

ture, so that their people accept it *without question*, believing it to be firmly established in the Word of God. They base their teaching primarily on this text in Genesis:

And on the seventh day God ended his work which he had made; and he rested on the seventh day from all his work which he had made. And God blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it: because that in it he had rested from all his work which God created and made. (Gen 2:2,3)

Let's make a few observations: First, when God "**commands**" something, he's not at all bashful about **commanding** something; and doing no work on the Sabbath day is most definitely a **command**. This is seen when he actually *did* give the Sabbath commandment in Exodus 16 to the children of Israel. In the midst of the detailed instruction about gathering the manna six days, but not on the seventh (vv4-31), Moses said, "This is the thing which the Lord hath **commanded**" (v16); and when some of the people went out on the seventh day, the Lord said, "How long refuse ye to keep my **commandments**?" (vv27,28). But where is any such wording like this in the creation account between God and Adam? This type of wording is indeed there, that is, a direct "**command**" given to Adam; but it has nothing whatsoever to do with a *Sabbath day*.

And the Lord God **commanded the man**, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, **thou shalt not** eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof **thou shalt surely die**. (2:16,17)

The **test** for Adam in the garden was a *singular* prohibition the Lord laid down. He did not lay down *several* prohibitions; he did not lay down even *two* prohibitions—**only one**. That was the *test*. This is how we know that Adam was given *no* restriction concerning any other thing. He was "**forbidden**" in no other area. God gave him *only one* restriction. But according to the **SDA**, God gave him *two* restrictions: "Thou shalt not eat of the forbidden fruit, lest ye die" **AND** "Thou shalt do no work on the Sabbath day, lest ye die." That's one too many **laws** laid down in the garden of Eden! There isn't anything wrong with this Sabbath command coming up some time later, but there's absolutely no room for it here!

The wording in Genesis makes this ever so plain. The Holy Spirit emphasizes on *purpose* three times exactly what Adam's one and only prohibition was. He uses the word "**commanded**" repeatedly and emphatically to direct our attention to it—"And the Lord God **commanded** the man, saying, Of every

tree of the garden..." (2:16); "And the Lord God called unto Adam...Hast thou eaten of the tree, whereof I **commanded** thee..." (3:9-11); "And unto Adam he said, Because thou hast ...eaten of the tree, of which I **commanded** thee..." (3:17). See how the Lord puts the spotlight on this word "**commanded**"? This word isn't used again till the time of Noah! (6:22) This was clearly Adam's singular restriction. It had nothing to do with observing a day. Yet if the **SDAs** are correct, the Lord would have had to ask Adam a *twofold* question: "Have you eaten of the tree? **or** Have you violated the Sabbath day?" Why was there *only one* question? very simply, because there was *only one* prohibition Adam was under. The **commandment** to keep the Sabbath day has *no place* in the garden of Eden!

This **assumption** is the "**foundation**" piece of the **SDA Church**; but it cannot stand alone, for it necessarily leads to **another** assumption that they're *forced* to teach. And just like the first, this other assumption is *nowhere* to be found in the Bible! They state it here:

So the Sabbath, established in Eden, was **kept by patriarch, prophet, and people of God** throughout the centuries...[It] was **observed throughout the patriarchal age**, long before it was placed in the special custody of ancient Israel, following their Exodus from Egypt. (Questions, pp130,134)

They have to believe this! If the Sabbath command came from creation, God's people all throughout the history of Genesis kept it—Abel, Enoch, Noah, Abraham, etc. The **SDA** leaders, though, can document *none of this*! So in their writings, after they claim that the Sabbath command sprang from creation, they have to jump **two thousand and five hundred years** to Exodus 16 to the Jewish nation in the wilderness where the *first mention* of a "Sabbath command" is found in the Bible! Here's how their *Sabbath* chapter opens in *Questions*: "We believe that the Sabbath was instituted in Eden before sin entered... and given to mankind as a perpetual memorial of a finished creation" (p129). They then make a few comments about the Sabbath in three brief paragraphs, and then comes this: "**Many centuries later**, the weekly seventh-day Sabbath was reaffirmed at Sinai." They have to jump all the way over the history of Genesis—**2,500 years**! In all the history of the book of Genesis, the Lord is totally **silent** about any kind of "Sabbath" observance whatsoever! He says nothing about it! The **SDAs** have not *one shred* of biblical evidence to cling to throughout that entire history! It's the same in their *Believe* book—they jump

literally from "*The Sabbath at Creation*" (p282) to "*The Sabbath at Sinai*" (p283). They have to! because there was **no one** who *kept the Sabbath* during that entire age of **25** long centuries!

