

**The spiritual significance of the Sabbath as an expression of faith
within Conservative Adventism**

by Eben de Jager

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PROMOTER: PROF. DIRK VAN DER MERWE

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Dedicated to my wife Karli

and our sons Jovan Karl and Elian Walden.

May we share Sabbath together in Eternity with our Creator and Saviour.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

Spirituality is as old as humankind itself. Since the dawn of humanity, irrespective of the concepts held of what that dawn might have entailed, human beings have had an awareness of self in relation to God, god, nature and others. This is evident from the archaeological remains of almost every civilisation discovered to date – Sumerian, Assyrian, Babylonian, Egyptian, even Aztec and Mayan to name but a few where the depiction of human and deity in art and architecture is not just evident and widely different, but amply so.

The definition of spirituality itself proves difficult, if not impossible, to pinpoint, which is an indication of the great variety of forms and functions spirituality manifests itself in amongst different cultures and creeds. For this reason Kourie (2006:22) states that “there is no clear, unequivocal definition of the concept that is acceptable to all interested in the field”.

The study of Christian Spirituality on an academic level can in many ways be considered in its infancy as it is the new kid on the Theological block (Kourie 2009:149-151), with various methodological approaches (Kourie 2009:158-166) being proposed for research into this vast, and concerning some aspects, yet unexplored field. It touches on a great number of disciplines (Welzen 2011:48) in pursuit of greater understanding of the human-divine relationship and is therefore interdisciplinary in nature (Schneiders 1989:31-33; Waaijman 2007), and yet very different from the fields it draws from. Proponents of Christian Spirituality recognise the effect the study of this discipline has on them, and admit that they cannot claim absolute objectivity in the endeavour. Kourie states that “... I would venture to say that the study of spirituality cannot be a merely disinterested exercise; it impacts upon the researcher, teacher and pupil alike” (Kourie 2009:159).

1.1 Background to the study

Every individual will relate to the study of Spirituality from his/her own experience and frame of reference. Meaning is ascribed by the observer and therefore, even if it be just in nuance, there will be differences in the spiritual significance assigned according to the

existing spirituality of the observer. When reflecting on spirituality in general, Kourie (2009:22) points out:

In certain quarters, spirituality denotes escapism, inactivity, and irrelevance while in other quarters it refers to full human maturation. It is an umbrella term which covers a myriad of activities ranging from the deeply creative to the distinctively bizarre.

This is true of Christian Spirituality as well. What is deeply creative to one individual might be considered distinctively bizarre to another; what seems insignificant to one is essential to another, and vice versa. For this reason the study of Spirituality cannot be prescriptive, but rather has to be descriptive. Welzen (2011:50) views this aspect as so essential that it has to be considered in the very definition of Biblical Spirituality when he says “[o]ur definition of Biblical spirituality¹ is meant as a definition that opens the field, not as a definition that limits and determines. It is a descriptive definition, not a prescriptive one”. Kourie (2006:32) agrees when she states that “[t]he academic study of spirituality is interdisciplinary, descriptive-critical rather than prescriptive-normative”. The aim of the academic study of Spirituality is to gain understanding and insight, to evaluate and maybe even to be transformed, but never to judge.

I grew up in a Pentecostal household and endured many comments at school in the seventies and early eighties about belonging to a sect that speaks funny² and falls around³ during services – childhood banter about the perceived distinctively bizarre practices within my then church community. Members of the Pentecostal Movement were still a minority at that time with the vast majority of the children at school with me belonging to one of the Sister Churches⁴.

¹ The convention when referring to this academic field of research has developed to use capitals i.e. Biblical Spirituality since the publication of the stated reference. Biblical Spirituality is not a synonym for Christian Spirituality, but rather “Biblical Spirituality belongs to the field of Christian Spirituality” (Welzen 2011:37).

² These were references to glossolalia, the gift of speaking in tongues as practiced in the Apostolic Faith Mission Church (to which I used to belong) and other Pentecostal churches.

³ References to being “slain in the spirit”, as some Pentecostals refer to falling under the power of the Holy Spirit, which is a common occurrence in some Pentecostal/Charismatic churches.

⁴ The Reformed Churches from the Calvinist tradition.

As Pentecostal spirituality became more commonplace and more people came to understand what their spiritual practice was all about, the previously held views towards Pentecostalism changed. During the Nineties and the first decade of the New Millennium the Pentecostal/Charismatic churches experienced exponential growth, even outnumbering the Reformed Churches in membership, according to the 2001 census figures on religion⁵. Today Pentecostal spirituality is no longer considered strange by the majority of Christian believers. Pentecostal spirituality did not change; people were simply better informed about it. Pentecostals are no longer considered as belonging to a sect; on the contrary, they are considered mainstream, and interaction between the Reformed churches and Pentecostal/Charismatic churches are commonplace, something unthinkable a mere thirty years ago. This Southern African trend is also indicative of the universal growth of Pentecostalism, of which the global success has been studied and referenced by Droogers (2001), Miller and Yamamori (2007) and others.

Having converted from Pentecostalism to Adventism⁶ and having practiced as an Adventist Pastor in two Conferences of the Adventist Church in the Southern African Union⁷ I have experienced similar biases than those experienced in my youth. The Seventh-day Adventist (SDA) Church is still considered and even defined as a sect in many Christian circles. It is my conviction that this perception is largely due to a lack of understanding of Adventist expressions of faith, and of their spirituality, similar to that which caused Pentecostals to be regarded as a distinctly bizarre sect mere decades ago. In much the same way will exposure to the methods and meanings of Seventh-day Adventist faith expression go a long way to understanding their spirituality. In no way is it meant to imply here that the Seventh-day Adventist Church will or could gain the following that the Pentecostal/Charismatic churches have; on the contrary, that would even go against the grain of Adventist eschatology⁸.

⁵ <http://www.info.gov.za/aboutsa/people.htm#religion>. The 2011 census no longer listed questions on religion as it was no longer considered a high enough priority (<http://www.statssa.gov.za/census2011/faq.asp> Question 31) therefore there are no official statistics available from Statistics SA.

⁶ Terms related to Adventism are defined in 1.3.1.

⁷ Adventist churches in a geographical area are grouped together under a Conference, Conferences are grouped together under a Union and Unions under a Division, of which there are Thirteen which fall under the General Conference of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. I have ministered in the Transvaal Conference and Kwazulu Natal Orange Freestate Conference.

⁸ Seventh-day eschatology in general and this aspect in particular will be discussed in greater detail in chapter 6 of the proposed study.

Within this vein of exploring and searching for understanding and meaning, the research of a specific practice, that of seventh-day Sabbath keeping within the Seventh-day Adventist Church, will be researched. I am well positioned to do this specific research as I have had exposure to the seventh-day Sabbath from both the “Insider” and “Outsider” perspectives (Rabe 2003:149-161). Having moved from outsider to insider does not, however, mean that the research will reflect a biased view. A critical solidary approach will be followed and will also reflect on practices within Adventist ranks which are not true to the real spirituality of the Sabbath even as understood by Seventh-day Adventists, but which in fact evidence a lack thereof amongst those who practice Sabbath keeping without embracing the relational essence of the Sabbath concept.

