage of cuneiform tablets authored by the Patriarchs themselves. Largely unknown to the vast majority of Christian believers is that evidence exists that this is what happened. Wiseman was digging in the area of Babylonia at this time and was one of a number of archaeologists who had a part in tracing human writing back to over 5,000 years ago. By the time of Abraham, who was a contemporary of Hammurabi, cuneiform writing was so common that ordinary citizens wrote about the everyday details of life and even sent little tablets through postal systems to other people, much like we do today with paper letters. Thus cuneiform writing was common more than 1,000 years prior to Moses and almost certainly more than 2,000 years prior to Moses.

A working theory that seems to resolve almost all of the issues raised by the higher critics is that from the time of Adam and the Patriarchs, these people wrote down on these tablets what they had witnessed first hand and then passed the tablets down to each subsequent generation. Recall that Adam lived for 930 years, and it is unrealistic to think that it would not take long-lived and highly intelligent people like him more than a few hundred years to figure out how to write. Joseph's family would have taken such a collection of tablets with them to Egypt, and Joseph would have passed them down through his family line. The Bible timeline developed by Bible Hub estimates that Joseph died in 1806 BCE and that Moses was born about 1525 BCE, after Joseph died. These stories give an approximate time span of 400 years, as attested in Gen. 15:13, Exo. 1:1-14, 12:40-41, Gal. 3:17. Following along with this line of speculation, it seems possible that these tablets might have been preserved by these families and that Moses somehow could have come into possession of them. While in Egypt and under the rule of Pharaohs who were not friendly to the Hebrews, the tradition of passing down oral and written records of their family history would have continued from one elder to another. There is good evidence that Moses used such tablets within the text of Genesis itself, but how he would have obtained such tablets is a question that might never be answered.

Wiseman's work is about as definitive as it can get when it comes to investigating things that happened so long ago, and his findings represent a "must read" for anyone who wants to

understand how the book of Genesis was produced. You can access P. J. Wiseman's book, *New Discoveries in Babylonia About Genesis* via an Internet search.

Bible-believing Christians tend to picture God dictating the Book of Genesis to Moses on Mt. Sinai in Ancient Hebrew. We can only hope that this is not the way it happened, as this view opens the door to too much theological mischief by the pens of the higher critics. Jesus credits Moses with giving the Law to Israel, but He did not specifically state that Moses authored Genesis. Wiseman demonstrates where, in the Book of Genesis, each "tablet" ended and the next one began. He demonstrates how each author of each tablet dated his work according to the primitive dating methods of the time. Wiseman's theory that Moses may have compiled much of Genesis and written only some of it solves nearly every problem that the higher critics use to discredit the reliability and inspiration of the Genesis record. While there is no mention in Scripture of these heirloom tablets from the patriarchs, we do have internal evidence within its text that something much like this almost certainly happened. Now that we know that writing was common during the time of the Patriarchs, and now that we have good reason to believe that writing was likely invented and utilized well before the time of the Great Flood, the idea that the Patriarchs were writing their eye-witness accounts on clay tablets and passing them down to each subsequent generation would not need to be spelled-out. These tablets were very small. Wiseman believed that the tablets upon which God wrote the Ten Commandments were the same relatively small size.

Again, speculating along the lines of Wiseman's theory, Moses would have been reluctant to change the original content of any of the original clay tablets as he copied them into the narrative found in the Book of Genesis. As the proto-Hebrew language evolved within the Canaanitish family of languages into the Ancient Hebrew language-- the first language in which we first find the books of Moses--the stewards of Israel's written records were able to work with a written language that was continuously, or nearly continuously, the same language they spoke. This set of circumstances would help to assure that the intent of the original meaning of the text would be maintained until it arrived in its Ancient Hebrew form.

We must keep in mind that the story in Genesis 2 is about what God did-- not what Adam and Eve were supposed to do. Since God led in every step of the process of inspiration, we can be certain of one thing, and that is if there were a Sabbath ordinance in Genesis 2, He would have made it to read that way so we would have no difficulty finding it.

ANCIENT HEBREWS UNDERSTOOD ANCIENT HEBREW

As the language of the Hebrews developed into Ancient Hebrew, the Judges of Israel were both studying it and supplementing it in the form of the language at that moment in time. It is unrealistic to think, then, that these judges could not understand what Moses had written in Genesis 2, Exodus 16, and Exodus 20-- the three chapters that are relevant to understanding the origin and proper application of Israel's Sabbath.

So, how does the *Mishnah* view the origin and application of the *Torah's* Sabbath laws in regard to how they should be applied to Israel's Hebrew and Gentile citizens? It interprets the Law of Moses to teach these things:

- No Sabbath ordinance existed until the Giving of the Manna during the time of the Exodus.

- Therefore, no Sabbath was present in the Garden of Eden.
- The Sabbath was for Israel and Israel alone. It separated Israel from all the other nations of the world.
- The Torah is very clear that the Sabbath was off-limits for Gentiles. If a Gentile presumed to keep it without fully converting to Judaism, the Jews believed that his actions represented blasphemy-- a deliberate disobedience to the plainly revealed will of God. Therefore, a Sabbath-keeping Gentile was a candidate for stoning in the Nation of Israel. Conversion to Judaism meant complying with the Ordinance of Circumcision.
- The Gentiles were held accountable only to the behavioral principles outlined by the Noachian Laws, which did not include a Sabbath commandment.
- They were also required to abide by most of the laws that governed sexual behavior as outlined in the Torah.

These teachings are a matter of public record. To study what the Mishnah teaches, do an Internet search for the Mishnah's chapter entitled Kings and Wars. The Talmud, which is both a commentary on the Mishnah and which includes it, was reformatted and made available in a new and up-to-date English translation by the noted Hebrew linguist, Dr. Reuven Brauner.

Until 2012 there might have been an excuse for minimally-informed Seventh-day Adventist scholars to dismiss the authority of the Mishnah. Failing to dig deeply into its origins, Adventist apologists have attempted to claim that the *Mishnah* originated in 200 CE and that its sentiments reflect Jewish attitudes forged by their resentment of the rise of Christianity. This claim ignores a whole set of facts about how oral law and histories were maintained in ancient societies. It ignores the fact that Jewish historians have demonstrated that the content of the Mishnah in the oral form which existed prior to 500 BCE is almost identical to today's written version that was transcribed by Jewish oral historians around 200 CE. Furthermore, the attempt of Sabbatarians to minimize the authority of the *Mishnah* also ignores the overwhelming evidence that Old Testament writers taught from it, Jesus taught from it, and New Testament writers incorporated its teachings into their writings.

While the Mishnah and the commentaries on it that represent the Talmud were maintained by oral stewardship, historians have a profound respect for the integrity of the process of preserving oral histories in general and of the Jews specifically. Thanks to the work of Messianic Jewish scholar, Reb Yhoshua, we now have specific examples of it that Jesus used in His own teachings and abundant examples used by both Old and New Testament writers. His study is compelling.

The Sabbath-related teachings of the *Mishnah* are clearly expressed in the Torah itself and are not dependent on support from the Mishnah. The principle that the Sabbath was off-limits to the uncircumcised, non-proselyte Gentile is so clearly spelled out in the Law of Moses that the Mishnah taught that Sabbath-trespassing Gentiles were blasphemers who deserved death by stoning.

JESUS VALIDATES THE INSPIRATION OF THE MISHNAH

The Pharisees rejected all the commentaries on the Oral Law, accepting only the Oral Law itself. Jesus would have only taught from the part of the Oral Law that later was redacted into the Mishnah. Jesus commanded the people to obey the teachings of the Pharisees. By the process of elimination, we see that Jesus was instructing them to understand that the Oral Law was a reliable resource of truth. The Pharisees stood in marked contrast to other Jewish sects who placed the commentaries on the Oral Law on an equal level with the Oral Law itself.

“Then Jesus said to the crowds and to his disciples: ‘The teachers of the law and the Pharisees sit in Moses’ seat. So you must be careful to do everything they tell you. But do not do what they do, for they do not practice what they preach. They tie up heavy, cumbersome loads and put them on other people’s shoulders, but they themselves are not willing to lift a finger to move them.’” -- (Matthew 23:1–4, NIV)

The word everything is powerful. Jesus told the people to obey everything the Pharisees taught. The Pharisees taught the divine inspiration of the Oral Law, but not the commentaries on it. The Oral Law gave instructions to Israel on the concept of the Bosom of Abraham, the Resurrection, and some other things which are not included in the Written Law.

REUVEN BRAUNER AND THE MISHNEH TORAH

These insights into Genesis 2 and its relationship to the Mishneh Torah come from Dr. Reuven Brauner, an Israeli Hebrew linguist, who is regarded in academic circles as one of the greatest living experts in Ancient Hebrew. Living in Israel, he speaks Modern Hebrew daily in addition to having comprehensive training in Ancient Hebrew. It was our co-author, Larry Dean, who connected the dots between the content of the Oral Law and the command of Jesus to obey the teachings of the Pharisees. Brauner, as a Jew, would not be likely to make such a connection. Once again we are faced with the need to consider who Jesus was talking to and under what circumstances. He was speaking to an audience of Jews who were, at that time, living under the terms of the Old Covenant.

By no means are we saying that Jesus taught from the Mishneh Torah. We are stating that Jesus validated the principle that the Oral Law is “inspired” at least to a certain, meaningful degree. Recall that the Mishneh Torah was not put together until 1200 to 1300 AD, or more than a thousand years after Jesus walked on Earth. Apparently the job of redacting the entire Oral Law had not been finished when the older *Mishnah* was redacted around 200 AD. The great Rabbinical scholar, Maimonides, appears to have finished the task. He listed the names of all the stewards of the Oral Law up until his own day. The leaders of Judaism, and particularly the Babylonian rabbis, had been afraid that the dispersion of the Jews throughout the world would soon make it impossible for the Oral Law to be transmitted through an unbroken line of oral stewards down through the tumultuous things the Jews were experiencing as of 200 AD. It appears, however, that while these fears were largely justified and the precautions taken to preserve it in writing were indeed very wise, that the remainder of the Oral Law survived these troublesome times after all and that the stewards of the Oral Law were able to continue their work.

The line of Judaism's stewards of the Oral Law seems to have disappeared completely after the redactions of Maimonides, and understandably so. It appears that his work represented a complete recording of the Oral Law, so what had been the Oral Law became a rather complete written version of it.

The *Mishneh Torah* differed from the older *Mishnah* in that Maimonides included the writings of rabbinical scholars that seem to have dated back as far as the time of the Babylonian Captivity. The principle followed by Maimonides seems to have been that the Judges of Israel's dual court system were essentially replaced by the role of the rabbinical teachers. The first appearance of Rabbinical Judaism took place at some unknown time during the Babylonian Captivity, which means that this mainstream version of Judaism had its beginnings prior 500 BCE. One of the key points to remember is that until very roughly 500 BCE, the Jews still spoke Ancient (Biblical) Hebrew, which was the same language in which the Books of Moses were written. The principle here is that in Exodus 18 God promised to guide the decisions made by Israel's lawmakers, and the rabbinical scholars assumed that role when Israel's dual court system was destroyed shortly before the Babylonian Captivity.

As we noted earlier, the subject matter of the *Mishneh Torah*'s section, "Kings and Wars," is extremely ancient. There had been no kings and wars in either Judah or the Northern Kingdom of Israel prior to the Babylonian Captivity, which takes us almost back to the time when the Jews spoke Biblical Hebrew. Even if you count the Hasmonean Dynasty in its brief reign as a relatively independent Jewish state, the latest of anything that would qualify as "kings and wars" would precede the First Advent by 100 years. This fact is evidence, but falls short of "proof," that the "Kings and Wars" chapter was likely to have been redacted from ancient Oral Law content and was not invented after 200 AD.

Dr. Reuven Brauner became known to us through a mutual contact in Israel. Dr. Brauner had translated the *Mishneh Torah* into English several years before. It was not necessarily the first translation of it into English, but his new work was highly regarded. As a Hebrew scholar with expertise in Hebrew linguistics, we took the opportunity to ask him if the Pentateuch teaches the existence of a Sabbath ordinance in Genesis. Larry Dean tells us that it took a great deal of persuasion to convince Dr. Brauner that our question in regard to the existence of a Sabbath ordinance in Genesis 2 was serious. As we have already explained, the Hebrew wording of the three key chapters in the books of Moses goes out of its way to exclude the possibility of a Sabbath prior to the Exodus. After several exchanges of emails between Larry Dean and Dr. Brauner, he agreed to provide us with a dialogue that we could use to explain his position on the issue.

Dr. Brauner's response was that there is no Sabbath ordinance within the account of the days of Creation, and he has helped us understand how the content of Genesis 2 does not permit it. Here is the email exchange between Dr. Brauner and Larry Dean. ⁽¹⁶⁾ Private email exchange between Dr. Brauner and Larry Dean, dated November 13 through November 15, 2015.

[DEAN] "One chapter in our book deals with the question: Does the wording of the first two chapters of the Book of Genesis regarding the events of the seventh day, establish a weekly Sabbath ordinance at the time of Creation? The larger theme of our book is whether or not Christians are required to keep the Jewish Sabbath. In light of your spectacular treatment of

the issue in your translation of the Mishnah, it seems clear that Gentiles were forbidden to keep the Sabbath. This is a position we strongly agree with.”

[BRAUNER] “Our Jewish Sages learned the commandment to observe the Sabbath from Exodus 23:12 where the language is, ‘You shall rest on the Seventh Day,’ and Exodus 20:8, with ‘Remember the Sabbath in its holiness.’ The verses in Genesis are considered the historical basis for the later-stated commandments, merely setting the stage for its rationale, as it were. In Jewish law, the typical learning of when a statement in the Torah is understood to represent a ‘commandment’ follows certain principles which include (A) verses which provide the historical/religious basis, and then (B) a direct positive or negative commandment. “Regarding non-Jews observing the 613 Commandments, it is explicit in Jewish law that the Commandments were given specifically to the Jewish people. Non-Jews are not obligated to observe but seven key Commandments, and non-Jewish observance of any of the others is a serious violation. As strange as this may seem, the reason that the 613 Commandments were directed only to Jews is that they are not universal and they underscore the special bond God has with the Jewish people and the special responsibilities Jews have to God. This is not to say that non-Jews cannot become close to God, enjoy His blessings, etc., but merely it states the unique role the Jewish people have with God. It is not negative in any way. Judaism encourages non-Jews to do what THEY have to do, and what they are commanded, i.e. the Seven Commandments of Noah, and not usurp the Jewish role. For this reason, non-Jewish observance of uniquely Jewish Commandments is technically forbidden by Jewish Law, and this includes detailed observance of the Sabbath as would a Jew. If a non-Jew feels the need to observe the Sabbath ‘properly,’ he has to convert to Judaism—something which he, ironically, is not encouraged to do, but may do so if he really feels compelled.

[DEAN] “Biblical scholars going back as far as the Venerable Bede, who wrote around 700 CE, have noticed that there is no ‘evening and morning’ suffix following the biblical account of what happened on the 7th day of Creation, but there is after the account of what happened on each of the previous six days of Creation. This fact seems to represent an indicator that signals the reader that the rest is unbound, beginning on that day and lasting forever, which would suggest that only this one seventh-day, and not subsequent multiples of it, was set aside as a memorial to God’s finishing of the creation of Planet Earth.”

[BRAUNER] “In Ancient Hebrew, EVERY word or absence thereof, is significant. However, I do not see how the absence of the evening/morning language has anything to do with Sabbath observance. You will have to explain how you derive this. But, as I said, those particular verses in Genesis are not composed with any directive or command embedded in the text. They are just stating facts. As to why the evening/morning language is absent, there are many possible reasons.

“One reason could be that the Hebrew words *erev* (evening) and *boker* (morning) can also mean ‘mixture’ and ‘examination,’ the latter term implying ‘clarification of a circumstance’ as one who sees something which appears to be confused will see the distinct elements which comprise it when looking closely, examining it. (See my work on Shoroshim at www.halakhah.com for the roots of these words.)

“In effect, the Creation process was that at the beginning of each of the six days, substances were all mixed up and confused. The component elements were not as yet refined and defined so as to be distinguishable and unique beings unto themselves.

“For example, we see that it says, at the beginning of the second day, that the firmament was ‘within’ the water, and then God separated it out. He then separated the waters from the waters and the water above the firmament from the water below it. Or on the fourth day, God separates the day from the night, and so forth.

“In effect, what we see is that God first creates jumbled, confused, mixed components which He then separates into pieces and gives distinct functioning. This can be seen for each of the six days if you carefully read the text.

“Thus, although it says “evening and the morning,” the text is really saying that ‘there was mixture, there was separation.’ That is, first there was a mixture (evening when the day and night ‘mix,’) and then morning (when the sunlight shines and things which were murky and hard to see suddenly become vivid and clear). This is why it first says “evening and the morning.” First situations are confusing for the observer. He is uncertain as to what he is actually looking at, and it may even become impossible for him to see it as the night falls and it gets darker. But then, as morning and sunrise approaches, he begins to see things as they really are!) Such can be implied from the Hebrew text. (Incidentally, the Hebrew word *erev* is more precisely ‘twilight’).

“Now, this analysis is not applicable for the seventh day as no such creative “creating” was done. The seventh day exists as an independent entity, and there was no mixture at its beginning, so there is no separation process. As such, the seventh day stands unique as it was complete from the beginning and no processing took place thereon. For that reason, it is worthy of being sanctified as a special and holy day, and no need for an ‘evening’ and a ‘morning.’

“However, as I have explained, no commandment to sanctify the day can be in any way implied from the Genesis text. At this point in the “evolution,” if you will, of God’s directives to mankind and later the Israelites, there is no requirement for man to sanctify the day. This God did on His own.”

Here we have it from one of the world’s leading Hebrew linguists! There is no Sabbath ordinance in Genesis 2. There is no higher authority to turn to for a credible rebuttal, and his assessment agrees with what other Hebrew linguists have said over the centuries. However, we learned from Brauner that our theory that the “evening and the morning” suffix was some kind of special hidden linguistic meaning indicator is wrong. We retract this claim that we have shouted so loudly in previous editions. However, as we can illustrate ourselves, it does function as a very visible meaning indicator that calls attention to the fact that God’s cessation from creating Planet Earth had no end. We will explain how this works shortly when we discuss what the Venerable Bede wrote about its significance around 700 CE.

It is dangerous for Sabbatarians to seize a single passage from a text written in a language that most likely evolved out of Egyptian and which passed through a whole succession of Canaanitish, proto-Hebrew languages into Ancient Hebrew, and then to attempt to use it to establish a doctrine that is intended to regulate the belief and practice of all Christians. This misguided concept is fully dependent on a Creation origin for the Sabbath ordinance, but no such thing exists.

Ancient Hebrew is one of the most difficult languages to translate. It is an extremely primitive, “bare-bones” language with a root structure, yet it has a nearly miraculous ability to communicate complex ideas. Paradoxically, despite its primitive simplicity, Hebrew has become, within the last decade or so, a key language for the sciences. It is claimed that Modern Hebrew now seems to have more in common with mathematics than any other language. Among its other interesting characteristics, Hebrew actually communicates ideas by words that are left out but could have been present. At the same time it is an “action language.” There are few words that can directly express abstract ideas, so a form of an action word or an example of the result of an action has to be used instead. In view of the sheer power of the Hebrew language, despite these apparent limitations, some Jewish and Christian scholars have called it “The Language of God.”¹⁷ Benner is considered to be a leading expert in Hebrew language theory. For additional information on the structure of Hebrew, please visit Jeff Benner’s website:

<http://www.ancient-hebrew.org/>

As we mentioned earlier, the Ancient Hebrew language provides the reader with a bare-bones structure. The reader is expected to be able to fill in the blanks via a special “code book” of deciphering instructions that were passed down in oral form from one generation to another. If the reader has no knowledge of this instruction set, he or she cannot get the full meaning out of the written text. This set of interpretive rules goes way beyond mere rules or grammar, word definitions, word usage, and idioms. Some of the key meaning indicators in Genesis 2, Exodus 16, and Exodus 20 represent none of these things. They are literally invisible to anyone who does not have an intimate knowledge of the Ancient Hebrew language’s orally transmitted “tool kit.” Only a few Hebrew scholars have the deep training in Ancient Hebrew that is necessary to possess the language skills required to extract the full meaning of the written language. Experts like Jeff Benner say that there are some passages in the Hebrew Bible that likely will never be fully understood because the needed deciphering tools have been lost and/or the cultural context remains unknown.

