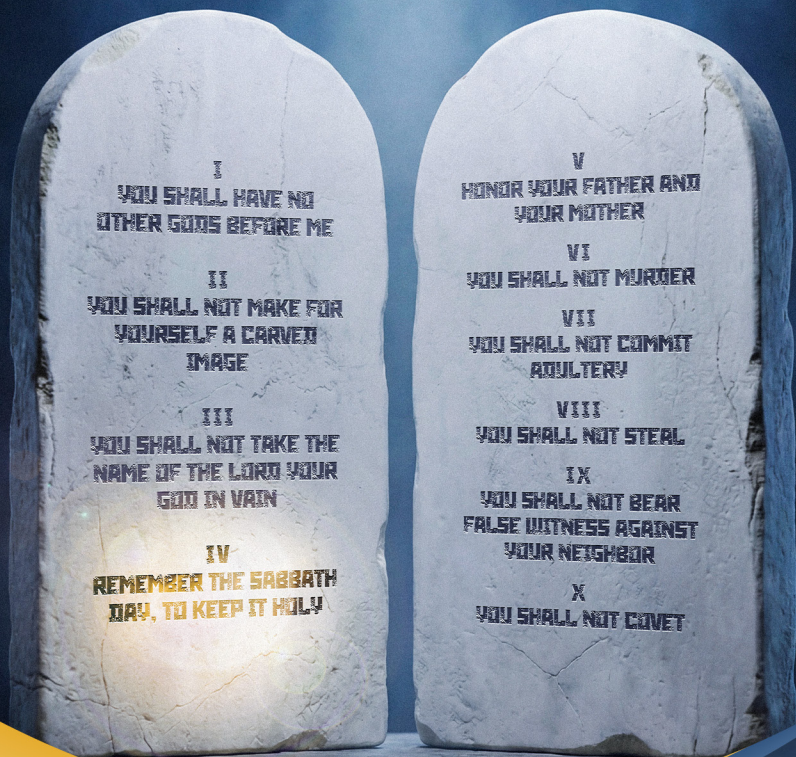




sum

SECRETS UNSEALED MINISTRY



Second Quarter 2026 Newsletter

Reflections on the Seal of God

Is the Sabbath the Seal of God?

Dear Friend of Secrets Unsealed

An enthusiastic group of students attended our ANCHOR School of Theology class this year. We completed our study of the minor prophets. Special attention was dedicated the post-exilic prophets, particularly to the end-time relevance of Daniel 11, Haggai, and Malachi. The study notes are available on our SUM web store.

We have two new programs for your viewing pleasure. A daily devotional podcast by Melvyn Blue, titled “Table in the Wilderness”, and a new quarterly report keeping you up to date about what we are all doing at SUMtv. Of course, we continue producing our regular weekly programs. Of particular importance is my series “The Bible’s Two Mysteries”.

We are excited about our upcoming Adventist Heritage tour in October. We have had an overwhelming response. The bus is filled, and we are adding names to the waiting list. We encourage you to put your name on the list in case of cancellations.

On another note, I encourage you to start making plans to attend our ANCHOR class in March of 2027. The topic will be “The Law and the Sabbath and the Writings of the Apostle Paul”, and will be team-taught by Pastor Daniel Miranda and me. Registration is open, so sign up early to reserve your space.

The production of regular and new programs is stretching our workers to the max. Each is required to wear many hats and to multitask. Our policy since the beginning of our ministry has been to operate in the black, so we will add personnel only when we have the funding. We deeply appreciate your prayers and financial support that make it possible to continue sharing Present Truth with the world.

Ellen White wrote that the final movements will be rapid ones. The signs of the times are quickly moving us toward the glorious climax of the Lord’s coming. Please pray that the Lord will use this ministry to bring honor to His name. Ellen White wrote:

“The agencies of evil are combining their forces and consolidating. They are strengthening for the last great crisis. Great changes are soon to take place in our world, and the final movements will be rapid ones. 9T, p. 11.

Homesick for Heaven,

Pastor Stephen Bohr

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2026 Anchor School of Theology



This year's Anchor class in March focused on an in-depth study of the minor prophets, Part 3 in the series The Great Prophecies of the Old Testament. Students from across the country gathered for a week-long deep dive into the past and future significance of books such as Malachi and Haggai, among others, especially as it applies to God's end-time church. Participants also explored the relevant prophetic dimensions of stories like Elijah and Esther, underscoring practical applications for God's remnant people. Pastor Bohr's Q&A sessions after each presentation remain a favorite among students. Look for these programs to be released soon. Study notes are now available for free download or purchase from our store.





Passion for Preaching

By Luis Fernando Manrique

Only once in my life did God speak to me in a direct and audible way. That moment occurred almost twenty years ago while I was serving as an evangelist in the Upper Magdalena Conference in Colombia. It was a Sabbath morning. The worship service was about to begin, and I was kneeling with the other participants on the platform in prayer.

Suddenly, a gentle, clear, and firm voice said to me, “Preach Luke 5.”

I opened my eyes in surprise. I thought someone nearby had spoken to me. I discreetly looked around, but everyone remained in prayer. No one had said anything. I then looked at

the outline of my sermon, which I had carefully prepared, and thought to myself, “I already have my topic ready. This is what I will preach.”

But once again I heard the voice, with the same clarity: “Preach Luke 5.”

I responded quietly, almost whispering, “I don’t know what to preach from Luke 5. I haven’t studied it.”

For the third time, the voice spoke with authority: “Preach Luke 5.”

At that moment I understood that it was God speaking to me, telling me what I needed to preach. Reverently I opened my Bible to Luke chapter 5. As I began to read, something

happened that transformed my life forever. The entire outline of the sermon began forming in my mind with supernatural clarity. Every point, every emphasis, every application appeared in an orderly and precise way. It was not the result of human preparation. It was the direct guidance of the Holy Spirit.

That day I preached about the miraculous catch of fish. I had no written outline. I had no notes. I had no prior preparation. I only had the Word of God and the guidance of His Spirit.

The church was full, with about 300 members present. The Holy Spirit moved with power. At the end of the sermon, as was my custom, I went to the door to greet the members. Many approached me with tears in their eyes and said, “Thank you, Pastor. That was the message this church needed.”

My only response was: “The glory belongs only to God.”

The Miraculous Catch as a Model for Evangelism

The story recorded in Luke 5 reveals one of the most significant miracles in Christ’s ministry. The disciples had worked all night without success. They were experienced fishermen; they knew the sea, they knew the techniques, they knew the trade, yet they had caught nothing.

Then Jesus said to them:

“Launch out into the deep and let

down your nets for a catch.”
(Luke 5:4)

From a human perspective, that command made no sense. It was daytime, the least favorable time for fishing. Yet when they obeyed the divine command, the miracle occurred:

“...they caught a great number of fish, and their net was breaking.”
(Luke 5:6)

This miracle reveals a fundamental principle of evangelism: success in mission does not depend on human ability, but on divine power. It was not the fishermen’s skills that produced the result. Jesus is the One who directs the catch, who gathers the fish, and who leads them to the nets.

In the same way, God is the One who prepares hearts and gathers people so they can hear the gospel. We are simply instruments used to bring them into the boat (the church).



But this miracle included an even greater purpose. Jesus declared:

“Do not be afraid. From now on you will catch men.” (Luke 5:10)

At that moment Christ performed the second great miracle of this story: He transformed ordinary fishermen into extraordinary evangelists. Peter, James, and John had no formal education. They were not religious leaders. They were not men of influence. Yet when they were filled with the Holy Spirit, the result was extraordinary.

Nearly **3,000 people were baptized** when Peter preached in Jerusalem on the day of Pentecost.

“Peter said to them, ‘Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of sins; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.’” (Acts 2:38)

“Then those who gladly received his word were baptized; and that day about three thousand souls were added to them.” (Acts 2:41)

Later, **another 5,000 people believed** when they heard Peter and John preach in the temple.

“However, many of those who heard the word believed; and the number of the men came to be about five thousand.” (Acts 4:4)

God gathered the people, and the disciples spoke through the power of the Holy Spirit.

SUMtv Follows the Model of the Miraculous Catch

This principle guides the work of the Evangelism Department of **SUMtv Latino**. We do not wait for people to come to us. We go where God gathers people. We go to cities, churches, and communities. We go wherever God opens doors, because we know that He continues performing the miracle of the spiritual catch.

Christ’s commission remains in force today. Before ascending to heaven, Jesus declared:

“Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature.” (Mark 16:15)

We do not wait for people to come to us. We go where God gathers people.

This mandate is not optional. It is a divine command. Ellen White explains it this way:

“The gospel commission is the great missionary charter of Christ’s kingdom. The disciples were to work earnestly for souls, giving to all the invitation of mercy. They were not to wait for the people to come to them; they were to go to the people with their message.”