Seventh-day Adventists keep the seventh-day Sabbath according to the daily cycle set in the Genesis 1 creation account, from sunset to sunset, as a time dedicated to and sanctified by God. This practice is often criticised by Evangelicals and Pentecostals alike, who consider it a legalistic adherence to the Old Testament Law, which they deem to be no longer valid in the Dispensation of Grace⁹. This consideration most often occurs without reflection or research into the spiritual significance of seventh-day Sabbath keeping for adherents thereof.

Having received training first at a Pentecostal seminary¹⁰ and later at an Adventist seminary¹¹, I have gained first-hand experience of the eclectic perspectives taught at each institution. Most often members and scholars affiliated with different denominations reason from the different perspectives they were trained in, rather than gaining exposure and experience of other perspectives on the topic before drawing conclusions. By considering and studying the Sabbath phenomenon from the Adventist perspective, I gained insight into the spiritual significance of the Sabbath and today keep the seventh-day Sabbath as a relational expression of my faith in Jesus Christ as Creator and Saviour. I am convinced that a better understanding of the Adventist perspective will greatly enhance the possibility of effective and constructive dialogue with Adventists by those not subscribing to the SDA

⁹ The Dispensation of Grace refers to the period of time from the death of Jesus Christ to the Second Coming of Christ or “parousia”.

¹⁰ Aucland Park Theological Seminary in association with the Rand Afrikaans University.

¹¹ Helderberg College.

understanding of Sabbath precepts. The lack of understanding of the foundations of Adventist spirituality in relation to the Sabbath, which does not by default mean subscription to the concept, is at the core of the misrepresentation of Adventist Sabbath beliefs by most non-SDA Theological scholars¹². This dissertation aims to disseminate the Adventist perspective on the Sabbath for the enquiring mind to consider. As Aristotle stated, “It is the mark of an educated mind to be able to entertain a thought without [necessarily] accepting it” (University of St Andrews 2006).

Seventh-day Sabbath keeping has serious social, economic and even political consequences for the keeper thereof. For instance, by choice Seventh-day Adventists exclude themselves from social events held on the Sabbath for the sake of their spiritual experience. The Sabbatarian lifestyle also prohibits working on the seventh-day Sabbath¹³, which greatly limits the opportunities of employment in many if not most sectors of the economy, especially in higher management where the level of responsibility often demands a willingness to make oneself available regardless of the day or time. In South Africa where people face serious rates of unemployment it says something about the earnestness with which SDA’s practice their faith when they willingly further limit their chances on employment by subscribing to seventh-day Sabbath principles.

Generally Seventh-day Adventists also do not enter the political arena as a career of choice. The Seventh-day Sabbath is not the only, but probably the main reason for this decision. Politicians are most often required to attend to work and social obligations during the Sabbath hours, which is problematic for adherents to the Adventist faith.¹⁴

¹² Möller (1994:559) is a prime example of this when he casts Judaism, those who defend child baptism, Adventism’s recognition of the Law and British Israelism together in one basket, completely misrepresenting Adventism perspective on the Law.

¹³ The exception would be essential medical services, in which cases it is considered “doing good” and the services delivered on Sabbath are done without charge by the Sabbath-keeper. Texts usually referred to in this respect are Mat 12:12, Mark 3:4 and Luke 6:9.

¹⁴ Renowned Neuro-surgeon Ben Carson, who entered the presidential race on a Republican ticket has been severely criticised by Seventh-day Adventists because of the problematic issue of Sabbath-keeping while running for Presidential Office and the observance thereof should he run successfully (<http://www.sdawatchmen.org/index.php/current-events-blog/97-ben-carson-and-politics>, <http://kftnews.com/ben-carson-gives-political-speech-on-sabbath/>).

Considering the perceived limitations that Sabbath keeping place on Sabbatarians, the question arises: Why would any individual want to choose a lifestyle that severely limits their social, economic and even political scope of involvement in society? How can such a limiting observance be considered a “delight”?¹⁵ There has to be a deeper significance to Sabbath than just the mere observance of an Old Testament commandment – and indeed there is.

The observance of Sabbath, especially in Africa, has been growing in recent years and seems to be ever growing. Höshele (2007:39), when writing on Sabbath observance in Africa, states, “an increase of interest in the Sabbath can be observed in the last generation” and notes that more than 15 million members at the time of his writing were worshipping in sabbatarian denominations established in the last 150 years.¹⁶ The Sabbath’s roots in Africa can, however, be found long before the establishment of these Christian denominations and have been traced back to the very beginning of Christian history as Bradford (1999) shows in his work *Sabbath Roots: The African Connection*.

1.1.1 Preliminary literature review

“The cycle of six working days and one for worship and rest, through the legacy of Hebrew history, has in time prevailed throughout almost all the world. In fact, Jewish and Christian worship find their concrete expression in one day, recurring weekly, wherein adoration of God is made possible and more meaningful by the interruption of secular activities.” (Bacchiocchi 1977:9)

There are various ways this one-day-in-seven concept, of which the specific day is identified as the seventh, the Sabbath, according to the Old Testament (Genesis 2:2,3; Exodus 20:8-11, Deuteronomy 5:12-15), is approached within Christianity. On one end of the spectrum there are those to whom the day itself is not relevant anymore, and on the other the identification, delimitation and observation of the day is paramount to their understanding

¹⁵ Isaiah 58:13. Within Adventism, to “call the Sabbath a delight” is understood to reflect the relational rather than the legal nature of the Sabbath observance.

¹⁶ This same trend is recognised by Meier (2001).

and expression of faith. In between we find a great variety of interpretations and applications of this one-in-seven principle.

As early as the Reformation we find evidence of proponents of the view that there is no transfer of the Sabbath day from the seventh to the first day. Martin Luther held to this perspective as is clear from the *Augsburg Confession*, Article XXVIII when he argues that:

[t]hose who consider the appointment of the Sunday in place of the Sabbath as a necessary institution are very much mistaken, for the Holy Scriptures have abrogated the Sabbath and teach that after the revelation of the Gospel all ceremonies of the old law may be omitted (Tappert 1959:91).

Others similarly believe that the day is not important at all, but represents a call to holiness of the entire life. This view is arguably best represented by König when he writes:

terwyl die Nuwe Testament na die opstanding van Christus nooit die letterlike vorm van die vierde gebod beveel of die gemeente oproep tot enige letterlike vorm van 'Sabbatheiliging' of 'Sondagheiliging' nie, word die gemeente herhaaldelik tot lewensheiliging opgeroep (König 1967:44).