Studying the Book of Genesis presents challenges found nowhere else in the Bible. The Lilith Myth is an important part of Hebrew culture that seems to have arisen from a combination of the unique nature of the Ancient Hebrew language and the way the text of Genesis seems to be pieced together. This myth arose very early in Hebrew culture, and there is even a reference to it in the Book of Isaiah.

According to the Lilith Myth, Adam had two wives. The first one was named Lilith. She refused to take a submissive role, rebelled, and tempted Adam’s second wife, Eve, into sin by appearing to her as the talking Serpent at the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil. Hebrew linguists have listed about 20 contextual clues within the first few chapters of Genesis that suggest that this meaning is embedded within the text.

Something like the Lilith Myth would not likely have arisen were it not for the dependency of written Ancient Hebrew on the orally-maintained “code book” that resulted from the primitive root structure of the language. Furthermore, it probably would not have arisen were it not for the fact that there appear to be three Creation stories present instead of one. As we explain elsewhere, this aspect of the Genesis record almost certainly resulted from Moses’ methodology of assembling the Book of Genesis from cuneiform tablets authored by the eyewitnesses to the events.

Since there is a clear reference to Lilith in the text of Isaiah 34:14, this myth developed at a time when the books of the Old Testament were written in the same language that the everyday person spoke. This fact means that there is almost no chance that the readers could not have understood the Ancient Hebrew language in which these things were recorded. Elsewhere we document the fact that Ancient Hebrew was spoken up until around 500 BCE. The Book of Isaiah is believed to have been written in the 8th Century BCE (See the *Wikipedia* article on the Book of Isaiah), or several hundred years before Ancient Hebrew evolved into the “Modern” Hebrew that was spoken by the Jews during the Second Temple Period.

In Isaiah 34:14, Lilith is translated as “screech owl” in English. The limited accuracy of the English translation reflects a knowledge deficit of Hebrew culture by the translators. Here is helpful information acquired by consulting a Hebrew-English Interlinear Bible and then turning to Strong’s Concordance for a study of the key word’s etymology:

Strong's Concordance

liyliyth: owl

Part of Speech: Noun Feminine

Transliteration: liyliyth

Phonetic Spelling: (lee-leeth')

Short Definition: owl

Brown-Driver-Briggs

Noun feminine Lilith (Milton Che night-hag), name of a female night-demon haunting desolate Edom; probably borrowed from Babylonian, Isaiah 34:14 (Late Hebrew id.; Assyrian lîlîtu, DIHWB 377; Syriac PS1951; on the development of legends of Lilith in later Judaism, see BuxLex. Talmud., under the word Cheon the passage GrünbaumZMG xxxi.1877, 250 f. (perhaps only apparent, a popular etymology לילה — Connexion with לין see 18.

These ancient Hebrews saw three distinctly different Creation stories within the first few chapters of Genesis. These accounts differ significantly in describing the circumstances of the creation of Adam's wife. In the Creation account of what happened when God introduced Eve to Adam, these hidden meaning indicators appear to signal that Adam said something that compared her to a previous wife.

Co-author, William H. Hohmann, observes an interesting irony. The same people who saw the Lilith Myth embedded in the Genesis creation story also failed to see a Sabbath ordinance in it. So Hohmann asks how it is possible that non-Jewish Hebrew “scholars” like the Seventh-day Adventists can “see” it. He observes that the only answer is that their theology demands it!

Modern Hebrew now has a dramatically larger vocabulary and has evolved rapidly since it became the official language of the new Nation of Israel. Modern Hebrew is similar enough to Ancient Hebrew that the Jews of today can read the old language with a certain degree of success. (Recall that “Modern” Hebrew was resurrected by the Jewish people and declared to be its national language around the time the Nation of Israel was founded in 1948.)

**HOW ADVENTISM LAUNCHED OUR CURRENT KNOWLEDGE
OF THE FACT THAT THERE WAS NO SABBATH UNTIL THE EXODUS**

In 1982 a team of biblical scholars, working under the leadership of Evangelical scholar, D.A. Carson, published their definitive findings in regard to the Sabbath-Sunday Question in the 1982 book, *From Sabbath to Lord's Day*. Carson published this research as a rebuttal to the 1977 book published by SDA Sabbath scholar, Dr. Samuele Bacchiocchi, *From Sabbath to Sunday*. Carson and his associates laid out a formidable case against Bacchiocchi's research methods and conclusions, each chapter having been researched and written by outstanding scholars with expertise in each area impacted by Dr. Bacchiocchi's claims. *From Sabbath to Sunday* was widely circulated to the world's clergy, beginning in 1977. The credibility suggested by his credentials-- a Seventh-day Adventist graduating from the Pontifical Gregorian University at the Vatican-- gave his work a great deal of scholarly weight. Partially as a result, there are Evangelical clergy who believe that the seventh-day Sabbath is required to comply with the keeping of the Ten Commandments, and the only reason why Christians can get away with observing Sunday is because grace covers the sin of Sabbath-breaking.

While Bacchiocchi explored a variety of Sabbath-Sunday issues in *From Sabbath to Sunday*, his main focus was to re-establish the credibility of the idea that the so-called "change" of the Sabbath was the result of sinister forces conspiring to destroy the true worship of God. In his doctoral studies at the Gregorian University at the Vatican, he discovered that the Seventh-day Adventist teaching that the Catholic Church "changed" the Sabbath was deceptive. He was forced to concede that this abandonment happened hundreds of years earlier. One of his theories was that the Church at Rome "changed it" between 100-140 CE because it feared that the Roman Empire's persecution of Jews would be extended to Christians because of the SUPPOSED common link of the Sabbath. (The first pope was seated about the year 600 CE.) Another of his theories was that Mithraism-- or sun worship-- had become popular by this time and had influenced Christians to adopt the same day of worship for utilitarian purposes. These and his other theories have been thoroughly debunked by the Carson team and various other scholars. Virtually all of these conspiracy theories are outlined and refuted in *Lying for God*.

SDA leaders have known for a long time that Ellen White was dreadfully wrong about the Catholic Church changing the Sabbath. Subsequent to the release of Bacchiocchi's 1977 book, *From Sabbath to Sunday*, SDA Sabbath scholars began developing their own alternate conspiracy theories. Even the General Conference developed one with a team approach. A plausible Sabbatarian-friendly theory was desperately needed for two reasons. First, Carson and his associates had thoroughly discredited Bacchiocchi's ideas, leaving in disrepute the entire concept that sinister forces had worked together to change the Sabbath from Saturday to Sunday. Second, Bacchiocchi's theories conflicted with what Ellen White, the Seventh-day Adventist prophetess, claimed God told her. Any new theory would have to solve both issues for Adventists, but such was never achieved. Most Seventh-day Adventists, including the majority of the clergy, are unaware of this unsavory history because the source for Sabbath-related things is sifted through the restrictive knowledge filter of the Seventh-day Adventist Church (note that information control is a practice of cults).

The Carson scholars drew from the greatly improved understanding of the diversity of the early church to demonstrate that these conspiracy theories were historically impossible and that the scholars of the Early Church had been articulate in spelling out the biblical reasons for Sabbath abandonment and rejection. Unfortunately, Seventh-day Adventist apologists have never acknowledged the existence of Carson's comprehensive research or made any effort to refute it, despite the passage of over 30 years. This is the epitome of Ostrich Theology, a term coined by William Hohmann, to describe the tendency of the SDA to ignore any and all evidence to the contrary of their positions and beliefs.

In light of the definitive qualities of the Sabbatarian work of Carson and his team, anyone who wishes to write credibly in favor of Sabbatarian theology is obligated to put together evidence that would invalidate their findings. He or she would have to produce, for example, compelling evidence from the Creation account that would credibly demonstrate that what God did on the 7th day represents a prescription for what man must do at regular seven-day intervals. The cognitive dissonance here appears to be insurmountable since God never worked again at creating Planet Earth, but human beings were given the responsibility of working the Garden even before the Fall of Man.

Sabbatarian apologists owe it to their readers to first refute—before writing such a book—the stance of Dr. Reuven Brauner, who is considered by many to be the world's leading authority, that there is no Sabbath in the Genesis record. Without a Sabbath in Genesis, there is no credible foundation for a Sabbatarian belief system outside the confines of the Old Covenant, since the Patriarchs before Moses would have lived without even knowing about the existence of any Sabbath.

By the time of the release of the 11th Edition of *Lying for God*, a responsible and ethical writer of a book designed to defend Adventism and Sabbatarianism would be obligated to his or her readers to first disprove the advanced studies of the Lying for God research team in regard to the second chapter of Colossians 2. Our team discovered and presented the fact that Numbers 28 of the Law of Moses required that two spotless lambs be sacrificed every weekly Sabbath in addition to the normal animal and grain sacrifices, solidifying the evidence that the weekly Sabbath was, as Paul said, one of the shadowy symbols of Christ that perished when the Real Spotless Lamb of God was nailed to the Cross. In the 12th Edition, we added to this evidence the fact that Ezekiel 46 requires the sacrifice of six spotless, male, young lambs on the weekly Sabbath.

THE HEBREW LINGUISTICS OF GENESIS 2

In looking at the Hebrew linguistics of Genesis 2, we will first take you through the process of translation from Hebrew into English with just one word—the word SHABAT—which means CEASE or STOP. A secondary definition of the word is REST, but this meaning came into the Hebrew language later.

Let us study the Brown-Driver-Briggs definition of the word in Genesis 2 which is popularly translated as “rest:”

https://docs.google.com/document/d/1IFWG4XY4iGOin4wnaS4fRg68RzWuUQzjgjn5f_3VM/edit

This definition shows the primary, secondary, and tertiary meanings of this word in general. The first and oldest meaning is CEASE as it came in from the Semitic word SABATU, which, as we will explain elsewhere, got its origin in the propitiative mid-month Full Moon celebration that marked the ceasing of the Moon's waxing and the beginning of the Moon's waning. Then the definition explains the meaning of the word when it is found in its QAL PERFECT MASCULINE form. This form of the word is indicated to be the form used in Genesis 2:3, and its use emphasizes the concept that the CEASING and DESISTING is absolute. (Keep in mind that the tertiary definition did not come into the Hebrew language until later-- perhaps not until after the first sacred Sabbath was given to Israel during the Exodus Journey:

Brown-Driver-Briggs H7673 (shabath)

נָשָׁבַת ⁷¹ **verb cease, desist, rest** (As šabātu, probably cease, *be completed* DI^{WB} Zim^{KAT} 3. 593 (Jen^{ZA} iv (1889), 277 f. is sceptical); Arabic سَبَّطَ *cut off, interrupt*; Late Hebrew has נִשְׁכַּח *neglect*, etc., Aramaic נִשְׁכַּח *cost of neglect*); —

Qal₂₇ *Perfect*3masculine singular נָשָׁבַת **Genesis 2:3** +; 3 plural נִשְׁבָּתוּ Lamentations 5:14, etc.; *Imperfect*3masculine singular יִנְשָׁבוּ Hosea 7:4; יִנְשָׁבַת Proverbs 22:10 2t.; 3 feminine singular תִּנְשָׁבַת Leviticus 26:35; תִּנְשָׁבַת Leviticus 26:34; Nehemiah 6:3 +, etc.; —

1 cease: (absolute 13 t.) of seasons Genesis 8:22 (J); manna Joshua 5:12 (P), etc., Isaiah 14:4 (twice in verse); Nehemiah 6:3 +; with מִן Hosea 7:4 3t.

2 *desist* from labour, *rest*:

a. with מִן (of god) Genesis 2:2,3(P).

The translators who seek to translate the Ancient Hebrew language into English have to look at what the Hebrew word would mean to a Hebrew reader studying the written passage in the same language in which he or she speaks. In this case, this language is Ancient Hebrew. To translate from one language into another one is never easy. Hebrew is a very primitive language. Among other things, it lacks words that describe abstract ideas. So when the literal Hebrew says that someone “knelt down” before someone or something, it probably would have registered, to a Hebrew reader, that this person who was bowing to was being offered “respect.” In the primitive states of Hebrew language development, it does not appear that there was a word for the abstract concept of respect.

Now back to the focus on one particular word—SHABAT. The Hebrew Interlinear Translation from the people at *Scripture For All* shows only the final result of the translation process, and not showing the intermediate stage. Their conclusion is that in the context of Genesis 2, the word SHABAT means STOPPED or CEASED. Please read the passage below carefully so you can get an idea of how the translation process ultimately turned out.

The following text is the English part of Scripture for All’s Hebrew-English Interlinear Bible’s literal translation of Genesis 2:1-3.19

“And they are being finished the heavens and the earth and all of host of them and he is finishing Elohim in (the) day the seventh work-of-him which he-did and he-is-ceasing in (the) day seventh from all-of work-of him which he-did and he is-blessing Elohim day-of the seventh and he-is-making-holy him that in him he-ceased from all-of work-of him which he-created Elohim to do-of.

Now, let us see how the intermediate step worked in the case of the word, SHABAT. Please study this passage as it is rendered in Jeff Benner’s Mechanical Translation of the passage.²⁰ Notice that the Hebrew verb for CEASED came through this process unchanged in both verse two and verse three. They went into the translation process as CEASED, and they came out of the interlinear translation process as CEASED. The third meaning ascribed to this word listed in a Hebrew dictionary is REST, but the definition of rest did not come into the Hebrew language until later in the language’s development.

One Sabbatarian apologist argues that the two dots underneath the Hebrew characters for the word, CEASED in Verse 2 indicate that the consonants are to be doubled and that the end result is the Hebrew word SHABBAT. If this were to be true, we would have the same noun form of the word for SABBATH as the one used in Exodus 20, thus causing the seventh day of creation to be identified as “Sabbath”. These dots are called NIQQUDS. They are guides to pronunciation and were not added to Hebrew writing until the early Middle Ages (<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Niqqud>). There is another kind of pronunciation cue marking that is added to the center of a character. It is called a DAQUET.

https://docs.google.com/document/d/1f6AZ8yaQ-6ukNSqCI_6Ti8DUa0LQpfYbUxdMbUi8AiE/

One of its functions includes the ability to indicate that the consonant should be pronounced “double.” Once again, these marks indicate only nuances of pronunciation and not of meaning. And, in both cases, these markings were not added to Hebrew writing until the early Middle Ages.

A careful analysis of Benner’s literal translation helps us to see why the author of Genesis had no choice but to use the word CEASED/STOPPED with the intent of communicating the concept of CEASED/STOPPED. SHABAT is not an abstract concept. At the same time, there are times when CEASED cannot mean rested. Here are two examples:

1. Let us say that a man is chopping wood. He finishes this task and goes over to the fireplace and starts cleaning the fireplace and chimney. In this case he CEASED one thing and began working on another thing. When he ceased, he didn’t rest.
2. Let us say a man is sleeping. He wakes up. When he wakes up, he ceases to sleep, but he also ceases to rest! When most people wake up in the morning and cease sleeping, they begin working.

Notice carefully what the literal Hebrew says about God’s working. He STOPPED working at the task of creating Planet Earth. In reality, God stopped creating Planet Earth the moment Eve came forth from His hand on the 6th day, and not the 7th day.²² The following explanation of the ascendancy of the 6th day in the Genesis Creation record is found in *The Genre of Biblical Commentary: Essays in Honor of John E. Hartley*, edited by Timothy D. Finlay, William Yarchin, from page 209. [Google Books Reference](#).

“Days Six and Seven. The exact expression, “the sixth day” (Hebrew characters), a determined construct chain, is unique to the biblical literature, and it is unique to the corresponding numerical constructions of Genesis 1, representing the final climactic day of God’s creative work.²⁰ This determined construction represents one of the several literary devices employed by the biblical author to highlight the significance of day six in the creation account.²¹

Footnotes:

²⁰ The noun [Heb] with the ordinal “sixth” occurs 6 times in the Hebrew Bible (Gen 1:31; Ex 16:5, 22, 29; Num 7:42; 29:29). The construction in Gen 1:31 is unique, a construct chain with the determined ordinal number in the absolute position. The five subsequent occurrences consist of the definite noun followed by the definite ordinal adjective, [Heb.], (the object of the preposition [Heb.] in each instance.)

²¹ In addition to the unique designation [Heb. Char.], the prominence of day six in Genesis 1 is signified by (1) word count allotment; (2) doubled creation day (similar to day four); (3) creation of humanity in the image of God; (4) extended commentary (recapitulation) of day six in Genesis 2.

Sabbatarian apologists become confused about **H7673 (shabath)** when they insist on using a definition of it that did not come into the Ancient Hebrew language until late in the language’s development, and by this we mean RESTED. Elsewhere we explain that H7673 came from Semitic word that meant DIVIDER as associated with the meaning of CEASING-STOPPING. A typical Sabbatarian argument seizes on the fact that H7673 is in the Qal Perfect verb form, which emphasizes the “absoluteness” of the end to God’s “resting.” This reading of the passage is required for Sabbatarian apologists because, if God were to have actually rested, the lack of the evening and morning clause would function to emphasize that God’s rest was for 24 hours only. In turn, this reading of the passage would have suggested that God literally rested on this one full seventh day, thus indicating that every seventh day got blessed since it was the seventh part of an assumed complete seven-part week. But the preferred meaning of H7673 is actually STOPPED/CEASED, which negates the idea that God took physical rest on the 7th day.

In order to force this Sabbatarian-friendly reading into Genesis 2, they find themselves in a position where they must find some way to discount the significance of the striking absence of the suffixical phrase, “the evening and the morning.” As noted elsewhere, the writer of Genesis 2 could not use this suffixical phrase in this place because the reference to an EVENING would have suggested that there was an end to God’s cessation of His creative work of making Planet Earth. From a logical perspective, once God CEASED His “program” of creating Planet Earth, His STOPPING WORKING on this special project was eternal.

The process by which Sabbatarians evade this problem is to say that since this suffix had been used after each of the first six days, these words have become so full of meaning that they transfer to the account of the 7th day, making it unnecessary to repeat these words again. This claim is based on an unwarranted assumption.

The facts of the Hebrew linguistics of Genesis prove beyond any reasonable doubt that God CEASED His creative activities rather than RESTED-RESPOSED on the 7th day. And since God CEASED on this one and only day, there is no possibility of constructing a credible interpretation of Genesis 2 that would permit the application of a requirement for all the world to REST on every subsequent seventh-day multiple of the 7th day of Creation. Genesis 2 is about what God did. Human beings could not possibly CEASE creating Planet Earth on any day of the week. Non-Sabbatarian theologians believe the 7th day of Creation was a literal 24 hour day, just like the first six days, but it was a day to be remembered as the day when God ceased His Planet Earth creating project and turned to other God-work “tasks” such as sustaining the Universe.

Therefore, it is linguistically and logically impossible that what God said about the 7th day of Creation could be construed as anything that Man even could possibly do or was responsible to do under any circumstances. The 7th day was simply a day that DIVIDED God's special work of creating Planet Earth from His routine God-work that He does all the time as the Sustainer of the Universe. No wonder Judaism has never accepted the idea of a Sabbath ordinance prior to the Giving of the Manna during the Exodus Journey.

THE OPEN-ENDED DAY CONCEPT

Widely acknowledged by biblical scholars, this open-ended nature of the "rest" of Genesis 2:2-3, should have been translated "ceased" in English.²⁶ See G.C.D. Howley, gen. ed., *A Bible Commentary for Today: Based on the Revised Standard Version* (London: Pickering & Inglis, 1979), p. 136. See also D. Guthrie and J. A. Motyer, eds., *The New Bible Commentary Revised* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1970), p. 83.

In previous editions of *Lying for God* we had claimed that the "evening and morning" suffix phrase was a Hebrew literary device which limited the blessing of this one seventh-day to that one and only day. Dr. Reuven Brauner, who has established himself as a world-renown Hebrew linguist by translating an extensive collection of ancient Hebrew documents into English and other languages, corrected us. Dr. Brauner explained that the absence of this suffixal phrase probably does function as a divider between the six day of God's Creative work and the days of God's "other" work. His opinion correlates our study of the etymology of the Hebrew word SHABAT, evolved from the Semitic word that is spelled something like SABBATI which means "propitiation." How the Hebrew word for REST (shabat) is tied to the concept of "rest" is like this. The Semitic "sabbati", given to the pagan "sabbath" days celebrated on the seventh and last day of each phase of the Moon served as dividers between the work days and the sabbaths (sabbati).

