

Feature Article: DS420

## SHOULD WE KEEP THE SABBATH?

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### SYNOPSIS

Some groups today, such as the Seventh-day Adventists, teach that keeping the seventh-day Sabbath is a perpetual moral law meant for all people, and that not keeping it is a sign of apostasy and disloyalty to God. They base their belief on Genesis 2:1–3, which tells of God resting after His creative work and then sanctifying the Sabbath day, and on the fourth commandment. They also argue that the New Testament teaches the continuity of seventh-day Sabbath observance by Christ's followers, even after Christ's death. These beliefs, however, are misguided. There is no universal moral obligation given in Genesis 2 to keep the Sabbath. Christ's finished work on the cross, moreover, abrogated the Mosaic law, and thus the fourth commandment no longer applies to Christians. Paul made this clear in his epistles, primarily in Romans, Galatians, and Colossians. Apostolic practice in Acts also confirms it. To be under the Jewish law, furthermore, brings its curse, for one cannot choose just a part of the law — he or she must obey every precept of it (Gal. 3:10). The Jews kept the Sabbath, but after Christ's resurrection no biblical data suggests that Christians kept the Sabbath. They instead kept the Lord's Day, which historically has been the first day of the week (Sunday). Every day is for worship, not just the Sabbath. Sabbath keeping may have some good purposes, but it is not an obligation for believers today, nor is it a sign of apostasy or disloyalty to God not to observe the Sabbath.

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Sabbath observance in the Old Testament was to be a memorial to God's rest from His creative activity: "The seventh day is the Sabbath of the LORD your God. In it you shall do no work....For in six days the LORD made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that is in them, and rested the seventh day. Therefore the LORD blessed the Sabbath day and hallowed it" (Exod. 20:10–11).<sup>1</sup>

Other than the Jews, few religious groups today promote keeping the seventh-day Sabbath. J. Barton Payne notes that "Judaistic sabbatarianism has reappeared among post-Reformation groups such as the Seventh-day Baptists, 1671, and the Seventh-day Adventists, 1845."<sup>2</sup>

Seventh-day Baptists (SDB) "differ from the tenets of the Baptists generally only in regard to the Sabbath."<sup>3</sup> The rationale behind their Sabbath keeping is that the Sabbath, as instituted in Eden and then made a part of the Sinaitic law code, "was made binding upon all men in all times; [and] that, in the nature of its relations to God and to man, it is irrevocable."<sup>4</sup> They argue that because Sabbath keeping is a moral issue that flows out of the very nature of God, it is unchangeable.

The Seventh-day Adventist (SDA) position is similar to that of the SDB. Established close to 160 years ago, the SDA church holds "that the Sabbath was instituted in Eden before sin entered, that it was honored of God, set apart by divine appointment, and given to mankind as the perpetual memorial of a finished creation."<sup>5</sup>

According to Sabbatarians, the Sabbath has always been the seventh day of the week. They believe “the Lord’s day” (Rev. 1:10), which the vast majority of the church has traditionally celebrated on the first day of the week, is really the Sabbath, because “in the Scripture, the only day the Lord calls His own is the seventh-day Sabbath [Exod. 20:10; Isa. 58:13; Mark 2:28]....Nowhere does the Bible command us to observe any weekly day other than the Sabbath....Nor does the New Testament indicate that God has changed the Sabbath to any other day of the week.”<sup>6</sup>

Sabbatarianism also argues that Christians are directly obligated to observe the fourth commandment to keep the Sabbath holy by resting on the seventh day. SDA publications explicitly state: “Salvation is all of grace and not of works, but its fruitage is obedience to the Commandments.”<sup>7</sup> In their view, seventh-day Sabbath keeping is a sign of sanctification and loyalty to God: “Every human being’s loyalty to God will be tested by the Sabbath command placed in the midst of the Decalogue [the Ten Commandments].”<sup>8</sup>

According to SDA, the early church fell into apostasy when it neglected Sabbath observance and instituted Sunday worship, especially evident in the Councils of Laodicea (A.D. 364) and Chalcedon (A.D. 451). The SDA church further argues that the institution of Sunday worship fulfilled Daniel’s prediction that the little horn would “change the times and law” (Dan. 7:25).<sup>9</sup> W. W. Prescott, an SDA magazine editor, wrote, “Seventh-day Adventists believe, and teach, that the observance of any other day than the seventh as the Sabbath is the sign of that predicted apostasy in which the man of sin would be revealed who would exalt himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped” (2 Thess. 2:4).<sup>10</sup> Finally, SDA holds that prior to the Second Advent, seventh-day Sabbath keeping will be the test of loyalty to God so that “the whole world will be divided into two classes: those who are loyal and ‘keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus,’ and those who worship ‘the beast and his image’ (Rev. 14:12, 9).”<sup>11</sup>