He later states that it "is dus nou duidelik dat die sewende dag nie verander het in die eerste dag van die week nie, maar in die heiliging van die ganse lewe" (König 1967:46). The view of a radical discontinuation of the day is prevalent in his writing where no aspect of the Sabbath whatsoever, be it day, delimitation of a day, or practice in observance is evident.¹⁷ It is, however, clear that the proponents of this view reject the idea of transfer of the Sabbath with its accompanying precepts from the seventh to the first day. Cooper (1996:236) agrees with this view when he states that "the Christian SUNDAY, 'the Lord's Day', the first day of the week, is often inaccurately referred to as 'the Sabbath'". They subscribe to the understanding of the Sabbath as a mere temporary legal requirement in religious practice relevant to the Old Testament Jews only (Carson 1982:349-351; Ratzlaff

¹⁷ Having stated the above, the prevailing prominence of the Sunday as day of worship set aside above any other is evident in the uneasy oscillation between Sunday and every-day-Sunday statements made in König's work. (König 1967:57-64).

1990:22-23, 245-246), which has come to cessation in precept and practice with the advent of the Gospel era (König 1964:10-12).

Another group subscribes to the idea that the Sabbath has been replaced by Sunday, the first day of the week (sometimes also referred to as the “eighth day” of the week¹⁸ or the Christian Sabbath). Within this group adherents differ on which aspects of the Sabbath should be continued with in Sunday observance. The Catechism of the Catholic Church states:

Sunday is expressly distinguished from Sabbath which it follows chronologically every week; for Christians its ceremonial observances replace that of the Sabbath. In Christ’s Passover, Sunday fulfils the spiritual truth of the Jewish sabbath and announces man’s eternal rest in God.”
(Catholic Church:581-582)

This definitive expression of the Roman Catholic view where there is a strong differentiation between Sabbath and Sunday is contrary to that of other adherents in the change-of-day view. Pipa (1997:95-110) spends a whole chapter in his work *“The Lord’s Day”* on the fact that as far as Sabbath goes, the “day changed; the obligation [remains] unchanged”, the obligation referring to the precepts of the fourth commandment. Crafts (1892) in his work *“The Sabbath for Man: A Study of the Origin, Obligation, History, Advantages and Present State of Sabbath Observance with special reference to the rights of Workmen”* consistently speaks of Sunday when he refers to Sabbath, showing that he strongly connects Sunday observance with the Old Testament Sabbath practices. Regarding the Sabbath commandment he states “[t]hat its obligation is not local and temporary is proven, secondly, by the fact that it is found in the Decalogue, a moral code of unlimited application” (Crafts 1892:357) and applies the way it is to be observed to Sunday. The strict observance of Sabbath rules was so strongly held in society at times in history that references to civil legislation on Sunday observance, often referred to as Blue Laws, are plentiful, though such legislation was not always popular as is evidenced in the reactions against it (Chaff 1983:776-782, Crafts 1892:101-178, Pipa 1997:140-155, Sanford 1992:372-373, Schwarz & Greenleaf 2000:241-245, 444-451, Knight 2004:87-89).

¹⁸ Catechism of the Catholic Church, p 581. “Because it is the ‘eighth day’ of the week following the Sabbath, it symbolises the new creation ushered in by Christ’s resurrection.”

In the United States a Blue Law¹⁹, officially declaring Sunday the day of rest for all citizens, has been proposed by Senator Blair in 1888 (Knight 2004:88; Schwartz & Greenleaf 2000:243). This action was successfully opposed by A.T. Jones (Schwartz & Greenleaf 2000:243-244). The Lord's Day Alliance (LDA), an organisation dedicated to the establishing of Sunday as a world-wide day of rest, has been established that same year and is active to this day and even has equivalent organisations in secular Europe such as the European Sunday Alliance²⁰. The LDAUSA president, D C McNair (2011:8) stated:

We of the Lord's Day Alliance of the United States will be celebrating our 125th anniversary in 2013, having been founded in 1888. We are not sign carriers. Nor are we out trying to close down businesses that operate on Sundays, but we know the blessings that God puts before those who live in obedience to God's will, blessings often not coming immediately and not necessarily in the form of a better profit and loss statement. We wish these blessings for others as well."

Various reasons are provided for the change from the seventh to the first day. Amongst these are the commemoration of Jesus' resurrection, religious gatherings referred to in the book of Acts which occurred on the "first day of the week" and the outpouring of the Holy Spirit which also occurred on the first day (Bacchiocchi 1998:25, Putnam 1924:13-14, König 1964:29-30). These strongly motivate the term "Christian Sabbath", often used for the new day of worship.²¹ Old Testament Sabbath principles are accordingly applied to the Sunday as a New Covenant Sabbath (Crafts 1892:353-376).

¹⁹ Blue Laws is a term used to refer to secular laws which restrict or ban certain activities on a Sunday for religious reasons and in order to promote Sunday observance. Typically such laws will enforce the closing of businesses or even simply prevent the sale of certain products, such as alcoholic beverages, on a Sunday.

²⁰ <http://www.europeansundayalliance.eu/>. Though not religiously motivated according to their founding statement it is significant that their day of choice coincides with the New Covenant day of worship and their activities are strongly supported by the Catholic Church and many other Protestant churches and organisations as is evident from their membership list which includes amongst others The Conference of European Churches.

²¹ Some of the same arguments for recognising Sunday as the day of worship observed by Christians are also posed by those who do not subscribe to the change of day idea.

“Sunday Sabbatarians”²² have much in common with the seventh-day Sabbatarians in terms of practice on their respective Sabbaths. Bacchiocchi (1998:262-263) states “Sunday-Sabbatarians recognise the underlying unity and continuity that exist between the Old-and New Testaments, Sabbath and Sunday. Consequently, they are eager to rediscover the biblical view of the Sabbath in order to better understand how Sunday should be observed.”

Yet another approach to the Sabbath is applying selected Old Testament Sabbath principles to any seventh day. The ‘any day’ one-in-seven cycle, where the rhythm rather than the specific day is central to this Sabbath construct, applies. Any-day Sabbatarians recognise the principles of the Sabbath, especially the physical, mental, intellectual and spiritual value it holds, but argue that the principle of one day in seven, rather than a specific day, even if it be Saturday or Sunday, can serve as the individual’s Sabbath.

Various books and essays have been written on the Sabbath and the accompanying spirituality, most notable of which is the work of Lynne Baab (2005, 2007). Most of these highlight the major spiritual aspects of the Sabbath also recognised by seventh-day Sabbath keepers. In Baab’s understanding of the Sabbath, a specific day is not at all important, but rather paramount is the rhythm of a seven day cycle, which gives the practitioner the freedom to choose their own day to keep as Sabbath.

This difference in approach does not imply that the work of these proponents should be excluded, or would be of no value to us in this study. On the contrary, they highlight shared values recognised by other Sabbatarians as spiritually significant and derived from Sabbath keeping. Many of their arguments agree with and even enhance those held by the Adventist mind, while only differing in the application thereof and the spiritual significance related to the specific day observed.

Seventh-day Sabbatarians hold to the belief that the seventh day is the only weekly Sabbath according to Scripture. This group holds in common the literal interpretation of the story of creation as found in Genesis 1:1-2:3, and therefore views the only day to be considered holy

²² Those who apply the biblical precepts regarding the keeping of the Sabbath as found in the Old testament to the Sunday.