The Venerable Bede (672-735 CE) called attention to this missing evening and morning clause and focused on the symbolic absence of the evening part. He did not think of it in terms of a divider; but rather he did see the reason why Moses could not have written this suffixal phrase after giving his account of what God did on the seventh day. The presence of an "evening" would suggest that God's rest ended on the seventh day and therefore, He would be required to begin work again. However, God's "rest" actually lasts forever if we are speaking about the "rest" following the completion of His creation of Planet Earth.

"[2.3a] And he blessed the seventh day and sanctified it. He did this namely with that blessing and sanctification which he revealed more fully to his people in the Law, saying, Remember that you keep holy the Sabbath day. Six days shall you labor, and shall do all your work. But on the seventh of the Sabbath of the Lord your God, you shall do no work. And a little further on, For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea and all things that are in them, and rested on the seventh day. Therefore the Lord blessed the seventh day and sanctified it. Truly this blessing and sanctification of the seventh day was done as a type of a greater blessing and sanctification. For just as the blood of the Lord's passion, which had to be poured out once for the salvation of the world, was signified by the frequent, indeed, daily sacrifices under the Law, so also by the rest of the seventh day, which always used to be celebrated after the works of the six days, was prefigured [by] that great day of the Sabbath, on which the Lord was to rest once in the grave, after having

completed and perfected on the sixth day all his works, by which he restored the world, long since lost, which he had completed on the sixth day. On that day [ed. Note: The Great Sabbath observed once a year by most of the early churches, and especially the Eastern church] also, being mindful, as it were, of the old work, he declared in clear language that he now completed the salvation of the world. For when he had taken the vinegar, he said, It is consummated. And bowing his head, he gave up the ghost. But also this sanctification and blessing of the seventh day, and the rest of God on that day after his works, signified that they were exceedingly good, because each of us after good works, which he himself works in us both will and to accomplish, struggles toward the rest of heavenly life in which we may enjoy his eternal sanctification and blessing. Hence it is proper that this seventh day is not described as having had an evening.”

Calvin B. Kendall, *Bede: On Genesis*, pp. 95-97, A Google Book.

Since SDA Sabbath scholar, Dr. Samuele Bacchiocchi, released his iconoclastic defense of the Sabbath in 1977, other scholars have recognized the significance of the absence of the evening and morning from the seventh day. A. T. Lincoln wrote:

“Elsewhere in Genesis 1 and 2 there are explicit commands for the first pair to follow. Not only is there no explicit command and no use of the term ‘Sabbath’ there is also no mention of humanity. The depiction of the seventh day in the schema is solely in terms of God. The climax of God's creative activity is not the creation of male and female so much as His own triumphant rest. It is true that His blessing and hallowing of the seventh day are not meant to be considered simply in a vacuum but have some relation to the created word. What is critical, however, is the nature of that relation. The seventh day is to be seen as representing the completion of the whole creation, and therefore in its blessing the whole creation is blessed. This day is related in this way to the other six, and yet at the same time is different, for it has no boundaries. The six days have their goal in a day that is different from the others and this is the force of the hallowing or sanctifying of the seventh day. Creation, therefore, is blessed with special reference to its goal, God's rest, which is set apart in some sense for all His creation including man and woman; but the precise sense awaits further unfolding. This is the relation of God's seventh day to humans; anything further must be read into the text and is often read back into it from Exodus 20:11. Claus Westermann, however, in his commentary on Genesis remarks judiciously that one can find here neither an institution of nor a preparation for the Sabbath but that its later establishment is reflected.”

A.T. Lincoln, “Chapter 12” in D. A. Carson, *From Sabbath to Lord's Day: A Biblical and Theological Perspective*, p. 348.

The Seventh day of Creation is proven to be a boundary day through two textual indicators:

1. No “evening and morning” suffix.

2. The association with the concept of the 7th day as a boundary day in the Semitic-Hebrew word linkage.

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE SIXTH DAY

Observe that if a Hebrew reader was studying this passage who could both speak and read Ancient Hebrew fluently, he or she would instantly recognize that the focus of the Creation account was on the 6th day—not the 7th day. While the author's account of the Creation story focuses on the conclusion of God's masterful Creation of Planet Earth and the incredible implications for the future of the newly created man and woman, Sabbatarians have built an entire religion on the false idea that God took a siesta on the seventh day.

The Creation account of the sixth day is so profound that the construction of the story of what happened on the sixth day is unique to all biblical literature. This form of expression is found nowhere else in the Hebrew Scriptures, and there is a good reason for it. Nothing in the Universe that God had created hitherto had come “within a million miles” of His masterpiece, Eve. Perhaps Adam fainted dead on the ground when God brought her to him, and God had to do quick CPR to get him breathing again. Perhaps all the angels wished that they could share a billionth of her beauty. In any case, the sixth day is all about God's finishing up the creation of Planet Earth after bringing Eve into existence, and the seventh day is merely an occasion designated to celebrate the completion of Creation that took place by the end of the sixth day.

What was He doing between the moment that Eve came forth from His hand on the sixth day and the morning of the seventh day when he “fattened up” the day and moved it to a different location? Considered alone and not in the context of how the Sabbath ordinance later became to be modeled after God's nearly insignificant actions on the seventh day, the author of Genesis might as well report that God got up in the morning, made His coffee, and began reviewing a report from His top angels on what was happening in the Universe. The account of the seventh day was insignificant and had no implications for mankind until God came along in Exodus 20 and used the “Days of Creation” model to build a sacred ordinance that would be a great blessing to the Jews.

The literal Hebrew says that God KNELT DOWN before the seventh day to show it honor. Since we are talking in the context of a Middle Eastern culture, God is explaining to the Hebrews how He honored the seventh day. Since God Himself is speaking in anthropomorphic terms about Himself, none of His glory is diminished. God is a Great Communicator. His Hebrew audience knew exactly what he meant.

The thing of most interest to us, in our consideration of the word SHABAT in terms of whether the word might better be translated as “rest” is clearly indicated by the reason given for why God respected the seventh day. On the seventh day, God resumed His normal work patterns, doing things that only God could do. He does not sleep because His constant watchcare over His Creation is essential to the maintenance of everything that exists.

What routine work did God do on the seventh day of Creation. First, he FATTENED UP the seventh day like a farmer-rancher would fatten up a cow for market. This process would involve stuffing the animal with rich grains and grass. The Hebrews, who read Genesis 2 for generations to come, would have understood this process to be labor intensive. This is the word translated as BLESSED by most English translations. However, the definition of BLESSED is a

secondary one that came into the Hebrew language later in its development.⁽²³ Brown-Driver-Briggs for *Strong's* H1288 (*barak*) courtesy of BibleHub.com.)

It would not be right to use this secondary definition of the Hebrew word until later in the developmental history of the Ancient Hebrew language. Therefore, the best translation of this wording would be that God showed RESPECT for the seventh day. The term, respect, is much "softer" appears to blunt the Sabbatarian's need to convince us that God made it an intrinsically, repeating day that has intrinsic sacredness.

Creating is one form of work, but so is picking up a day a day and putting it somewhere else so it will stand out. It is easy to understand how this task involved "real" work for God. He was faced with the task of moving the seventh day a little ways away from the other six days—far enough away that it could be noticeably different from the six previous days. Picture the task of moving a day in your imagination.

THE HEBREW TEXT CLARIFIES WHEN GOD ENDED HIS WORKING

The New English Translation (NET) cites an aspect of the Hebrew wording of Genesis 2 to indicate that this passage teaches that God finished His work ON or IN the 7th day. First, let us examine the word-for-word rendering of the passage in question from the *Hebrew-English Interlinear Bible* at Bible Hub:

He had done which His work seventh on the day God And ended He had done which His work from all seventh on the **day [bay-yo-wm]** and He rested [ceased] it and He sanctified the seventh day God And blessed and accomplished God had created which the work from all in it.

The Hebrew word, *yo-wm* means "day," and the prefix, *bay* (a suffix in Hebrew, actually) is a preposition translated "on" or "in the."

The New English Translation renders the Hebrew text like this, with an explanatory footnote:

2 The heavens and the earth[a] were completed with everything that was in them.[b] By[c] the seventh day God finished the work that he had been doing,[d] and he ceased[e] on the seventh day all the work that he had been doing. 3 God blessed the seventh day and made it holy[f] because on it he ceased all the work that he[g] had been doing in creation.[h]

The New English Translation provides Footnote C to explain how the Hebrew wording of this passage demands that the English be rendered as worded in the English:

Footnotes

- a. [Genesis 2:1](#) tn See the note on the phrase "the heavens and the earth" in [1:1](#).
- b. [Genesis 2:1](#) tn *Heb* "and all the host of them." Here the "host" refers to all the entities and creatures that God created to populate the world.
- c. [Genesis 2:2](#) tn *Heb* "on/in the seventh day."

EXAMPLES AND ADDITIONAL CLARIFICATIONS

Remember the two instances in which ceasing does not mean resting. In God's case, we are faced with Example Number One. It is more like God was chopping wood, stopped chopping wood, and started to mow the lawn. He ceased one task and began working at two other tasks. Just as soon as God CEASED from creating Adam and Eve on the sixth day, he began doing "God work" on the 7th day. His "God work" involved fattening up and moving the seventh day. An author who has spent some time thinking about the question of when and what kind of work God was doing on the 7th day is Terrence D. O'Hare. In his book, *The Sabbath Complete*, he provides this analysis.²⁴ Google Books reference:

<https://books.google.com/books?id=u3NMAwAAQBAJ&printsec=frontcover#v=onepage&q&f=false>

"One would expect His work to have been complete on the sixth day considering His statement of full acceptance and satisfaction with everything that He had made. Indeed, the New English Bible translation apparently perceived this as an error and records, "On the sixth day God completed all the work he had been doing," substituting the word "sixth" for "seventh." However, most translations retain the number "seven" despite [this apparent contradiction], [although] some [render it] "By the seventh day..." If God completed the creation on the sixth day and abstained from all creative work on the seventh day, why does the Scripture imply a work of God on His day of rest? Scripture advances that the sixth day ended with a sinless man and woman, because "God saw everything that He had made, and, indeed it was very good" (Gen.1:31), but interestingly, the seventh day does not warrant such an affirming conclusion. This poses the possibility of one more, non-creative work on the seventh day. Heschel and Kaplan suggest that the blessing of the seventh day itself was the special work accomplished (Heschel, *Sabbath*, p. 22). Heschel proposes that *menuah* was created on the Sabbath. This is taken to mean tranquility, serenity, peace, repose, happiness, stillness, and harmony (Kaplan, *Sabbath*, p. 20)."

The meaning of the word REST in Genesis 2 is widely understood by Hebrew scholars to mean CEASED or STOPPED. Harold Dressler observes (²⁵ Harold H.P. Dressler, *The Sabbath in the Old Testament*, pp 22–23, in D. A. Carson, ed. (1982), *From Sabbath to Lord's Day*). the following: Footnote #30 is provided afterward because it provides additional clarification. Also please observe that some sources appear to render the Hebrew characters from right to left as they would appear in a Hebrew manuscript, whereas other sources show them from left to right as they would be if they were written in English:

"A question that must be discussed in connection with the origin of the Sabbath is the etymology and meaning of the word *sbt* (Hebrew word translated "rest"). Lexicographers group it with the verb *sbt* (to cease, stop; to stop working, celebrate, to rest). Hehn emphasizes that the meaning "to rest" is foreign to this verb; the nature of *sbt* is "to cease", to be finished (J. Hehn, *Siebenzahl und Sabbat*, p. 101. Schmidt sees no original interdependence between the verb *sbt* and the noun "Sabbath"; there is only a very early connection (W. H. Schmidt, *Die*

Schöpfungsgeschichte der Priesterschrift (Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1964), p. 156. From the etymology, Beer and Mahler understand the action of “being complete” (G. Beer, Schabbath-der Mischnatractat “Sabbath”, p. 13; E. Mahler, Der Sabbath, p. 239.) De Vaux points out that the noun formation from the verb sbt is irregular; “the regular form would be shebeth.” In its grammatical form it “ought to have an active meaning, signifying ‘the’ day which stops something, which marks a limit or division...” (R. de Vaux, *Ancient Israel*, p. 476). The Sabbath would thus be a day that marks the end of the week or the ceasing of the week’s work.³⁰

Footnotes:

³⁰ (R. North, Derivation, p. 186, especially note 3: “sbt” has nothing to do with resting in the sense of enjoying repose... It certainly cannot be translated as “the day of rest.” This latter statement can be questioned [however] since it is based on the etymology rather than the usage of the word.”

Dressler indicates in his above comments that we need to leave the door open to the possibility that SHABAT could be legitimately translated to mean “the day of rest” because the decision not to translate it this way is based on word etymology rather than word usage. In our work to bring you readers our presentations, we feel that it is our responsibility to introduce possible reasons why you should not accept one or more of our conclusions. Notice that Dressler is not saying that SHABAT means THE DAY OF REST. He is merely telling us that we need to keep the door open to this possibility. We point out that the decision to translate this word STOPPED/CEASED is, to a certain degree, based on the fact that the Hebrews did not ever subsequently USE the verb, SHABAT to mean THE DAY OF REST. Instead, thousands of years after Creation at the Exodus, when the Sabbath was given to Israel for the very first time, the noun, SHABBAT was used to refer to the Sabbath day. Elsewhere we explain that the two b’s (bb) intensify the word to suggest a cessation of back-breaking work such as the Hebrews experienced as slaves in Egypt. Also, as our co-author, William H. Hohmann points out, the Sabbath was never a day of worship in the Jewish religious system. God instructed the Israelites to stay in their dwellings on the Sabbath. Also, Dressler has not thought out the issue that God did two different kinds of work within the seven-day period of the days of Creation. There was no time for God to rest, but it only takes an instant to CEASE one kind of work and start a different kind of work the next moment.

Genesis 2 is the story about what God did—not what mankind should do. It is God who did one kind of work, stopped doing that particular kind of work, and began doing a different kind of work. Human beings cannot do either of the kinds of work that God did during Creation Week. They can’t fatten up days or pick days up and put them down somewhere else. Even if God had done something that human beings could emulate, there is no command that they do so.

Once you realize what God DID on the seventh day, the idea that Adam and Eve should do what God did on every seventh-day interval for time and eternity becomes comical. In this case, Adam and Eve would have to stop creating and start fattening up and setting aside a day. They can’t create things out of nothing, and they can’t fatten up (bless) any day. In order to place a Sabbath ordinance in Genesis 2, there has to be something that God did which Adam and Eve could have done, but there isn’t.

Let us say for a hypothetical moment that God did rest on the seventh day and that Adam and Eve were to do what God did in an attempt by human beings to follow God's example. How long did God "rest" from creating Planet Earth? Forever! He never created Planet Earth again. Following God's example would have led Adam and Eve to total indolence. Notice that to call attention to the fact that God celebrated His creation of Planet Earth by CEASING for this work forever, He left out the suffixal phrase, "the evening and the morning," after His account of what He did on the seventh day. By contrast, He included this phrase after the account of His creative activity on all the six previous days. As co-author, Margie Littell, points out, the purpose of the "evening and morning" phrase was to establish time limits. A day's limits were given as an evening and a morning added together. Without an evening at the end of the seventh day, indication is made of the fact that God's "rest" from creating Planet Earth would never end.

THE CONCEPT OF PROPITIATION WITH "SHABAT"

The difficulty of equating the "resting" of God in Genesis 2 with a Sabbath becomes virtually impossible when the Semitic derivation is considered. The Hebrew word for "Sabbath" was derived from the Semitic word for propitiation. From the earliest times the Semites avoided the performance of certain activities on the fifteenth day of the month in an effort to avoid the ire of the gods. Later the religions of the peoples who descended from the Semitic race avoided certain forms of work on the 7th, 15th, 21st, and 28th days of the month on the basis of the principles of propitiation. These days corresponded to the last day of each of the seven days of the four phases of the Moon. It is difficult to imagine that God would institute a propitiation-based ordinance prior to the Fall of Man. Propitiation is focused on the theme of payment for evil once that evil has been committed. The Godhead, in discussing the Fall of Man, voiced concern that as a result of their disobedience, Adam and Eve had just then, at that moment, acquired the ability to understand evil. Prior to eating the forbidden fruit, they had understood only "good." This fact fundamentally rules out even the possibility of a Sabbath ordinance prior to the Fall of Man.

In short, while the concept of REST (CESSATION) has an etymological connotation of propitiation, there is no intent of the writer to bring anything related to propitiation into the discussion. God STOPPED. The heathen STOPPED doing certain kinds of activities on their Pagan "sabbaths" to atone for the things they had done to offend the gods.

The *Encyclopedia Biblica* provides insight into the meaning of the word that is popularly translated as "rest" in Genesis 2. Its article on the origin of the Sabbath cites Marcus Jastrow (1829–1903), a highly respected Hebrew linguist, demonstrated that the root word for this family of words was associated with the concept of propitiation. Jastrow notes that the Hebrew language is part of the Canaanite language family. The Canaanites, a Semitic people, seem to have utilized a pagan Sabbath system based on the four phases of the Moon and a day between each of those four phases that separated them which was reserved for cessation of various kinds of activity based on superstition. It is also mentioned, in the *Encyclopedia Biblica*, that:

“the Hebrew Sabbathon conveys the idea of propitiation or appeasement of divine anger and [it] is...the opinion [of Professor Jastrow] that the Hebrew Sabbath (i.e. CREATION Sabbath) was originally a Sabbathon—i.e. a day of propitiation and appeasement; marked by atoning rites... it was celebrated at intervals of seven days, CORRESPONDING WITH CHANGES IN THE MOON'S PHASES, and was identical in character with the four days in each month, i.e. 7th, 14th, 21st, and 28th!”

The MacMillan Company, 1899, *Encyclopedia Biblica*. p. 4180.

The same encyclopedia adds that:

“The word ‘Sabbath’ is a feminine form/word. The ROOT (of Sabbath) has NOTHING to do with resting in the sense of enjoying repose; in transitive forms and applications, it means: ‘to sever;’ ‘to put an end to;’ intransitively, it means ‘to desist’ — ‘to come to an end.’ In a transitive sense – ‘the divider’ – indicates the Sabbath as dividing the month. It certainly cannot be translated ‘The Day of Rest.’”

The MacMillan Company, 1899, *Encyclopedia Biblica*, p. 4173

One scholar explains in greater detail how the Hebrew word for “Sabbath” first became assimilated into the Hebrew language as a word associated with the concept of propitiation:

“In the *Journal of Biblical Literature*, October, 1914, Professor Meek, of James Milliken University, Decatur, Ill, subjects this problem to a new investigation. While the word “Sabbath” is Semitic, its equivalent goes back to pre-Semitic Sumerian days. For example, in a bilingual tablet the expression “day fifteen” is made equivalent to the Babylonian sha-bat-ti, which is the equivalent of the word Sabbath. But this takes it out of the connection which has so long been assumed and brings it into connection with the fifteenth of the month, the day of the full moon. Professor Meek rejects emphatically the relationship of Sabbath with the 7th, 14th, 19th, 21st, and 28th days of the month, affirming that there is no evidence anywhere in Babylonian literature that Sabbath was applied to any day other than the 15th. Moreover, the root of the word Sabbath is equated with another root, which means “to be complete,” so that the application of this word to the day of the full moon becomes at once easy.

“Professor Meek then pauses to consider the development of the celebration of the Sabbath as registered in the Old Testament. In early Israel, that is, in nomadic Israel, he denies that there was any celebration of the seventh day as Sabbath, the ritualistic observance of the seventh day being inappropriate to the nomadic life and becoming suitable only when the transition to agricultural conditions had been made. In Ex. 20:8 and Deut. 5:12 scholars agree that the statement was simply “observe” or “remember the Sabbath, to sanctify it,” the reasons attached for the sanctity of the Sabbath not appearing in the original Decalog. There is, moreover, direct evidence that in pre-exilic Israel the Sabbath was connected with the new moon (Amos 8:4); Hosea 2:13; Isa. 1:13; 2 Kings 4:23), and it is also known that the full moon had religious significance for the ancient Hebrews (Ps. 81:3). Moreover, in Lev. 23:11 there is a trace of the fact that the fifteenth of the month or the day of the full moon, was formerly

known as the Sabbath, even among the Hebrews. The author canvasses the testimony in the Old Testament and elsewhere of the importance of the moon in Semitic, especially in Hebrew thought. Moreover, the manner of the observances of the Sabbath in early Israel suggests that it was a full-moon festival without other cessation from daily toil than that which a religious festival suggested. Only much later was the idea of rest and cessation from all labor attached to the Sabbath. In the pre-exilic prophetic period the Sabbath festival and the new-moon festival seems to have fallen into disrepute. . . .