### **IS SABBATH KEEPING A UNIVERSAL MORAL OBLIGATION?**

Sabbatarians argue that because the Sabbath was instituted at Creation, keeping it is a universal moral obligation. In the initial account of God’s creation of the Sabbath, however, “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.”<sup>12</sup> The text of Genesis 1–2 unfolds God’s creative work and its completion in six days, followed by God’s rest. The movement climaxes with God’s resting. It may be a fitting pattern for humanity to follow, but the text contains no suggestion of some universal moral obligation for humanity to keep the Sabbath.

In the same passage, God married the first pair and commanded them to reproduce and multiply; yet even that injunction is not a moral law, universally binding on all humans. Jesus Himself did not marry, and He endorsed celibacy in some cases (Matt. 19:12). Paul, furthermore, advocated the unmarried state as a wise and wholesome choice for some Christians (1 Cor. 7:7, 26–27, 39–40).

God’s initial Sabbath did not originate from His divine essence and nature, and consequently it should not be seen as a moral law binding on all people. Jesus, in response to the Pharisees’ question about what activities were lawful on the Sabbath, said, “The Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath” (Mark 2:27). God made us. He knows our frame, our constitution, and our needs. God’s pattern of work and rest is instructive for us. Following that pattern, we can learn and benefit; but are we to see a binding moral obligation of Sabbath keeping in the Creation account? The answer is *no*. It simply is not there. Some read an obligation back into the Genesis record from the fourth commandment’s wording, which mentions the Creation (Exod. 20:11), but it is not in Genesis 2:1–3.

### **IS SABBATH KEEPING A PERPETUAL OBLIGATION?**

If Sabbath keeping is not a universal moral law, is it true that it is a perpetual obligation enjoined on all humankind? Sabbatarians argue that perpetual observation is evidence of a perpetual obligation. Darwin Maxson, a Seventh-day Baptist educator, argues that from the institution of the Sabbath “there has been an unbroken line of God-loving men who have kept the seventh day of the week as a Sabbath.”<sup>13</sup>

There is no question that the Bible teaches that God made the seventh day, blessed it, and sanctified it. All this can be learned from Genesis 2:1–3; however, there is no further mention of the Sabbath in Genesis, or in Exodus, during all the thousands of years that passed by until the Israelites, freed from Egyptian bondage, were on their wilderness trek. Not one verse of Scripture shows Adam, Enoch, Methuselah, or Noah keeping the Sabbath and passing it down to others. We never read that Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, or the patriarchs ever kept the Sabbath for even one day. They came out of heathen darkness and into marvelous faith in God, but there is no hint that they practiced Sabbath keeping. This is, of course, an argument from silence; however, neither can Sabbatarians prove from silence that there has been an unbroken line of seventh-day Sabbath worship.

The Scriptures note times when what God prescribed was not followed. In Nehemiah 8:17 we read that the Feast of Tabernacles with its sitting under booths (Deut. 16:16) had not been observed for nearly 1,000 years, from Joshua down to Ezra. Second Chronicles 36:21 similarly seems to indicate that the 70-year-long Babylonian captivity was partly to reclaim the Sabbatic years that were largely neglected from the times of the judges through the kingdom period.<sup>14</sup> There is no such indication, however, about a similar lapse that would explain the lack of any reference to Sabbath observance in Genesis.

SDA writings also endeavor to prove that an unbroken line of Sabbath observance continued during the New Testament era by arguing that Jesus, and His disciples and followers, kept the Sabbath prior to His crucifixion. All acknowledge this, but it does not prove the perpetuity of Sabbath observation after the Resurrection. Several references to the Sabbath in the book of Acts are asserted to show that the disciples knew no change from keeping the Sabbath (Acts 13:14, 27, 42; 16:13; 18:4).<sup>15</sup> Each mention of the Sabbath in Acts, however, merely confirms that the Jews still observed that day. Not once is it reported in Acts that Christian believers assembled on the Sabbath. The only reference to the Sabbath in the New Testament after Acts is Colossians 2:16, where Paul told believers they are not under bondage to Jewish dietary restrictions or the Sabbath.

