

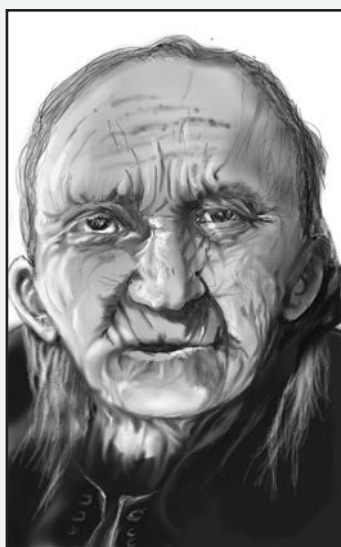
The Sabbath and the End Times



SABBATH—MAY 13

READ FOR THIS WEEK'S LESSON: James 2:8–13; Genesis 2:1–3; Psalm 33:6, 9; Revelation 14:7, 9, 12; Isaiah 65:17.

MEMORY VERSE: “I was [given the task] to make all men understand the meaning of this secret. God kept this secret to Himself from the beginning of the world [the earth]. And He is the One Who made all things” (Ephesians 3:9, NLV).



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GOD made each one of us. So, every person has worth. The baby inside its mother, the teenager in the wheelchair, and the grandmother who can't remember her own name: all these people have worth in God's eyes. God is their Father. These persons are His sons and daughters. “ ‘He is the God who made the world. He also made everything in it. He is the Lord of heaven and earth. He doesn't live in temples built by human hands. . . . From one man he made all the people of [in] the world [on the earth]. Now they live all over the earth’ ” (Acts 17:24, 26, NIV).

Every person on the earth belongs to the same family. We are brothers and sisters made by the same God. The Genesis story (Genesis 1 and 2) shows us how much we really are worth. What's more, each one of us is special. There's no one else who is an exact copy of you anywhere. You are worth so much to God that He was born as a human and died on the cross for you and your sins!

**WHAT WE OWE TO THE GOD WHO MADE US
(James 2:8–13)**

Genesis 1 and 2 tell us how we were made and why we are here. The Genesis story gives us a reason for living. God made us. We must answer to Him for our behavior. The One who made us makes us responsible for all that we say and do. God has made important rules that He expects us to obey.

We know that God is our Judge. What does His work as Judge show us about what He expects from us? How are God’s job as Judge, His law, and worship all connected? Read Revelation 14:7; Romans 14:10; and James 2:8–13 for the answers.

The first angel announces: “ ‘The time has come for God to judge all people’ ” (Revelation 14:7, ERV). God made us free to choose between good and evil. So, we are responsible for the decisions we make.

But God also asks us to make decisions about everlasting life and heaven. The First Angel’s Message commands us to “ ‘Worship God. He made the heavens [the skies], the earth, the sea, and the springs of water [the places where water comes out of the earth]’ ” (Revelation 14:7, ERV). This verse shows us that we worship God because He made us.

Also, we keep the Sabbath because Jesus made us. So, Jesus is worthy of our worship. Our Sabbath keeping shows God and everyone else that we accept God’s Ten Commandments. When we keep the Sabbath holy, we show God that we want to be obedient to His whole law. God’s law shows us how to live in the best way possible. God’s law is part of His government. The law shows us God’s love, too. That’s why God uses the law to judge us.

How does our understanding of the story in Genesis 1 and 2 change our behavior? In what way do the people, places, and ideas in your life have a part in the choices you make? How can God’s mercy help us to win the fight against our bad habits?



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THE SABBATH AND THE GOD WHO MADE US (Genesis 2:1–3)



The Bible asks us to rest in God's love and His care each Sabbath.

God gave us the Sabbath because we need to remember that He made us. In the mid-1800s, people everywhere started to accept the teaching of evolution. Evolution is the false teaching that life on earth started because of an accident from slow changes in plants and animals that happened over a very long time. So, God sent the people on this earth a message of wonderful hope. We have been studying this message all quarter: the First Angel's Message, in Revelation 14:6, 7.

Satan hates Jesus. So, Satan tries hard to make people misunderstand the story, in Genesis 1 and 2, about how God made us. Satan doesn't want us to worship Jesus as the One who made us and saves us. God's end-time message commands people to worship Jesus as the One who made heaven and earth. So, we should worship Jesus because He made us.

Read Revelation 14:6, 7. Then read Genesis 2:1–3; Exodus 20:8–11; and Deuteronomy 5:12–15. How does the Sabbath commandment show us the connection between the Genesis story about how life started and the Good News?

The final war between God and Satan will be about the Sabbath. The Sabbath is a word picture of our rest in Jesus. The Sabbath is a special sign that shows we are loyal to God (Ezekiel 20:12, 20). The Sabbath also shows that we trust in God to save us and not our good behavior. The Sabbath shows that God does for us the thing we can't do for ourselves. God saves us from our sins.