“It was in the exilic period that the ritualistic element of the Sabbath became dominant. . . at this time it became thoroughly disassociated from the moon and identified fully with the seventh day.”

The Homiletic Review, Volume 70, Article, “The Sabbath in the Old Testament.”

THE CONCEPT OF “SHABAT” AS A DIVIDER

As we mentioned a short while ago, the Hebrew word for “rest” in Genesis 2, SHABAT, came from a Semitic word that seems to have acquired its connection with the concept of propitiation because the pagan rest days, called SABBATI, divided the six working days of their lunar weeks from these rest days. As we learned from the above quotation from Dr. Meek, the word for Sabbath in Leviticus 23 is not like the words that had been used to reference the Sabbath up to this point. It is not the word used in Genesis 2 for rest, and it is not the same word used for “rest” in Exodus 20. It is, as Professor Meek pointed out, a word that is associated with the 15th day of the month-- in this case a day which divided the days during which the Moon waxed from the days that the Moon waned. Thus, the word for “rest” used in Genesis 2 implies that the 7th day was a divider between the days that God worked at creating Planet Earth and the days when He did other kinds of work. There was no resting for God on the 7th day because He transitioned from creating to fattening up and moving the 7th day to the side.

At the same time it is significant to observe that both the pagan system of rest days and the Hebrew system of Sabbaths correlated with the four phases of the Moon. There was a difference of one day between them, but this discrepancy is not “real” in that the numbering of the days of the month was different. The pagans began numbering their four lunar weeks with the day of the New Moon included in that count. The Hebrews began numbering their four lunar weeks with the day after the New Moon. The result was that the rest days were the same days, but they were numbered differently. Also, both the pagans and the Hebrews celebrated the full Moon day on exactly the same day, numbered, respectively, the 14th and the 15th days of the month. The Hebrews would have understood the concept of “dividing” in relationship to the 7th day of rest that followed the six days of Creation. The 7th day divided, or separated, God’s working days of Creation from His normal working days.

Since one of the goals of this book is to demonstrate what Adventists knew and when they knew it about the biblical and historical impossibilities of their doctrines, here is what a former president of Andrews University, the seat of the Seventh-day Adventist Seminary, said about the meaning of this Hebrew word, translated “rest.” Notice that Dr. Hasel is aware that the primary meaning of the verb for REST in Genesis 2 is STOPPED/CEASED. Also, observe that he lists the meaning of “to keep the Sabbath,” but does not mention that this possible definition of the word did not come into use until later in the language’s development:

“The relationship between the noun shabbat and the Hebrew verb shabat, to stop, cease, keep (sabbath) in the Qal, ‘to disappear, be brought to a stop,’ in the Nip’al ‘to put to an end, bring to a stop,’ in the Hip’il, remains disputed. Scholars have argued that the noun derives from the verb or that the verb derives from the noun. While there is no conclusive answer, it seems certain that the noun shabbat cannot be derived from the Akkadian term shab/pattu(m). A possible connection of shabbat with the number ‘seven,’ has been left open. In this case the Akkadian feminine form sibbitim, ‘seventh,’ may be considered as an ancestor of the Hebrew noun shabbat, ‘sabbath,’ also a feminine form, which, if the relationship holds, may have originally meant ‘the seventh [day].’ On this supposition ‘the seventh day’ in Genesis 2:2–3 would receive further light.”

Gerhard F. Hasel, “Sabbath” Vol. 5. p. 849 in David Noel Freedman (ed), 1992. *The Anchor Bible Dictionary*. New York. Doubleday.

Dr. Hasel does not deny that the verb, SHABAT, in Genesis 2 derives its connotations from the Semitic word, SABBATH, which carried the connotations of propitiation and dividing into the Hebrew from the pagan system of lunar rest days. With the sophisticated knowledge of Hebrew that some Adventist scholars have, it is safe to assume that many Adventist pastors and educators know that Genesis 2 does not teach that God reposed on the 7th day of Creation. In fact all Seventh-day Adventist clergy are required to take a course in Hebrew at SDA seminaries.

THE CONCEPT OF “SHABAT” VERSUS “NUAH”

Some Adventist apologists claim that the word for SABBATH in Exodus 20, the noun SHABBAT, is essentially interchangeable with the verb, SHABATH, in Genesis 2, so that the presence of SHABAT in Exodus effectively places a SHABATH-- the Sabbath Ordinance- back into Genesis 2. Yet, Dr. Hasel does not think these two words evolved from the same Semitic words. It is worthy to note that by the time we get to Exodus 20, the author of Genesis utilized both a word for CEASE/STOP/REST and a word that means the SABBATH itself. For an overview of this situation, we turn to Terrence D. O’Hare’s book, *The Sabbath Complete*.³³

“The word from which ‘rest’ is translated in Genesis 2:3-4 is shabath (note the single “b”). Used seventy-one times in the OT, it is usually translated ‘cease’ or ‘rest.’ In Genesis, shabath is used only three times, twice in the record of creation (Gen. 2:3-4) and once during the lifetime of Noah (Gen. 8:22). Other Hebrew words are translated ‘rest.’ For example, nuach is used in Deuteronomy 5:14 to describe the rest allowed the servants of Israelites on the Sabbath day, and in Exodus 20:11 to state that God rested on the seventh day. During the first 2,000 years of recorded biblical history, the Hebrew words for rest or cessation (shabath and nauch) are used only seven times, and none of the uses implies a recurring weekly cessation from labor. Not until the exodus from Egypt’s womb was Israel introduced to the Sabbath institution: ‘Tomorrow is a Sabbath rest, a holy Sabbath to the Lord’ (Exod. 16:23).”

Terrence D. O’Hare, *The Sabbath Complete*. [Google Books Reference](#).

There is a significant variation in the transliteration of shabath, and that is the presence of one “b” or two “b’s.” O’Hare explains:

“Derived from shabath, the doubled ‘b’ in shabbath has ‘an intensive force, implying a complete cessation of making to cease’ (Vine’s Dictionary, 542: Hamilton, ‘shabbat,’ TWOT, 2:902.) The Sabbath was a neologism for the Israelites. The author of Hebrews mentions the Creation rest as a type of the promise of heaven (Hebrews 4:4), but he does not say ‘spoken in a certain place on the Sabbath day.’ If the seventh day of creation was anything other than the seventh day, this would have been a logical place to mention the Sabbath, but foregoing that, the author is consistent with the historical Jewish understanding that the Sabbath was not given until Mount Sinai.”

The Hebrew-Interlinear Bible translates Exodus 20:11 word equivalent as follows:

“That six of days he-made Yahweh the heavens and the earth the sea and all of which in them he-is-stopping in the day of the seventh on so he blessed Yahweh.

Scripture 4 All, The Hebrew-Interlinear Bible, Exodus 20:11. [Internet Reference.](#)

One possible reason why the secondary reading of CEASE/STOPPING is to be preferred in this case is that the word NUAH is of Late Hebrew derivation. The “original” text of Exodus 20 is in Ancient Hebrew. While this question can only be settled by a scholar who is truly an expert in Ancient Hebrew, we present this possibility for your consideration. Notice this entry from Brown-Driver-Briggs for Strong’s Hebrew word #5117:

נָחָה noun rest; possibly also verb נָחָה Phoenician ; נָחָה verb rest (Late Hebrew id.; Aramaic נָחָה “Iph. Perfect), compare Levy cited CISi. 118 Lzb322; Assyrian nâhu, rest (inûh), and derivatives; Ethiopic: be extended, long, rarely rest; Arabic IV. is make camel lie down on his (“breast; resting-place of camel, compare Doughty Arab. Des. i, 397, ii, 63, 486, 64

We see, here, that the emphatic form of the word in Exodus possesses a connotation of stopping very hard physical tasks, as would be appropriate for describing the rescue of the Israelites from their slave labor in Egypt. This concept is significantly different. Note that if Adam and Eve were to have followed God’s example, they would have ceased creating, because that is what God stopped doing. If God had rested, which He did not, Adam and Eve would have never worked again, and the Garden of Eden would have turned into an unkempt jungle.

**CONCEPT: SET ASIDE FOR MEMORIALIZATION OR
FOR RELIGIOUS CEREMONY**

THE HEBREW WORD QUDASH

Recall that Benner builds a credible case for the fact that God set aside the seventh day for special recognition because He RESPECTED the day. The abstract concept of RESPECT is illustrated in the Hebrew by presenting God as kneeling down before the seventh day. **The reason for this "respect" is not that he rested on it, but that he, at some time during this day, concluded the doing of His "business."**

Below is Genesis 2:2-3 from Jeff Benner's website, The Mechanical Translation Project at <https://www.mechanical-translation.org/mtt/G2.html>. The mechanical translation in English is designated as RMT.

2 and~he~will~much~FINISH^(v) (וַיִּכַּל / wai'khal) Elohiym (אֱלֹהִים / e'lo'him) in~the~DAY (בַּיּוֹם / ba'yom) the~SEVENTH (הַשְּׁבִיעִי / hash'vi'i) BUSINESS~him (מְלָאכְתּוֹ / mé'lakh'to) WHICH (אֲשֶׁר / a'sher) he~did~DO^(v) (עָשָׂה / a'sah) and~he~will~CEASE^(v) (וַיִּשָּׁבֵת / wai'yish'bot) in~the~DAY (בַּיּוֹם / ba'yom) the~SEVENTH (הַשְּׁבִיעִי / hash'vi'i) from~ALL (מְכֹל / mi'kol) BUSINESS~him (מְלָאכְתּוֹ / mé'lakh'to) WHICH (אֲשֶׁר / a'sher) he~did~DO^(v) (עָשָׂה / a'sah)

RMT: and Elohiym finished in the seventh day his business which he did, and he ceased in the seventh day from all his business which he did,

3 and~he~will~much~KNEEL^(v) (וַיִּבָּרֶךְ / wai'va'rekh) Elohiym (אֱלֹהִים / e'lo'him) AT (אֵת / et) DAY (יוֹם / yom) the~SEVENTH (הַשְּׁבִיעִי / hash'vi'i) and~he~will~much~SET.APART^(v) (וַיִּקְדָּשׁ / wai'qa'deysh) AT~him (אֵתוֹ / o'to) GIVEN.THAT (כִּי / ki) in~him (בוֹ / vo) he~did~CEASE^(v) (שָׁבַת / sha'vat) from~ALL (מְכֹל / mi'kol) BUSINESS~him (מְלָאכְתּוֹ / mé'lakh'to) WHICH (אֲשֶׁר / a'sher) he~did~SHAPE^(v) (בָּרָא / ba'ra) Elohiym (אֱלֹהִים / e'lo'him) to~>~DO^(v) (לַעֲשׂוֹת / la'a'sot)

RMT: and Elohiym exalted the seventh day and he set him apart, given that in him he ceased from all of his business which Elohiym shaped to make.

This mechanical translation indicates that God did not finish His special work of creating Planet Earth until some time on the 7th day. Note that the "him" in "and he set him apart" appears to designate the 7th day itself and is not a reference to Himself. The ceasing of God's work seems not to have taken place on the 6th day of the days of Creation-- something that would be necessary for God to have done nothing at all on the 7th day in the way of work. And, keep in mind that setting aside a day is a type of God-work. It would be like God picked up the day and moved it out a little bit so it would stand out.

Note that the Hebrew text of Genesis 2:2-3 this Hebrew text does not permit the interpretation that every 7th day thereafter was similarly set aside.

One attribute of the giving rules and regulations in Hebrew culture is that usually the giving of a real law is followed by the rationale for the giving of that law. For example, honor your parents so your days may be long upon the Earth. We are limited to God respecting only ONE day in the history of Planet Earth.

Think of what it would mean if God had to bless every seventh-day thereafter. He would have to return every week and move the 7th day out of its place with regard to the previous six days, all to celebrate the fact that He transitioned from one kind of God work to another kind of God work

way back at Creation. Logic is cast aside if we take God to mean that multiples of the seventh day of Creation were shaped up and moved out of place. We must limit our assessment to the meaning of what all of this blessing and setting aside meant for this ONE day in the history of Planet Earth.

The possibility that this passage means that the 7th day is set aside for a holy purpose is permitted by this form of the word, QADASH. In Exodus 20:8 however, the form of this word used is different, and in later history of the Hebrew language it could have been used to mean something akin to being “set aside to be observed.” We maintain that the word, “qadash,” in Genesis 2:2–3 indicates that this one, single day in the history of Planet Earth was set aside for the holy use of “memorializing” God’s completion and cessation of creative activity. Please study the following Hebrew dictionary definitions from two authoritative sources:

Gen 2:3 (KJV) 3And GodH430 blessedH1288 the seventhH7637 dayH3117, and sanctifiedH6942 it: becauseH3588 that in it he had restedH7673 from allH3605 his workH4399 whichH834 GodH430 createdH1254 and madeH6213.

STRONG’S #6942 – QADASH

qadash: to be set apart or consecrated

Part of Speech: Verb

Transliteration: qadash

Phonetic Spelling: (kaw-dash')

Short Definition: consecrate

Word Origin

denominative verb from qodesh

Definition: to be set apart or consecrated

Credit: BibleSuite.Com

BROWN-DRIVER-BRIGGS – QADASH-STRONG’S HEBREW WORD #6942

Brown-Driver-Briggs, gives the following definitions. Note that a **secondary** use of this word can mean “to set aside for religious services,” but this definition must be excluded from Genesis 2:2–3 because;

1. The definition of being set aside for religious services entered the Hebrew language at a later stage in the language’s development, and
2. The context of Genesis 2:2–3 does not include a religious service (which was only introduced thousands of years after the fall).
3. Genesis 1:14 already specified that mankind would choose its own times for its sacred days according to the world clocks of the Sun and Moon.

The first meaning of the exact form of the word as used in Genesis 2 is “to set apart.” Note that this word has at least three forms and that sometimes the different forms have variants with their respective definitions.³⁵

THE HEBREW LINGUISTICS OF EXODUS 16

While there is an absence of evidence for the presence of a Sabbath ordinance in Genesis 2:1–3, there is definitive proof in Exodus 16 that there was no Sabbath prior to the arrival of the Israelites at the edge of the Wilderness of Sin. It was at this time that God tested Israel's obedience with the first Sabbath and the first provision of the Manna. God led the Children of Israel out of Egypt just prior to the Sabbath, so they were forced to journey and march on the first 7th day after they left Egypt, as well as every subsequent day up through a full week after they finally arrived at the edge of the Wilderness of the Moon (Sin). There are enough direct and indirect markers of the progression of time throughout the Exodus journey to prove that no Sabbath was kept for the first five weeks after the Children of Israel departed from the Land of Goshen in Egypt. A Canadian biblical scholar, Steve Rudd of Bible.CA, has completed a definitive study of the chronology of the Exodus journey that proves this point beyond any credible challenge.³⁶

36 See:

<http://www.bible.ca/archeology/bible-archeology-exodus-route-travel-times-distances-days.htm>

The claim that God introduced the Sabbath at any point prior to the Exodus journey is an insult to His character and His power, and terse questions arise that are not flattering to the Sabbatarian point-of-view. Did God not have the power to control the events of the Exodus so that the Israelites could keep the Sabbath? Since Sabbatarians believe the Sabbath is a moral law, would God require His People to break one of His moral provisions? Later, the transgression of the Sabbath law required the same penalty as that of murder– the death penalty. The fact that God totally ignored the issue of Sabbath observance on the Exodus journey is all the proof that any reasonable person should need that there was no Sabbath ordinance in existence at that time to keep or break.

The absolute proof that there was no Sabbath until the giving of the Manna is found in an analysis of what Moses wrote about the events in Exodus 16. To realize that this is proof, and not merely circumstantial evidence that there was no Sabbath prior to this event, one must understand the Hebrew concept of anarthrous construction as it relates to the differentiation of references to the chronological appearance of Jewish sacred days in Scripture.

EVIDENCE FROM DEFINITE VERSUS INDEFINITE ARTICLES

A Hebrew keeper of the written records who lived in ancient Israel would instantly recognize that the text of the Pentateuch was carefully worded to clarify that the Sabbath was introduced for the first time in Exodus 16. A biblical scholar who wrote during the time of Ellen White; Robert Cox, F.S.A. (Scotland), published a comprehensive two-volume report on the Sabbath-Sunday Question in 1865. The Seventh-day Adventist Church was organized in 1863. While Cox was reporting on the fatal-to-Sabbatarianism implications of Hebrew linguistics and the chronology of the Exodus on the Sabbath-Sunday Question, Ellen White was spinning her scripturally unsupportable, imaginative fairy tales about Adam and Eve, Enoch, and Abraham keeping the Sabbath. Sabbatarians sometimes quote Cox out of context because like Heylyn, Cox reported

on all sides of the Sabbath controversy. We quote Cox from his 1865 edition of the [*Literature of the Sabbath Question*](#).

In the Hebrew phrase here (Exodus 16 verse 23] translated, “the rest of the holy Sabbath,” and in that translated “a Sabbath” in verse 25, and “the Sabbath” in verse 26, the article is wanting; and consequently, instead of using the definite English article in the first and third instances, our translators [probably referring to the King James Version] ought to have used the indefinite, as they had done in the second instance. The words in verse 23 mean literally, “A resting of a holy Sabbath to Jehovah is tomorrow.” In verse 29, where the article is prefixed in the original, we have a correct translation in the phrase “the Sabbath,” the institution thus being now spoken of as known to the hearers. This distinction between the 29th and the previous verses in regard to the article, is preserved in the Septuagint, and also in De Wette's translation. Geddes inconsistently gives “a Sabbath” in verse 25 and 29, and “the Sabbath” in verse 26.

The true rendering of these verses ought to be kept in mind while judging whether or not the Sabbath is in this chapter spoken of as an institution previously known to the Israelites. In reference to that question, see Gen. ii. 3 (p. 3); Exod. xx.8-11 (p. 11); Deut. v. 12-15 (p. 25; Neh. ix.14 (p. 35); Ezek. xx. 12 (p. 44).

Robert Cox (1865), *Literature of the Sabbath Question*, Volume One, page 8.

The concept of definite versus indefinite pronouns to differentiate between something introduced for the first time from subsequent mentions is not unique to the Hebrew language. Let us say that a professor of mechanics is introducing his class to a new machine called a DISCOMBOOMERATOR. The students in his mechanical engineering class come in and take their seats. The professor says, “Let me introduce you to a discomboomerator. It takes things apart so well that they can’t be put back together again. The discomboomerator I am showing you today is made by the Winston C. Smith Company and costs \$3,500.” The professor would not likely say, “Let me introduce you to the discomboomerator.” The first thing he needs to establish is that there is a class of things called discomboomerators. A classification of things is less definite than that of a certain make and model of that classification. Similarly, the Sabbath’s general classification is that of rest days, or relatively short “vacations” from labor. Since God explained the concept of a day of rest that has a particular purpose, He can then be more definite in His references to something He has already explained— a particular kind of rest day that happens at the end of every week.

Here is an explanation that will help us understand why a proper translation of the definite versus indefinite article was so important to Cox. In the English language an ARTICLE modifies a noun (the name of a person, place, or thing), making it either indefinite (“a” or “an”) or definite (“the”). Unlike English, Hebrew does not have an indefinite article—just a definite article.

From: http://www.hebrew4christians.com/grammar/grammatical_terms

The linguistic term ANARTHROUS means, in reference to a noun, that it does not have an article, definite or indefinite, before it (e.g. the Sabbath or a Sabbath).

Nouns that do not have an article before them in Hebrew are generally translated into English with the indefinite article (e.g. “a” or “an”). However, in the case where the anarthrous nouns are qualitative, the Hebrew noun is often translated without any article. This fact means that if you find a Hebrew noun that has no article in front of it, the unwritten pronoun is indefinite, as in “A sabbath.”