(The Acts of the Apostles, p. 23.1)

During the year **2025**, God opened providential doors to preach the gospel in multiple cities, churches, and countries, bringing hope, restoration, and salvation to many lives. As a result of this evangelistic effort,

61 people gave their lives to Jesus Christ through baptism, and ministry was carried out in **17 congregations in the United States, Costa Rica, and El Salvador**, strengthening churches and proclaiming the message of salvation.

Congregations visited by Pr. Manrique during 2025

Congregation	City / State / Country	Program Type	Baptisms
Oroville Hispanic Church	California, USA	Family Seminars	—
Central Adventist Church of Grecia	Costa Rica	Evangelistic Series	5
Lions Club – Santa Tecla	El Salvador	Evangelistic Series	6
Una Esperanza Hispanic Church	Delaware, USA	Evangelistic Series	6
Sea Side Hispanic Church	California, USA	Family Seminars	2
Pleasant Hill Hispanic Church	California, USA	Evangelistic Series	2
Spring Hispanic Church	Texas, USA	Family Seminars	—
Reading Hispanic Church	Pennsylvania, USA	Family Seminars	—
Peregrinos Hispanic Church	Oklahoma, USA	Family Seminars	4
South San Francisco Hispanic Church	California, USA	Prophetic Evangelism	2
Cinco Ranch Hispanic Church	Texas, USA	Prophetic Evangelism	7
Central Hispanic Church of Charlotte	North Carolina, USA	Evangelistic Series	15
Woodstock Hispanic Church	Georgia, USA	Family Seminars	2
Central Hispanic Church of Lawrenceville	Georgia, USA	Family Seminars	7
Northern California Youth Congress	California, USA	Youth Congress	—
Fresno Central Hispanic Group	California, USA	Revival Week	2
Providence Hispanic Church	Rhode Island, USA	Week of Prayer	1



Each of these events was clear evidence of the power of God working in human hearts. People who had never heard the gospel accepted Christ. Every baptized person represents a transformed life. Hundreds of families were restored. Churches were strengthened. Members experienced spiritual revival, and souls were prepared for eternity.

This impact has been possible thanks to two fundamental factors.

First, **the power of the Holy Spirit**, because without Him there is no true conversion.

Second, **the faithful support of donors and collaborators**, whose generosity makes it possible for the gospel to continue being preached.

The Invitation

The time in which we live is solemn. The world needs hope.

It needs truth. It needs to hear the gospel.

Today is the time to preach.
 Today is the time to act.
 Today is the time to fulfill Christ's command.

The same God who gathered the fish in Luke 5 continues gathering souls today. The mission is not finished. Christ is coming soon, and the gospel must reach the whole world.

Bible. (1995). *Holy Bible, New King James Version*. United Bible Societies.

White, E. G. (1911/2007). *The Acts of the Apostles* (p. 23.1). South American Publishing Association. <https://m.egw writings.org/es/book/127.108>



Pr. Luis Fernando Manrique
 Director of Evangelism SUMtv

I
YOU SHALL HAVE NO
OTHER GODS BEFORE ME

II
YOU SHALL NOT MAKE FOR
YOURSELF A CARVED
IMAGE

III
YOU SHALL NOT TAKE THE
NAME OF THE LORD YOUR
GOD IN VAIN

IV
REMEMBER THE SABBATH
DAY, TO KEEP IT HOLY

V
HONOR YOUR FATHER AND
YOUR MOTHER

VI
YOU SHALL NOT MURDER

VII
YOU SHALL NOT COMMIT
ADULTERY

VIII
YOU SHALL NOT STEAL

IX
YOU SHALL NOT BEAR
FALSE WITNESS AGAINST
YOUR NEIGHBOR

X
YOU SHALL NOT COVET

Reflections on the Seal of God

Is the Sabbath the Seal of God?

By Pastor Stephen Bohr

The Sabbath is the Seal of God

There are many Sabbath-keeping churches in the world today because it is one of the Ten Commandments. However, the Seventh-day Adventist concept of the Sabbath is far more profound than that of the other churches. The Seventh-day Adventist Church is unique because it links the Sabbath with the three angels' messages of Revelation 14 and believes that it will be the final test for the world. It sees the Sabbath in the context of the beast, the image of the

beast, and the mark of the beast in Revelation 13 and 14. Ellen White wrote about a Seventh-day Adventist pastor who believed in keeping the Sabbath just as the Seventh-day Baptists do:

*“Elder K knows not of what spirit he is. He is uniting his influence with the dragon host to oppose those who keep the commandments of God, and who have the testimony of Jesus. He has a hard warfare before him. As far as the Sabbath is concerned, he occupies the same position as the **Seventh Day Baptists**. **Separate the Sabbath***

from **the messages**, and it **loses its power**; but when connected with the message of the **third angel**, a **power** attends it which **convicts unbelievers and infidels**, and brings them out with strength to stand, to live, grow, and flourish in the Lord." 1T, p. 337

Since **early** in its history, the Seventh-day Adventist Church has consistently taught that the eschatological **Seal of God** is the **Seventh-day Sabbath**. As far as we know, the first person to discover this truth was Captain **Joseph Bates**, who in **1846** published a booklet titled *The Seventh-day Sabbath a Perpetual Sign*.

With the passing of time, **Ellen White** and her husband, James, came to **agree** with Joseph Bates and, **unequivocally and repeatedly**, identified the Sabbath as the **eschatological Seal of God**. In the following statement, she used the words 'seal', 'sign', 'test', and 'Sabbath' together:

*"The **Sabbath** was placed in the Decalogue as the **seal** of the living God, pointing out the Law-giver, and making known his right to rule. It was a **sign** between God and his people, a **test** of their loyalty to him."* ST, May 13, 1886

According to Ellen White, the Sabbath is the seal of God because it is the **only** commandment that contains the **name** and **title** of the Lawgiver as a sign of the law's authenticity:

*"The fourth commandment is the **only one** of all the ten in which are found both the **name** and the **title** of the Lawgiver. It is the only one that shows by whose authority the law is given. Thus it **contains the seal of God, affixed to His law** as evidence of its **authenticity** and **binding force**."* PP, p. 307

The Sabbath is the seal and sign of God's authority over everything He has made:

*"The Sabbath of the fourth commandment **is the seal** of the living God. It points to God as the Creator, and is the **sign** of His **rightful authority** over the beings He has made."* ST, November 1, 1899

Not only is the Sabbath the sign or seal in the heart **of the law**. It will also be spiritually imprinted on the foreheads of those who **observe it**:

*"The **sign** or **seal** of God is the **observance** of the seventh-day Sabbath, and the Lord's memorial of his work of creation."* Special Testimony to Battle Creek, 1898, p. 6

Ellen White encouraged the church to **proclaim** the Sabbath as the seal of God:

*"The truth in regard to the Sabbath of the Lord is to be **proclaimed**. The **seventh-day** is to be shown to be the **seal** of the living God."* 4MR, p. 425

It should not surprise us that the Sabbath seal is found in the heart of the Ten

Commandments. Several years ago, when I was doing research at the James White Library at Andrews University, I saw on one of the shelves several large green volumes containing pictures of tablets of clay that archeologists had unearthed in the ancient Canaanite city of **Ugarit**. As I leafed through one of the volumes, something immediately caught my eye.

The volume contained pictures of ancient **covenants** between sovereign kings and their vassals. The clay **tablets** were written in cuneiform on **both sides**, and a large seal was impressed in the center of the tablet while the clay was still soft. These covenants were deemed **authentic** because they contained the name, title, and territory over which the sovereign ruled. The sovereign promised vassal kings **protection** in exchange for obedience to the terms of the covenant.

This immediately brought to mind the Ten Commandment **covenant** that God made with

Israel (Deuteronomy 4:13; Exodus 19:1-8) written on **both sides** of stone tablets (Exodus 32:15, 16). I thought to myself: Where would we expect to find the seal of authenticity on the table of God's covenant? The answer was obvious—it must be in the **very center** of the table and must contain the name, title, and territory of the covenant maker! And I knew that in the end time, the covenant will guarantee **God's protection** for those who are loyal to the terms of the covenant!

The Holy Spirit as the Seal

A **superficial** and hasty reading of Scripture **out of context** has led some Adventists to claim that Ellen White was wrong when she wrote that the Sabbath is the seal of God in the heart of the Decalogue and in the foreheads of His end-time people.

Three times in his writings, Paul wrote that the **internal** work of the **Holy Spirit** on the human heart is the seal. It bears noting, however, that the seal

that Paul referred to is the gift of the **early rain** that an **individual believer** receives at **conversion** at the **beginning** of the Christian life.

It is important to underline that the three texts quoted below are

*“The Sabbath of the fourth commandment is the seal of the living God. It points to God as the Creator, and is the **sign** of His **rightful authority** over the beings He has made.”*

all in the **past perfect** tense. The tense of the verbs indicates that the Ephesian and Corinthian believers had **already been sealed** with/by the Holy Spirit. The apostle was not referring to the end-time seal spoken of in Revelation 7:1-4 because that seal will be placed upon God's people when they receive **latter rain** power just before the close of probationary time.