Saturday, the seventh day, as mandated by the Creator. They believe there can be no cessation of the observance of Sabbath in day, delimitation or observance, and therefore the continuation of the Sabbath in the Christian era is imperative.

It is noteworthy that, almost without exception, the proponents of all the various views on the Sabbath mentioned above refer to the same verses from the Bible to support their positions (compare Du Preez 2008:126, 149-153, Gulley 2007:337, 345-346, 352-354; König 1964:10-22 amongst others). This fact emphasizes the importance of hermeneutics when it comes to understanding the Sabbath issue.

One of the fundamental differences in the understanding of the spiritual value of the Sabbath is found not in what the Old Testament says about the Sabbath, but rather in the view of the origins of the Genesis 1 and 2 account, which is foundational to the legitimacy of its significance.

The predominant academic view of the origins of Genesis 1 to 2:4a on the one hand and Genesis 2:4b to 2:25 on the other hand, is that it was a reaction to the Akkadian epic of creation, the 'Enuma Elish, encountered by the leadership of Judah while in exile in Babylon (Lombaard 2012:147; Westermann 1984:1-46; Miller & Hayes 1986:416-420).

Within Seventh-day Adventism any theory that casts doubt as to the legitimacy of the Bible as a grand narrative inspired by the Holy Spirit, and therefore also on its divine origins as the Word of God, is rejected. For this reason Adventism rejects current Pentateuch Theory and holds a completely different view on the origin of the Sabbath as well. The SDA motivations for rejecting Pentateuch Theory and the *šapattu* connection of origin for Sabbath will be discussed to highlight the academic foundation the SDA objections are based upon (Neufeld 1976:1245-1246). Adventists are not the only ones to reject current Pentateuch theory, and by extension, also the related theories on the origins of the Sabbath (Keil & Delitzsch 1978:I(iii), 517-531).

Sabbath as a creation ordinance is also disputed amongst different scholars. Where early scholars such as Philo, Tertullian and Barnabas, as well as later scholars such as Luther and

Calvin, and also and many modern scholars such as R A Cole, McCann and Wenham all agree that Sabbath had its origin in creation (Gulley 2007:338-339), Ratzlaff and Carson deny Sabbath as a creation ordinance, but connects it with the Law given to Israel (Carson 1982:349-351; Ratzlaff 1990:22-23, 245-246).

Mainly due to the general acceptance of the change from Sabbath to Sunday as day of observance for Christians (Bacchiocchi 1977, Cullmann 1953:88-93), the Sabbath has not received much attention by modern Christian scholars. Höshelle (2007:39) states “[t]he theology of the Sabbath has remained a marginal enterprise among leading Christian thinkers until very recently. Karl Barth and Jürgen Moltmann are notable exceptions to this picture”.

There are, however, a greater and growing awareness of the Sabbath in the world in general (Baab 2005:51)²³, and in Africa in particular (Bradford 1999:155-181), but specifically of the Sabbath-Sunday issue in South Africa as is evident from the University of South Africa Sabbath Conference with the theme “The biblical Day of Rest” held in 1994. The conference was held partly in reaction to the refusal of some rugby players to take part in an international test match played on a Sunday against Australia (Bacchiocchi 1998:266-267). Some years later the prevailing Sabbath issue is evident from the April 2011 volume of “Die BoodsAPPER”, which was dedicated to the theme “Die Dag van die Here”, and in which the day of worship is addressed in various articles throughout the publication and the precedence of Sunday over the “Joodse sabbat” (Swanepoel 2011:46) is prevalent.

Sabbath in the New Testament has taken on a different colour. Jesus and his activities on Sabbath are often mentioned and He is found to be at odds with the establishment on it. This, as well as the practices of his followers on the Sabbath, shows both the changes to and the continuance of Sabbath keeping.

²³ The increasing number of publications dealing with the Sabbath in the last two to three decades is evidence of the trend of acknowledging the Sabbath concept even though the form it takes in the minds and writings of the various authors differs greatly.

Even in the Epistles the golden thread regarding the Sabbath is evident, as the teachings of and about Jesus were sent to the various churches throughout the Roman Empire, while the practices of the apostles are evident from the book of Acts. Here teaching and practice has to be set alongside one another to understand how they relate to one another. Several exegetical studies on the texts involved have been done by Adventist scholars, amongst whom Du Preez (2008) is notable. His work *Judging the Sabbath: Discovering what can't be found in Colossians 2:16* provides in-depth research into the motivation for the SDA understanding of the separation of ceremonial and seventh-day Sabbaths. By showing a clear distinction between the two types of Sabbaths in origin, function and fulfilment, as well as the specific New Testament references to the ceremonial Sabbaths coming to an end, the stage is set for the seventh-day Sabbath to continue.

The Sabbath issue strongly influences the expression of faith of all Christian believers, be it those who adhere to the radical discontinuation between Sabbath and Sunday, those who insist on the seventh-day Sabbath being the Saturday, or any variation in between. Christian Spirituality as a new discipline within Theology provides a means by which the significance of the Sabbath as expression of faith can be studied to gain an understanding of the Sabbath from the Seventh-day Adventist perspective.

The works of several current scholars of Christian Spirituality set the stage for the framework within which this study will elucidate aspects of Seventh-day Adventist spirituality as it pertains to the Sabbath (Kourie 2006, 2009; Lombaard 2003, 2007, 2011, 2012; Schneiders 1989; Waaijman 2004, 2007; Welzen 2011).

The field of Christian Spirituality also opens the door to non-scholarly input, such as the works of Ellen G. White (1894, 1900, 1911, 1949, 1950, 1954, 1957, 1976, 1980, 2005) who plays such a pivotal role in the development of SDA spirituality, and thereby allows for her voice to be heard in a way that would not be possible accept at Adventist academic institutions. The recognition of spirituality amongst so-called non-academic societies is evident from works like that of Waaijman (2004:2-6). This approach is also recognised in *Ervaring, rede en metode in Skrifuitleg. 'n Wetenskapshistoriese ondersoek na Skrifuitleg in die Ned. Geref. Kerk, 1840-1990* (Deist 1994).

To truly understand the Adventist perspective on the Sabbath it is imperative to understand the motivation for observing a specific day, and not just any, but the very Sabbath believed to be the biblical Sabbath, the seventh day. The way the Sabbath points to and speaks of Christ as both creator and redeemer/re-creator in both Old and New Testaments greatly adds to the spiritual significance of observing not just the day, but observing it in a very particular way. New Testament references to Christ as both Creator and Saviour point to the continuance in belief of the two motivating factors for the observance of Sabbath as it was found in the Old Testament, both in the Gospels and in the Epistles (Gulley 1998:340-341).

The Sabbath is believed to be the pivotal aspect of end time events in Adventist eschatology (Gulley 2007:358-374) and therefore brings the Adventist believer into play as an active participant in the unfolding of the revelation of Jesus Christ just prior to His Second Coming. This view significantly enhances the perception of the spiritual value of Sabbath keeping in the Adventist mind.