The Bible asks us to rest in God's love and His care each Sabbath. That is another reason why the Sabbath is a word picture for rest and trust. Our keeping the Sabbath shows that we don't trust in our good behavior to save us. The Sabbath is about mercy, not about keeping rules to earn God's pardon. The Sabbath is about love, not punishment. The Sabbath is about depending on God, not on ourselves. Each Sabbath we praise God for saving us in Jesus.

The Sabbath is the everlasting connection between Eden in the past and the promise of the new sky and earth in the future (Isaiah 65:17; Revelation 21:1).

How does Revelation 14:6, 7 show us a hint of the Sabbath commandment? Why is the Sabbath so important to our end-time message? (Also read Exodus 20:8–11.)

THE DEVIL'S SNEAKY LIE (Psalm 33:6, 9)

The devil hates the teaching that God made the earth and sky in six days. So, the devil came up with a lie to attack Bible truth. Satan's lie says that God took a long time to make life on earth. The lie also says God didn't make the earth in six days. He used evolution. As we saw, evolution is the false teaching that life on earth started because of chance from slow changes in plants and animals that happened over a very long time. Do you see how sneaky this teaching is? Satan mixes the teaching of evolution with Bible truth. This false teaching says that the days in Genesis 1 are not real days but millions of years. So, this lie teaches that life on earth is billions of years old.

Read Psalm 33:6, 9 and Hebrews 11:3. What do these Bible verses tell us about how God made the earth?

The Bible teaches us how God made the earth: "He spoke, and it [the earth] happened. He commanded, and it appeared" (Psalm 33:9, ICB). Genesis 1 shows us that God made the earth in six real days that were each 24 hours long. Then God rested on the 7th day. Bible thinkers who don't believe in the real six-day Genesis story accept that the person who wrote Genesis meant to teach the idea that God made the earth in six days.

The Hebrew word for "day" in Genesis 1 is "**yom**." In the Bible a number is often written before the word "**yom**" or day. Some examples are third day, first day, and so on. Whenever a number is written before the word "**yom**," then the number limits the day to 24 hours. Nowhere in the Bible do we see an example where a number before "**yom**" means more than a real day. So, the word "**yom**" with a number written in front of it always means 24 hours.

Also, if God didn't make the skies and earth in six days, how can we keep the seventh-day Sabbath? Why would God command us to keep it? So, if we accept that God waited long ages to make the earth, we attack the Sabbath truth.

Satan's attack on the Sabbath really is an attack on God's control. Satan's sneaky plan is to trick people into accepting evolution. Then Satan will destroy their belief in the Sabbath. Sad to say, many people today, including Christians, don't accept the Sabbath.



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All our Bible teachings come from our belief that God made the earth and everything in it.

THE SABBATH AND THE END TIME (Revelation 14:7, 9, 12)

The worldwide war between God and Satan started in heaven many thousands of years ago. Satan started the war when he questioned God's control. This war continues today.

Read Revelation 14:7, 9, and 12. Write what these verses mean by finishing the sentences on the lines below.

Revelation 14:7 commands us to _____

Revelation 14:9 asks us not to _____

Revelation 14:12 describes a people who _____

These verses teach us that the war between God and Satan in the end times is about worship. Do we worship God? Or do we worship the wild animal power from the sea? All our Bible teachings come from our belief that God made the earth and everything in it. Without that belief, nothing else we believe matters. The Genesis story teaches us about the seventh-day Sabbath (Genesis 2:1–3). So, the Sabbath is a sign that God made the earth in six days and rested on the seventh day. The Sabbath is proof that God made us.

So, anyone who teaches that the Sabbath isn't important is trying to remove God from His throne and replace Him (2 Thessalonians 2:4). An attack on the Sabbath is an attack on God.

The real test in the end times will be about our love for Jesus. Are we loyal to Him? The Bible says that we show our love for God by our obedience to His commandments (1 John 5:3; Revelation 14:12). The Sabbath is the only commandment that shows us God as the One who made us (Exodus 20:8–11). No wonder the Sabbath will be the test that separates the ones who worship God from the ones who worship the wild animal power from the sea (Revelation 14:11, 12). Think about how important the Sabbath is to you. Do you really think the final test can be about anything else?

Many people argue that it doesn't matter which day we keep, as long as we keep a day holy. How do we use Bible truth to answer this false teaching?

THE SABBATH AND EVERLASTING REST (Isaiah 65:17)

The Sabbath is the same as a place of safety in this life. Each week we let go of our worries and cares and enter God's rest center: the Sabbath. Abraham Heschel, the famous Jewish writer, said that Sabbath is "the same as a castle. This castle is not made with stone. This castle is made of time."—*The Sabbath: Its Meaning for Modern Man* (New York: Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 2005), page 12, adapted. Every seventh day, God's Sabbath or "palace" comes down from heaven to earth. The Lord invites us to spend these 24 hours in fellowship with Him each week.

At the start of Heschel's book, Susannah Heschel, his daughter, writes about the Sabbath in these words: "The Sabbath is a word picture for heaven. The Sabbath is a story about God and His love. In our prayers, we ask God to send His Chosen One. When the Chosen One comes, His coming will be the same as a Sabbath. Each Sabbath helps us get ready for heaven. So, we must learn how to love the Sabbath now. If we don't, then we won't know how to enjoy everlasting life later."—*The Sabbath: Its Meaning for Modern Man*, page XV, adapted.