It is a mistaken assumption to **equate** the **conversion** seal of the early rain at the beginning of the Christian life with the **protective** eschatological seal at the end of the Christian dispensation. Let's examine the three texts where Paul referred to the Holy Spirit as the seal/sealer:

*"In Him you also trusted, after you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation; in whom also, having **believed**, you **were [past passive tense] sealed with the Holy Spirit** of promise, **who is the guarantee** of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, to the praise of His glory." (Ephesians 1:13-14)*

*"And do not grieve the **Holy Spirit** of God, **by whom** you **were sealed [past passive tense]** for the day of redemption." (Ephesians 4:30)*

*"Now He who establishes us with you in Christ and has anointed us is God, who also **has sealed us [past passive tense]** and given us the **Spirit** in our hearts as a **guarantee**." (2 Corinthians 1:21, 22)*

How do we resolve the **seeming** discrepancy between Paul and Ellen G. White? Is there really a contradiction, or is the problem with our own understanding? Is it possible that the Holy Spirit is the sealer in both the gospel seal and the eschatological seal?

In this study, we will find that Ellen White and the Bible are in perfect harmony. Both are describing **two different sides** of the same reality. The Bible is highlighting the **invisible, internal** work of the Holy Spirit, while Ellen White is describing the **external, visible** manifestation of that internal work.

Abraham and the External Act of Circumcision

In order to better understand the relationship between the external observance of the Sabbath and the internal work of the Holy Spirit, let's take the analogous case of circumcision.

God commanded that circumcision be a **visible, outward** ceremony where the foreskin was **literally** removed. In Leviticus 12:3, God explicitly **commanded** the **external act** on the eighth day after birth: *"And in the eighth day the flesh of his foreskin **shall be circumcised**."*

According to Genesis 17:14, so important was the **external** observance of circumcision that whoever did not perform the **visible, outward** act was to be cut off from God's people because circumcision was the visible

sign or **seal** of the covenant (Romans 4:11, 12)

“And the uncircumcised male child, who is not circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin, that person shall be cut off from his people; he has broken My covenant.”

According to Exodus 4:24-26, so serious was this matter of the **external, visible** circumcision sign that God sent an angel who threatened to kill Moses for neglecting to circumcise his son.

Abraham and the Deeper Dimension of Circumcision

However, circumcision had a deeper meaning than the physical removal of the foreskin. It was an external sign of the **internal** and **invisible** work of the Holy Spirit in the heart. We see this deeper meaning in the experience of Abraham.

According to Genesis 15:6, God promised Abraham a son from his own loins when he was about **84 years old**, and the story tells us that Abraham **trusted** God’s word and it was accounted to him for righteousness:

*“And he **believed** [trusted] in the Lord; and He counted it to him for righteousness.”*

Genesis 17:24 tells us that Abraham, however, was not circumcised until he was **99 years old**, approximately 15 years **after he was justified** by faith. The crucial question is this: Did the **external act** of circumcision save

or justify Abraham? Of course not! Circumcision was a **visible sign** that he had experienced righteousness by faith fifteen years earlier. It was an **external** sign of an **internal** experience.

In the days of Paul, the Jews had made the act of external circumcision the **litmus test of salvation** and of **belonging to God’s people**. The Jews considered **the physical act** as all-important, but the apostle explained that the external act was a visible **sign** or **seal** that Abraham had been justified by faith 15 years earlier. Notice that Paul uses the words ‘seal’ and ‘sign’ interchangeably:

*“And he received the [external] sign of circumcision, a [external] seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had **while still uncircumcised**, that he might be the father of all those who believe, though they are uncircumcised, that righteousness might be imputed to them also, and the father of circumcision to those who not only are of the circumcision, but who also walk in the **steps of the faith** which our father Abraham had while still uncircumcised.”* (Romans 4:11, 12)

The internal and **deeper dimension** of circumcision was already present in the Old Testament. Moses wrote that the external act was to be the visible announcement of an internal experience:

“And the Lord your God will

circumcise your **heart** and the **heart** of your descendants, **to love the Lord** your God with all your heart and with all your soul that you may live.” (Deuteronomy 30:6)

Moses described the removal of the **visible foreskin** as a sign of the removal of the invisible foreskin from the heart:

“Therefore circumcise **the foreskin of your heart**, and be stiff-necked no longer.” (Deuteronomy 10:16-17)

The apostle **Paul** agreed with Moses:

“For we are the **circumcision** who **worship God in the Spirit**, **rejoice** in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in **the flesh**” (Philippians 3:3)

“For he is not a Jew who is one **outwardly**, nor is **circumcision** that which is **outward** in the flesh;²⁹ but he is a Jew who is one **inwardly**; and **circumcision** is that of the **heart**, in the **Spirit**, not in the **letter**; whose **praise** is not from men but from God.” (Romans 2:28-29)

At this point, someone might argue that because circumcision is no longer required as an external seal or sign, neither is the Sabbath. However, the Bible makes clear that circumcision was a purely **Jewish** institution, established **after sin**, replaced by **baptism**, and, according to the **explicit teaching** of the **Jerusalem Council**, no longer

mandatory for Christians:

“In Him you were also **circumcised** with the circumcision made **without hands**, by putting off the body of the **sins of the flesh**, by the **circumcision** of Christ,¹² **buried with Him in baptism**, in which you also were **raised with Him** through faith in the working of God, who raised Him from the dead.” (Colossians 2:11, 12)

In contrast to circumcision, the **Sabbath** was made for **all mankind**, **at creation**, **before sin**, and in the New Testament, there is **no indication** that it was ever replaced.

The Example of Baptism

As we just noted, baptism **took the place** of circumcision (Colossians 2:11-13). So I ask, is the **external act** of baptism mandatory, or is it sufficient **simply to invite** Jesus into the heart?

There are texts in the New Testament that make the **external rite** of baptism a **condition for salvation**. However, when we carefully read these texts, we discern that the visible water ceremony, though required by God, is not sufficient. The external rite must be preceded by an internal spiritual experience of conversion. The Great Commission makes this clear that belief must precede water baptism:

“And He said to them, “Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature.”¹⁶ He who **believes**

[the internal experience] and is baptized [the external act] will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned." (Mark 16:15-17)

The apostle Peter concurred:

"There is also an antitype which now saves us — baptism (not the removal of the filth of the flesh [external], but the answer of a good conscience toward God [internal], through the resurrection of Jesus Christ." (1 Peter 3:21-22)

Ellen White agreed with the Bible testimony. She clearly stated that the external rite of baptism is required but not sufficient:

"Christ made baptism the entrance to His spiritual kingdom. He made this a positive condition with which all must comply who wish to be acknowledged as under the authority of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. Those who receive the ordinance of baptism thereby make a public [visible] declaration that they have renounced the world, and have become members of the royal family, children of the heavenly King." 6SDABC, p. 1075

Concerning the words that the Father spoke to Jesus at His baptism, Ellen White wrote that believers receive the **imprint** of God at baptism. The word 'imprint' is related to the word 'seal'. According to one source, *"a seal is an emblem or device used to authenticate a document, while an imprint is the mark left by a seal*

or a stamp."

Several Ellen White statements follow where she discusses the internal work of the Holy Spirit as it relates to the visible sign of baptism:

"Let those who received the imprint of God by baptism heed these words, remembering that upon them the Lord has placed His signature, declaring them to be His sons and daughters. The Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, powers infinite and omniscient, receive those who truly enter into covenant relation with God. They are present at every baptism, to receive the candidates who have renounced the world and have received Christ into the soul temple. These candidates have entered into the family of God, and their names are inscribed in the Lamb's book of life." AG, p. 143

"The new birth [an internal work of the Holy Spirit—John 3:3, 8] is a rare experience in this age of the world. This is the reason why there are so many perplexities in the churches. Many, so many, who assume the name of Christ are unsanctified and unholy. They have been baptized, but they were buried alive [they had the external but not the internal]. Self did not die, and therefore they did not rise to newness of life in Christ (MS 148, 1897)." 6SDABC, p. 1075

"It is the grace of Christ [the internal work of the Holy Spirit] that gives life to the soul. Apart from Christ, baptism [the external act],

like any other service, is a worthless form.” DA, p. 181

“Baptism **does not make** children Christians; neither does it **convert** them; it is but an **outward sign**, showing that they are sensible that they should be children of God by acknowledging that **they believe** in Jesus Christ as their Savior and will henceforth live for Christ.” CG, p. 499

The Example of Communion

At the communion service, we first **literally and visibly wash** one another’s feet. This is an **external, visible act**. However, the **internal** meaning is that the believer has made everything right with the Lord and with others before coming to the communion table. That is why Protestants refer to the Communion service as ‘an outward sign of inward grace’.