Adventists subscribe to “the Historical School of prophetic interpretation - the progressive and continuous fulfilment of prophecy, in unbroken sequence, from Daniel’s day and the time of John, on down to the second advent and the end of the age” (Froom 1978:22-23). The Historicist interpretation of Prophecy²⁴ has been viewed as controversial since the “great disappointment” experienced by the Millerite Movement during 1843-1844, after which most interpreters abandoned this method of interpretation. The SDA church, unique in retaining this methodology, can draw much of its unique attributes and specifically their understanding of the role of the Sabbath in their eschatology from it.

Another unique aspect of Adventist spirituality is their view on the spirit of prophecy. The term “τὸ πνεῦμα τῆς προφητείας” translated “spirit of prophecy” is found only once, in Revelation 19:10 in the King James translation of the Bible, and relates to the testimony of

²⁴ At the core of this method of interpretation lies the year-day principle which serves as the “basic diagnostic difference between the historicist school of interpretation that employs this principle and the preterist and futurist schools that do not” (Shea 1992:67. See also Du Preez 2007:233-270).

Jesus. In the Targums²⁵ the term “spirit of prophecy” appears much more often which greatly enhance the understanding of the variety of meanings and applications of the term used by John, as Hui (1999:94-97), Pfandl (1997:44-46), Stefanovic (in Pfandl 2010:447-449) and others have noted. Their conclusion is in agreement with Menzies (2007:108-126) that the spirit of prophecy is a reference to the Holy Spirit from whom the gift of prophecy originates.

Within Scholarly Adventism the “Spirit of Prophecy” is generally used to refer to all inspired texts which carry the testimony of Jesus.²⁶ The works of Ellen White (1911, 1946, 1950, 1967) as the most valued and prolific modern day author in Adventism are not the only written body of work referred to by this name. As a matter of fact, she herself points to Scripture, and specifically the Old Testament, in reference to the Spirit of Prophecy:

It was Christ that spoke to His people through the prophets. The apostle Peter, writing to the Christian church, says that the prophets ‘prophesied of the grace that should come unto you: searching what, or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ and the glory that should follow.’ 1 Peter 1:10, 11. It is the voice of Christ that speaks to us through the Old Testament. ‘The testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy.’ Revelation 19:10. (White 2005:366-367)

Within Adventism the belief is held that her writings were evidence of the prophetic gift at work. Even though there exists no grades of inspiration²⁷ and she was thus just as inspired when writing some of her work as was the biblical writers, it is also accepted that her writings do not hold the same authority as the Bible, but as that of non-canonical prophets (Pfandl 2008:77). To this effect the SDA Encyclopaedia states “Seventh-day Adventists acknowledge the prophetic gift apart from the Sacred Canon as having operated prior to, during, and since the composition of the Bible, but affirm that the canonical Scriptures

²⁵ The Aramaic translation of the Hebrew Old Testament.

²⁶ The term “Spirit of Prophecy” has a much narrower application amongst lay members. They tend to refer only to the writings of Ellen G. White when using the term.

²⁷ A Prophet is either fully inspired or not at all. Inspiration is either 100% or non-existent.

constitute the norm by which all other prophetic messages are to be tested.” (Neufeld 1976:1413)

Although not an academic scholar in her own right, Ellen White played a major part in the development of both the Seventh-day Adventist Church and of Adventist spirituality. Spirituality is, however, not something that is in principle or practice limited to the scholarly oriented. Within the Adventist fray it is almost impossible to speak of spirituality without considering the insights of Ellen White on this matter. It would, nevertheless, be a great fallacy to misrepresent Ellen White as the author of Adventism as she is sometimes represented to be in statements such as “Adventism is effectively the child of Ellen Gould White” (Fernandez-Armesto & Wilson 1996:209).

The connection between spirituality and health has long been established and is being extensively researched (Drazenovich 2007:106-129, Drazenovich & Kourie 2010, Kuhalampi 2010:44-258, Van de Vyver 2010:106-114). The Seventh-day Adventist Church has a long history of promoting healthful living as part of their Christian spirituality (Knight 2004:68-74, 79-81; Schwartz & Greenleaf 1995:100-113, 295-301). Health principles are part and parcel of their fundamental beliefs (Seventh-day Adventist Church 2005:16-17), some of which have to be studied and practiced as lifestyle before baptism or profession of faith, as a requirement for membership.

Some health principles also relate to the Sabbath as the human requirement of rest, recuperation and restoration to health (Bacchiocchi 1998:284-301). The reference to health refers both directly and indirectly to spiritual health, not just physical, mental and emotional health, and is derived from the Sabbath rest.

Ellen White, a prominent figure in the Seventh-day Adventist Church, deals extensively with healthful living, and for the time it was written it was ground breaking in insight. During the 1800's it was often ridiculed, but modern science has continually been revealing the merits of the health reform principles promoted in books such as *Counsels on Diet and Food* (White

1976) and *Counsels on Health* (White 1957)²⁸ etc. Ellen G White's approach to spirituality was holistic in nature, which explains her emphasis on physical and mental well-being as part of worship (Kuhlampi 2010:44-258).

Comparing these writings with modern day studies on health and spirituality will assist in not only showing the value of the health message found in the White's writings, but will also show that she was far ahead of her time with the insight she shared on these topics and their relationship to Sabbath and Adventist spirituality.

Thus not only the work of scholars will be considered in this study. Where pertinent to the subject and valuable to the delimitations of this study the works of laity who greatly contributed to the field of spirituality in Adventism will be consulted as well. Adventist spirituality cannot be studied without accepting the literature which both grew from, and on which their spiritual practice is based, as valid sources for its study. It is accepted that recognizing such sources as valid for the purposes of this study does not imply agreeing with the precepts and premises they hold.

1.2 The statement of the problem

SDA spirituality, as far as the Sabbath is concerned, is not merely based on an Old Testament commandment that is fanatically adhered to, but speaks to the very essence of being, believing and worship. It encapsulates the very core aspects of the human-divine relationship, and is an expression of faith in the God who "was, is and is to come"²⁹. It recognises what God did, is doing and will do in future, until the final events of earth's history play out. The Seventh-day Sabbath is an inseparable part of SDA spirituality that signifies belief in Jesus as Creator, Saviour, and Restorer or Recreator, and it is their ultimate expression of their relationship with God; expressed not legalistically, but rather relationally (Gulley 1989:359-361).

²⁸ Both these books are compilations of EG White's works from 1864 when she received her first vision on health reform to 1915 when she passed away. In them the fragments from various works were compiled based on the subject or aspect addressed.

²⁹ Revelation 1:4, 1:8 and 4:8.

1.2.1 The main problem

The spiritual significance of the seventh-day Sabbath as an expression of faith which leads Seventh-day Adventists to embrace a lifestyle that often excludes them to a large extent from many social, economic and political spheres is greatly misunderstood by scholars and laymen who view the practice as a legalistic adherence to Old Testament Law.

1.2.2 The key aspects

1.2.2.1 The Seventh-day Adventist point of view on the origins of the Sabbath differs greatly from the general academic perspective on it.