But the **SDAs** must believe and teach **both** of these **huge assumptions**! Their whole doctrinal structure is sustained by them. What do their leaders say about all this "*silence*"? Well, when they made the statement above about the Sabbath being observed "*throughout the patriarchal age*," they knew they had to say something, because it's too obvious that it's *nowhere* taught in the Bible! So they put a footnote, and came up with this explanation:

The *silence* of the latter part of Genesis regarding the Sabbath is understandable when one remembers that **acquaintance** of the patriarchs with God's commandments was **taken for granted**. The author of the historical record in Genesis [Moses] **did not deem it necessary to mention it** in his sweeping survey of the centuries.... (p134)

First of all, Moses wasn't giving a "sweeping survey of the centuries," he was highlighting important historical events. And "Sabbath-keeping," according to the **SDA**, is of supreme importance! Let's consider just how lame this **SDA** "*silence*" excuse really is. They say Moses "did not deem it necessary to mention it," that the patriarchs were so "acquainted" with "God's commandments" that we're just supposed to "take it for granted" that they kept the Sabbath. Well, *the children of Israel* in the wilderness were also well "*acquainted*" with the Sabbath commandment, yet Moses still felt it "*necessary to mention it*" time and time again! Here's how silly this actually is: For **two thousand and five hundred years**, Moses doesn't mention the keeping of the Sabbath one single time! through all the life of Adam, Abel, Seth, Enoch, Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph—not one word about the Sabbath ever! But beginning in Exodus 16 when God *did in fact* institute the observance of "the Sabbath" *for the children of Israel*, during their brief history and sojourn in the wilderness of **merely 40 years**, Moses "*did deem it necessary to mention it*"—**36 times**! You heard me right—**36 times**! Look at those figures again: **2,500 years/ZERO times! 40 years/36 times**! Something just doesn't add up! Try all you want, you'll *never* "balance" those books!

And again, while Moses feels that it's **not** "*necessary to mention*" the patriarchs *observing the Sabbath* (throughout Genesis), isn't it strange that he doesn't feel that way about their "*calling upon the name of the Lord*"?

- "...his name Enos: then began men to call upon the name of the Lord" (Gen 4:26)

- "...Abram built an altar...and **called upon the name of the Lord**" (Gen 12:8)
- "...there Abram **called on the name of the Lord**" (Gen 13:4)
- "And Abraham...**called there on the name of the Lord**" (Gen 21:33)
- "Isaac built an altar there, and **called upon the name of the Lord**" (Gen 26:25)

It's absurd to say that Moses would record this, while saying nothing, *absolutely nothing*, about them keeping the Sabbath!

The patriarchs were never instructed about the Sabbath, yet in Genesis, Moses shows that *they were* instructed regarding: marriage (2:24; 34:9), sacrifices (3:21; 31:54; 46:1), offerings (4:3,4; 8:20; 22:2-13), altars (8:20; 12:7,8; 13:4,18; 26:25; 35:1,7), tithes (14:20; 28:22), priests (14:18-20), and circumcision (17:10-14, 23-27; 21:4). Evidently Moses "**did deem it necessary to mention**" these things! He gives us an account of the religious customs and worship of the patriarchs, yet never a word is said about any one keeping the Sabbath! The *all-important* Sabbath command is completely missing from this entire period! Before the Sabbath command was given to the Jews in Exodus 16, think about this: Moses referred to "sacrifices" **18** times, "offerings" **11** times, "altars" **13** times, and "lambs" to sacrifice, **9** times. That's over **50** references pertaining to religious observances! Couldn't Moses have at least said "Sabbath," "Sabbath day," "kept the Sabbath," or "observed the Sabbath" **just once**! You won't find it anywhere. Why? It's all too obvious—*No Sabbath command existed!*

Just listening to the text in Exodus 16 where the word "Sabbath" is *first found* in the Bible, it's obvious that it's something **brand new** to the Jews. On the sixth day, Moses said, "This is what the Lord has commanded: Tomorrow is **a day of solemn rest, a holy sabbath** to the Lord" (v23 RSV). The KJV incorrectly has "**the** holy Sabbath"—but the definite article "the" is not in the original text. If the Jews were already familiar with "**the** Sabbath," Moses would've said, "Tomorrow is **the** day of solemn rest, **the** holy sabbath." But this is something *new* that he is *introducing* to them, so he says, "**a day** of rest," "**a holy Sabbath**."

If you were bringing a new friend to your church, upon arriving, you would not say, "Here's **a church**." You would say, "Here's **the church**," referring to one you're familiar with, where you go each week. But Moses didn't say, "Here's **the church**," one they were familiar with, where they went each week; he said, "Here's **a church**." Listen to him again,

"Tomorrow is a day of solemn rest, a holy sabbath to the Lord." He says it the same way in verses 25 & 26—with *no* definite article, "...today is a sabbath to the Lord...Six days you shall gather it; but on the seventh day, which is a sabbath, there will be none" (RSV). In the USA, July the 4th is not referred to as "a day of independence," but "the day of independence"—the recurring and familiar "independence" day observed annually. But Moses doesn't talk like that here: the Sabbath day—because for the Jews, it was not yet the familiar *Sabbath day* observed weekly. This is so obviously seen from what follows, "So the people rested on the seventh day" (v30). That is, *for this reason* the people began resting "on the seventh day!" There's *no sense* in the language here if this is not the meaning!