Likewise, with the unleavened bread and grape juice. At communion, we partake of a **literal** morsel of bread and a **literal** cup of unfermented grape juice. However, the visible emblems have a profound **internal spiritual significance!** Ellen White explained that the Holy Spirit is present to impart blessings to those who truly discern the spiritual meaning of the emblems. On the other hand, Paul explained that those who do not discern the meaning of the symbols are guilty of the Lord’s body and blood! (1 Corinthians

11:27-32).

The Observance of the Sabbath as a Visible or Outward Sign
God commanded His people to keep the Sabbath **outwardly** by abstaining from work. In fact, God commanded the observance of a **specific, visible** day and prescribed principles on **how** to keep it holy:

“Remember the Sabbath day, to **keep it holy**.⁹ Six days you shall **labor** and do all your **work**,¹⁰ but the **seventh day** is the Sabbath of the Lord your God. In it **you shall do no work**: you, nor your son, nor your daughter, nor your male servant, nor your female servant, nor your cattle, nor your stranger who is within your gates.¹¹ 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.” (Exodus 20:8-11)

The ‘gospel prophet’ Isaiah wrote that on the Sabbath we should turn away our foot from the Sabbath, by not doing our pleasure, nor doing our own ways, nor finding our own pleasure, nor speaking our own words (Isaiah 58:13). Clearly, there are **external** prescriptions for a proper observance of the Sabbath!

The word ‘sign’ refers to a **visible** phenomenon in the Old Testament (cf. Genesis 1:14; 4:15; 9:17; Ezekiel 20:12, 20), and the Sabbath is called a ‘sign’. One significant use of this word, which

is worth quoting, is in Exodus 31:16-18:

*“Work shall be done for six days, but the seventh is the Sabbath of rest, holy **to the Lord**. Whoever does any work on the Sabbath day, he shall surely be put to death.¹⁶ Therefore the children of Israel shall keep the Sabbath, to observe the Sabbath throughout their generations as a perpetual covenant.¹⁷ It is a **sign** between Me and the children of Israel forever; for in six days the Lord made the heavens and the earth, and on the seventh day He rested and was refreshed.”¹⁸ And when He had made an end of speaking with him on Mount Sinai, He gave Moses two tablets of the Testimony, tablets of stone, written with the finger of God.”*

There are some important points in these verses. The Sabbath institution predates Israel and takes us all the way back to creation before sin entered the world. It is as much a creation ordinance as is heterosexual marriage. Furthermore, the text refers to the Sabbath as ‘the Sabbath **unto the Lord**’, not the Sabbath of the Jews. Never, **not even once**, is the Sabbath referred to in the Bible as the **Jewish Sabbath** or the Sabbath of the Jews. It is always the Lord’s Sabbath:

- Sabbath rest, a holy Sabbath **unto the Lord** (Ex 16:23)
- ‘the Sabbath **of the Lord** your God’ (Exodus 20:11)
- ‘you shall keep **my** Sabbaths’

(Ezekiel 20:12, 20)

- God refers to it as ‘**my** holy day’ (Isaiah 58:13, 14)
- Jesus proclaimed Himself the **Lord of the Sabbath** (Mark 2:27)

*“Never, not even once, is the Sabbath referred to in the Bible as the **Jewish Sabbath** or the Sabbath of the Jews. It is always the **Lord’s Sabbath**”*

It is undeniable that, according to Exodus 31, God gave the Sabbath **to Israel** as an everlasting covenant. However, the text does **not say** that He gave it **exclusively** to Israel. God gave it to Israel because they were His people at that time, but it does not follow that it applied **only to them**.

God gave all Ten Commandments to Israel. In fact, the **prologue** to the Ten Commandments in Exodus 20:1, 2 gives the deliverance of Israel from bondage as the reason for them to keep the commandments.

“And God spoke all these words, saying: “I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage.”

Does this mean that **all** Ten Commandments applied only to the Jews? Of course not! They were given to Israel because they were God's people at that time.

It is also remarkable that the writing of the law on tables of stone by the finger of God is immediately preceded by a command to keep the Sabbath. Although the Sabbath is one of the commandments written with God's own finger (verse 18), its importance is highlighted by its mention in the previous five verses (verses 12-17).

Perhaps this is the reason why the Sabbath is not only one of the Ten Commandments in the Ark of the Covenant but its importance is highlighted by the pot of Manna inside the Ark (Hebrews 9:4) which teaches that the Sabbath is the **test** of whether God's people will keep, not only the Sabbath, but the entire law (cf. Exodus 16:4, 22-30). This explains why Ellen White saw the Sabbath commandment in the Ark surrounded by a halo:

*“Jesus raised the cover of the ark, and I beheld the tables of stone on which the ten commandments were written. I was amazed as I saw the **fourth commandment** in the **very center** of the ten precepts, with a **soft halo of light** encircling it. Said the angel, ‘It is the **only one** of the ten which defines the living God who created the heavens and the earth and all things that are therein.’” LIFSK, pp. 95, 96*

The Deeper Dimension of the Sabbath

Clearly, God commands His people to outwardly keep the Sabbath. However, the observance of the Sabbath has a **deeper dimension**. It is a **visible sign** of an **internal** relationship created by the **Holy Spirit** in the heart.

God instructed His people to **internalize** His Word. Perhaps an analogous example will serve to explain the relationship between the internal and the external. God commanded Moses (with my own explanatory details in brackets):

“And these words which I command you today shall be in your heart [in the heart before they are placed on the hand, the forehead and the doorposts].⁷ You shall teach them [after they are in the heart] diligently to your children, and shall talk of them [after they are in the heart] when you sit in your house, when you walk by the way, when you lie down, and when you rise up.⁸ You shall bind them as a sign [external behavior is to reveal that they are in the heart first] on your hand [they should guide what you do], and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes [they should guide what you think].⁹ You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates.” (Deuteronomy 6:6-8)

The rabbis of Christ's day followed this counsel, **literally**, jot and tittle, to a T, and yet totally missed the internal meaning

of God's counsel. Ellen White explained the misconceptions of the Jewish leadership:

*“The command given to Moses was construed into a direction that the precepts of Scripture should be worn **upon the person**. They were accordingly written upon strips of parchment, and bound in a conspicuous manner about the **head and wrists**. But this did not cause the law of God to take a firmer hold of the **mind and heart**. These parchments were worn merely as **badges, to attract attention**. They were thought to give the wearers an **air of devotion** which would command the reverence of the people. Jesus struck a blow at this **vain pretense**.” DA, pp. 612, 613.*

The Sabbath: An Outward Sign of Internal Holiness

The observance of the Sabbath did **not make Israel holy** but rather was a **visible sign** to the surrounding nations that God **had** already set them apart as His holy nation, His own special people. In other words, the **external observance** of the Sabbath had the purpose of announcing to the surrounding nations that Israel had an **internal and holy relationship** with the Lord. Only a holy people, distinct from the world, could truly keep the Sabbath holy. As Ellen White so aptly put it:

“No other institution which was committed to the Jews tended so fully to distinguish them from

surrounding nations as did the Sabbath. God designed that its observance should designate them as His worshipers. It was to be a token of their separation from idolatry, and their connection with the true God. But in order to keep the Sabbath holy, men must themselves be holy.” DA, p. 283

It will be noticed that Ellen White refers to the Sabbath as a **token**. What is a token? The Merriam-Webster Thesaurus defines it as “an **outward sign or expression**” and illustrated the meaning of the word with the example, “his tears were **tokens** of his grief”. Another online dictionary defines it as “a **visible or tangible** representation”. Thus, the Sabbath is the **outward visible** sign or token that the heart has been sanctified by the Holy Spirit:

*“Nothing so distinguished the Jews from surrounding nations, and designated them as true worshipers of the Creator, as the institution of the Sabbath. Its observance was a continual **visible token** of their connection with God, and separation from other people.” 2SP, p. 193*

Like Ellen White, the **Mosaic** legislation and the prophet **Ezekiel** had already linked sanctification with the observance of the Sabbath:

“And the Lord spoke to Moses, saying, “Speak also to the children of Israel, saying: ‘Surely My Sabbaths you shall keep, for it is a

*sign between Me and you throughout your generations, **that you may know** that I am the Lord who **sanctifies** you.” (Exodus 31:12-13)*

*“Moreover I also gave them My Sabbaths, to be a **sign** between them and Me, that they might know that **I am the Lord who sanctifies** them. ²⁰ hallow My Sabbaths, and they will be a **sign** between Me and you, **that you may know** that I am the Lord your God.” (Ezekiel 20:12, 20)*

Ellen White drew a parallel between the experience of Israel and God’s end-time remnant in regards to the Sabbath:

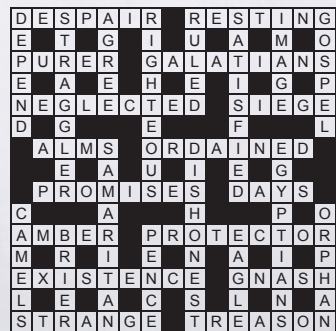
*“As the Sabbath was the **sign that distinguished** Israel when they came out of Egypt to enter the earthly Canaan, so **it is the sign that now distinguishes** God’s people as they come out from the world to enter the heavenly rest. The Sabbath **is a sign** of the relationship existing between God and His people, **a sign** that they honor His law. It **distinguishes** between His loyal subjects and transgressors.” CCh, p. 261*

The Sabbath is a sign of the relationship existing between God and His people, a sign that they honor His law. It distinguishes between His loyal subjects and transgressors.”