Sabbatarians argue that the Christian practice of Sunday observance — what became known as “the Lord’s day” — is wrong because it was not prevalent until the middle of the second century.<sup>16</sup> Just because the practice was not prevalent before this time, however, proves nothing about whether it is correct. The New Testament mentions that believers met on the first day of the week (Acts 20:7; 1 Cor. 16:2). Though we cannot be certain about its origins, there are “reasons for holding that Sunday worship began at an early stage of Christian history and was from an early stage understood as commemorative of the Lord’s resurrection on the first day of the week.”<sup>17</sup> This is also the best explanation of why Sunday became known as “the Lord’s day” (Rev. 1:10).

The SDA church argues that Jesus’ warning to His disciples to pray that their flight to escape would not “be in winter or on the Sabbath” (Matt. 24:20) implies that believers will be observing the Sabbath in that future day.<sup>18</sup> This verse, of course, has various eschatological interpretations, but it does not necessarily imply that those who flee will be observing the Sabbath themselves. It necessarily implies only that those believers who flee will be in a land where the Sabbath is being observed, probably by non-Christian Jews.

The SDA church also holds that Isaiah 66:22–23 teaches that “God intended that His people should observe the Sabbath throughout eternity.”<sup>19</sup> The context of this eschatological text, however, merely teaches that from month to month and from week to week, God’s people will worship Him. In that final state of God’s kingdom, which Revelation 21:3 tells us will have no need of sun or moon, there will be one perpetual day. John added that “there shall be no night there” (Rev. 21:25). How then could there be a cycle of seven days that would allow for a literal Sabbath? The Isaiah passage, in reality, says nothing about Sabbath worship. It simply means that God’s people will perpetually worship Him.

### **APOSTASY OR CHRISTIAN LIBERTY?**

The New Testament records various struggles the new Christian church had in order to break the shackles of an old system of law keeping that bound many in their former religion — Judaism. Peter, for example, struggled with his Jewish background and initially refused God’s revelation to him that

Gentiles should not be treated as ceremonially unclean but rather should be given the Gospel (Acts 10:9–20, 28). Peter subsequently proceeded to Caesarea to share the Gospel with the Roman centurion, Cornelius, and other Gentiles. When Peter returned to Jerusalem, some of the Jewish hierarchy in the Christian church “contended with him” (Acts 11:2).<sup>20</sup> Peter explained how God had commanded him in a vision to go to Cornelius and the other Gentiles, and then what happened when they heard the saving Gospel about Jesus Christ. Luke recorded how this particular situation ended: “When they heard these things they became silent; and they glorified God, saying, ‘Then God has also granted to the Gentiles repentance to life’” (Acts 11:18).

God’s clear intention that Jewish law not be binding on believers after Christ’s death and resurrection was not, however, readily embraced by Christians with a Jewish heritage. Some years later, even after Paul and Barnabas took the Gospel to the Gentiles on their first missionary journey (Acts 13–14), the entire doctrine of salvation was in jeopardy of being compromised. Certain Judaic believers came to Antioch and boldly taught new Gentile believers that “unless you are circumcised according to the custom of Moses, you cannot be saved” (Acts 15:1). This controversy immediately led to the Jerusalem council recorded in Acts 15.

Some believers, who were also Pharisees, argued that “it is necessary to circumcise them [Gentiles], and to command them to keep the law of Moses” (Acts 15:5). The decision of the council, however, was that the law of Moses was not binding on Gentile believers. Peter even declared, “We believe that through the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, we [Jews] shall be saved in the same manner as they [Gentiles]” (Acts 15:11). Christ sets all believers free from the Mosaic law – no more circumcision, no more dietary restrictions, no more clean and unclean animals (see Lev. 11). Paul later warned against those who were “commanding to abstain from foods which God created to be received with thanksgiving by those who believe and know the truth” (1 Tim. 4:4). Paul affirmed, “For every creature of God is good, and nothing is to be refused if it is received with thanksgiving” (v. 5).

Paul also exhorted the Galatians to “stand fast therefore in the liberty by which Christ has made us free, and do not be entangled again with a yoke of bondage” (Gal. 5:1). His appeal focused primarily on whether circumcision was a necessity for new believers, but the issue was much larger: if one adopts the practice of Jewish circumcision, he becomes “a debtor to keep the whole law” (Gal. 5:3). Of course, no one was ever saved by keeping the Jewish law. Those who seek to keep the law fall under its curse: “Cursed is everyone who does not continue in all things which are written in the book of the law, to do them” (Gal. 3:10).<sup>21</sup> James voiced the same concept: “For whoever shall keep the whole law, and yet stumble in one point, he is guilty of all” (James 2:10).