From: http://www.hebrew4christians.com/grammar/grammatical_terms

There is significant academic recognition of this important characteristic of the Hebrew language. It was researched in depth by Harold H.P. Dressler as part of the Carson project. In 1982, he was teaching Old Testament as Associate Professor of Biblical Studies at Northwest Baptist Theological College in Vancouver, BC, Canada. His paper, “The Sabbath in the Old Testament,” is one of the chapters in the book, *From Sabbath to the Lord's Day* (1982), edited by D.A. Carson. Dressler provided these scholarly references in footnote number 39, p. 37 in *From Sabbath to Lord's Day*:

“The anarthrous construction carries significance (i.e., “The whole idea was new”) as pointed out by G. Rawlinson, *Exodus* (London: Kegan, Paul, Trench & Co., 1906), p. 52; A. Dillmann, (Leipzig: S. Hirzel, 1897), p. 175; P. Heinisch, *Das Buch Exodus* (Bonn: Hanstein, 1934), p. 133; G. Henton Davies, *Exodus* (London: SCM, 1967), p. 140. This construction of the word שַׁבָּת occurs only four times in the Pentateuch, Exodus 16:23; 20:10 (followed by v. 11 with an articular construction) and Exodus 35:2 (followed in v. 3 by an articular construction). In the latter three instances this construction occurs within a formula: “six days work may be done, but on the seventh day there is a Sabbath....” The anarthrous construction in Exodus 16:23, 25 is unique and may, therefore, well signify the newness of an idea.”

Harold H.P. Dressler, “The Sabbath in the Old Testament” fn. 39 in D.A. Carson (1982), *From Sabbath to Lord's Day*.

The www.bible.ca staff completed an exhaustive linguistics study that provides even further evidence that the Sabbath was introduced for the first time in Exodus 16. Combined with our understanding of the significance of the anarthrous construction of nouns in Hebrew, it is clear that the majority of the scholars who translated the Hebrew texts of the Old Testament into English have recognized the existence of this usage indicator for a long time. Here is a summary of what the researchers at Bible.CA have observed:

1. All the Jewish holy days are never introduced the first time in Scripture with the definite article “the” but with the indefinite “a” or “an”.
2. The indefinite article is used both before and after something has been instituted, but the definite article (THE Sabbath) is never used the first time something is introduced.
3. This powerful argument proves that the weekly Sabbath did not exist before Ex 16:23.
4. What makes it irrefutable, is the fact that every Jewish Holy Day follows this same pattern!

In conjunction with a number of other factors, the argument from anarthrous construction helps to make a watertight case that there was no Sabbath until the Exodus. This argument is strong, but it is not conclusive in itself. Some cautions must be observed:

1. The study must be done in Biblical Hebrew—not in a translation of any kind into any other language.
2. Common sense accommodation must be made for exceptions that would occur in normal speech patterns in any language. Subsequent mentions might dictate the use of an indefinite pronoun, depending on sentence structure and what the writer is trying to say.

If a study of the anarthrous construction is conducted in the original Hebrew (Ancient Hebrew, or Biblical Hebrew as it is alternatively called), the principle is followed 100% of the time. No one but a qualified Hebrew Linguist is able to conduct such a study.

Since Exodus 16 is our focus, it is significant to point out that linguists note that the absence of a definite pronoun before the first mention of the word SABBATH is highly unusual and unexpected in the Hebrew language. Robert Paul Martin (1948-2016), a Sabbatarian, opposed Dressler's suggestion that the anarthrous construction of the first mention of the Sabbath in Exodus 16 is significant, but he concedes to Dressler that, indeed, the absence of a definite pronoun before the word for "Sabbath" is rare:

"Dressler finally argues that 'the anarthrous construction [the word Sabbath (tBv; ;) without the definite article the] in 16:23, 25 is unique and may, therefore, well signify the newness of an idea.' Indeed, this is rare but it is not unique to Exod. 16:23, 25."

See page 25:

<http://heritagebooktalk.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/08/The-Christian-Sabbath-Sample-Chapter.pdf>

In normal Hebrew sentence construction, one would expect to see THE Sabbath, but instead, we see the equivalent of A Sabbath. Then Martin goes on to argue that certain exceptions negate this principle, but his study is inadequate to take into consideration the normal patterns of sentence structure that would require this anarthrous construction. We will analyze the subsequent mentions to see if the exceptions he cites are valid.

Here is a partial analysis. It is true of the Passover. It is true of the first mention of the Sabbath Obedience Test and the first mention of the Sabbath as a civil ordinance for Israel:

Topic	First Mention	Subsequent Mention
Passover	a day you are to commemorate / a festival to the Lord (Exodus 12:14)	the Festival of Unleavened Bread (Exodus 12:17) [Festival of Unleavened Bread = Passover]

Sabbath obedience test	a day of sabbath rest / a holy sabbath to the Lord (Exodus 16:23) a solemn rest “a” holy Sabbath // a sabbath to the Lord (Exodus 16:25)	the Lord has given you the Sabbath (Exodus 16:29) the sabbath to the Lord your God (Exodus 20:8) “the” Sabbath (Exodus 20:11) “the” Sabbath (Deuteronomy 5:12)
Day of Pentecost	“a” holy convocation (???)	“the” day of Pentecost (Acts 2:1)

Martin highlights two “exceptions” to this pattern.

“For six days work is to be done, but the seventh day is a day of sabbath rest, holy to the Lord. Whoever does any work on the Sabbath day is to be put to death. The Israelites are to observe the Sabbath, celebrating it for the generations to come as a lasting covenant” (Exodus 31:15–16).

NOTE: The indefinite A modifies the word “day.” It is necessary for proper sentence structure and has nothing to do with the question of anarthrous construction and the first mention of Jewish holy days.

“For six days, work is to be done, but the seventh day shall be your holy day, a day of sabbath rest to the Lord. Whoever does any work on it is to be put to death” (Exodus 35:2).

Common sense is needed in examining this principle. Accommodation must be made for things like exceptions required by a particular type of grammatical construction. Also notice that great caution is needed in the analysis. In the case below, Leviticus 23, the indefinite article comes in verse 14, introducing three BRAND NEW annual festivals that have never previously been mentioned. The anarthrous construction in verse 14 is our signal that three new appointed festivals are going to follow. The three annual festivals are given proper names, so in no situation would it be proper grammar to introduce these specific names with an indefinite pronoun. The Hebrew word for Sabbath, SHABBAT, simply means “rest.” By contrast, these three new festivals have titles that require several words together, which means that their definitions can only be established by looking at all of the words in the title. This also means that their identity is not based on any previous word usage, such as the Hebrew word for Sabbath, which is based on the previous general concepts of propitiation, ceasing, and rest. Notice below:

Leviticus 23: 14–16 (NIV)

The Three Annual Festivals

“Three times a year you are to celebrate a festival to me.

“Celebrate the Festival of Unleavened Bread; for seven days eat bread made without yeast, as I commanded you. Do this at the appointed time in the month of Aviv, for in that month you came out of Egypt. No one is to appear before me empty-handed.”

“Celebrate the Festival of Harvest with the first-fruits of the crops you sow in your field.”

“Celebrate the Festival of Ingathering at the end of the year, when you gather in your crops from the field.”

Not all English translations respect this principle in their translation uniformly, however. In Exodus 16 the NIV appears to supply the indefinite article correctly, whereas the King James Version does not. Here is a comparison of the same passage in both translations:

Exodus 16:21–26 (NIV)

“Each morning everyone gathered as much as he needed, and when the sun grew hot, it melted away. On the sixth day, they gathered twice as much—two omers for each person—and the leaders of the community came and reported this to Moses. He said to them, ‘This is what the LORD commanded: “Tomorrow is to be a day of rest, a holy Sabbath to the LORD. So bake what you want to bake and boil what you want to boil. Save whatever is left and keep it until morning.”’ So they saved it until morning, as Moses commanded, and it did not stink or get maggots in it. ‘Eat it today,’ Moses said, ‘because today is a Sabbath to the LORD. You will not find any of it on the ground today. Six days you are to gather it, but on the seventh day, the Sabbath, there will not be any.’”

Exodus 16:21–26 (KJV)

“And they gathered it every morning, every man according to his eating: and when the sun waxed hot, it melted. And it came to pass, that on the sixth day they gathered twice as much bread, two omers for one man: and all the rulers of the congregation came and told Moses. And he said unto them, This is that which the LORD hath said, Tomorrow is the rest of the holy Sabbath unto the LORD: bake that which ye will bake to day, and seethe that ye will seethe; and that which remaineth over lay up for you to be kept until the morning. And they laid it up till the morning, as Moses bade: and it did not stink, neither was there any worm therein. And Moses said, Eat that to day; for to day is a Sabbath unto the LORD: to day ye shall not find it in the field. Six days ye shall gather it; but on the seventh day, which is the Sabbath, in it there shall be none.”

The importance of the anarthrous construction in Exodus 16 is recognized by other scholars. Harold H. P. Dressler is tentative in his mention of this idea, citing the following scholars and lists their primary sources: G. Rawlinson, *Exodus* (London: Kegan, Paul, Trench & Co., 1906), p.52; A. Dillman, *Die Bucher Exodus und Leviticus* (Leipzig: S. Hitzel, 1897), p. 175; P Heinisch,

Das Buch Exodus (Bonn: Hanstein, 1934), p. 133; G. Henton Davies, Exodus (London: SCM, 1967), p. 140. These scholars wrote between 1897 and 1967 and on two continents.

The concept of anarthrous construction is not merely a matter of grammar. It is an attribute of Hebrew writing convention that has, as one of its components, an element of grammar. Therefore, a reference to it will not be found in books such as A Grammar of Biblical Hebrew by Paul Joüon & Takamitsu Muraoka, and, An Introduction to Biblical Hebrew Syntax by Bruce K. Waltke & M. O'Connor.

The book, Hebrew Grammar of Gesenius, Edited by Roediger, discusses the principle of Hebrew grammar, [comparing it with the significance of anarthrous construction to other languages](#).

“In general, the article is used as in the Greek, German, [and English]. It stands, of course, when a noun is repeated which had just been introduced; e.g. God said: Let there be light... and God saw the light; I Kings 3:2: Bring me a sword; and they brought the sword. Ecc. 9:15. So also when a thing is well known; or unique in its kind; as the king Solomon; the sun; the earth. It is omitted, when the object is indefinite, general, or before unknown; e.g. some of the above examples, also Ecc. 1:12: I am king over Jerusalem.”

Roediger (ed). *Hebrew Grammar of Gesenius*, p. 204

This book on Hebrew grammar supports the point of view that the Sabbath concept is introduced as something new in Exodus 16 as we are explaining. Sabbatarian apologists will claim that the definite article (the) is not needed before a noun that already has established importance; so the first mention of the new Sabbath law in Exodus 16 does not need the pronoun “the” in front of it. However, the rules of Hebrew grammar and linguistic convention contradict this claim.

If we are not mistaken, in order for the writer of Exodus 16 to use a definite article before the first mention of the Sabbath, the Sabbath would have to have already been a well-known entity. Therefore, by the rules of Hebrew grammar, the writer indicated, by omitting the definite article (the), that the Sabbath was a totally new concept at that point in time.

THE EXODUS 23 OBJECTION

Sabbatarian apologists call attention to the fact that three sacred events are introduced in Exodus 23 with the definite article, THE. A careful examination of this passage indicates that Exodus 23 treats the three new sacred institutions as a new SET.

Here is the text from the NIV, and the NIV is fairly accurate in following the Hebrew articles:

The Three Annual Festivals

14 “Three times a year you are to celebrate **a** festival to me.

15 “Celebrate **the** Festival of Unleavened Bread; for seven days eat bread made without yeast, as I commanded you. Do this at the

appointed time in the month of Aviv, for in that month you came out of Egypt.

"No one is to appear before me empty-handed.

16 "Celebrate **the** Festival of Harvest with the firstfruits of the crops you sow in your field.

"Celebrate **the** Festival of Ingathering at the end of the year, when you gather in your crops from the field.

17 "Three times a year all the men are to appear before the Sovereign Lord.

The Israelites are already familiar with the concept of unleavened bread. At this time, all three items are new when considered as new institutions, or ordinances, and they are clearly part of a NEW set of institutions indicated to be a new set with an anarthrous construction as the indicator that this set is a new set.

EVIDENCE FROM "FULL FORCE"

As mentioned earlier, in Exodus 16:23, the first mention of the word for Sabbath and its pronoun is unexpected and nearly unique. Part of this "uniqueness" is that the way the reference to the first Sabbath is phrased gives it a very forceful rendering. The Sabbath in Exodus 16:23 is special in these ways:

1. Anarthrous construction indicates first mention.
2. The construction of the pronoun plus the noun is nearly unique in biblical Hebrew.
3. The phrase in which it is in lends full force to the concept, which is significant when combined with #1 and #2.

Yet the pro-Sabbatarian author Robert Paul Martin attempts to explain this phenomenon away. It is [point #3 that he wishes to discredit](#). Note that the phrase, "a sabbatical celebration, a holy Sabbath," is what Martin recognizes as a "full force" term.

"Consider third that Dressler does not say why he singles out 'a sabbatical celebration, a holy Sabbath' as the 'full form,' when similar, even fuller, expressions occur elsewhere in the Pentateuch. If, as Dressler alleges, the presence of this 'full form' at Exod. 16:23 serves to introduce a previously unknown institution, what is the significance of the even fuller forms, which convey even more information about the nature of the Sabbath? Such forms were used elsewhere with no implication of introducing a previously unknown concept. It is better to say that the form used at Exod. 16:23 is one of several that Moses could have used to remind the people of the Sabbath's nature. Other, even fuller, forms were available; but the one that he used was adequate to remind them that the week had a special, holy day, which was to be observed, notwithstanding what was truly new in their experience, which was God's gracious provision of manna from heaven. The Sabbath therefore was not new, but their manner of laboring for their daily bread was."

Robert Paul Martin (2016), *The Christian Sabbath*, p. 74.

Martin's footnote is essential to his point:

“The ‘full form’ is fuller than Dressler says, actually appearing at Exod. 16:23 in the form “a sabbath celebration, a holy sabbath unto the Lord”. At Exod. 31:15, we also find “a sabbath, a sabbath celebration, holy unto the Lord... on the sabbath day”. At Exod. 35:2, we find “a holy day for you, a sabbath, a sabbath celebration to the Lord”. At Lev. 23:3, we find “a sabbath, a sabbath celebration, a holy convocation... a sabbath unto the Lord”. In addition, see Lev. 16:29-31; 23:24, 32, 39; 25:4, where similar expressions appear with reference to other “sabbaths” and the sabbatical year.

Martin's Sabbatarian bias appears to affect his ability to grasp the significance that the anarthrous construction and near-uniqueness of the construction of the phrase in which the mention of the Sabbath is found combines with the “full force” nature of the Sabbath terminology to discredit his idea that the “full force” component is unintentional and insignificant.

A NEW TESTAMENT EXAMPLE OF THE SIGNIFICANCE OF DEFINITE VERSUS INDEFINITE ARTICLES

Thomas Preble was the first Millerite to write in favor of keeping the Jewish Sabbath. It was his pro-Sabbath tract entitled, “Tract, Showing That the Seventh Day Should Be Observed As the Sabbath,” reprinted from an article he had published in the early Advent publication, *Hope of Israel* in the Feb. 28, 1845 issue, that influenced the parents of J.N. Andrews, the future wife of Uriah Smith, and Joseph Bates to become Sabbath-keepers. It was Joseph Bates who introduced the Sabbath to Ellen White. However, Thomas Preble kept the Sabbath only until mid-1847, [at which time he repudiated his own work.](#)

See <http://www.imsmedia.org/adventist-pioneers/thomas-m-preble>

In 1867 he published an expose of the cult of Adventism entitled *The First Day Sabbath Clearly Proved*. You can find it in Google Books. While he incorporated many of the same anti-Sabbatarian concepts that are used against the 7th day Sabbath doctrine today, his main thesis was that at the Cross, the Jewish Sabbath of the 7th day of the week ended, and the Christian “Sabbath” began. He called attention, among other things, to the fact that in Genesis the only principle for Sabbath-keeping is that the human race should work six days and rest one day. His argument is difficult to follow, but fighting to understand it is worthwhile.

“Did the Lord Jesus keep the seventh-day Sabbath? He evidently did, as he was ‘made under the law’ (Gal. 4 : 4), and was ‘circumcised;’ He no doubt observed the Sabbath, as it ought to have been observed at that time; although his manner of keeping it, however, was such that the Pharisees accused him of breaking it, because he did not observe their traditions, which they had connected with the observance of that day. There is no doubt but the women mentioned in Luke 23:55, after they had ‘prepared spices and ointments’ for the body of

Jesus, returned and rested the Sabbath-day according to the 'commandment;' yea, the 'fourth commandment.'

"Good, says the Sabbatarian. And I too say, Good; because I have no doubt of its truth. But when this matter shall be critically examined, I think all candid minds will acknowledge that this was the last seventh-day Sabbath ever kept according to the commandment: as I believe the following facts will abundantly prove. The original Greek words for Sabbath, as found in the New Testament, in their singular and plural form, are Sabaton, and Sabbata. The number of times these words occur in the New Testament is sixty-eight. They are found in different books, as follows : in Matthew, eleven times ; in Mark, twelve times; in Luke, twenty times; in John, thirteen times; in Acts, ten times; in 1 Corinthians, once; and in Colossians, once. These words are transferred (not translated) into our English version, in all, fifty-nine times; and thus called Sabbath, or Sabbath-days, etc. But the translators saw fit to render the word Sabaton, by the word 'week,' in nine cases out of the whole number sixty-eight, and these nine cases are found in the following places: in Matthew 28: 1; Mark 16: 2, 9; Luke 18: 12; 24: 1; John 20:1, 19; Acts 20:7; 1 Corinthians 16:2. In Matthew it reads, 'In the end of the Sabbath [Sabaton], as it began to dawn toward the first [day, is a word supplied by the translators] of the week [Sabaton], came Mary,' etc. In Mark: 'And very early in the morning, the first of the week [Sabaton], they came,' etc. 'Now when Jesus was risen early the first of the week [Sabaton], he appeared,' etc. In Luke: 'I fast twice in the week [Sabaton], I give tithes,' etc. Now upon the first of the week [Sabaton], very early in the morning,' etc. In John: 'The first of the week [Sabaton] cometh Mary Magdalene early,' etc. 'Then the same day, at evening, being the first of the week [Sabaton], when the doors were shut,' etc. In Acts: 'And upon the first of the week [Sabaton], when the disciples came together to break bread,' etc. In 1 Corinthians: 'Upon the first of the week [Sabaton] let everyone of you lay by him in store,' etc. Now let us turn back to Matthew 28:1, and see if we can ascertain the true import of this word 'week,' as it has been thus found in the cases above referred to. It appears that the word Sabaton, as found in this verse, occurs twice, and in both instances it is in the plural, form; and this being the case, the true rendering of the passage requires us to read it, in substance, like this: At the end of Sabbaths, in the beginning of the first of Sabbaths, etc. Or as Mark has it: And very early in the first of Sabbaths (lit. of one of Sabbaths), etc. But Luke and John appear to have it still stronger: And in the first of the Sabbaths, etc; the definite article being placed before the noun Sabaton. Now it is evident that if the translators had transferred the word Sabaton, in these nine cases just examined, as they did in the other fifty-nine instances above referred to, then we should have had less difficulty than we now have, and we should see that at the end of the seventh-day Sabbaths (or at the end of the Jewish Sabbath — which was given to the 'children of Israel' to be a 'sign' unto them 'throughout their generations'—there would be the beginning of the Lord Jesus Christ's day, or 'Sabbath.' Or in other words, where one series of days ended, there another series of days began. And this change of days was marked by the most important events that ever transpired in the history of man. 'The veil of the temple was rent in twain,' 'the middle wall of partition' between Jews and Gentiles, was 'broken down,' and thus they were 'made both one.'"

Thomas Preble, *The First Day Sabbath Clearly Proved*, a Google Book

Although we do not support Preble's theological conclusion that God transferred Saturday sacredness to Sunday sacredness, his citation of this example of anarthrous construction suggests that biblical scholars have known about this facet of Hebrew linguistics for a long time.

It is not a concept that Sabbatarian apologists can easily dismiss. In defense of the precursors and pioneer founders of Adventism, they did not have the scholarly education that Preble had.