The Creator of the Internal Relationship

Of course, this leads us to ask: What is the link between the Holy Spirit seal and the Sabbath seal? Perhaps a better question is, what makes our **hearts holy** so that our Sabbath observance is holy? Clearly, the **Holy Spirit** is the agent who performs this work. The Spirit who wrote the law on tables stone writes them on the tables of our hearts (2 Corinthians 3:3, 17, 18), of which true Sabbath observance is the **visible sign**. So, it is not a contradiction to state that the Holy Spirit and the Sabbath are closely related.

Exodus 31:17, 18 tells us that God wrote the Ten Commandments on tables of stone with His **own finger**. **Who** is the finger of God? **Matthew 12:28** tells us that Jesus cast out demons by the **Spirit of God**, but the parallel passage in **Luke 11:20** explains that He did it by the **finger of God**. Thus, the finger of God who wrote the literal Ten Commandments was the Holy Spirit, and the same Spirit that



writes them on our hearts. (Jeremiah 31:31-34)

The apostle Paul wrote that the Holy Spirit is the agent that sanctifies the heart:

*“But we are bound to give thanks to God always for you, brethren beloved by the Lord, because God from the beginning chose you for salvation through **sanctification by the Spirit** and belief in the truth.”* (2 Thessalonians 2:13)

It is the Holy Spirit who **transforms the life** and leads us to obey God’s law, of which the Sabbath is the sign:

*“I will give you a **new heart** and put a **new spirit** within you; I will take the heart of stone out of your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. ²⁷ I will put **My Spirit within you** and cause you to **walk in My statutes**, and you will **keep My judgments** and do them.”* (Ezekiel 36:26, 27)

The wind is **invisible** to human eyes but its visible **effects** can be seen. So, the work of the Holy Spirit on the human heart is **unseen** but the effects can be seen in the observance of the commandments, particularly the holy Sabbath.

Ellen White saw no contradiction between the Holy Spirit seal and the Sabbath seal because both are true. One is the outward manifestation of the other:

*“Would you impress **the seal** to obtain a **clear impression** upon the wax, you do not dash it on by*

*a violent action, but you place the seal carefully and firmly and press it down until the wax receives the mold. **Just so** the Lord is dealing with our souls. . . Not now and then, but constantly the **new life is implanted** by the **Holy Spirit** after Christ’s likeness.”* HP, p. 66

*“As **wax** takes the **impression** of the **seal**, so the soul is to take the **impression** of the **Spirit of God** and retain the image of Christ.”* ISM, p. 336

Contrary to what many detractors believe, Ellen White did not teach that Sabbath observance is **an end** in itself. Its observance does not **confer holiness**, nor does it earn us salvation. In fact, she has several statements where she explains that the Sabbath is an **outward sign** of an **inward experience** produced by the **Holy Spirit**:

*“Pointing to God as the Maker of the heavens and the earth, it [**the Sabbath**] distinguishes the true God from all false gods. All who keep the seventh day **signify** by this act that they are worshipers of Jehovah. Thus the Sabbath is the [**visible**] **sign** of man’s allegiance to God as long as there are any upon the earth to serve Him.”* PP, p. 307

What is Patriotism?

Let’s take an example to explain the relationship between the inward and the outward. The word patriotism is an **abstract** principle that citizens feel deep in

their hearts. However, although patriotism is internal, how is it visibly expressed?

Singing the **Star-Spangled Banner** at a sporting event allows fans to express their patriotism, making it **visible** and **audible**. Likewise, pledging allegiance to the **flag** of the United States while crossing the heart is a visible expression of patriotism.

Would it be proper to pledge allegiance to the United States by using a Russian flag? Does it really make any difference which flag we pledge allegiance to? What would you think of someone who says “I am a red-blooded American, I love this country” and then pledges allegiance to the Russian flag? Does the **visible** flag make a difference? How can we pledge allegiance to the ‘nation’ of heaven by keeping Sunday, so to speak, the wrong flag? I think you get the point! Ellen White wrote repeatedly that we **demonstrate** our loyalty to the only true God by keeping the Sabbath:

“Those who would have the seal of God in their foreheads **must keep the Sabbath of the fourth commandment**. This is what **distinguishes them from the disloyal, who have accepted a man-made institution in the place of the true Sabbath**. The observance of God’s rest day is the **mark of distinction between him who serves God and he who does not.**” 7SDABC, p. 970

“The **keeping** of the Sabbath is a **sign of loyalty** to the true God.” GC, p. 438

“The Sabbath is a pledge given by God to man—a **sign** of the relation existing between the Creator and His created beings. By observing the memorial of the creation of the world in six days and the rest of the Creator on the seventh day, by keeping the Sabbath holy, according to His directions, the Israelites were to **declare to the world [particularly important in a polytheistic world] their loyalty** to the **only true** and living God, the Sovereign of the universe.” 3SM p. 256

"The observance of God's rest day is the mark of distinction between him who serves God and he who does not."

“Let us reverence God’s institution, the Sabbath day; for it is the **sign** of our relationship to God, the **sign** by which we are **demonstrated** as His people.” 5MR, p. 86

“To the **obedient**, it is a **sign** of their **loyalty** to God.” 11MR, p. 18

“**True** observance of the Sabbath is the **sign of loyalty** to God.” 15MR, p. 32

Ellen White on the Sabbath as a Deeper Spiritual Experience

While Ellen White repeatedly underlined the importance of outwardly keeping the Sabbath according to God's directions, she also addressed the importance of the inward, loving, motivation for its observance:

*“The quiet, consistent, godly life is a living epistle, known and read of all men. **Holiness** is not shaped **from without** or **put on**; it radiates **from within**. If goodness, purity, meekness, lowliness, and integrity **dwell in the heart**, they will **shine forth in the character**; and such a character is full of power. Not the instrument, but the great Worker in whose hand the instrument is used, **receives the glory**. The heart filled with the Savior's love, daily **receives grace to impart**. The **life reveals** the redeeming power of the truth.”* HP, p. 237

The prerequisite for keeping the Sabbath is to love God supremely and the creatures that He has made; the commandment must be obeyed in spirit and in truth:

*“The Sabbath is a **test** to this generation. In obeying the fourth commandment in **spirit and truth**, men will obey all the precepts of the Decalogue. To fulfill this commandment one must **love God supremely**, and exercise **love toward all the creatures** that he has made.”* ST, February 13, 1896

In order to receive the seal of

God a believer's character must bear a likeness to Christ:

*“The **seal of the living God** will be placed upon those only who bear a **likeness to Christ in character**.”* RH, May 21, 1895

“The seal of the living God will be placed upon those only who bear a likeness to Christ in character.”

Technically speaking, the observance of the Sabbath is not the seal but rather a revelation that a person has received the seal:

*“The **sign, or seal**, of God is **revealed** in the observance of the seventh-day Sabbath, the Lord's memorial of creation.”* 8T, p. 117

Some in the church have used a single statement in an attempt to prove that Ellen White believed that the seal is not the observance of the Sabbath, but rather a settling into the truth intellectually and spiritually:

“Just as soon as the people of God are sealed in their foreheads—it is not any seal or mark that can be seen, but a settling into the truth, both intellectually and spiritually, so they cannot be moved—just as soon as God's people are sealed and prepared for the shaking, it will come.” Manuscript 173, 1902, p.

1-6. (“Medical Missionary Work in Southern California,” Interview held in Los Angeles, California, September 15, 1902 found in 10MR, p. 252)

However, this single quotation cannot be used to contradict the plethora of statements where Ellen White categorically wrote that the seal is the Sabbath in the heart of the law. Ellen White is not talking out of both sides of her mouth. This particular statement is describing the Holy Spirit’s sealing in the mind and heart which is then revealed **visibly** by a careful and faithful observance of the Sabbath. Even the threat of death will not move those whose heart the Spirit has sealed! The choice of Ellen White statements is not either/or but rather both/and.