In Galatia, Paul and Barnabas founded churches on their first missionary journey. Shortly after they left, Judaizers tried to add to the Gospel of Christ, which Paul and Barnabas had proclaimed. Paul called this action a perverting or a distorting of the Gospel (Gal. 1:7). What did the Judaizers teach? They added law keeping to the Gospel as a means of salvation. Paul countered by arguing that the Mosaic law was like a tutor, a schoolmaster “to bring us to Christ, that we might be justified by faith. But after faith has come, we are no longer under a tutor” (Gal. 3:24–25).

Again, Paul upbraided the Galatians by asking, “But now after you have known God...how is it that you turn again to the weak and beggarly elements, to which you desire again to be in bondage?” (Gal. 4:9). What was the evidence of their turning back? Paul accused them, “You observe days and months and seasons and years” (Gal. 4:10). Circumcision was another stumbling block. Paul concluded, “You have become estranged from Christ, you who attempt to be justified by law; you are fallen from grace” (Gal. 5:4). They had attempted to be justified by keeping the law, but without success. They had fallen from the grace basis for salvation to a basis found in keeping the Mosaic law. Paul was saying in effect that those who continued to keep the law, which included keeping the Sabbath, were committing apostasy!

Paul also addressed this subject in his epistle to the Romans. There, under the topic of Christian liberty, he dealt with such issues as eating meat versus maintaining a vegetarian diet. He also broached the Sabbath question. Paul wrote, “One person esteems one day above another; another esteems every day

alike. Let each be fully convinced in his own mind. He who observes the day, observes it to the Lord; and he who does not observe the day, to the Lord he does not observe it" (Rom. 14:5–6). Believers are now free to observe or not observe the Sabbath according to their consciences. They are not free to judge each other in this regard (v. 10), as the SDA church has clearly done by asserting that those who do not keep the seventh-day Sabbath are being disloyal to God. Such claims, as well as their teaching that Sunday observance is a sign of apostasy, undermine the clarification in some SDA literature that Sabbath keeping is a fruit and not a cause of salvation, and help explain the legalism that has been rampant throughout the denomination's history.

### HAS GOD ABROGATED THE SABBATH?

Can one say for sure that God has abrogated (done away with) the command to keep the Sabbath? Yes. In many respects God has changed His commands and laws. To fail to understand this creates confusion and misunderstanding of the Scriptures.

One clear illustration of God's changing laws regards the eating of meat. Most would agree that God gave Adam and Eve a vegetarian diet: "Of every tree of the garden you may freely eat; but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat" (Gen. 2:16–17). We do not read of Adam and Eve having a barbeque prior to the Fall. After the Fall, however, they had to offer animal sacrifices. The sweet and delicious aroma of roasting meat would have filled the air. Did they eat those sacrifices? We are not told, although later, under the law of Moses, the offerer partook of certain of his sacrifices, such as the peace offering (Lev. 7:11–18).

After the Flood people freely ate meat — of all kinds. God declared, "Every moving thing that lives shall be food for you. I have given you all things, even as the green herbs" (Gen. 9:3). The only restriction was that the blood of animals not be consumed with the meat (Gen. 9:4). This illustrates a clear change God instituted in one of His initial commands to humankind. Conditions changed and God began something different, but that was not the end of the matter.

When the Jews arrived at Sinai, God restricted their diet (Lev. 11). There God distinguished between certain clean and unclean birds, land animals, and aquatic creatures. The point, however, is not that God declared some animals clean and others unclean at that time. That was known long before. Noah had taken both clean and unclean animals onto the ark (Gen. 7:2). The point of Leviticus 11 is that God restricted the eating habits of the Jews — and only of the Jews — to a specific diet that He approved at that time. The diet of all humankind, including the Jews, was unrestricted prior to that time, according to Genesis 9:3–4.

Even that is not the conclusion of the matter. After the cross, those Jewish dietary regulations were abolished. This is clearly taught in Peter's vision (Acts 10:9–16, 28; 11:5–10) and in Paul's epistles (Rom. 14:2–3; Col. 2:16; 1 Tim. 4:3–5). In a similar manner, the Sabbath is no longer binding on Christians (Col. 2:16). Christ has freed us from the law.