THE HEBREW LINGUISTICS OF EXODUS 13 AND 14: CHAG THE ORIGIN OF THE PASSOVER ORDINANCE AND THE ORIGIN OF THE SABBATH

We now turn from our study of the word SABBATON to a review of the evidence from the circumstances of the giving of the Passover ordinance and the Exodus Journey that there was no Sabbath until the Giving of the Manna as told in Exodus 16. The Giving of the Manna took place five weeks after the Israelites left the Land of Goshen in Egypt. In Exodus 12 and 13:6 the story of the giving of the Passover ordinance is told, which took place several weeks earlier.

In the translation of Exodus 12, the word for the 7th day in the Hebrew is not a form of the word, Sabbath. It is, instead, **CHAG**. **Troy Martin, www.NCCG.Org**, points out that **CHAG** is used 62 times in Scripture, and in every case it indicates a pilgrimage feast day:

...the "seventh day" spoken of in **Exodus 13:6** is called a *chag* (H2282) which is used 62 times in Scripture and is only used to refer to the pilgrimage feast days (found in **Exodus 23:14-17**), in this case, *Aviv* 15. It is not referring to the last day of the feast, rather the first. This *chag* can only be the 15th of *Aviv*. See also. **Deuteronomy 5:12-15** and **Leviticus 23:6-8**. Article, "The Weekly Biblical Sabbath Days" by Troy Martin.

<http://www.nccg.org/642Art-SabbathDays.html>

From the 12th & 13th chapters of Exodus and the story of the giving of the Passover Ordinance we learn that all seventh days mentioned in Exodus were NOT weekly Sabbaths. Since Sabbaths always occurred on the 15th day of each lunar month (as well as every 8th, 22nd, and 29th days), there is no possibility that there were weekly Sabbaths prior to the Exodus story of the Giving of the Manna in Exodus 16.

Instead, Passover is a sacred appointed festival and one designated as a pilgrimage appointed festival by the word that Moses chose in this context, or CHAG.

Furthermore there is no evidence that the Israelites kept the Sabbath for the first five weeks of their journey, and there is proof (in the literal sense of the word) that they did not in the account of the Giving of the Manna as recounted in Exodus 16. If the Sabbath had been a moral law which had existed from Creation, God would not have failed to make provision for the Israelites to keep it faithfully for the 40 days travel time between the Land of Goshen in Egypt and Mt. Sinai.

The Passover lamb was to be slain at twilight on the 14th day of the month, according to Exodus 12, which was the evening of the same day the Israelites left Egypt. The next day, the 15th day of the lunar month later became a Sabbath in Israel, but not before Exodus 16. Passover started at sundown on the 14th day according to the way the Jews reckoned the transition from one day to another. Later, we will study the circumstances of the Crucifixion and discover that Jesus, the Lamb of God, was crucified at the same time of Passover day— just minutes from the beginning of the 15th day Sabbath.

Note also the 15th of every month was the day of the full Moon, and in almost all very ancient civilizations, the day of the full Moon was an important day of worship. Also, there is some correlation with the word used for SABBATH in Leviticus 23 in verse 3. It is the word **SHABATH**, and it made its way into the Hebrew language from a Semitic word which meant the “day of the full moon” which was based on the concept of STOPPING. It was on this day when the Moon stopped getting brighter (waxing) and began to get dimmer (waning).

The Passover occurred weeks before the Sabbath obedience test was given to the Israelites in Exodus 16. The Hebrews were required to observe the Passover day at exactly the same appointed time each year:

⁴Today, in the month of Aviv, you are leaving. ⁵ When the LORD brings you into the land of the Canaanites, Hittites, Amorites, Hivites and Jebusites—the land he swore to your ancestors to give you, a land flowing with milk and honey—you are to observe this ceremony in this month: ⁶ For seven days eat bread made without yeast and on the seventh day hold a festival to the LORD. ⁷ Eat unleavened bread during those seven days; nothing with yeast in it is to be seen among you, nor shall any yeast be seen anywhere within your borders. ⁸ On that day tell your son, ‘I do this because of what the LORD did for me when I came out of Egypt.’ ⁹ This observance will be for you like a sign on your hand and a reminder on your forehead that this law of the LORD is to be on your lips. For the LORD brought you out of Egypt with his mighty hand. ¹⁰ You must keep this ordinance at the appointed time year after year. – Exodus 13:4-10 (NIV)

With what is stated in **Leviticus 23**, the facts of the Passover week significance becomes obvious:

The 14th day of the Passover month is specified again. The Passover lamb is to be slain on this 14th day having been purchased on the 10th day of the month.

The very next day, the 15th of the lunar month, the Feast of Unleavened Bread begins, and it will last seven days. A comprehensive analysis of this situation indicates that both the 15th day of the month and the 22nd day of the month are annual Lunar Sabbaths.

Significant to the question of a Sabbath prior to the Exodus is found in the word which is used to designate the 7th day associated with the day following the Passover– the 15th day.

Therefore, if there had been weekly Sabbaths prior to the Exodus, the word used to designate this 7th day would be SHABBAT, or the same word used in Exodus 20 to indicate the 7th day weekly Sabbath. But the Hebrew word used, instead, is CHAG. The use of the Hebrew word, CHAG, for the reference to the 7th day in Exodus 13 and in association with the giving of the Passover ordinance is proof beyond reasonable doubt that no Sabbath existed prior to Exodus 16.

Instead, at that time God gave them an Independence Day– an occasion to celebrate being set

free from their slavery. A little further along in their journey, God gave them a Sabbath day as a reminder they had been set free. (Deuteronomy 5:15)

They did not go to the temple to celebrate this special Independence Day; they stayed at home with their families, had a special meal, and remembered God's deliverance.

It is no coincidence that Jesus, the Lamb of God, our final sin Sacrifice, selected the 14th day, Passover, to set us free. This important day also fulfilled the Old Covenant need for a final sin sacrifice by his giving of His Body and His Blood. A New Covenant began, first stated at the Last Supper, right before He was crucified.

The Festival of Unleavened Bread, which lasted from the 15th day of the month until the 22nd day of the month, was clearly a shadowy representation of the body of Jesus. Jesus told us that He was the Bread of Life for the world, and this symbolic prophecy in the Law of Moses was incorporated into the New Covenant in the ordinance of the Lord's Supper. This appears to be another prophetic component of Leviticus 23. The 15th and 22nd days of the Jewish month are always Sabbaths, and they represent two of the special annual Sabbaths of the Hebrew liturgical year.

THE MANNA AND SABBATH OBEDIENCE TEST IN EXODUS 16

J.N. Andrews, the first Advent Movement Sabbath scholar, theorized that some aspects of the "Manna Test" given to the Hebrews in the early verses of Exodus 16 suggest that the Israelites were already familiar with the Sabbath. He pointed out that God didn't seem to feel the need to explain His reason for the six days of work followed by one day of rest at that time. Our analysis of his manna argument resulted in these findings that are not favorable to this claim:

1. There is no indication in the Exodus 16 verses to specifically suggest that the people were familiar with the Sabbath concept. If the Israelites were familiar with the Sabbath, they would not need to have been told not to gather manna on the seventh day, since that would represent work.
2. As Dressler observes, the Hebrews had just come out of Egypt, which utilized a 10-day week. This is probably the reason why the first mention of the Sabbath in Exodus 16 is the full form of the word, meaning: "a sabbatical celebration, a holy Sabbath". (See Dressler, "The Sabbath in the Old Testament," Chapter 2 in D.A. Carson (ed) (1982), *From Sabbath to Lord's Day*.)

Note that the Egyptians utilized a pagan sabbath system of four sets of seven days each tied to the lunar month and were observing these "sabbaths" while the Hebrews were captive to them. Therefore, the concept of a HOLY Sabbath would have been completely new to the Hebrews. They were accustomed to watching the Egyptians observe their "sabbaths" with fertility rites and the superstitious avoidance of certain tasks.

3. In Exodus 12, when God explained His instructions for the ordinance of the Passover, He did not mention the Sabbath Day when one would expect Him to have done so. He instructed them to continue preparing food on the seventh day of the Passover Week—a task forbidden by the Sabbath-keeping laws He gave them later:

“This is a day you are to commemorate; for the generations to come you shall celebrate it as a festival to the LORD—a lasting ordinance. For seven days you are to eat bread made without yeast. On the first day remove the yeast from your houses, for whoever eats anything with yeast in it from the first day through the seventh must be cut off from Israel. On the first day hold a sacred assembly, and another one on the seventh day. Do no work at all on these days, except to prepare food for everyone to eat—that is all you may do.” (Exodus 12:14–16, NIV).

4. The Manna obedience test stands on its own without any dependence on the Sabbath because during the week the Hebrew people were instructed to gather no more than an omer for each person. A significant number of the Israelites broke this new law right away, gathered more than they needed for the next day, and found that the extra portions rotted.

“Then said the LORD unto Moses, Behold, I will rain bread from heaven for you; and the people shall go out and gather a certain rate every day, that I may prove them, whether they will walk in my law, or not” (Exodus 16:4).

5. Andrews says this chapter suggests that the Israelites were familiar with the work-six-days / rest-on-the-seventh-day pattern because they did not agitate for an explanation regarding it. Arguments from silence are among the weakest. Note that God seems to have chosen the seven days of Creation because it was an easy formula to remember. It would seem that if God spoke something to any of us out of a cloud and it was readily understandable, we would not agitate for an explanation of it. God is a good communicator—the best ever. (Again, we must consider the possibility that a seven-day lunar week of a pagan sabbath system was in use in Egypt during the time of their bondage. In this case they would not need an explanation of the work-six-days-and-rest-the-seventh-day principle either.)
6. The wording of the passage identifies the Sabbath requirement as an obedience test. If the Israelites were keeping the Sabbath up to that point, they would have had their obedience tested continually along the way. Perhaps a different kind of obedience test would have been appropriate in that case.

THE HEBREW LINGUISTICS OF EXODUS 20

The Hebrew meaning indicators used in the wording of Exodus 20 are complex and require an intimate knowledge of the Hebrew language to identify. The Book of Genesis quotes God’s statement in such a way that Hebrew readers would recognize that although the cultic Sabbath ordinance was modeled after the Creation week, the idea that the Sabbath ordinance was instituted at the time of Creation is contraindicated.

The concept that the Sabbath commandment is a MODEL is the key to understanding the relationship between Creation week and the Sabbath commandment. Moses used several Hebrew literary conventions in Exodus 20 to clarify that the Sabbath ordinance was a MODEL of the days of Creation. [Lincoln comments on the linguistic aspects of Moses’ account of the fourth commandment](#) in Exodus 20.

“The last clause of Exodus 20:11 gives the reason for the Mosaic institution and takes up the terminology of blessing and hallowing from Genesis 2:2-3, now specifically applying these terms to the “Sabbath” rather than the seventh-day, and is not to be taken as implying that the seventh day of Genesis 2:3 was already the Sabbath set aside by God for humanity. As H.H.P. Dressler points out, the present commandment is based on a previous event, and the significance of the Hebrew construction translated as “therefore”, is crucial to this interpretation, as it often functions to connect causally an event in the past with a situation some time later. In fact scholars often speak of an “etiology” when a present name or practice is explained on the basis of a previous event or story, and “therefore” is one of the marks by which an etiology is recognized. Exodus 20:11 indeed contains in addition to this introductory formula a further feature typical of an etiology—the word play between “the seventh day” and “the Sabbath day.” Such etiological passages, after the introductory “therefore” or “consequently now,” can have the verb in the past tense without implying a strictly past meaning. The presence of these features in Exodus 20:11 suggest that it too is to be seen as providing an explanation of a present institution, the Mosaic Sabbath, by reference to a past event, God’s seventh-day rest after the creation, utilizing the terminology of Genesis 2:3 and a play on words to make its point.”

A.T. Lincoln, Chapter 12, "From Sabbath to Lord's Day: A Biblical and Theological Perspective," in D. A. Carson (ed.), *From Sabbath to Lord's Day*, page 349.

Again, note that one source renders the Hebrew characters from right to left and the other from left to right. It seems that the Hebrew characters are like a combination of two Hebrew words which would be literally translated “ON-SO:” Strong’s #H5921 (used as a preposition (in the singular or plural, often with prefix, or as conjugation with a particle following); above, over, upon, or against (yet always in this last relation with a downward aspect) in a great variety of applications:—above, according to (-ly), after, (as) against, among, and, X as, at, because of, beside (the rest of), between, beyond the time, X both and, by (reason of), X had the charge of, concerning for, in (that), (forth, out) of, (from) (off), (up-) on, over, than, through(-out), to, touching, X with.), and Strong’s #H3651 (From H3559; properly set upright; hence (figuratively as adjective) just; but usually (as adverb or conjugation) rightly or so (in various applications to manner, time and relation; often with other particles):— + after that (this, -ward, -wards), as . . . as, + [for-] as much as yet, + be (for which) cause, + following, howbeit, in (the) like (manner, -wise), X the more, right, (even) so, state, straightway, such (thing), surely, + there (where) -fore, this, thus, true, well, X you.) [Emphasis from the author, credit to Strong’s.]

The Hebrew-English Interlinear Bible [provides a literal translation of Exodus 20:11](#). This translation indicates that God commanded the Hebrews to rest on the Sabbath because He stopped on the 7th day of Creation:

“All of which in them and he-is-stopping in-the-day the-seventh on so He blessed Yahweh.”

See <http://www.scripture4all.org/OnlineInterlinear/OTpdf/exo20.pdf>

There are reasons why the scholars who developed the *Scripture4All Hebrew-English Interlinear Bible* prefer to translate the Hebrew word used for REST in Exodus 20:11 as STOPPED. The transliteration of this word is NUWACH (Strong's H5117). The definition of “rested” came into the Hebrew language late in its development, probably via Aramaic, which was a language spoken concurrently in that part of the world at the time. The oldest fragments of the Old Testament manuscripts come from the Dead Sea Scrolls and may be dated as late as 200 BCE. Aramaic was in use by this time. Here is the Brown-Driver-Briggs for the word NUWACH:

For ordinary reading, the meaning of “rested” is acceptable, but when we are examining a text for the purpose of establishing Christian doctrine of global proportions, an extremely careful study is needed. Additionally, the Strong's commentary for this word states that this particular word (NUWACH) is often used figuratively:

“cease, be confederate, lay, let down, be quiet, remain, cause to, be at, “A primitive root; to rest, i.e. Settle down; used in a great variety of applications, literal and figurative, intransitive, transitive and causative (to dwell, stay, let fall, place, let alone, withdraw, give comfort, etc.) -- cease, be confederate, lay, let down, (be) quiet, remain, (cause to, be at, give, have, make to) rest, set down. Compare Yaniym.”

Strong's Exhaustive Concordance

Since God did not repose on the seventh day and merely stopped doing one kind of work on the sixth day and started doing another kind of work on the seventh day, the writer's use of the word NUWACH represents an excellent word choice. The word SHABAT (stopped-ceased) is quite literal. This is why SHABAT had to be used in Genesis 2. By contrast, in Exodus 20, the “rest” is figurative. In Exodus 20:11, the word NUWACH “had” to be used in Exodus because it is a word for “repose” that can be used figuratively. (It is always important to remember that SHABAT and NUWACH are verbs, whereas SHABBAT is a noun that got into the language through an entirely different pathway than SHABAT.)

Exodus 20, therefore, does not provide support for the claim that God literally reposed on the seventh day of Creation. God also told Israel to rest on the Sabbath to help them remember that He had rescued them from slavery. The Jews were required to rest every seventh day as much to help them remember their Exodus from Egypt as to remember that God stopped creating on the last day of Creation. Unless we are presumptuous enough to step into God's place and determine which reason was the most important for keeping the Sabbath, we must regard both reasons as equally important. Christians, therefore, cannot remember the Sabbath for one of these reasons, so Sabbath-keeping cannot possibly apply to them.

In summary, Genesis 20 utilizes four aspects of the Ancient Hebrew language to clarify that the Sabbath commandment was merely modeled after Creation Week:

1. The word translated, "therefore," indicates that something in the present is about to be explained by something that happened in the past,
2. The explanation of a present event is accomplished by comparing it with an older event, and;
3. The word play between the "seventh-day of Creation Week and the "Sabbath day" of the 4th commandment, which gives further evidence that an etiological explanation has just taken place.
4. As discussed in an earlier section, the form of the word translated "rest" is an irregular form of the verb, which is more closely related to the concept of CEASING rather than that of repose.
Note that there are two Hebrew usage indicators which work together to clarify to the Hebrew reader that the new ordinance cannot be construed as having its original beginning at a time in the distant past.

Paul evidently well-understood that there was no Sabbath law in existence before the Exodus, as can be deduced by the following passage:

"For before the law was given, sin was in the world. But sin is not taken into account when there is no law" (Romans 5:13, NIV).

All we have to do, here, is to apply some common-sense reasoning. There was no sin in the world before Creation. Adam, Eve, Cain, and their descendants sinned. Paul could not possibly mean that there was no law in effect at all. We know that Adam and Eve had one law given to them at Creation, and that was not to eat of the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil. We know that God loosely codified a set of laws for all the people of the world during the age of Noah and the Flood, which the Jews refer to as the Noachian laws, and we know that God gave Israel 613 rules and regulations, including the Ten Commandment Covenant, at Mt. Sinai. We know God gave the Sabbath law with the giving of the Manna. We see no Sabbath commandment in Genesis 2 and no Sabbath commandment within the Noachian laws.

Other General Principles Of Hebrew Linguistics

ROOT STRUCTURES

The Book of Genesis not only uses important Hebrew literary conventions in Genesis 2, but also in Exodus 16, and Exodus 20 to clarify that the Sabbath did not exist until the time of the giving of the Manna. Since these Hebrew literary devices convey their meanings through ways that are uniquely characteristic of Ancient Hebrew, they are invisible to those who lack advanced training in it. Recall that virtually invisible linguistic indicators in the Creation story triggered the formulation of the Jewish Lilith myth. Although Ancient Hebrew utilized idioms, most of the linguistic devices that preclude a Sabbath ordinance prior to the Exodus are NOT idioms. In some cases, the meaning of a word or phrase in Hebrew can only be understood by word usage studies.

A guidebook to Ancient Hebrew idioms is useless to identify the many other kinds of literary devices found in Genesis 2, Exodus 16, and Exodus 20 which clarify that the Sabbath commandment given at Mt. Sinai is merely modeled after Creation Week. One example of a

non-idiomatic indicator is that in Ancient Hebrew, the lack of a definite article before a noun signifies that the whole idea is new. This particular indicator has critical implications for determining what is conveyed about the Sabbath in the Pentateuch (the first five books of the Old Testament), but it is neither an idiom or an aspect of Hebrew syntax.

You can't argue with the way the Hebrews have interpreted their own language. When the compiler of the Book of Genesis consolidated the content of cuneiform tablets that had been passed down to him and authored the other books of the Pentateuch, he was very clear in his wording of the Sabbath-related passages in Genesis 2, Exodus 16, and Exodus 20. In fact his wording is so definitive that official Judaism has never entertained the possibility that the Sabbath ordinance originated at Creation.

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE GREEK LINGUISTICS OF EXODUS 20 (SEPTUAGINT) AND COLOSSIANS 2

Elsewhere we explain that a group of 72 rabbinical scholars who spoke and wrote both Hebrew and Greek fluently translated the Scriptures from Hebrew into Greek 200 to 300 years prior to the birth of Christ. Paul, a Jewish lawyer who knew Hebrew and Greek very well, chose to use the same Greek word that these scholars chose for the word SABBATHS in Exodus 20 for the word SABBATHS in Colossians 2.

Documentation of this fact SABBATON in Exodus 20 is, indeed, the plural form of this Greek word is verified by the definition of *Strong's* word, G4521. First, a general definition of the word, and second, two separate usage lists, one for the singular form of the word and one for the plural form of the word.