Sabbath Observance in the Times of Jesus

The best way to understand the relationship between the **internal** sealing of the Holy Spirit and the external observance of the Sabbath as a sign, is by contrasting how Jesus and the Jewish intelligentsia kept the Sabbath. While the religious leaders were mean-spirited, ugly and restrictive, they appeared to be meticulous Sabbath ‘keepers’. They were sticklers, ‘keeping’ the Sabbath **externally**, but without the **internal** work of the Holy Spirit in their hearts. We call their attitude ‘legalism’. Jesus rebuked

this external façade. In His woes upon the scribes and Pharisees Jesus ‘brutally’ diagnosed the problem:

*“Woe to you, Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you cleanse the **outside** of the cup and dish, but **inside** they are full of extortion and self-indulgence. Blind Pharisee, first cleanse the **inside** of the cup and dish, that the **outside** of them may be clean also. “Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you are like whitewashed tombs which indeed appear beautiful **outwardly**, but **inside** are full of dead men’s bones and all uncleanness. Even so you also **outwardly** appear righteous to men, but **inside** you are full of hypocrisy and lawlessness” (Matthew 23:25-28)*

It is noteworthy that every single miraculous healing of Jesus on the Sabbath was a **chronic case**. He could have waited till sundown to prevent antagonizing the religious leaders. However, He wanted to make a point that could not be missed.

When Jesus was baptized in the Jordan river He received the seal of the Holy Spirit and **His manner** of Sabbath observance visibly revealed it. The gospels do not mention a single instance where Jesus said what should **not be done** on the Sabbath. In all seven of His healings the emphasis falls on what **He did!** Let’s take one example of the contrast between spiritual and legalistic Sabbath keeping:

“And He entered the synagogue again, and a man was there who had a withered hand. ² So they **watched Him closely**, whether He would heal him on the Sabbath, so that they might **accuse Him**. ³ And He said to the man who had the withered hand, “**Step forward**.” ⁴ Then He said to them, “Is it **lawful** on the Sabbath to do good or to do evil, to **save life** or to **kill**?” But they kept silent. ⁵ And when He had looked around at them with **anger**, being grieved by the **hardness of their hearts** [*internal heart problem*], He said to the man, “Stretch out your hand.” And he stretched it out, and his hand was restored as whole as the other. ⁶ Then the Pharisees went out and immediately plotted with the Herodians against Him, how they might **destroy Him**.” (Mark 3:1-7)

Several details stand out in this story. For the religious leaders it was alright to **spy** on the Sabbath and launch **accusations**. According to them it was wrong for Jesus to heal on the Sabbath but alright to plot to kill Him. The passage clearly tells us that the problem with the religious leaders was the **hardness of their hearts**. Thus Ellen White wrote: “Its [*observance of the Sabbath*] mere **outward** observance was a mockery.” DA, p. 286

The accusers ‘kept’ the **Sabbath outwardly** but did not have the work of the **Holy Spirit** in their hearts. Whoever has been sealed by the Holy Spirit in the heart

will keep the Sabbath as Jesus did. Ellen White described the Sabbath ‘keeping’ enforced by the religious leaders:

“As the Jews departed from God, and failed to make the **righteousness of Christ their own by faith**, the Sabbath **lost its significance** to them. Satan was seeking to exalt himself and to draw men away from Christ, and he worked to **pervert the Sabbath**, because it is the **sign** of the power of Christ. The Jewish leaders accomplished the will of Satan by surrounding God’s rest day with **burdensome requirements**. In the days of Christ, the Sabbath had become **so perverted** that its observance **reflected** the character of selfish and arbitrary men rather than the character of the **loving heavenly Father**. The rabbis virtually represented God as giving laws which it **was impossible for men to obey**. They led the people to look upon God as a tyrant, and to think that the observance of the Sabbath, as He required it, made men **hard-hearted** and **cruel**. It was the work of Christ to clear away these misconceptions. Although the rabbis followed Him with merciless hostility, He did not even appear to conform to their requirements, but went straight forward, **keeping the Sabbath according to the law of God**.” DA, pp. 283, 284

From a sign of **Christ’s righteousness** in the life and for His glory, the Sabbath had become a sign of their **own righteousness**

for their glory. Their Sabbath 'keeping' made them **intolerant, mean spirited, judgmental and arrogant**. The Sabbath makes **no one holy**; it is the sign of holiness or sanctification that flows from the heart.

Ellen White wrote that the message of the faithful witness to the church of Laodicea will cause the shaking among God's people. And what is Laodicea's problem? It is a church that thinks it is "*rich and increased with goods and in need of nothing*". Outwardly the church is checking every box. However, one thing is missing—Jesus is outside the heart knocking and begging to enter! Thus, the disease of Laodicea is the same that existed in the days of Christ—outward 'piety' without the **internal** work of the Holy Spirit. Sabbath observance that does not come from the heart is a farce!

Does this mean that we do not need to be careful Sabbath keepers? Of course not! Some enemies of the Sabbath see strict obedience to it as legalism and therefore teach that Jesus is our Sabbath rest and therefore we need only to enjoy rest in Him. After all, they argue, didn't Jesus say:

"Come to Me all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." (Matthew 11:28-30)

However, does resting in the righteousness of Jesus exonerate

us from careful Sabbath observance as an **external expression** of an internal experience of rest with Jesus?

It bears noting that the offer of rest that Jesus made in Matthew 11:28 is closely related to the Sabbath because at the very beginning of chapter 12, Jesus dealt with a case of a legalistic pharisaical observance of the Sabbath. When Jesus promised rest to those who come to Him, He was referring to delivering the people from the burdensome Sabbath rules and regulations that the religious leaders had added to the Sabbath and imposed upon the people:

*"Christ saw that lessons must be given to scatter the rubbish of **traditional exactions** which they themselves **had invented and piled upon** the holy institution, **given in love** by a merciful God. The Sabbath **was not** to be that which the Jews had made it—a rigorous **burden** and exaction, **loaded down** with continual **additions** of their **own invention**. By this means the day was made what Satan had been working on human minds to make it—a grievous **yoke** in the place of a delight, the holy of the Lord, honorable. God gave the Sabbath to be a blessing to man; it was to be to him a memorial of God's work of creation; it was to remind him of God's sacred rest, for which reason he had "**blessed the Sabbath day, and hallowed it.**"*
RH, August 3, 1897

The problem with the religious world today is that they see the Sabbath through the eyes of the scribes and Pharisees and equate it with the true Sabbath. Therefore, they claim that we don't need to keep it but simply to find rest in Jesus.

However, would those who make this claim, also affirm that we don't need to be baptized in water because it is enough to accept Jesus as our Savior in our hearts? Would they say that it is not necessary to partake of the literal bread and grape juice at communion because we already believe internally what these symbols represent? Would they contend that it is unnecessary to get married in an official legal ceremony simply because love is already in the heart?

Mere External Sabbath Keepers

Ellen White always kept the proper balance in her view of the Sabbath. She taught that an internal relationship with Jesus will lead to an external observance of the Sabbath. She also taught that an external observance of the Sabbath without the internal work of the Holy Spirit in the heart is of no value before God:

*"I was shown that **merely** observing the Sabbath and praying morning and evening are **not** positive evidences that we are Christians. These **outward forms** [external]*

*may all be strictly observed, and yet **true godliness** [internal] be lacking."* 4aSG, p. 95

*"An **outward observance** of the Sabbath will **not save** the soul. The principles interwoven with every one of the Ten Commandments are to be honored and obeyed in the individual, **practical life**. The law, God requires, shall be written on the **tablets of every soul**." Letter 191, 1899, pp. 3, 4 (found in 6MR, pp. 396, 397)*

*"All who keep the Sabbath **in truth** bear the mark of **loyalty to God**. They are representatives of His kingdom. Their light is to shine forth to others in **good works**. We are not merely to observe the Sabbath as a **legal matter**; we are to be intelligent in regard to **its spiritual bearing** upon all the transactions of life. God says, "Verily, my sabbaths ye shall keep: for it is a sign between Me and you throughout your generations; that ye may know that I am the Lord that doth sanctify you." Exodus 31:13. **This is sanctification through the truth**." 3MR, p. 424*

Some "Sabbath keepers" will be lost

Ellen White never taught that those who outwardly keep the Sabbath will be saved. In fact, she taught that some 'Sabbath keepers' will be lost because their service to God was merely a claim:

*"Not all who **profess** to keep the*

Sabbath will be **sealed**. There are many even among those who **teach the truth to others** who will **not receive the seal** of God in their foreheads. They **had the light** of truth, they **knew their Master's will**, they **understood every point** of our faith, but they had not **corresponding works**. These who were so familiar with prophecy and the treasures of divine wisdom, should have **acted their faith**. They should have commanded their households after them, that by a well-ordered family they might **present to the world** the influence of the truth upon the human heart." CET, p. 189

"The quiet, consistent, godly life is a living epistle, known and read of all men. **Holiness** is not shaped from **without or put on**; it **radiates from within**. If goodness, purity, meekness, lowliness, and integrity dwell in the heart, they will **shine forth in the character**; and such a character is full of power. Not the instrument, but the great Worker in whose hand the instrument is used, receives the glory. The heart filled with the Savior's love, daily receives **grace to impart**. The life reveals the redeeming power of the truth." HP, p. 237

Is it perhaps true that we have focused so much on what we should **not do** on the Sabbath that we have forgotten what **we should do**? If we love Jesus, we will do what He did on the Sabbath—bless humanity and focus on our relationship with Him.