1.2.2.2 The understanding of the Sabbath as a legal requirement applicable only to the Jews misrepresents the Old Testament spirituality regarding the Sabbath as understood by Seventh-day Adventists.

1.2.2.3 The Sabbath continued as a valid Christian expression of faith in the New Testament times and speaks directly to their faith in Jesus as both Creator and Saviour.

1.2.2.4 The Sabbath-Sunday issue plays a pivotal role in the understanding of Seventh-day Adventist eschatology and greatly motivates the adherence of this contra-cultural practice.

1.2.2.5 The spiritual significance of the Sabbath to Seventh-day Adventists is greatly misunderstood when interpreted as a mere Old Testament law. The full significance is only understood when the function of Sabbath as a symbol of creation and redemption, and the relation between Sabbath and humanity is evaluated.

1.2.2.6 The relationship between the Sabbath and the holistic health of the human being is central to Adventist spirituality.

1.3 Delimitations of the study

The study focuses on the spiritual significance of the Sabbath to Seventh-day Adventists and the accompanying expression of faith in their relational understanding of it that motivate them to its observance. The study will not consider the merits of the biblical interpretation of SDA theology or the works of members of the Adventist Church, since the field of Christian Spirituality searches to gain insight into spirituality as it is encountered, being descriptive-critical without making prescriptive-normative remarks. The study will instead focus on being descriptive-analytical in nature (Schneiders 1989:32-33), highlighting the

description regarding the seventh-day Sabbath phenomenon amongst Adventists. It will, however, consider the scholarly foundation that led to the faith expression which sets the SDA church apart from most all other denominations.

Sabbath keeping and the spiritual significance thereof as an expression of faith are encountered across faith³⁰ and denominational³¹ boundaries. These adherents all have some shared values with regards to the Sabbath, but also have definite differences on some aspects of faith and even on Sabbath keeping. Some Sabbath keepers believe in the keeping of “a Sabbath”, not necessarily the seventh-day Sabbath. A great proponent of this view is Lynn Baab³² whose research and writings on the Sabbath and related spiritual aspects are well known worldwide. She recognises the value of the Sabbath as a day of rest that holds great advantage for health and recovery from the stresses of modern day life. She also recognises the importance of the seven day rhythm as an integral part of Sabbath keeping. Though her work will prove valuable in many ways to the current study, and will be referenced, it also differs in an essential aspect from the focus of this study. The primary focus is the seventh-day Sabbath referring to the time period from sunset on a Friday to sunset on a Saturday, according to the Gregorian calendar, and not Sabbath keeping in a general sense.

Further distinction should be made between seventh-day Sabbath keepers from different faiths, such as Judaism and Seventh-day Adventists. This distinction is made not only because the field of academic study is Christian Spirituality, but also because an essential part of Sabbath keeping within the framework of this study will prove to be accepting Jesus Christ as Creator and Saviour of all humanity. Though common ground will be found with the Jewish seventh-day Sabbath observance, the Christian perspective will be considered here.

³⁰ Jews as well as some Christian denominations.

³¹ Seventh-day Adventists, Seventh-day Baptists, Church of the Nazarene and Shembe’s amaNazaretha Church amongst others.

³² Lynn Baab holds a PhD in Communication from the University of Washington and is a faculty member in the Theology and religious Studies department of the University of Otago in New Zealand. She has authored numerous books on the Sabbath and other topics.

To the Seventh-day Adventist the Sabbath as a symbol of both creation and salvation (or re-creation if you please)(Bacchiocchi 1998:59-182; Gulley 1998:340-341) is established in the Old Testament (Gen 2:1-3; Exodus 20:11; Deut 5:15) and meets its fulfilment in Jesus Christ as the Creator and Saviour who is more fully revealed in the New Testament (John 1:1-3, 14; Acts 13:23; Phil 3:20, 2Cor 5:17). They therefore strongly object to the view that Sabbath is not a creation ordinance and is therefore temporary in nature as promoted by Carson (1982) and Ratzlaff (1990) amongst others. Only a brief study of contemporary Pentateuch Theory will be referenced to underscore the difference in view held, and therefore the derived spirituality, from that of Seventh-day Adventism.

The spiritual significance of the seventh-day Sabbath is also very different in their Historicist interpretation³³ of prophecy than that from Preterist³⁴ or Futurist³⁵ interpretations (Doukhan 2000:110; Gulley 1998:358-374; Holbrook 1989:42, 44-46, 107; Stefanovic 2007:277). The understanding of the term historicism in SDA circles is very different from that of mainstream scholarship. Paulien (2003:15) states:

The Adventist definition of 'historicism' does not bear the usual literary and historical meaning common in scholarship today, but goes back to a more traditional usage, in relation to the way biblical prophecy is applied in today's world.

It is the Historicist interpretation which gives a unique flavour to the Spirituality of the SDA Church.³⁶

Although there are many other unique attributes to the theology of the SDA Church, this study concerns itself with the seventh-day Sabbath as an expression of faith, and not with any of the other distinctive practices. This said, it will be necessary to refer to some of the

³³ Historicist interpretation of prophecy, also referred to as Historicism, describes a school of prophetic interpretation that conceives the fulfilment of the prophecies of Daniel and Revelation as covering the historical period from the time of the prophet to the establishment of the kingdom of God on earth.

³⁴ Preterism assigns the fulfilment of the prophecies of Daniel and Revelation to the past. This view originated during the Counter-reformation with seventeenth century Jesuit Luis de Alcasar.

³⁵ Futurism defers the bulk of the prophetic fulfilment of the books of Daniel and Revelation to the time shortly before the Second Advent. This view originated during the Counter-reformation with Jesuit priest Francisco Ribera.

³⁶ For more on the definition and history of Adventist Historicism see Reimar Vetne, 'A Definition and Short History of Historicism as a Method for Interpreting Daniel and Revelation,' *JATS* 14/2 (Fall, 2003), 1-14.

other unique attributes³⁷ if and where they are pertinent to the study at hand. Such attributes will be reflected on in brief and only as far as it would be beneficial to understanding the Sabbath better. For the rest, these attributes are peripheral and in depth study of such will only serve to detract from the core object of study which is the Sabbath.

The merits of the beliefs, exegesis and interpretations encountered in the study are not considered an issue for investigation. What is considered the core issue, withal, is the Adventist understanding of the Sabbath, which guides this expression of faith. Where their beliefs, exegeses and interpretations are contrasted with that of other denominations it is done for the sake of clarity of their own understanding, not for the sake of evaluating, demeaning or judging any aspect of any other denomination or faith community.

1.3.1 Definitions of key terms

For the purposes of this study there are several key terms that must be considered. The definitions used are those from the Adventist understanding and use of terms since it is their spirituality under investigation. These are:

1.3.1.1 Adventist: In general the term Adventist refers to a believer in the Second Advent or Coming of Jesus Christ, which would include many if not most Christians today. The term was coined by the Millerites (see Advent Movement) and could variously be used to refer to a proponent of the Millerite Movement, a believer in Adventism, or any of several Adventist church bodies. For the purposes of this study the term Adventist, however, refers to the general reference found “in SDA usage; a short term for ‘Seventh-day Adventist’” (Neufeld 1976:11).