Christ released us from the Sabbath. His finished work on the cross abolished the entire Mosaic law of ordinances, which includes the Sabbath commandment. Only nine of the Ten Commandments are repeated in the New Testament. The reason for this is significant. The fourth commandment was part of the Jewish law system, which Paul called "the handwriting of requirements that was against us, which was contrary to us" (Col. 2:14). The moral standards in the other nine commandments regarding worshipping other gods and idols, taking God's name in vain, dishonoring parents, murdering, committing adultery, stealing, lying, and coveting remain in effect because they reflect God's very nature and as such are timeless.<sup>22</sup> The expression of these moral standards in the form of the Ten Commandments, however, was not timeless. Paul clearly stated that Christ took this "handwriting of requirements" and "nailed it to the cross" (Col. 2:14).

The result could not be clearer. Paul's "therefore" in Colossians 2:16 is based on the fact that Christ canceled the debt — all those Old Testament regulations that had plagued the Jews for centuries.<sup>23</sup>

“Therefore,” Paul concludes, “let no one judge you in food or in drink.” Those regulations were abolished. Pork is as lawful as beef, chicken, or fish. Even meats offered to idols were not prohibited, unless eating such food might cause a weaker brother’s conscience to stumble (1 Cor. 8:4–9).

Paul further concluded in verse 16 that no one can judge you “regarding a festival or a new moon or Sabbaths.” These three terms have particular reference to the *yearly* festivals such as Passover, Pentecost, and Tabernacles (Deut. 16:16); the *monthly* festival of the new moon when the trumpet was blown (Num. 10:10; Ps. 81:3); and the *weekly* observance of the Sabbath.<sup>24</sup> This triple terminology of festivals, new moons, and Sabbaths is found elsewhere in the Old Testament (Isa. 1:13–14; Ezek. 45:17; Hos. 2:11); thus it was familiar to Paul’s Jewish readers.

The Colossian believers were to allow no one to pass judgment against them regarding Jewish Sabbath observances, new moons, or any other Jewish feasts. Why? Because Jesus Christ abolished those observances, which were mere shadows, whereas Jesus Himself is the substance, the body that creates the shadow. Christ is the reality. Oliver B. Greene correctly states, “Christianity knows no such thing as days, months or seasons. *Every day is holy unto the Lord, and Christians should worship God every day.*”<sup>25</sup>

The Sabbath rest, of course, pictures God’s finished, completed work, initially at Creation, then again with salvation by faith in Christ’s substitutionary death, burial, and resurrection for our sins. The writer of the epistle to the Hebrews used this Sabbath analogy to note that when one believes, he enters into the reality of God’s rest, pictured by the Sabbath. As a result, the believer “has himself also ceased from his works as God did from His” (Heb. 4:10).

### SABBATH KEEPING TODAY?

Those who keep the Sabbath do so with a belief that law can be divided into moral and ceremonial aspects. They believe Sabbath observance is part of the moral aspect and remains in effect, but the detailed instructions are part of the ceremonial aspects that have been done away with in Christ. The law, however, cannot be so easily divided. Deuteronomy 27:26, for example, cited by both Paul (Gal. 3:10; cf. 5:3) and James (James 2:10), shows that keeping the law is a two-edged sword — to fail in one point makes one guilty of all. The New Testament, furthermore, provides no clear distinction between moral and ceremonial aspects of the Mosaic law and frequently speaks of the entire law (e.g., Gal 3:23–24; 4:4–5).

What would Sabbath keeping look like today if one were to practice it? Let us not discuss Pharisaical perversions or additions to the Sabbath, but just what God’s Word teaches.

According to Exodus 16:29, God required strict home-abiding on the Sabbath for all Israelites. In today’s economy the airlines, buses, trains, and roadways would be empty. Orthodox Jews in some parts of Jerusalem will stone cars that are driven through their neighborhoods on Saturday. Nehemiah took stern action against buying and selling on the Sabbath (Neh. 10:31; 13:15–22). Department stores and the malls would need to remain closed. Restaurants and individuals would fall under the ban on baking and boiling food (Exod. 16:23). Seeking and finding one’s “own pleasure” and doing one’s “own ways” were also prohibited on the Sabbath (Isa. 58:13). Death was exacted on any violators, including whoever performed any work (Exod. 31:14–15; 35:2), even gathering sticks (Num. 15:32, 35).

What would be possible on the Sabbath? Jesus attended synagogue, worshiped God, taught and applied the Scriptures, performed deeds of mercy and encouraged others to do the same, and He no doubt rested from some of His usual labor.