The Tree and Day Test

Seventh-day Adventists believe that the world will be divided into two groups at the end, and the **visible** dividing factor will be worship on the seventh day Sabbath versus worshipping on the first, Sunday. However, the deciding factor will not simply be a matter of days but rather of loyalty! At the end, two different days will be **visible signs of allegiance**. This will not be a **novel way** of testing a person's loyalty. It will be, in principle, the same test that Adam and Eve faced in the **Garden**.

God had told the progenitors of the race that they could enjoy the fruit of the trees of the Garden for their **personal consumption**. However, He specifically instructed them that one tree was **off-limits**. In similar fashion, God has given humanity **six days** for our **personal** labor and work. However, He has specified that the **seventh** day is **off limits**.

In the Garden, the Creator tested Adam and Eve's **loyalty** by means of a visible **tree**. Once again, the issue was not the tree. The tree was the means to test whether they would be loyal to God's Word and obey His authority, or loyal to the serpent's word and obey his authority.

At the conclusion of history, all the descendants of Adam and Eve will face the **same kind of test**, but with a different vehicle. On the one hand, will be those who render obedience to the



Creator's authority and demonstrate it by keeping the Sabbath, the visible sign of His authority. On the other hand, will be those who render obedience to the beast by keeping Sunday, his sign of authority. Israel faced a similar Sabbath test of loyalty to God's authority and law:

*"Then the Lord said to Moses, "Behold, I will rain bread from heaven for you. And the people shall go out and gather a certain quota every day, that I may **test** them, whether they will **walk in My law** or not... Now it happened that some of the people went out on the seventh day to gather, but they found none."²⁸ And the Lord said to Moses, "How long do you refuse to keep My **commandments** and My **laws**?" (Exodus 16:4, 27, 28)*

The Replacement of the Seal in the Law

As I have pointed out before, the Sabbath commandment is the only one in the law that has the **name** of the Lawgiver, the **realm** of His dominion, and His **office**. Therefore, it is the only commandment that contains the seal of authenticity. That being the case, the followers of the Lawgiver will receive the seal of God by keeping the Sabbath as the sign that they worship Him as the Creator.

Satan always seeks to replace the genuine with a counterfeit. God has a genuine day of worship, and so does Satan. When the papacy claimed to change the law by removing the Sabbath and inserting Sunday in its place, it not only usurped the power and prerogatives of God but also **removed** God's seal from the law and **replaced** it with its own.

Just before the close of

probation, the papacy's followers who keep Sunday as their day of worship, knowing full well that they should keep the Sabbath, will receive the mark of the beast, the sign that points to the power that claims to have changed the day of worship. Thus, the test over the day is a matter of whose authority we obey. Do we worship the Creator or do we worship the usurper? Ellen White described the Sabbath/Sunday issue as a matter of loyalty or disloyalty to the Creator:

*“The image of the beast will be formed before probation closes; for it is to be **the great test** for the people of God, by which their **eternal destiny** will be decided. . . This is the **test** that the people of God must have **before** they are **sealed**. All who **prove their loyalty** to God by **observing His law**, and refusing to accept a spurious sabbath, will rank under the banner of the Lord God Jehovah, and **will receive** the seal of the living God. Those who yield the truth of heavenly origin, and accept the Sunday sabbath, **will receive** the mark of the beast.”* Mar, p. 164

“The Sabbath will be the great test of loyalty, for it is the point of truth especially controverted [testing with a tree like in Eden would not be the issue a hand]. When the final test shall be brought to bear upon men, then the line of distinction will be drawn between those who serve God and those who serve Him

not. While the observance of the false sabbath in compliance with the law of the state, contrary to the fourth commandment, will be an avowal [an open declaration] of allegiance to a power that is in opposition to God, the keeping of the true Sabbath, in obedience to God's law, is an evidence of loyalty to the Creator. While one class, by accepting the sign of submission to earthly powers, receive the mark of the beast, the other choosing the token of allegiance to divine authority, receive the seal of God.” GC, p. 605

Two days at **either end** of the week will be a **token, a sign, an avowal, a seal** of allegiance to one power or the other. The faithful will be willing to die to be faithful to their convictions. However, they will only be willing to die because they have received the **inward** seal of the Holy Spirit in their hearts. The Sabbath will be an **outward sign** of an inward experience. God's people will **not** be willing to **die for the Sabbath** but rather because they **love the Lord of the Sabbath**. Jesus said, “if you love me, you will keep my commandments” John 14:15 ESV

There could be **no better sign** to test the faith of God's people than the day on which they worship, because this will be the central issue in the final controversy. It would make no sense to test humanity with a tree or anything else because that will not be the point of controversy.

In the closing period of probationary time, those who choose to be in Babylon will become “*a dwelling place of demons, a prison for every foul spirit, and a cage for every unclean and hated bird!*” and will receive the plagues. The rebellious religious world will give a decree to kill those who do not worship the beast and his image and refuse the mark. We are to keep the Sabbath because we love the Creator, not because we are under duress. There is no greater legalism than saying, ‘*you either keep Sunday or we will kill you*’. This was the identical attitude of the Jewish leaders when Jesus broke ‘their sabbath’.

In a world where the planet seems to be falling apart at the seams, in the midst of wars, rumors of wars, pestilence, famine, earthquakes, and riots, and ‘Christians’ will convince the civil powers of the world that Sabbath keepers are bringing down the wrath of God. They will say that the only way to recover God’s favor and blessings is by getting rid of the voice of reproof. This will be legalism to the greatest extent. The idea will be that humanity can earn God’s blessings again by shaping up!

However, God does not want anyone to suffer the plagues, so He will send a loud cry with the unmitigated power of the latter rain to call His faithful followers out of Babylon! The entire earth will be lightened with His glory

(Revelation 18:1-5).

In Christ’s day, the Jews were ‘keeping’ the Sabbath in the **wrong way**, and at the end, Christians will be keeping the **wrong day**. The Sabbath in Christ’s day was not the Sabbath of the Lord, and neither is Sunday. Satan cares not if we keep the wrong day or the true Sabbath in the wrong way; the end result is the same. The Sabbath makes no person holy but rather is the visible sign that God has made the person holy:

“The seal of God will never be placed upon the forehead of an impure man or woman. It will never be placed upon the forehead of the ambitious, world-loving man or woman. It will never be placed upon the forehead of men or women of false tongues or deceitful hearts. All who receive the seal must be without spot before God, --candidates for heaven. Search the Scriptures for yourselves, that you may understand the fearful solemnity of the present hour.” CET, p. 191.2



Pastor Stephen Bohr
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What's in a Name?

By Jeanne Wheaton

Metabolic Dysfunction-Associated Steatotic Liver Disease (MASLD). A little wordy, maybe? Previously known as Nonalcoholic Fatty Liver Disease (NAFLD), this buildup of extra fat in liver cells is closely linked to metabolic syndrome, which includes high blood sugar, extra body weight, high blood fats, and high blood pressure. It occurs despite low alcohol use, a factor commonly linked to liver disease. MASLD has become a global concern and is currently affecting about 38% of all adults and 7-14% of children and adolescents worldwide, and increasing as rates of obesity and type 2 diabetes climb. MASLD is associated with more advanced liver diseases like cirrhosis and liver cancer, cardiovascular disease, chronic kidney disease, loss of

muscle mass and strength, and cancers outside of the liver. In addition, it has been associated with reduced health-related quality of life, reduced work productivity, fatigue, and economic burden.¹ Cardiovascular disease is the leading cause of death in those with MASLD. Treating underlying causes such as obesity, diabetes, high blood pressure, or high cholesterol can often reverse or slow MASLD at early stages. About 20% of MASLD cases progress to a more severe form called metabolic dysfunction-associated steatohepatitis (MASH). Still, only a minority will progress to scar tissue formation called cirrhosis, end-stage liver disease, or liver cancer. Since MASLD is often asymptomatic in its early stages, it is typically detected by a blood

test for liver function.²

As with many other metabolic diseases, MASLD is managed by lifestyle changes, including a healthy diet, exercise, weight loss, blood sugar and blood pressure control, cholesterol and triglyceride control, and smoking cessation. A Mediterranean-type diet is often recommended, including plenty of fruits and vegetables, whole grains, nuts and seeds, and legumes while avoiding sugary drinks and desserts, highly processed foods, and those high in saturated and trans fats. Intermittent fasting is also considered effective in improving metabolic dysfunction by promoting better glucose and blood pressure control and liver health. Bariatric surgery is also considered an option in some cases, as are medications to control obesity.³

Simply following the counsel given to us over a hundred and fifty years ago could go a long way toward the prevention and even reversal of MASLD as well as other lifestyle diseases. “Again and again I have been shown that God is trying to lead us back, step by step, to His original design,—that man should subsist upon the natural products of the earth.”⁴ “Grains, fruits, nuts, and vegetables constitute the diet chosen for us by our Creator. These foods, prepared in as simple and natural a manner as possible, are the most healthful and nourishing. They impart a

strength, a power of endurance, and a vigor of intellect that are not afforded by a more complex and stimulating diet.”⁵

“MASLD is managed by lifestyle changes, including a healthy diet.”