Under the plural section, you will find Colossians 2:16 and Exodus 20:10 listed together as plural forms of the word SABBATON. The *Blue Letter Bible* organization makes the point clear:

STRONGS NT 4521: σάββατον [Sabbath] σάββατον, σαββάτου, τό (Hebrew שַׁבָּת), found in the N. T. only in the historical books except twice in Paul's Epistles; sabbath; i. E.:

1. the seventh day of each week, which was a sacred festival on which the Israelites were required to abstain from all work (**Exodus 20:10**; **Exodus 31:13**; **Deuteronomy 5:14**);

a. singular σάββατον and τό σάββατον: **Mark 6:2**; (**Mark 15:42** L Tr); **Mark 16:1**; **John 5:9f**, etc.; equivalent to the institution of the sabbath, the law for keeping holy every seventh day of the week: **Matthew 12:8**; **Mark 2:27**; **Luke 6:5**; λύειν, **John 5:18**; τηρεῖν, **John 9:16**; ἡ ἡμέρα τοῦ σαββάτου (יום שַׁבָּת, **Exodus 20:8** and often), the day of the sabbath, sabbath-day, **Luke 13:16**; **Luke 14:5**; ὁδός σαββάτου, a sabbath-day's journey, the distance it is lawful to travel on the sabbath-day, i. e. according to the Talmud two thousand cubits or paces, according to Epiphanius (haer. 66, 82) six stadia: **Acts 1:12**, cf. **Matthew 24:20** (the regulation was derived from **Exodus 16:29**); cf. Winers RWB, under the word Sabbathsweg; Oehler in Herzog xiii., 203f (cf. Leyrer in Herzog edition 2 vol. 9:379); Mangold in Sehenskel v., 127f; (Ginsburg in Alexander's Kitto under the word Sabbath Day's Journey; Lumby on **Acts**

1:12 (in Cambr. Bible for Schools)). as dative of time (Winers Grammar, § 31, 9 b.; Buttmann, § 133, 26): σαββάτω, **Matthew 24:20** (G L T Tr WH); **Luke 14:1**; τῷ σαββάτῳ, **Luke 6:9** L text T Tr WH; **Luke 13:14**; **Luke 14:3**; **Acts 13:44**; ἐν σαββάτῳ, **Matthew 12:2**; **John 5:16**; **John 7:22** (here L WH brackets ἐν),²³; ἐν τῷ σαββάτῳ, **Luke 6:7**; **John 19:31**, accusative τὸ σάββατον during (on) the sabbath (cf. Buttmann, § 131, 11; Winer's Grammar, § 32,6): **Luke 23:56**; κατὰ πᾶν σάββατον every sabbath, **Acts 13:27**; **Acts 15:21**; **Acts 18:4**. plural τὰ σάββατα, of several sabbaths, **Acts 17:2** (some refer this to 2).

b. plural, τὰ σαββάτων (for the singular) of a single sabbath, **sabbath-day** (the use of the plural being occasioned either by the plural names of festivals, as τὰ ἐγκαίνια, ἄζυμα, γενέσια, or by the Chaldaic form סַבְבָּתָא (Winers Grammar, 177 (167); Buttmann, 23 (21))) : **Matthew 28:1**; **Colossians 2:16** (**Exodus 20:10**; **Leviticus 23:32** etc.; τὴν ἑβδομὴν σάββατα καλοῦμεν, Josephus, Antiquities 3, 6, 6; add, 1, 1, 1; (14, 10, 25; Philo de Abrah. § 5; de cherub. § 26; Plutarch, de superstitione 8); τὴν τῶν σαββάτων ἑορτήν, Plutarch, symp. 4, 6, 2; hodie tricesima sabbata, Horace sat. 1, 9, 69; nowhere so used by John except in the phrase μία τῶν σαββάτων, on which see 2 below); ἡ ἡμέρα τῶν σαββάτων, **Luke 4:16**; **Acts 13:14**; **Acts 16:13** (**Exodus 20:8**; **Exodus 35:3**; **Deuteronomy 5:12**; **Jeremiah 17:21f**); τοῖς σάββασιν and ἐν τοῖς σάββασιν (so constantly (except Lachmann in **Matthew 12:1, 12**) by metaplasm for σαββάτοις, cf. Winers Grammar, 63 (62); (Buttmann, 23 (21))) **on the sabbath-day**: **Matthew 12:1**(see above),⁵, 10-12 (see above); **Mark 1:21**; **Mark 2:23**; **Mark 3:2,4**; **Luke 4:31**; **Luke 6:9** (R G L marginal reading) (1 Macc. 2:38; the Sept. uses the form σαββάτοις, and Josephus both forms). On the precepts of the Jews with regard to the observance of the sabbath, which were for the most part extremely punctilious and minute, cf. Winers RWB, under the word Sabbath; Oehler in Herzog xiii. 192ff (revised by Orelli in edition 2 vol. xiii. 156ff); Schürer, Zeitgesch. 2te Aufl. § 28 II.; Mangold in Schenkel see, p. 123f; (BB. DD., under the word; Geikie, Life and Words of Christ, chapter xxxviii. vol. ii: p. 95ff; Farrar, Life of Christ, chapter xxxi. vol. i., p. 432f; Edersheim, Jesus the Messiah, vol.ii.,p.56ff. index,xvii.).

<https://www.blueletterbible.org/lang/lexicon/lexicon.cfm?t=kjv&strongs=g4521>

ON THE EVER-CHANGING NATURE OF LANGUAGE

The Canaanite-based language spoken by the Children of Israel during the time of the Judges seems not to have fully evolved into the Ancient Hebrew until some time after the kingdoms of Judah and Israel had become established. Over the hundreds and hundreds of years that transpired between the early kingdoms and the various periods of captivity, Ancient Hebrew evolved into “Modern” Hebrew. These Hebrew languages were very different from one another, including some of their written characters. Dr. Reuven Brauner says that many non-Hebrew linguists looking at the history of the development of the Hebrew language make too much of these differences. In fact he says that if you can read Modern Hebrew, you can usually read Ancient Hebrew, albeit with some difficulty.

Modern Hebrew had a long lifespan, but by the time of Christ, the Jews, with the exception of specially trained rabbinical scholars, did not know Hebrew. They were speaking Aramaic. Both

the ancient and modern forms of Hebrew were known only to the rabbis. The Old Testament, whether earlier written in Ancient Hebrew and later in Modern Hebrew, had to be translated again into Aramaic. Recall that Jesus read Scriptures about Himself from Aramaic scrolls in the synagogue. Some rabbinical scholars were responsible for keeping the knowledge of Ancient Hebrew alive, and they used it for specialized work such as studying the Pentateuch in its “original” language. Unfortunately, many Christian scholars have attempted to study the Ancient Hebrew text of the Pentateuch without sufficient training. The results have been disastrous.

The wording of Genesis 2 is unfavorable to the Sabbatarian belief model, especially in view of the fact that Exodus 16 utilizes a full set of specific indicators to clarify that the Sabbath commandment was being introduced for the first time. This fact is not surprising, since, as we recall, the Israelites under the direct leadership of God did not keep their first Sabbath until the 31st day of the Exodus. Additionally, Exodus 20 contains four Hebrew usage indicators which clarify that the Sabbath ordinance was a new concept that was merely modeled after Creation week. We will explore these things in detail elsewhere.

Scholars are also faced with the challenge that God spoke to the Hebrews in anthropomorphic and cultural terms they could understand. For example, when God talked with Moses, He expressed human-like emotions such as jealousy or anger. Let us not think for a moment that the purity and selflessness of God’s “jealousy” or “anger” could be fully represented by the use of these human terms.

In the Creation story, God’s Creative work is described in terms of the action-based language that his readers would understand. However, since the record of the Pentateuch evolved from a form of Egyptian writing through a series of proto-Hebrew languages, and finally into the Ancient Hebrew language, we should not assume that the anthropomorphic descriptions of God’s activities in Genesis 1 and 2 can be taken with the degree of literalization that would provide a solid basis for a major Christian doctrine like Sabbath-keeping for everyone. The literalness of God’s “resting” is essential to the concept of Sabbatarianism, yet it collapses unless these anthropomorphic representations can be taken to represent the full reality of His actions. The Ancient Hebrew wording of Genesis 2 merely says that God CEASED His work on the seventh day.

THE ORIGINAL LANGUAGE OF THE PENTATEUCH

Recent archaeological discoveries silence the skeptics by validating the Bible story of King David. However, these findings also indicate that the language during the time of the Judges had not yet evolved into Ancient Hebrew. In fact, Ancient Hebrew did not evolve from its precursor languages until some time after King David and King Solomon. Inscriptions found in cities dated to near the time of King David are currently undecipherable, even though there are some rough similarities between the characters they used and those of Ancient Hebrew. The language in which the Pentateuch was originally recorded was almost certainly not Ancient Hebrew. This evidence gives us plenty of reasons to make us even more reluctant to construct a major Christian doctrine on two isolated verses from the Pentateuch.

Reflecting on Judaism.Com is a Jewish website that focuses on the theological issues within Judaism. The question of the original language of the Pentateuch is a sensitive one among Jewish scholars. In his essay on the question of the original language of the Torah, lay scholar, Woolf Abrahams, reports that he submitted this question to a variety of Jewish scholars and found no consensus. One professor he consulted, [an anonymous orthodox Jewish professor of](#)

“The question has some merit but is problematic because you do not define what you mean by Torah. The Torah (as in the Pentateuch) informs us that what was given at Sinai (and this presumes that the events described in the Torah are historical – a rather difficult presumption) was the 10 commandments only. It is pretty clear that the Torah (as we have it now) was written down in stages at a much later period (probably after the setting up of the two kingdoms of Israel and Judah) when Hebrew would have been the spoken language, hence it is written in Hebrew. The stories about Abraham and co [Company?] were told and written down in Hebrew without anyone questioning what languages were spoken at that time. The authors had a few other things on their minds when they compiled the Pentateuch... Hence, even the 10 commandments as they appear in the Pentateuch reflect different oral traditions and transmission; hence, it is impossible to know in what language they originally appeared. They were clearly translated at some stage into Hebrew in two similar but slightly different versions as can be seen in Exodus and Deuteronomy. I hope that is helpful.”

See <http://www.reflectingonjudaism.com/content/was-torah-written-hebrew>

THE ORIGIN AND DEVELOPMENT OF ANCIENT HEBREW

Rabbinical Judaism gives 1391 to 1271 BCE as a likely life-span for Moses, and Christian tradition has assumed a much earlier date (www.crystalinks.com, article, "Moses"). In our work, we have chosen to use a date of 1446 BCE for the Exodus, since this date reflects the opinion of a wider range of present-day scholars. A primitive form of what might possibly be a precursor to Ancient Hebrew appears to have begun to emerge from the Canaanite family of languages not long before the time of King David. This proto-Hebrew language developed into its final Ancient Hebrew form some time after the reign of King David. Looking at things from the perspective of this time in Israel's early history, the evolution of the language would have been slow. Each generation of scribes might have had to update the language in increments, but they would have no trouble understanding the current version they were working with and updating it to a somewhat more “modern” usage, much like the Bible was updated from something like the King James Version to The New International Version that many use today.

The concept that the Hebrew language had not fully evolved into Ancient Hebrew by the time of King David is verified by recent archaeological discoveries of artifacts with inscriptions that date back to the 10th Century BCE, including one found at a dig in a village believed to have been built near the time of the early Kingdom of Judah. While these discoveries have helped establish the authenticity of the biblical stories of the first kings of Judah, they reveal that the written form of the language was only remotely similar to Ancient Hebrew. In fact these inscriptions are currently undecipherable as of July 2015.

The Canaanite group of languages formed a branch of the Northwest Semitic family of languages (*Wikipedia* article, "Hebrew Language"). From Moses through the period of the Judges, the descendants of Abraham spoke a language which represented that of a precursor

to Ancient Hebrew. The original language that Moses used to compile Genesis from a collection of cuneiform tablets and oral tradition might have been a form of Egyptian or an early form of one of the Canaanitish family of languages. It may have been translated and re-translated many times as the language spoken by Israel evolved during the period of the Judges up through and beyond the time of King David when it finally got into the Ancient Hebrew language that we think of as its "original" language.

The scribes responsible for safeguarding the Pentateuch (the first five books of the Bible credited to Moses' authorship) over the centuries between the Exodus and the Captivity undoubtedly confronted significant challenges. This fact should make us more reluctant than ever to formulate a globally applicable Christian doctrine on parts of the Pentateuch that are just telling a story. It is one thing to base a Christian doctrine on a statement credited to God that reads with perfect clarity, such as "Thou shalt not steal," but it is another thing to base the doctrine that all people must keep the Sabbath for now and eternity on a passage that tells the story of what God did on a certain day in the history of Planet Earth. All other facets of Scripture teach that the Sabbath was for no one else but the children of Israel. Even Jesus excluded the Heathen "dogs" from the Sabbath. The only possible hope Sabbatarians have to make the Sabbath a universal requirement is to prove there is a Sabbath at Creation. This simply cannot be done without violating proper methods of interpretation and scholarship.

The fact that Moses' books probably went through additional steps of translation prior to settling into its Ancient Hebrew form does not provide any support for the skeptical point of view that the events he described were not real. Even if all of the Book of Genesis came to Moses in oral form, this would be an inadequate excuse to disbelieve the truth of what he wrote. Scholars understand that in many primitive societies, important histories have been memorized word-for-word and passed down from one generation to the next. This process was considered to be sacred.

Furthermore, it is far more likely that Moses assembled the Book of Genesis from cuneiform tablets that were handed down to the patriarchs, then to Joseph in Egypt, and were preserved by the Hebrews during their captivity. The astonishing thing is that modern archaeology has known since no later than 1936 that writing on cuneiform tablets was a normal everyday thing 1,000 years prior to the birth of Moses. For example, wives would write letters to their businessmen husbands across the country, sending it via a postal service. A typical letter might read something like, "My dear husband, the kids are doing fine and all is well here at home. I hope you are making lots of money for us wherever you are. And, by the way, could you stop at the bazaar on the way home and get me a swath of purple so I can make me and the girls matching dresses? May the gods be with you, and may I see your face soon. Sincerely, your loving wife, Zeldessa."

It does not hurt to recall, once again, that in 1936 an archaeologist by the name of P.J. Wiseman published a book entitled *New Discoveries in Babylonia about Genesis*. He had been digging up cuneiform tablets for years in Babylonia and surrounding areas. He noted that the Book of Genesis appeared to have been assembled from a set of cuneiform tablets that were likely passed down through time and that Moses put them together in chronological order. He pointed out that just like the cuneiform tablets place the title announcement at the end of side two, so the various sections of Genesis that are so obvious upon analysis, always place the title notice at the end, rather than the beginning of the section. For example, if the text of Genesis says something like, "These are the generations of Noah," this notice describes what comes before it rather than what comes after it. The higher critics have complained that the Book of Genesis is

not trustworthy because it had multiple authors. Wiseman's findings turn this perceived weakness into one of the book's greatest strengths. Yes, The Book of Genesis was written by multiple authors—eyewitnesses to the actual events recorded. Wiseman's work is not better known since what he discovered is not what the higher critics wanted to hear, and skepticism is the popular attitude of this age, so it seems.

For the purpose of this book, the implication is this: Moses got at least some of his information from human sources— not from a direct revelation from God— for the Book of Genesis. While Christians believe that God had His hand in this process, it is even more dangerous than we may have realized to base key Christian doctrines on isolated, obscure passages from the Pentateuch. We had better take Moses for his word. He clearly identifies what information came directly from God in his writings. We must now assume, thanks to Wiseman's work, that anything else came from a long heritage of cuneiform tablets that began to be written by the patriarchs for at least 1,000 years prior to Moses.

As the Pentateuch was updated from one of the Canaanite languages over time into Ancient Hebrew, nothing was placed in the text of Genesis 2:2-3 to suggest that the seventh day was more than 24 hours in length. Nothing was said about either God or man “kneeling down” on every interval of the seventh day of Creation. This day was to be set aside forever to be remembered as the day that He finished creating Planet Earth. Moses was telling a story, choosing his words carefully to prevent his future readers from seeing things in his account that weren't there. As the translation updates between the Exodus and the time when the Pentateuch took its final shape in Ancient Hebrew, the translators were successful in preserving these key distinctions. Because Moses recorded both the account of Creation and the giving of the Law from Mt. Sinai, he likely recognized the need to make these critical clarifications with the appropriate language “tools” he had at his disposal.

Thanks to the inspiration of God through Moses and/or the translators between Moses' original language and the Ancient Hebrew, Israel and its Levitical and rabbinical scholars never officially believed the Sabbath was intended for anyone else but them, and they generally always officially believed the Sabbath was introduced for the first time in the history of the world with the giving of the Manna. If you want to understand the perspective of Bible writers on the Sabbath, you must understand the perspective of the Jews on the Sabbath. Why? Because those who preserved the Bible were JEWS.

CULTURAL FACTORS AND WORD USAGE INFLUENCES ON TRANSLATION

Other than a misreading of Genesis 2:2–3, the only other Bible text that appears on the surface to teach a universal Sabbath requirement is Mark 2:27. The text reads, “And he said to them, “The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath.” Adventists and other Sabbatarians think that they have found in this text a concrete statement that mandates universal Sabbath-keeping for all of humanity (“man”). However, contextual analysis of this text within its pericope and historical understanding, accomplishes the opposite— the Sabbath was made for the “Jewish man” and not all of humanity.

“The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath.” The Greek reads, “και ἐλεγεν αυτοῖς το σάββατον διὰ τον άνθρωπον ἐγένετο ουχ ο άνθρωπος διὰ το σάββατον—And He said to them, “the Sabbath came into being on account of the man and not the man on account of the Sabbath.”

“The Man”—ho anthropos—has a variety of meanings and is determined by its contextual use. It can mean “humanity (male and female), a male (adult or not), a son, a slave, someone in a condition (e.g. a sick man, an evil man, a good man, etc.), a husband, a subset of mankind (e.g. Matt. 27:32- ἀνθρώπον Κυρηναῖον “Cyrenian man,” Acts 21:39- ἄνθρωπος Ἰουδαῖος “Jewish man,” Acts 16:37- ἀνθρώπους Ῥωμαίους “Roman men,” etc.), human nature, etc.” With these various meanings of ho anthropos in this text, who is “the man” that the Sabbath came into being for? We confidently assert that “humanity” is not who is being referenced here, as, contextually, Creation is not what is being discussed (or mentioned) nor is the generic “man”—Adam. In the New Testament, whenever a universal principle is being discussed or a teaching is being enjoined, Adam is either referred to by name or as the generic “man,” (with variants) or Creation is explicitly referenced or both Adam and Creation are spoken of together. For example, in Matthew 19:3-6 Creation, “the beginning,” and “male and female” (Adam and Eve as prototypes) are directly referenced as to what constitutes a legitimate marriage, how long it should last, and its universal import. In Acts 17:24-29, Creation and Adam (“one man”) are explicitly referenced by Paul to prove to the Athenians that the Supreme God is Creator; we are His children and one human family through Adam. In Romans 5:12-21, Adam is explicitly referred to as the “one man” that sinned and brought death upon all of humanity, as a result of being the generic “man,” and thus all “humanity” shares in that guilt and are naturally born sinners. In 1 Corinthians 11:8-12, Creation and “man and woman” (Adam and Eve as prototypes) are directly referred to as a reason for the universal standard of male headship. In 1 Timothy 2:12-14, Adam and Eve are explicitly named and Creation is also referred to regarding this same principle. In 1 Corinthians 15:20-21, Adam is referred to as the reason for universal sin and death on all men; and Jesus is considered to be the “Second Adam” who brings life and resurrection to all (vs. 45). More examples could have been given but these aptly illustrate the point. From these examples, we can confidently conclude that “humanity” is not who is being referred to here as who the Sabbath “came into being” for. Even though “Jewish” is not used to modify “the man,” yet contextually, we can see that it is the “Jewish man” (“a subset of mankind”) who is being referenced because everything under focus here is strictly Jewish.

Jewish leaders (Pharisees) questioned a Jewish Rabbi (Jesus) concerning the conduct of Jewish citizens (the disciples) who violated Jewish law (the Sabbath). To which Jesus made a DEFENSE by citing the past and excusable behaviours of Jewish figures with Jewish institutions and culture (the Temple, Showbread, Priests, David and his men, and pulling an animal out of a ditch/pit). As is clearly stated in the Old Testament and Jewish Apocrypha (Exo. 31:12-17; Deut. 5:12-15; Eze. 20:12, 20; Neh. 9:13-15; 10:28-31; 13:15-22; Psalm 147:19-20; Jubilees 2:31; etc.), the Sabbath “came into being” at Mt. Sinai and it exclusively applied to Hebrews (Jews) ([of course provision was made for Gentiles to keep it if they became a part of Israel by first undergoing circumcision [Exo. 12:43-49; Isa. 55:6-7; Eze. 44:6-9; Acts 15:1, 5; Eph. 2:11-12; etc.], but other than that it was not naturally enjoined on them [Neh. 10:28-31; 13:15-22; Rom. 2:12-16]). Therefore, “the man” in this context is the Jewish disciples whose Sabbath activity were called into question by the Pharisees. The Jews never thought that the Sabbath applied to Gentiles nor did they consider Gentiles to be “men” but “dogs and unclean creatures” [Mark 7:24-29; Acts 10:10-16, 24-28]. Also, this statement by Jesus is not a call for universal and mandatory Sabbath-keeping, it is a DEFENSE He gives in favor of His disciples violating the Sabbath.