There are various Scriptures that testify plainly that "the Sabbath" was *not* "given to mankind," as **SDAs** teach, but to the Jews alone: "Remember that thou wast a servant in the land of Egypt...therefore, the Lord thy God commanded thee to keep the Sabbath" (Deut 5:15). "Thou camest down also upon Mount Sinai... and mailed known unto them thy holy Sabbath" (Neh 9:13,14). This implies that it was not known before, that is, *from creation*. In harmony with this, God said: "I caused them to go forth out of the land of Egypt, and brought them into the wilderness...Moreover also I gave them my Sabbaths, to be a sign between me and them" (Ezek 20:10,12). When did God give them the Sabbath? when he *brought them out of Egypt*. Where did he give it to them? *in the wilderness*. What for? *for a sign* between himself and them. It does not say that God *restated*, *restored*, or *reaffirmed* the Sabbath (see *Questions*, p130), but that he gave them the Sabbath. "I gave them my Sabbaths" implies the act of committing it to them, showing that they did not have it before, that this was a new thing to them, and only for them—"The Lord hath given you the Sabbath" (Exod 16:29). If God *made it known* unto them, and *gave it* to them, was it not *their Sabbath*?—the "Jewish" Sabbath!

The children of Israel shall keep the Sabbath...for a *perpetual covenant*. It is a *sign* between *me* and the children of Israel (Exo 31:16)

As the *sign* of the Mosaic covenant, the Sabbath can *only* be meant for Israel, with whom the covenant was made. It had a "perpetual" function, that is, as the sign of the covenant, it was to last as long as that covenant. That covenant *ended* with the coming of Christ and the inauguration of the New Covenant (Heb 8:6-13).

One other point here: God said at Sinai, "Remember the Sabbath day" (Exod 20:8). **SDAs**

claim that God said "remember" because the Sabbath sprang from creation, and God is calling upon them not to forget it. But such is not the case. This word "*remember*" carries a much deeper meaning than that. It's used here not merely as a reminder, but because it has direct reference to the Sabbath being the sign of the covenant—the "remembrance" sign of the Old Covenant. We have already made a good study of this subject. Thus to avoid taking up unnecessary space here, I refer you to our tract—The Signs of the Covenants. It's opened up there for you to see it clearly.

The closing column of this tract is a list of testimonies from the early Church Fathers on the Lord's Day. But first, let's hear from a couple of them on the patriarchs and the Sabbath:

Justin Martyr, who wrote only 44 years after the death of John (AD96), and who was well schooled in the doctrine of the apostles, *denied* that the Sabbath originated at *creation*. Thus after naming Adam, Abel, Enoch, Noah and others, he says: "All those righteous men already mentioned, though they kept no Sabbaths, were pleasing to God" (*Dialogue with Trypho*, chp.19). "If there was no need of circumcision before Abraham, or of the observance of Sabbaths...before Moses, no more need is there of them now" (chp.23). "As circumcision began with Abraham, and the Sabbath with Moses...so it was necessary...that they should have an end in Christ" (chp.43).

Tertullian, AD200, said: "Let them show me that Adam Sabbatized, or that Abel in presenting his holy offering to God pleased him by Sabbath observance, or that Enoch who was translated was an observer of the Sabbath" (*An Answer to the Jews*, chp.4).

The **SDA Church** has some **strong words** against all Christians who do not keep the Jewish Sabbath. Even teaching that in the end time before Christ returns, anyone who claims to be "saved" will, in fact, prove to be "lost" and will surely "perish" if they are not keeping the "seventh-day Sabbath," as the **SDA Church** does by worshipping on Saturday (*Believe*, pp 196,197). And they speak with such an "*air of confidence*" too—just like they did about the "**unsinkable**" *Titanic*! Yet all this is based on *nothing more* than a mere **assumption**!□

— Dan Shanks

References — (1) *First Apology*, chp.67 (2) Philip Schaff, *History of the Christian Church*, V, 60; also Eusebius, *Ecccl. Hist.*, IV, 23, 11 (3) *Book of the Laws of Countries*, cited from McClintock and Strong Encyclopedia, *Lord's Day*, PC Study Bible (4) Walter R. Martin, *The Kingdom of the Cults*, Bethany Fellowship Pub. (1977), p396 (5) Schaff, *op. cit.*, V, 60 (6) *Origen Against Celsus*, Book 8, 22