If there is a *principle* that one day in seven belongs to God, then it should be used to arrest us from our normal pursuits and allow us to devote more attention to God’s Word and work, but Christians are not obligated to observe the Sabbath, nor are they committing apostasy if they exercise their Christian liberty not to observe the Sabbath.

## NOTES

1. All Bible quotations are from the New King James Version unless otherwise noted.
2. Everett F. Harrison, ed., *Baker's Dictionary of Theology* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1960), s.v. "Sabbatarianism."
3. Philip Schaff, ed., *A Religious Encyclopaedia: or Dictionary of Biblical, Historical, Doctrinal, and Practical Theology*, rev. ed. (New York: Christian Literature, 1888), s.v. "Seventh-day Baptists."
4. *Ibid.* This same argument is also reported in *Cyclopedia of Biblical, Theological and Ecclesiastical Literature* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1880), s.v. "Sabbatarians."
5. *Seventh-day Adventists Answer Questions on Doctrine* (Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1957), 149. For a refutation of SDA arguments, see Walter Martin, *The Kingdom of the Cults*, rev. 30th anniv. ed. (Minneapolis: Bethany House, 1997), 568–81.
6. *Seventh-day Adventists Believe...* (Washington, DC: General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, 1988), 254. The bracketed Bible references are my own listing of key passages Adventists use to support this point.
7. "Fundamental Beliefs of Seventh-Day Adventists" (1980), 18, cited in *Seventh-day Adventists Believe...*, 232.
8. *Seventh-day Adventists Believe...*, 256.
9. *Seventh-day Adventists Answer Questions*, 152. "Through the prophecy of Daniel 7 God revealed His foreknowledge of the change of the day of worship" (*Seventh-day Adventists Believe...*, 260).
10. James Orr, ed., *International Standard Bible Encyclopaedia* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1939), s.v. "Sabbath: Seventh-day Adventist Position."
11. *Seventh-day Adventists Believe...*, 256.
12. Andrew T. Lincoln, "From Sabbath to Lord's Day: A Biblical and Theological Perspective," in *From Sabbath to Lord's Day: A Biblical, Historical, and Theological Investigation*, ed. D. A. Carson (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1982), 348.
13. *A Religious Encyclopaedia*.
14. Second Chronicles 36:21 references a prophecy made by Jeremiah, but the precise passage is obscure. Daniel 9:2 mentions Jeremiah's prediction of 70 years of desolation. Perhaps Jeremiah 25:11–12; 29:10 is the referent.
15. *International Standard Bible Encyclopaedia*.
16. *A Religious Encyclopaedia*.
17. R. J. Bauckham, "The Lord's Day," in *From Sabbath to Lord's Day: A Biblical, Historical, and Theological Investigation*, ed. D. A. Carson (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1982), 240.
18. *Seventh-day Adventists Believe...*, 253.
19. *Ibid.*, 254.
20. "Contended" in the KJV and NKJV. Other translations say, "took issue with him" (NASB), "criticized him" (RSV, TEV, NIV, NRSV, NLB), "found fault with him" (Weymouth), and "began to bring charges against him" (Williams).
21. Paul is citing Deuteronomy 27:26.
22. The New Testament reaffirmations of the Ten Commands are: (1) no other gods, Luke 10:27; (2) no idols, 1 John 5:21; (3) no swearing, Matt. 5:33–37; (4) keep the Sabbath, no references; (5) honor parents, Matt. 19:19; (6) no murder, Matt. 19:19 and Rom. 13:9; (7) no adultery, Matt. 19:18; (8) no stealing, Eph. 4:28; (9) no lying, Col. 3:9; and (10) no coveting, Matt. 5:28.
23. Williams translates this as "canceled the note," referring to a note or bond. Weymouth similarly says, "The bond...He cancelled." Moffatt has, "He cancelled the regulations." The NIV says that Christ "canceled the written code, with its regulations." The ESV wording is, "Canceling the record of debt that stood against us with its legal demands."
24. H. C. G. Moule, *Colossian Studies* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1898), 174. See also Everett F. Harrison, *Colossians: Christ All-Sufficient* (Chicago: Moody, 1971), 65; G. G. Findlay, "Colossians" in *The Pulpit Commentary*, eds. H. D. M. Spence and Joseph S. Exell (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1962), XX, 92; and especially John Eadie, *Commentary on the Epistle of Paul to the Colossians* (reprint, Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1957), 176–77.
25. Oliver B. Greene, *The Epistle of Paul the Apostle to the Colossians*.