1.3.1.2 Advent Movement: “A term often used variously to mean: (1) in expressions such as ‘great Advent movement of 1843–4’, the Millerite movement, principally in America; (2) the Seventh-day Adventist movement” (Neufeld 1976:11). For purposes of this study, and to avoid misunderstanding, the term Advent Movement will exclusively be used to refer to the Millerite Movement of 1843-44.

1.3.1.3 Conservative Adventism: This term refers to the segment of Seventh-day Adventists who holds to the traditional views and values of the Adventist Church such as the

³⁷ The Investigative Judgment, the state of the dead, the sanctuary system, the Antichrist and the mark of the Beast amongst others.

literal 7 day (each consisting of 24 hours) creation account and the hermeneutic principles voted at the 1986 General Conference Committee Annual Council, outlined in “Methods of Bible Study” (General Conference Committee Annual Council 1986).

1.3.1.4 Seventh-day Adventist (SDA): For the purposes of this study, the term Seventh-day Adventist will serve as a synonym for Adventist, referring to an individual or individuals who adhere to the fundamental beliefs of the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

1.3.1.5 Spirit of Prophecy: This term is generally used in Adventist circles to refer to the prophetic testimony which points to Jesus Christ, and is derived from Revelation 19:10, which states that “... the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy”. It would therefore include, but not be limited to, the Old and New Testaments. “By extension of meaning, G. I. Butler, longtime president of the General Conference, defined the term *spirit of prophecy* as ‘that Spirit which causes certain persons to prophesy.’” (Neufeld 1976:1412)

Since the relevant sections of this study which reference the Old and/or New Testament will explicitly indicate as much, the more selective use of the term Spirit of Prophecy will be utilised here. The term Spirit of Prophecy in capitals will refer specifically to the written works of Ellen Gould White in recognition of her prophetic gift as per the Adventist understanding of the same.

1.3.1.6 Sabbath: In general, the term Sabbath can refer either to the seventh-day Sabbath, or to any of several sacred feast days which may or may not fall on the seventh day. The core aspect of SDA spirituality in this study is the seventh-day Sabbath. This space of time is reckoned from sunset on a Friday evening to sunset on a Saturday evening, with the day cycle having its foundation in Genesis 1: “the evening and the morning were the first day”³⁸. When referring to any feast Sabbath, which also refers to a sunset to sunset time period, but which can fall on any day of the week,

³⁸ This cycle is repeated six times in Genesis 1: verses 5, 8, 13, 19, 23 and 31.

including sunset Friday to sunset Saturday, it will be referred to as a “ceremonial Sabbath” or “feast Sabbath”. (Neufeld 1976:1237-1238)

In a few cases where the reference to the Sabbath refers to the view of those who do not subscribe to the view that it is the seventh day, the context will make the differentiation clear.

1.3.2 Presuppositions

For the sake of studying a lived spirituality within a certain faith community and to understand it from the perspective of that community, it is necessary to accept their beliefs as the given and non-negotiable norm for the living of their faith. Any attempt to understand their expressions of faith will be greatly hindered if it is approached in a prescriptive-normative way, whether it may be from the insider or outsider perspective, or from any other point on the scale in between. The advantages and disadvantages of being ‘insider’ or ‘outsider’ in the research process are demonstrated by Rabe (2003) and are particularly relevant to the current study. The shift on the continuum between ‘outsider’ and ‘insider’ to which Rabe (2003:150) refers, should be amply evident during the study as the significance of the Sabbath to Adventists becomes progressively clearer.

Even though some elements within the theology of the faith community studied might be radically different from that of the scholar, it in no way influences the validity of the expressions of faith and therefore the spirituality of that faith community. It is therefore imperative that the spirituality of the subject community is approached by presupposing that their understanding of any element pertaining to their spirituality is valid. Any deviation from this principle will constitute prescriptive-normative criticism which would undermine the ability to gain insight into the spirituality studied.

It is therefore, for the purposes of the current study, presupposed that the beliefs, exegeses and interpretations of the Seventh-day Adventist Church are valid for the sake of gaining insight into their lived spirituality as it relates to seventh-day Sabbath observance.

These beliefs include *inter alia* the origins of Genesis 1 and 2, the Adventist Historicist approach to prophecy, the prophetic gifts of Ellen Gould White and her writings as at least part of the Spirit of Prophecy.

Adventist exegesis has to be assumed, if not accepted, as valid, as it is the foundation from which their interpretations and beliefs originate. It then follows that their interpretations of Scripture from the Historicist perspective, which includes, but is not limited to the identification of times, individuals, institutions, events and identifying marks and seals, are also legitimate. These will be discussed in greater detail as they become relevant during the study.

The study recognises that not all Adventists necessarily adhere to the principles of keeping the seventh-day Sabbath, and that some have a legalistic, normative approach in engaging the Sabbath. It is thus recognised that even within the faith community of SDA's, there will be some measure of difference, and even indifference, as far as certain aspects of Sabbath keeping is concerned.

1.4 The value of the study

The value of this study is both theological and practical.

1.4.1 Theological value

The theological value in studying the spiritual significance of the Sabbath as an expression of faith in Seventh-day Adventism is twofold.

Firstly the study documents an aspect of Christian Spirituality from a perspective not before considered within the framework of Christian Spirituality. Some aspects of Sabbath spirituality have been researched before, but this study researches the full range of contributing factors of the Sabbath from a particular perspective, namely from origins to eschatology to health.

Secondly the study will draw from the Old and New Testaments – history, eschatology and health - a broad range of contributing sources to underscore the significance of a single

aspect of spirituality. In general, Biblical Spirituality as a discipline tends to draw from only one source pool, and more often than not from the New Testament, which makes this study both different and more challenging at the same time. It will illustrate the value of interdisciplinary study of Spirituality over a wide range of fields, showing how the Old and New Testaments contribute to spirituality by reaching into history, and even explore current and future events through prophecy.

1.4.2 Practical value

The practical value of this study vests in the understanding it brings of a faith community that is not very often engaged with because of its “differentness”.³⁹ When insight is gained of the shared values held at least in theory by non-Adventists and Adventists alike, even though expressed in different acts of faith, common ground is found from which the other can be engaged. The motivations behind seventh-day Sabbath keeping is not absent in other denominations, but is expressed differently and often less prominently. A study such as this opens the door to further dialogue because of shared belief discovered within a very different expression of faith.

When understanding the spiritual aspects of Sabbath keeping, it is easier to interact and engage with Sabbath keepers. The “differentness” is less when its motivation is understood. When the spirituality behind Sabbath keeping is grasped, the respect for those who hold such practice sacred is also increased, which in and of itself also opens pathways across previously perceived spiritual borders.

³⁹ Many misunderstandings and misinterpretations exist about what the Seventh-day Adventist Church believes, giving rise to claims about their faith which is simply not true. See Hoekema (1973) as an example.