Early Church Fathers

AD60, Luke, "Upon the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul preached unto them" (*Acts 20:7*)

AD95, John, "I was in the Spirit on the Lord's Day" (*Rev 1:10*)

AD107, Ignatius, Bishop of Antioch, and pupil of the Apostle John: "Let us no longer keep the Sabbath after the Jewish manner... Let every friend of Christ keep the Lord's Day...the resurrection-day, the queen and chief of all the days" (*To the Magnesians*, chp.9)

AD120, The Didache, (*Teaching of the Twelve Apostles*), "Every Lord's Day gather together, and break bread, and give thanksgiving" (chp.14)

AD120, Barnabas, "We keep the eighth day with joyfulness, the day also on which Jesus rose again from the dead" (*Epistle*, chp.15)

AD140, Justin Martyr, "Sunday is the day on which we all hold our common assembly"¹

AD170, Dionysius, Bishop of Corinth: "Today we kept the Lord's Day holy, in which we read your letter"²

AD180, Bardesanes of Edessa, Syria: "On one day, which is the first day of the week, we assemble ourselves together"³

AD180, Irenaeus, Bishop of Lyons, and pupil of the eminent **Polycarp** (AD69-155), Bishop of Smyrna, who himself was a pupil of the Apostle John: "The mystery of the Lord's resurrection may not be celebrated on any other day than the Lord's Day"⁴

AD194, Clement of Alexandria: "...according to the Gospel, he keeps the Lord's Day, when he abandons an evil disposition...glorifying the Lord's resurrection in himself" (*Misc.*, VII, 12)

AD200, Tertullian of Africa: "We have nothing to do with Sabbaths...We have our own solemnities, the Lord's Day..."⁵

AD225, Origen of Egypt: "We...observe certain days, as for example, the Lord's Day..."⁶

AD250, Cyprian, Bishop of Carthage: "...the eighth day, that is, the first day after the Sabbath, the Lord's Day..." (*Epistle* 58,4)

AD270, Anatolius, Bishop of **Laodicea**: "...the Lord's Day, on which the resurrection of the Lord from death took place" (*Canon* 10)

SDAs must ignore all of this evidence, and go on believing the "stories" about Constantine (AD321), the Council of Laodicea (AD364) and the Pope, and how the Sabbath, somewhere in the "fourth century" (!) was changed to Sunday, so now all we have is a "counterfeit Sabbath," a "papal substitute" for the true Sabbath—and also that "the Lord's Day" is the seventh day! the "Sabbath" day! — Far-fetched indeed! and contrary not only to well-documented facts of history, but sound reason as well.

Seventh-day Adventism a church built upon an ASSUMPTION

The **Titanic Disaster** was one of the worst maritime disasters in history. On its maiden voyage from Southampton to New York City, this luxury liner struck an iceberg near midnight on April 14, 1912. Of the more than 2,200 persons aboard, over 1,500 died. The ship had been proclaimed "**unsinkable**," because of its 16 watertight compartments. Nevertheless, the damage from the iceberg brought the *Titanic* down in less than three hours. Many believed the numerous reports that this ship was indeed "**unsinkable**," but what they believed was based upon a mere **assumption**—an assumption that proved at last to be untrue.

The foundational doctrine upon which the **Seventh-day Adventist (SDA) Church** rests is that the **seventh-day Sabbath** was **established at Creation**, that there and then God laid down a **command** to Adam **for all mankind** to rest and do no work on the Sabbath day. They assert in their "**SDA Believe**" book, "The beneficent Creator, after the six days of Creation, rested on the seventh day and instituted the Sabbath for all people..." (*Believe*, 2006 ed., p281). Then in "*Questions on Doctrine*," (2003 ed.)

God instituted the Sabbath on the seventh day of the first week of time...[It] was instituted in Eden before sin entered...and given to mankind as a perpetual memorial of a finished creation. (*Questions*, pp129,139)

This belief can be likened unto the report that the *Titanic* was "**unsinkable**,"—an **assumption**. They *suppose* it to be true, yet have no clear biblical evidence for it. That which the **SDAs** teach as a cardinal doctrine is not at all stated in the Genesis creation account. That man was commanded in Eden to keep the Sabbath day, they merely *assume*. But they set it forth, not as something that they *suppose*, but as a *matter-of-fact*. Listen to them talk about it: "The Decalogue, sealed with the lip and finger of God, was lifted above all Jewish rites and ceremonies. This is evident from the fact that the Sabbath was established before man sinned..." (*Questions*, p130). They do not hesitate to refer to their *supposition* as "**fact**." The doctrinal structure of this church rests so firmly upon this assumption, that the **SDA** leaders make sure it's repeated often in their litera-