

The Foundation of God's Government



SABBATH—MAY 25

Worship will be an important test during the final days of earth's history (Revelation 14:6–12).

READ FOR THIS WEEK'S LESSON: Revelation 11:19; Matthew 5:17, 18; *The Great Controversy*, chapters 25–27.

MEMORY VERSE: “Then the dragon was very angry at the woman. He went off to make war against all her other children. Her children are those [people] who obey God's commands and have the truth that Jesus taught” (Revelation 12:17, ICB).

AFTER THE BIG DISAPPOINTMENT, in 1844, the first Adventists studied the Bible carefully. They learned that the law was an important part of God's work in heaven's temple. The Adventists understood that the Sabbath was important, too. The Sabbath shows us that Jesus made us. This Bible truth is our reason for worshiping God. Worship will be an important test during the final days of earth's history (Revelation 14:6–12).

Satan doesn't want anyone to worship God. So, Satan makes people think God's law isn't important. Satan knows if you keep the law but “fail to obey only one command, you are guilty of breaking all the commands in that law” (James 2:10, ERV). So, Satan works hard to get people to break God's law. Satan hates the Sabbath. The Sabbath helps people remember that God made them.

This week, we will study the connection between God's temple, His law, the Sabbath, and the mark of the beast. We also will study how the Sabbath is important to God's end-time people.

THE MOST HOLY ROOM AND GOD'S LAW (Revelation 11:19)

Read Revelation 11:19; Exodus 25:16; Exodus 31:18; and Revelation 12:17. What do these verses tell us was in the Ark of God's Promise? In Old Testament times, the ark was in the Most Holy Room in the Holy Tent or Tent of Meeting.

On the Day When God Removes All Sin, He makes the temple clean. The Israelites had a part to do to get ready for this day. The priests, or spiritual leaders, commanded the people to confess their sins, to search their hearts, and to do no work (Leviticus 23:29–31). On this day, the high priest, or top spiritual leader, entered the Most Holy Room of the Tent of Meeting. There, the high priest put an end to sin. The Ark of the Promise was inside the Most Holy Room. Inside the ark was God's Ten Commandment Law that was written on two pieces of stone. The ark had a gold cover named the mercy seat. The high priest sprinkled blood on the cover to clean the Tent of Meeting from sin. God's glory shone above the mercy seat. Every offering the people brought to the priests showed God's mercy to sinners. These gifts of blood helped the people remember their sins (Hebrews 10:3). The sins of the people can be removed in only one way. They must have faith in the blood of Jesus to clean them from all sin (1 Peter 1:18, 19). In Jesus, God's mercy and His law join together.

John looked into the temple in heaven. He saw "that God's temple in heaven was opened. Inside it the wooden chest called the ark of his covenant [promise] could be seen" (Revelation 11:19, NIV). Ellen G. White adds this explanation: "God put His law inside the Most Holy Room in His temple in heaven. God told His people this same law on Sinai. God wrote a copy of His law with His own finger on two pieces of stone. Moses wrote a copy of the rules of this law in a book. The book that Moses wrote and the stone that God wrote on were exact copies of the first law in God's temple. When the people understood the connection between the law of Moses and the law in heaven, they saw that God's law is holy. God's law does not change."—*The Great Controversy*, page 434, adapted.

The Adventists in the 1800s studied the Bible's teaching about the temple on earth and in heaven. They learned that God's law and His Sabbath are important. Because John saw God's law in the Ark of Promise in heaven's temple, we know that God didn't get rid of His law when Jesus died.



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GOD'S LAW NEVER CHANGES (Matthew 5:17, 18)

Read Matthew 5:17, 18; Psalm 111:7, 8; Ecclesiastes 12:13, 14; 1 John 5:3; and Proverbs 28:9. What do these Bible verses teach us about the connection between Christians and God's law?



**Whoever kept
God's law holy
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Seventh-day Adventists teach that God's law is holy. Protestant leaders in the past taught the same thing. Read this powerful quote from John Wesley: "Moses gave the Israelites a special law about gifts and offerings. This law came from God. This law explained the rules for offerings and the work done in God's temple on earth. The Lord came to destroy this law. . . . But Jesus did not remove the Ten Commandments. Jesus did not seek to get rid of any part of this law. The Ten Commandments cannot be destroyed. The law is the same as a loyal witness. . . . Every part of this law must control the lives of all people everywhere in all ages. The truths of the law do not depend on time or place or on anything else that will change. God's law depends on the love and holy life of God."—Upon Our Lord's Sermon on the Mount, Discourse V, *John Wesley's Sermons: An Anthology* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1991), pages 208, 209.