So, we can see that when God made the earth, He made the Sabbath for us. When we rest on the Sabbath, we rest in God's loving care. We rest in hope of the everlasting rest God will give us in the new earth that is soon to come.

Read Isaiah 65:17; Isaiah 66:22; 2 Peter 3:13; and Revelation 21:1. How does keeping the Sabbath help us understand everlasting life on the new earth?

The same God who made the earth the first time will make it new again. The Sabbath will be an everlasting word picture for God as the One who made us (read Isaiah 66:23). That's why the Jews saw the Sabbath as a sign of the future life in heaven. The Jews named the Sabbath the "**olam haba.**" This name means "the new life to come." The Sabbath is a "taste" of everlasting life.

The three angels tell everyone to worship God. Their message helps us understand better the One who made us. He says, " 'Look! I am making everything new!' Then he said, 'Write this, because these words are true and can be trusted' " (Revelation 21:5, ICB).

How can you make the Sabbath a "taste" of everlasting life in your own life and in your family?



Abraham Heschel, the famous Jewish writer, said that Sabbath is "the same as a castle."



The Sabbath shows us that God is the only One who can be King.

ADDITIONAL THOUGHT: “We worship God because He is the One who made us. God’s holy angels give us this reason in these words: ‘You made all things’ ([Revelation] 4:11, [ERV]). On earth, people need to remember that God is the One who made them. That’s why the first angel says, ‘Worship God. He made the heavens [skies], the earth, the sea, and the springs of water’ ([Revelation] 14:7, [ERV]). Bible thinkers believe that the first angel uses the language from the fourth commandment in his command to humans to worship God (Exodus 20:11). . . .

“The Sabbath is the sign of God’s government. The Sabbath shows us who God is. God is the One who made us. The Sabbath shows us God’s kingdom, too. God’s kingdom includes everything He made. Finally, the Sabbath shows us that God is the only One who can be King. Why? Because He made everything. So, for the dragon [Satan] to win his war against God, he must get rid of the Sabbath.”—Ángel Manuel Rodríguez, from an unpublished paper, “The Closing of the Cosmic Conflict: Role of the Three Angels’ Messages,” (from an unpublished article), pages 40, 41, adapted.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- ① What message does the Sabbath teach us? How does this message answer the important questions about life? These questions include: “Where did I come from?” “Why am I here?” “What will happen to me in the future?”
- ② Think about all the beautiful things God made in nature. Each week, the Sabbath comes to us to help us remember these wonderful things God made. What does the weekly Sabbath teach us about how important the story is in Genesis 1 and 2?
- ③ Read the stories in Daniel 3 and Daniel 6. What part does worship have in these stories? How can these stories help us get ready for the end times?

THE CHOICE BETWEEN TWO BOOKS

I grew up in a Jewish home, but my family wasn't religious. You could tell we weren't very religious by the way we kept the Jewish holidays. Those holidays included the special feasts and other religious festivals. When the special religious holidays came, my family would sit down at the table and say: "Our enemies tried to kill us Jews in the past. They failed. So, let's eat!" As you can see, we weren't a very religious family. But I always was searching for the truth.

In the fall of 1979, my search for truth caused me to have some strange experiences. In one of these experiences, I felt as if my spirit left my body and traveled around outside it. At the time, I didn't know that Satan was behind these experiences. I only knew that they felt real. So, I decided to start reading about them. I walked to a library at the University of Florida to get a book to teach me more about these strange spiritual experiences.

On the way to the library, I stopped at a health-food store to ask for a job. A man came out when I started talking about my strange experiences. He pulled me into the store and locked the door. So, I told him about my experiences of traveling outside my body. The man tried to warn me that these experiences came from the devil. Well, I didn't understand why the man was so scared for me. Before I left his store, he handed me a book. He said, "Please read this."

So, with his book in my hand, I went over to the University of Florida library. There, I found a book on traveling outside my body and other strange experiences. I couldn't check the book out because I wasn't a student. So, I sat down in the library to read the first chapter. I also did the first lesson. Then I went and hid the book on the library shelves so no one would check it out before I finished reading it myself.

Anyway, on my way to the shelves, I walked through the library with two books. In one hand I had this book on strange spiritual experiences. In the other hand, I had the book that the man in the health-food store gave me. The book about traveling outside my body was in one hand. What did I have in the other hand? *The Great Controversy* by Ellen G. White. At the time, I had no idea about the worldwide war between God and Satan.

A few days later, I had a powerful experience and met Jesus. I gave Him my heart. The strange spiritual experiences I had stopped and never came back. Soon, I read *The Great Controversy*. The book changed my life. There is no question, the Lord brought this book into my life at just the right time. I was looking for the truth. I found so much of it in that book.

INSIDE
Story
by CLIFFORD GOLDSTEIN



"Please read this."