Verse 28 reads, “So the Son of Man is lord even of the Sabbath.” The Greek word καί (kai) translated as “even” in this text, is a coordinating conjunction that has a copulative and

cumulative force in this text. In this passage, Jesus' Lordship and authority is called into question by the Pharisees when they accused His disciples of doing what was unlawful on the Sabbath. So when Jesus said He, "the Son of Man"— Jesus' Messianic title as the Savior of both Jews and Gentiles [Matt. 8:20; 9:20; Luke 19:9-10; John 5:24-27; etc.] is Lord EVEN of the Sabbath, He claims Lordship over ALL the other days and the Sabbath does not fall out of His scope of Lordship. And as Lord over the Sabbath, He can dictate what is acceptable behaviour thereon, just as He would for the other days, and declare His workers innocent when they violate it. HE IS LORD EVEN OF THE SABBATH! He is not bound by nor tied to it, rather, it is at His disposable and control. And by virtue of His disciples being connected to Him and His good works, they too are not bound by the Sabbath and can dispose of it as they see fit. God's higher works trump the Sabbath law. After all, "The Sabbath was made for the man, NOT the man for the Sabbath."

Conclusively, this passage does not universalize and mandate Sabbath-keeping for "humanity." Rather it confines it to the "Jewish man," and demonstrates it to be an outmoded law which, as the apostle Paul wrote, was fading away.

All other Sabbath-related passages band together to form a sturdy chain of concepts which work together to teach that the Sabbath was a distinguishing identifier for Israel between Mt. Sinai and the Cross. In Mark 2:27, Jesus said that "the Sabbath was made for man." Elsewhere we will demonstrate that by indicating that the Sabbath was intended for the Jewish "man" and not the Heathen "dogs," and that Jesus restricted the application of the Sabbath ordinance to the Jews. In doing so, Jesus validated the principle that the Sabbath is subordinate to the Ordinance of Circumcision. He also most likely prevented Himself from an attempted stoning, since the slightest suggestion that the Gentiles were included in the ordinance of the Sabbath would have incited the crowd.

Recall that elsewhere Jesus illustrated the principle that the Sabbath is subordinate to the Ordinance of Circumcision when He called attention to the fact that the Jews circumcised a male child on the 8th day from birth even if that eighth day fell on the Sabbath (John 7:21-23). It is Jeff Benner, of the Ancient Hebrew Research Center, who says that it is not possible to understand Ancient Hebrew without knowing its cultural context. His definition of some Hebrew or Greek words differ in some cases from those of other scholars because he has applied cultural studies to understand the various influences which affected what the Old Testament writers wrote.

Language changes significantly even over a few centuries. In the King James Era the word "let" meant to hinder or prevent. Now, less than 500 years later it means the opposite— to allow or permit. Imagine a language that changed like this for thousands of years, and you will understand how a language's constant change creates problems for translators working millennia later! Take the epic poem, Beowulf, which is believed to have been composed between the 8th and 11th centuries. Most of its content was written in Old English. Although the language is "English," it is mostly unintelligible to the modern English reader. Today, even a person who speaks English as his or her native language will have to read an English to English translation of it to get very much out of the story.

BENNER ON TRANSLATING ANCIENT HEBREW

Until the early 1980s Sabbatarians never had to face the findings of advanced Hebrew linguistic studies to any significant degree. Benner teaches that Ancient Hebrew communicates meaning

through structural patterns and usage conventions that transcend word translation accuracy and the understanding of idioms. Readers with a strong interest in understanding these principles should study his work at the [Ancient Hebrew Research Center](http://www.ancient-hebrew.org/1_about.html).

See http://www.ancient-hebrew.org/1_about.html

Sabbatarians, in failing to understand these key principles, cannot accept the fact that their compelling need to read a recurring blessing and hallowing of the seventh day of Creation every seventh day is negated by non-idiomatic meaning indicators that are not spelled out concretely in Hebrew characters.

The more one reads Benner's explanations of the difficulties involved in translating Ancient Hebrew into Modern English, the greater the linguistic barriers to finding any real substance for Sabbath keeping in Genesis 2:2–3 appear. According to Benner, Ancient Hebrew is put together using "root" structures. English and other modern languages are more expressively flexible, but not necessarily more "poetic." Languages based on root structures approach the communication of ideas differently than languages that have different operational principles. Benner says that in many cases an accurate translation of Ancient Hebrew into modern languages is not even possible.

And, as we mentioned before, Ancient Hebrew is somewhat different from the Modern Hebrew language that evolved from it, including its written characters. Even a modern Jewish scholar may not have expertise in Ancient Hebrew. If a significant number of Jewish rabbinical scholars have not completed advanced studies in Ancient Hebrew, it is unreasonable to suppose that more than a tiny fraction of Christian scholars would have this degree of Hebrew expertise. By the time of Jesus even Hebrew was no longer spoken. Jesus read to the people in a synagogue from a scroll written in Aramaic. Only specially trained rabbis understood Hebrew and used it for religious studies. Israel as a nation wrote and spoke Aramaic during the time of Jesus. The scrolls were written in Aramaic, and the Rabbis read the Scriptures to the people in Aramaic.

Benner clearly does not say that a mechanical translation such as his can communicate all the meaning intended by the writer. At his website he says:

"Because the meaning of a Hebrew word cannot be conveyed completely through one or two English words, each word found in the MT [Mechanical Translation] will be included in the dictionary. This dictionary will more accurately define each word within the context of Ancient Hebrew language and culture."

Benner also has this to say about translating Ancient Hebrew into modern languages:

"The Hebrew language, as is the case with every language, is closely tied to the culture the speakers and writers belong to. When reading the Bible, whether in Hebrew, English or any other language, it is essential that it be read through the eyes and mind of the Hebrew culture and not one's own culture."

With this new understanding of ancient biblical languages it is easy to see that much of what goes into producing a translation of the Bible is unknown to the typical reader. Most Christians

assume modern translations represent a close equivalent of the author's original intent. A good example of this fallacy, as I mentioned before, is that once the Jewish culture during the time of Jesus is understood, we see that when He told the Jews that the Sabbath was made for man, speaking in Aramaic, of course, He was excluding the Gentile "dogs". In this particular case an understanding of what Jesus really said is fully dependent on knowing the language's cultural context. Jesus spoke these words in Aramaic and His words were recorded in the original language of the Gospel writer who recorded the story. Note that in this case, the importance of the culture in which His words were formulated transcends the importance of the language in which it was spoken, or even the language in which it was recorded. However, the solution is not to modify the translation process. The student of the Bible must make up the difference by striving to understand the influences that produced what the writer penned.

The fact that SDA scholars could conclude that "man" in this passage means "all mankind" is the result of examining the passage without examining the cultural influences that shaped its wording. It is only one example of their tendency to use shoddy methods of textual analysis whenever doctrines critical to their theology are at stake. The SDA have had a culture of biblical interpretation from its inception that is so poor that even similar sounding words were grounds for a particular interpretation, with no proper examination of the etymology of the words. For example, Easter in the SDA theology is associated with Eostre which they define as the goddess of spring. [*The Encyclopedia Britannica* notes:](#)

"There is now widespread [consensus](#) that the word derives from the Christian [designation](#) of Easter week as in albis, a Latin phrase that was understood as the plural of alba ("dawn") and became eostarum in [Old High German](#), the [precursor](#) of the modern German and English term. The Latin and Greek Pascha ("Passover") provides the root for Pâques, the French word for Easter."

See <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Easter-holiday>

The true connection is the association of sunrise in the east with the resurrection or rising of Christ. There is no other legitimate association of "Easter" in the Christian faith. What this demonstrates for our readers is the proclivity in the SDA culture to use whatever association or interpretation they desire, despite the reputability of the method, in order to achieve the desired outcome; in this case the "poisoning of the well" when it comes to the observance of the resurrection of Christ with the associative word/term, Easter. Is it any wonder or surprise then, given the culture of the SDA, that they would also use whatever means possible to find a Sabbath instituted at Creation and a Sabbath validation everywhere when their theology demands it?

Because of the significant differences between Ancient Hebrew, Modern Hebrew, English, and the cultures they represent, a mechanical translation of one isolated passage of Genesis is insufficient to support the doctrine that God requires all Earthlings to keep the Sabbath for eternity.

IMPLICATIONS FOR THE CONCEPT OF SOLA SCRIPTURA

“The Bible and the Bible alone” is a dangerous idea if Benner's precautions are not observed. The Bible cannot be properly understood without a comprehensive knowledge of the culture that produced it and a native-like understanding of the “original” languages. One must also consider to whom God was speaking and under what circumstances. Again, there is no better example than the “Dogs versus Jews” cultural understanding that shows us that Jesus did define the Sabbath as strictly for Jews in Mark 2:27. Sometimes the cultural clues we need are found within Scripture itself. For example, we find that Jesus, in speaking with the Canaanitish woman, implied to her that He viewed her as a “dog.” This is the Heathen woman who came to Jesus with the request that He heal her demon-possessed daughter as told in Matt. 15:22-28. Her daughter was healed when she appealed to Jesus on the basis that even the “dogs” eat the crumbs that fall from the master’s table. We can be certain that Jesus limited the jurisdiction of the Sabbath to the Jews, because in the mind of the Jews, Gentiles were not human beings; they were not “men.” As noted elsewhere, had Jesus not excluded the Gentiles from the jurisdiction of the Sabbath, the people would have been tempted to pick up stones to throw at Jesus. Jesus appears to have opposed the idea that the Torah should be interpreted in the Sola Scriptura manner. Elsewhere, we discuss the fact that Jesus commanded the people to obey the teachings of the Pharisees.

As you recall, the Pharisees accepted the Oral Law itself but rejected all its commentaries. It is probably more accurate to say that the Pharisees taught that the commentaries on the Oral Law were useful to a degree but were not “inspired” by God's influence as was the Oral Law itself. You might recall that the Oral Law, or at least a major portion of it, was redacted into the *Mishnah* around 200 AD. The *Mishnah* and its commentaries comprise the *Talmud*. The Oral Law, which became the *Mishnah* around 200 AD, is the record of Jewish legal precedence that had its beginning as the Oral Law that was given verbally to Moses at Mt. Sinai and supplemented by the Judges of Israel under the promised inspiration of God as outlined in Exodus 17. Legal precedence is a cumulative record of the decisions of the judges of Israel, down through time, in regard to one thing, and one thing only, and that is the question of how the law of the Torah should be interpreted and applied.

The concept, here, is that the Torah could not be applied with justice to all on the basis of the Sola Scriptura concept and that this principle was understood by Jesus Himself.

The content of the *Mishnah* (200 AD) together with the further redaction of the Oral Law by Maimonides (1200-1300 AD) represents a record of thousands of years of the legal precedence of the Nation of Israel. Maimonides' addition of rabbinical legal precedence from as far back as prior to the Babylonian Captivity added a new perspective on how the Jews understood the Law of Moses and the way the Sabbath ordinance was to be implemented. Together, these virtually complete redactions of the Oral Law and the additional record of rabbinical legal precedence included in the *Mishneh Torah* gives us a very good understanding of how the Nation of Israel applied the *Torah's* laws to its Gentile citizens.

Since the Jews formed their interpretations of Scripture based on their first-hand native understanding of Ancient Hebrew, and since Ancient Hebrew (Biblical Hebrew) requires the knowledge of the equivalent of an oral code book to decipher it, the Oral Law, with its interpretation of the *Torah*, is of inestimable value in understanding the Jewish perspective on issues with the Law. And no one could understand what the Law meant better than the Jews who for a very long time used to read the Law in the same language in which they spoke. To

summarize, the Jews understood their own sacred writings to teach that Gentiles were excluded from the Old Covenant law's ordinances, including the Passover and Sabbath, unless they became circumcised proselytes to Judaism. As we noted before, a commentary on the relationship between the Sabbath and Gentiles would not be discussed in the Oral Law if the foundation for it did not exist in the Written Law. The Oral Law may deal with some subjects that are not covered in the Written Law, such as the Resurrection of the Dead, but it can be expected mostly to clarify what is already in the Written Law. And this is all the Oral Law has done with the subject of Gentiles in relation to the Sabbath and the Ordinance of Circumcision.

CORRELATION WITH OTHER ANCIENT SOURCES

Conservative biblical scholars believe that it is likely that the Book of Job was written a very long time before Moses and may have fallen into his hands. Some evidence suggests that he might have translated it from another language into whatever language he wrote in at the time. The story takes place in a land outside of Israel. We seem to have an individual who is recognized by both God and Satan to be a righteous man. There is no record of Job keeping the Sabbath. Thus, Job seems to fit the pattern of no record of Sabbath-keeping by any of the Patriarchs prior to the Exodus. The biblical scholars at Bible.Org supply these considerations as evidence that the story took place [a very long time before the time of Moses](#):

Support for a pre-Mosaic date:

The patriarchal family-clan organization reflects the time of Abraham rather than after the Exodus.

The offering of sacrifice by the head of the family rather than a priest reflects a time before the Exodus.

The mention of a qesitah as a type of money (Job 42:11) suggests a date which is at least during the time of Joshua (cf. Jos. 24:32), if not during the patriarchal period (cf. Gen 33:19)54.

Support for an early second millennium date of Job as a contemporary with the patriarchs:

The reference in Ezekiel 14:14 to Job and Daniel may be a reference to the ancient Canaanite hero Dan'el who was a prominent figure in the Ugaritic epics rather than to the contemporary prophet, Daniel.

Other names in Job are authentic for the second millennium B.C.

Bildad was short for Yabil Dadum, a name found in cuneiform sources of the second millennium B.C. Job is found in the "Babylonian Job", a cuneiform composition.

Date of Composition: Possibly during the time of the Patriarchs (Second Millennium B.C.)

The Patriarchal Age:

This was the view of the Talmud.

This helps support the accuracy of the conversations between Job and his friends; but this is not necessary since portions of Genesis were accurately transmitted by mouth until Moses wrote them down.

The addition of 42:16-17 could have been added shortly after Job's death.

The lifestyle and longevity of Job are similar to that of the patriarchs found in Genesis.

The moving bands of Sabaeans and Chaldeans (Job 1:15, 17) matches the early second millennium B.C.

The literary genre of Job (below) matches that of the patriarchal era.

The name of Job is found in the Amarna letters (c. 1350 B.C.) and the Egyptian Execration texts (c. 2000 B.C.)

Although the evidence does not demand a second millennium B.C. date, it certainly allows for it. (See <https://bible.org/article/introduction-book-job>)

Note that the scholars at Bible.Org summarize considerations that might suggest later dates for the Book of Job's composition.

Many extra-biblical sources, including Jewish and non-Jewish, can help with an understanding of biblical languages including Ancient Hebrew, Modern Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek. The Christian Bible came about as a result of decisions made by human beings during the first few centuries of the Christian Faith. While Christians believe that God led the process of selection, some inclusions and exclusions suggest that this selection was not perfect. For example, Martin Luther objected to the inclusion of the Book of Revelation.

The Book of Enoch has some key relevance to the question of whether or not Christians should keep the Jewish Sabbath. It was rejected by Western Christianity but was included in the canon of one of the Eastern Orthodox Churches— The Coptic Church of Egypt. After the resurrection of Christ the Jews rejected the Book of Enoch because some of its prophecies seemed to foretell events related to the life of Christ. Its content provides compelling evidence that the Patriarchs and the predecessors of the Hebrew people utilized a lunar calendar— not surprising because the world seems to have known no other way to track time back then. The Book of Enoch indirectly provides proof that Israel used a lunar calendar in ancient times because one of the main themes of the book is the need to abandon such a calendar in favor of a fixed-week, solar calendar. Its total exclusion of any mention of a Sabbath ordinance during the purported period of time it claimed to represent— the Age of Enoch prior to the Great Flood— provides compelling evidence that the Jewish writer(s) did not believe in a Sabbath ordinance prior to Mt. Sinai.

The *Book of Enoch* includes an extensive discussion of the importance of the four phases of the moon and the lunar calendar. The implication of its content is that the affinity for the 7-day week came not from the dim memory of a Genesis Sabbath but from the observation of the four phases of the Moon— that the concept of a seven-day week likely developed as a result of astronomical observations. Your authors observe that the journey of the Moon seems to have little movement for seven days at a time, or, as we would say, it goes through four “phases.”

Quoted in the canonical *Book of Jude* and purportedly written by Enoch, the 7th from Adam, most scholars believe it was put together from a number of sources about 200 BCE. It makes no reference to the Sabbath or the Mosaic Covenant. Fragments of *The Book of Enoch* were featured in a recent national exhibit of the Dead Sea Scrolls, and one of those fragments included a discussion of lunar-related topics. The Book of Enoch paints a picture of a pre-Exodus world that is fully devoid of the concept of a Creation-based Sabbath.

The absence of any reference to the ordinance of the Sabbath is remarkable regardless of when The Book of Enoch was written. If it was written during the pre-Flood time of Enoch, it provides additional evidence— not proof— that the Sabbath was completely unknown to the descendants of Adam and Eve, Noah, and Abraham. If the story was fabricated by some well-meaning Rabbis a few hundred years before the birth of Christ, those who put it together were careful to make their work appear to be credible by avoiding any mention of things that did not exist at the time of Enoch— no Sabbath, no Decalogue. At the same time this book focuses on the theme of righteousness, discusses the importance of keeping the moralistic laws of God, and delineates what those laws include. The moralistic laws discussed in The Book of Enoch seem to parallel those of the Noachian laws— laws that the Jews believed applied to non-Jews and the observance of which would assure a non-Jew eternal life in Paradise. Either scenario provides additional evidence that the Jews did not believe the Sabbath originated at Creation and that this belief was a part of Jewish thinking no later than 200 BCE. And what about the prophecies of Christ? Jewish scholars suggested that portions of the Book of Enoch were written after the life of Christ until fragments of the book were found along with the Dead Sea Scrolls, which effectively dated the writing of it to no later than 200 BCE.

Such information from these other perspectives should make those who study the books of Moses either in Ancient Hebrew or a translation in his or her own language want to be very careful not to read his or her own preconceived ideas into the text.

ANSWERS TO OBJECTIONS

OBJECTION: THE SAME HEBREW WORD USED IN GENESIS 2 TO INDICATE THAT THE 7TH DAY IS BLESSED IS THE SAME HEBREW WORD USED IN GENESIS 1:28 WHEN GOD BLESSED ADAM AND EVE AND TOLD THEM TO MULTIPLY ACROSS THE FACE OF THE EARTH. THE USE OF THIS SAME WORD INDICATES THAT BLESSED SEVENTH DAYS ARE TO "MULTIPLY" TILL THE END OF TIME.

REBUTTAL - There are several problems with the logic of this argument: **(1)** Many things can be blessed. The Hebrew word, here, is straightforward. Both people and things can receive special consideration, supernatural benefits and protection over time, and special designation. Each thing God blesses has different characteristics. People are supposed to multiply or the human race would not exist. A day is a day, limited by the time it takes for Planet Earth to rotate. This process cannot be multiplied, as it is fixed by the laws of physics. **(2)** Genesis 1:14 states that the human race will determine its own holy days according to the movements of the world clocks-- the Sun and Moon. That human beings did this is a matter of recorded ancient history. Virtually all very ancient calendars were lunar and virtually all sacred days were appointed in regard to the phases of the Moon. A Sabbath ordinance given in Genesis 2 would flatly and unavoidably cause a conflict. God would not specify one way to do holy days in one chapter and then upend the whole system in the very next chapter with an entirely new idea. **(3)** The Jewish system of holy days as outlined in Leviticus 23 is a lunar mathematical model which depends on both the first week of the month and the month starting at the beginning of each and

every month. By contrast, were there to have been a Sabbath system established in Eden, it would have to have been anchored to the 7th day of Creation with subsequent contiguous weeks of seven days each. Such a week did not exist in the very ancient world. The first known **fixed** week calendar was that of Egypt's Civil Calendar, which was based on ten-day weeks. A Sabbath in Genesis is mathematically impossible.