Compare Exodus 34:5–7 with Romans 7:11, 12; Psalm 19:7–11; Psalm 89:14; and Psalm 119:142, 172. What do these verses tell us about the connection between God's law and His love?

The law of God is a written record of His love. God's law is a perfect copy of His holy life. God's law is the foundation of His throne. The law teaches us right from wrong and how to live our lives so that we will please God. No wonder Satan hates the law! "Everyone saw that the temple on earth was a perfect copy of the temple in heaven. They also understood that the law that Moses put inside the ark on earth was an exact copy of the law inside the ark in heaven. They understood the connection between God's temple in heaven and His law. Whoever kept God's law holy must also keep the Sabbath, the fourth commandment. Other Christians refused to accept this Bible truth. They didn't want to keep the Sabbath. So, they refused to accept the teaching about Jesus' work for sinners in heaven's temple."—Ellen G. White, *The Great Controversy*, page 435, adapted.

THE SABBATH AND THE LAW (Revelation 14:6, 7)

Read Revelation 14:6, 7; Revelation 4:11; Genesis 2:1–3; and Exodus 20:8–11. These verses teach us that God made the earth in six days. What is the connection between this teaching, the Sabbath, and God’s law?

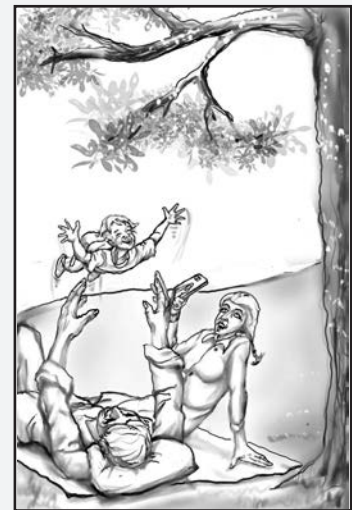
Jesus is worthy of our worship. We worship Him because He made us and saves us. God rested on the Sabbath day after making the earth in six days. The Sabbath helps us understand God’s care for us as the One who made us. The Sabbath shows us our Savior’s love. So, the Sabbath helps us understand God’s plan to save sinners.

At the end of making the earth and skies, God rested on the seventh day to celebrate the beauty of the earth He made. God also rested as an example to us. The Sabbath is a short stop we take every seven days to praise the One who made us. As we worship God on the Sabbath, we open our hearts to get the special blessing God placed in that day. God did not place this blessing in any other day.

The Sabbath helps us remember the One who made us. The Lord loves us too much to leave us when we forget about Him or His plan for our lives. The Sabbath is a special sign. When we keep the Sabbath holy, we show that we are loyal to God (Ezekiel 20:12, 20). The Sabbath is a symbol of rest and not works. The Sabbath is a symbol of mercy and not saving ourselves with our own behavior. The Sabbath shows we trust in God to save us and do not depend on ourselves. True Sabbath rest means we trust in God’s mercy. God made us, He saves us, and He is coming again for us.

Revelation 14 is God’s end-time message for everyone on earth. This message invites people everywhere to rest, or trust, in God’s love and care each Sabbath. Revelation 14 also asks us to remember that God made us and to give Him glory. Our keeping the Sabbath is also connected with Eden in the past and the new heavens and the new earth to come. The Sabbath also helps us remember that God will some day make the earth new again.

Has anyone accused you of trying to earn your way to heaven with Sabbath keeping? Why is the Sabbath a symbol that God made us and saves us? Why would our obedience to God’s command to “rest” cause people to think we were trying to “work” our way to heaven?



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THE MARK OF THE BEAST (Revelation 12:12, 17)



Revelation 13 introduces the dragon's two helpers: the sea beast and the land beast.

Read Revelation 12:12, 17 and Revelation 13:7. What do these verses show us about Satan? How angry is he? Why is the devil so angry with God's end-time people?

Revelation 12 is an outline of the war between Jesus and Satan from the beginning of earth's history to the end times. Revelation 13 introduces the dragon's two helpers: the sea beast and the land beast. These two powers fight alongside the dragon against God's people.

Read Revelation 13:4, 8, 12, 15 and Revelation 14:7, 9–11. (Also read Revelation 15:4; Revelation 16:2; Revelation 19:20; Revelation 20:4; Revelation 22:9.) What important idea do you see in each of these verses?