- 1 Younossi ZM, Kalligeros M, Henry L. Epidemiology of Metabolic Dysfunction-Associated Steatotic Liver Disease. *Clin Mol Hepatol*. 2024 Aug 19. doi: 10.3350/cmh.2024.0431. Epub ahead of print. PMID: 39159948.
- 2 UCSF Health. Metabolic Dysfunction-Associated Steatotic Liver Disease. <https://www.ucsfhealth.org/conditions/metabolic-dysfunction-associated-steatotic-liver-disease> (accessed 3-11-2025)
- 3 Machado MV. MASLD treatment-a shift in the paradigm is imminent. *Front Med (Lausanne)*. 2023 Dec 11;10:1316284. doi: 10.3389/fmed.2023.1316284. PMID: 38146424; PMCID: PMC10749497.
- 4 White, E.G. (1890). *Christian Temperance And Bible Hygiene*. Battle Creek, MI: Good Health Publishing Co.
- 5 White, E.G. (1905). *The Ministry of Healing*. Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press Publishing Association



Jeanne Wheaton
M.S., R.D.N.



The Lord's Mercies

"It is of the Lord's mercies that we are not consumed, because His compassions fail not. They are new every morning: great is thy faithfulness." Lamentations 3:22-23 KJV

By John Bridges

What a reminder and wake-up call to remember God's goodness to us every day. These are the things to think upon. If we dwell on this world's troubles, they crowd out blessings and a spirit of gratitude and happiness.

One of the simplest and most immediate direct ways to see God work and how He works is by sharing your time and gifts He has bestowed on you. His promise is:

"Give, and it shall be given unto you; good measure, pressed down,

and shaken together, and running over, shall men give into your bosom. For with the same measure that ye mete withal it shall be measured to you again." Luke 6:38 KJV

Thank you for your prayers, time, encouragement, and generosity. You are a vital part of this ministry in changing lives and hastening the coming of the Lord.

A simple, effective way to express your gratitude and further this ministry is through wise estate planning.

Do you have an estate plan? Why should you?

- Honor God by leaving a legacy for God's work
- Provide wise planning for you and your family's future needs
- Ensure a smooth transfer of assets
- Maintain control; decide how, when, and to whom assets are distributed

Avoid Taxes on Your IRA

It may seem hard to believe, but paying taxes on your IRA may not be as mandatory as you think! IRA owners reaching age 70 ½ are allowed to transfer up to \$108,000.00 directly to a charity without incurring tax consequences.

At age 73, it is mandatory that you begin withdrawals. Again, a direct transfer to a charity satisfies the requirement.

These withdrawals are allowed to go into a charitable gift annuity if you need a life income stream.

A Gift Annuity Gives you:

- Favorable rates with fixed income for life
- Payments to you or to you and your spouse
- Satisfaction of knowing that after paying you, it will support the Secrets Unsealed Ministry

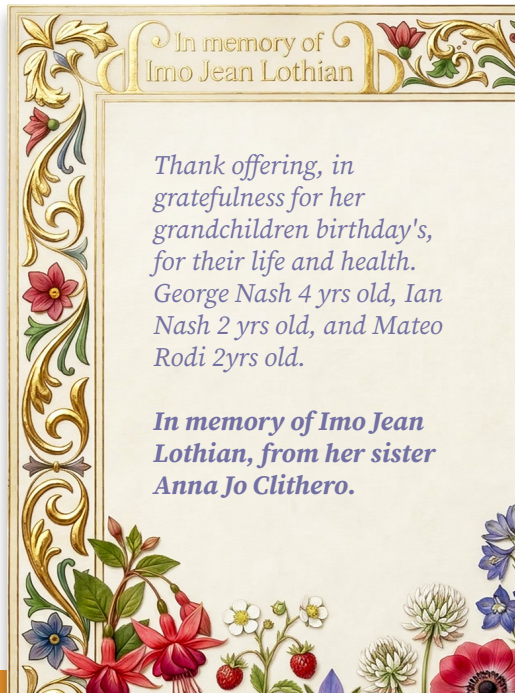
Single Life Charitable Gift Annuity Rates

• Age 60	5.2%
• Age 65	5.7%
• Age 70	6.3%
• Age 75	7.0%
• Age 80	8.1%
• Age 85	9.1%
• Age 90	10.1%



Pastor John Bridges

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TABLE IN THE WILDERNESS

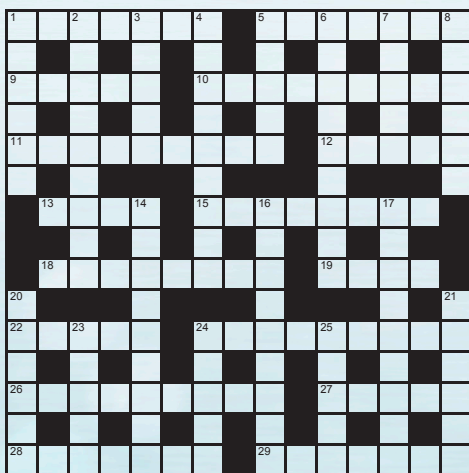
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Bible Crossword

Across

- 1 Desperation; Praised (anag) (7)
- 5 God, doing this on day 7 (7)
- 9 More refined (5)
- 10 One of Paul's letters (9)
- 11 Uncared for (9)
- 12 Encamp against city (5)
- 13 Charitable giving (4)
- 15 Consecrated (8)
- 18 Abraham received these (8)
- 19 Jesus raised in 3 (4)
- 22 Colour found only in Ezekiel (5)
- 24 Someone who shields (9)
- 26 Continuance of life (9)
- 27 Grind together (5)
- 28 Unusual (7)
- 29 Athalia's cry (7)



by Philologus

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Down

- 1 Rely on (6)
- 2 Tail-ender (9)
- 3 Be in harmony (5)
- 4 Not wicked (9)
- 5 Reigned (5)
- 6 Contented (9)
- 7 Picture (5)
- 8 Good news (6)
- 14 The first, first-aider? (9)
- 16 Fradulent (9)
- 17 Slain by Moses (9)
- 20 They get the hump (6)
- 21 Parentless (6)
- 23 Prickly shrub (5)
- 24 300 bought ointment to anoint Jesus (5)
- 25 Keen-sighted bird of prey (5)

Testimony Time

Dear SUM Family, I just want to tell you how much I enjoy your sermons. I watch one every night before I go to bed. Thanks to all of you for feeding my soul. I'm 85 years old, and it is not easy to go to church all the time. - **Eroilda in CA**

I am 91 years old and have never grown so much in all my life. Pastor Bohr is best informed and best at informing the truth. I was baptized into the Baptist Church at a young age, and have never heard these messages before. - **Dorothy in AZ**

From our hearts, thank you for teaching us to understand end-time events in such a clear way. Through the Lord's help and your ministry, you have helped us to love the Lord more and more and more. - **Sharleen in LA**

I want to say thank you for the work you all are doing for the Lord. That you've not forgotten those of us in prison, as many have, speaks to the truth of God's love, grace, and mercy. It's easy to turn away from those who appear different and/or whose sins are more visible, but that you see value, as Christ does, in all of His creatures is a beautiful testament of your faith in His word and His call to minister to the world. Thank you for showing me that there is still hope. - **Timothy, a prison inmate in GA**

I've been in contact with your ministry and am getting books from your catalog. I really appreciate all of you at Secrets Unsealed ministry. Thank you for your services; you are reaching a lot of lost men and women locked up. I know you guys have been a big help with my walk with God, and especially with my addiction problem, but with God and your books, you have saved me. Thank you. I'd like these three books, please: Daniel and the Revelation, The History of Redemption, and The Greatest of all the Prophets. - **Devin, a prison inmate in IN**

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Title: "The Law & The Sabbath, and the Writings of the Apostle Paul"

Date: March 15 - 20, 2027

Location: Secrets Unsealed, Fresno, CA.

Ancla (*Spanish Seminar*)

How the Bible, psychology, and science provide practical and definitive solutions to family challenges.

Title: "Familias Poderosas"

Date: Oct. 31 - Nov. 7, 2026

Speaker: Pr. Luis Fernando Manrique

Location: Secrets Unsealed, Fresno, CA.

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