In the end times, people worship God, or they worship something else. Jesus made us. So, He is worthy of our worship (Revelation 5:9). The war in heaven between Jesus and Lucifer started over worship. Lucifer bragged, "I will rise above the tops of the clouds. I'll make myself like [the same as] the Most High God" (Isaiah 14:14, NIV). Satan wanted to be worshiped the same as God. Only God is worthy of this worship. In Revelation 13, Satan comes up with a plan to get people to worship him. Satan uses the sea beast as part of his plan (Revelation 13:4).

When we compare Revelation 13 with Daniel 7, we see that the sea beast is the same as the little horn. The little horn "will try to change the times and laws that were given by God" (Daniel 7:25, NIV). What is the only part of God's Ten Commandments that talks about time? The fourth commandment. The little horn is a symbol for the Roman Catholic Church. This church has tried to change the day of worship from the 7th day to the first day of the week.

God gave the Sabbath as a sign of His control (Exodus 31:13; Ezekiel 20:12, 20). The little-horn power wants to replace the worship of God in our hearts with himself. That is why the final test will be over true and false worship.

Revelation tells us that God's people will keep His commandments (Revelation 12:17; Revelation 14:12). God's commandments include the 7th-day Sabbath, and not Sunday. Anyone who refuses to worship God on His holy day (Isaiah 58:13) and worships the beast on his fake sabbath, Sunday, will get the beast's mark (read lesson 11).

THE THREE ANGELS' MESSAGES (Revelation 14:12)

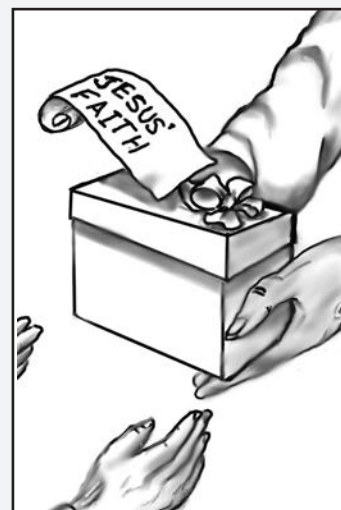
In Revelation 14:7, the first angel cries with a strong voice: “ ‘Respect and honor God and give him glory! The time has come for him to judge people, to tell them how good or bad they are. Worship him. He made heaven and earth, the sea, and the rivers’ ” (WE). This message is God’s invitation to everyone on earth to be loyal to Him.

The second angel announces: “ ‘The great [mighty] city of Babylon has fallen down [is destroyed]. It has fallen down because it filled all the countries with its wrong ways. It has made people to suffer God’s anger’ ” (Revelation 14:8, WE). Babylon is a word picture for a worldwide religion that rejects the first angel’s message. That’s why Revelation 14:9–11 warns us against worshipping the beast. These verses show us two choices: (1) worship God, or (2) worship the beast. All people must choose Jesus or Satan. Our decision will be final and can’t be changed.

Read Revelation 14:12. This verse talks about the ones who refuse to worship the beast. What two things does this verse tell us about these people?

God will have an end-time people who are loyal to Him. God’s loyal end-time people will suffer more than any other group has suffered for their faith in history. God will give His people His gift of mercy to help them during this terrible time. God’s people will be obedient to Him. How will they show their obedience and loyalty to God? They will keep His commandments. The final test between good and evil will be about the Sabbath.

God’s loyal followers will have faith **in** Jesus. They also will have the faith **of** Jesus. The faith of Jesus is a faith so deep and powerful that all the demons in hell and all the trouble and suffering on earth can’t destroy it. When we have the faith of Jesus, we will trust God when we cannot see any reason to trust Him. We will believe when we can’t understand why. We will hope when life looks hopeless. The faith of Jesus is a precious gift. Jesus gives us this gift when we believe in Him. This gift will give us strength during the hard times ahead. Soon we won’t be allowed to buy or sell. We will be attacked, thrown in jail, or killed for our faith. The faith of Jesus will protect us in earth’s final hours until Jesus comes back.



The faith of Jesus is a precious gift. Jesus gives us this gift when we believe in Him.



When governments make a Sunday law, then any man who rejects the Sabbath and honors Sunday will show that he accepts Rome's control.

ADDITIONAL THOUGHT: “In the past, many Christians have kept Sunday. They believed they were keeping the Bible Sabbath. There are now loyal Christians in every church, including the Roman Catholic Church, who keep Sunday. These Christians really believe that Sunday is God’s true Sabbath. God accepts their faith. But when governments will make a law in the future to force people everywhere to keep Sunday, everyone on earth will understand the Bible truth about the 7th-day Sabbath. Then whoever breaks God’s commandment to obey Rome will honor the pope above God. At that time, all the people who honor Sunday will be worshipping Rome. They will worship the beast and his statue or false god. God has announced that the Sabbath is a sign of His control. So, when governments make a Sunday law, then any man who rejects the Sabbath and honors Sunday will show that he accepts Rome’s control. When God’s people warn everyone on earth about the Sunday law, then everyone will need to make a choice. They must choose between God’s commandments and the Sunday law, which is the mark of the beast. At that time, the people who continue to sin against God’s law and keep Sunday will get the beast’s mark.”—Ellen G. White, *The Great Controversy*, page 449, adapted.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- ① Life is changing so fast. Every day brings new changes and problems. Why must we always be watching and waiting for Jesus? How can we make sure we are ready for His coming?
- ② How do God’s work as Judge and His law help us understand that only His mercy saves us?
- ③ Do you have friends who keep Sunday and don’t understand why the 7th-day Sabbath is important? How can you share the Bible truth with them?
- ④ What happens when the government and the church join together? As Christians, what is our duty to our government? What does the Bible teach us?

RUNNING FROM CHURCH, PART 2

Aneliya's two sons gave their hearts to Jesus after her family left their country and moved to Europe. Then Aneliya's sons asked their mother to accept Jesus as her Savior.

20-year-old Rosen asked, "Mother, don't you want to be saved?" Aneliya exploded the same as a volcano. She pounded the table with her fist. "I'll keep my religion until I die!"

Aneliya's 22-year-old son, Sergei, told his mother about how Jesus died on the cross for people's sins and woke up from the dead on the third day. Aneliya said, "He couldn't do that!"

Sergei said, "If you believe in Jesus, and you die, God will wake you up from the dead, too."

Later, Sergei read John 3:36 to his mother: " 'Whoever believes in the Son has eternal [everlasting] life. But those [people] who do not obey the Son will never have that life. They cannot get away from God's anger' " (ERV).

Sergei told his mother, "We die, but when Jesus comes back, we will wake up from the dead."

Aneliya asked, "My son, how can we wake up from our graves?" This question was a big one for Aneliya. How can people wake up from the dead and live forever?

Sergei said, "We will live again."

As Aneliya listened to her sons read verses from the Bible, she started to understand. Soon she also started to understand what she heard about Jesus when she first visited church. Joy filled Aneliya's heart. Aneliya later understood that the Holy Spirit entered her heart. Soon Aneliya accepted Jesus as her Savior. When she did that, she wanted to spend time with Him and worship Him at church.

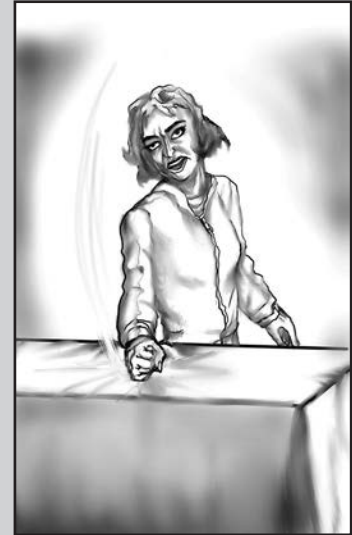
Then Aneliya's 15-year-old daughter was baptized. Aneliya didn't go to the baptisms of her two sons. But she went to her daughter's baptism. Aneliya's daughter said, "It's your turn next, Mother."

Sergei gave Bible studies to his mother. She also studied the Bible on her own. She wished to live for Jesus. Then the day came when she got baptized. She was 47 years old. Aneliya says, "I was so happy. I can't explain how much joy I felt in my heart. It was the first time in 47 years that I felt so much joy. I believed and accepted Jesus as my Savior."

Today, Aneliya is 48. She teaches her people about Jesus. Her husband accepted the Bible, and his parents back in their home country keep the Sabbath now. Aneliya gives Bible studies to her community. She says, "I wanted to run away from church. But now I want to run to church. The Holy Spirit brought me to God."

INSIDE
Story

by ANDREW MCCHESENEY



Aneliya pounded the table with her fist. "I'll keep my religion until I die!"