Chapter 2

The Origin of the Sabbath and the Creation Myths

Within the Theological sphere there are many views held on how the universe came into being. These views range from creationism to evolution with a whole variety of views in between that eclectically combine aspects of the two.⁴⁰ Each of these various views has an impact on the understanding and significance of the Sabbath to the respective proponents. Even outside of the creation vs evolution debate many theories regarding the origin/development of the Sabbath exists.⁴¹ For the purpose of the current study only a brief investigation of current Pentateuch theory, as far as it impacts and relates to the Sabbath, will be considered and compared to the Seventh-day Adventist position.

2.1 Elements of Pentateuch Theory

Current Pentateuch theory holds that the biblical accounts of creation and specifically the first account found in Genesis 1:1-2:4a⁴² came about as a reaction to the Ancient Near Eastern (ANE) creation myths which the Hebrews encountered during the Babylonian exile (Lombaard 2012:147; VanGemeren⁴³ 1996:1158). This view inevitably impacts the dating of the biblical creation account and moves it forward to a date sometime during or after the middle of the 6th century BCE (Hoffmeier 1983:39; Lombaard 2012:147). Should this theory be proven true, it would inevitably obliterate any claim of the Sabbath being a creation ordinance, since the creation narrative of both Genesis 1 and 2 would be nothing more than Hebrew myth derived from, and in answer to, their encounters with Babylonian creation myths.

With the Sabbath being the focal point of this study, the aspects pertaining to our theme will receive primary focus, with only selected other similarities being mentioned in brief.

⁴⁰ Lombaard (2012: 150-152) refers to such combinations with the term the "Creationism-Evolution Omelette"

⁴¹ Kraeling (218-228) evaluates the mainstream theories in brief.

⁴² The Genesis 1:1-2:4a creation account will hereafter simply be referred to as the Genesis 1 account or the first creation account. Some debate continues on the inclusion of Genesis 2:4a but for the purpose of this study it is not of any significance. Proponents of the Genesis 1:1-2:4a division as a single creation account includes Lombaard (2012: 147), Moskala (2002: 55; 2011: 45), VanGemeren (1996: 1158) and Westermann (1984: 78, 178, 197) amongst others.

⁴³ VanGemeren is indeed the correct spelling of the surname and not Van Gemeren.

Modern Pentateuch Theory stems from the many similarities evident between the Babylonian creation myths⁴⁴, in particular the *Enuma Elish*⁴⁵, and the biblical accounts of creation (Clifford 1985:520-523; Hasel 1972:1-2; Hess 1995:141-149; Lombaard 2012:147; Middleton 2005:185; Smith 1880:56-90; Van Zyl 1977:13; Wallace 1988:237-241; Westermann 1984:26-47). Many Babylonian creation accounts existed before the *Enuma Elish*, but this compilation is considered of great significance (cf Van Zyl 1977:8) as the *Enuma Elish* combines many of the earlier creation myths to form a much more comprehensive account than any of its source accounts in and of itself provide. Roux (1992:94) explains:

The theory that the ocean was the primordial element from which the universe was born, that the shape of the universe had resulted from the forceful separation of heaven from earth by a third party was generally adopted in Sumer, Babylon and Assyria and forms the basis of the most complete and detailed story of creation that we possess: the great Babylonian epic called from its opening sentence, *Enuma Elish*, 'When on high...'.

Since the *Enuma Elish* envelopes most of the Ancient Near Eastern (ANE) creation accounts, it will be primarily used as the creation myth of reference for purposes of this study.

2.1.1 The *Enuma Elish* Creation Myth

The *Enuma Elish*, which means "when on high" after the opening words of the epic, deals with the rise of Marduk, initially only a member of the Babylonian pantheon, to kingship (Hooke 1963:41; Horn 1979:246; Pinches 1908:11; Van Zyl 1977:8). Since creation is not the main theme of this epic, the term "the Epic of Creation" which is often used to refer to it, is somewhat misleading (Yingling 2011:34). According to Yingling (2011:33-38), the

⁴⁴ Most notable being the *Atrahasis Epic*, the *Enuma Elish*, the *Gilgamesh Epic*, and the *Adapa Myth*. For an overview of these and other creation myths from Canaanite, Egyptian and related Ancient Near Eastern (ANE) origins, see Clifford (1994).

⁴⁵ The *Enuma Elish* itself is believed to be a derived from earlier creation myths common to the Ancient Near East such as the Assyrian and Sumerian creation myths (Hasel 1972: 16; Yingling 2011: 33). It was initially called "The Babylonian Epic of Creation" but was better known as the *Enuma Elish* to the Assyrians and Babylonians (Yingling 2011: 33).

composition of this narrative probably coincided with the rise of Marduk's prominence in the Babylonian pantheon during the reign of Hammurabi, or soon afterwards.

In this myth Marduk is victorious in mortal combat with Tiamat and he divides her body into two parts; the one used to form the sky and the other to form the earth and the deep (*tehom*⁴⁶). (Harlow 2008:172; Hasel 1972:7-8; Hooke 1963:44-45; Payne 1962:133-134; Van Zyl 1977:9)

Many scholars claim that knowledge of Sumerian-Babylonian mythology is strongly evident in the biblical creation accounts and recognise many, and significant, parallels between the first biblical creation account and the *Enuma Elish* specifically (Alexander & Baker 2003:156; Graves & Patai 2004:21-23; Hooke 1963:41-45, 119-120; Horn 1979:246; Vawter 1956:38; Westermann 1984:16). The conclusion drawn is that the biblical account came into existence not by the hand of Moses, but by an author from the exilic period in the history of the Hebrew nation. This creation account is attributed to the Priestly source (P)⁴⁷ according to the JEPD hypothesis and is therefore dated during the Babylonian exile (Harlow 2008:168; Knight 1985:732-733; Van Zyl 1977:11; Von Rad 1972:45-67; Wallace 1998:235).

Two similarities between the Ancient Near Eastern creation accounts and the first biblical creation account are of great significance to this study. Firstly the term *sabattu* (or equivalent⁴⁸), which appear in various Ancient Near Eastern creation myths, and secondly the aspect of rest of the creator in the two sets of creation accounts will be considered.

⁴⁶ Some attempts to show that the origin of the biblical *tehom* in Genesis is derived from the word Tiamat have been made (Pinches 1908: 60-61). Hasel (1972: 5-6) refutes this view and contends that "Heidel has argued convincingly that both words go back to a common Semitic root from which also the Babylonian term *tiamtu*, *tamtu*, meaning 'ocean, sea,' is derived". See also Van Zyl (1977: 9) and Von Rad (1972: 50).

⁴⁷ According to JEPD Theory four distinct writers can be identified in the writings of the first five books of the Bible traditionally attributed to Moses. These four are identified as the Jahwist (J), Elohist (E), Priestly (P), and Deuteronomist(D).

⁴⁸ Sometimes also rendered *šapattu*. Shea (1984: 15) explains that the second syllable can be pronounced "ba" or "pa", thus both *sabattu* and *šapattu* would be acceptable (See also Jastrow 1914: 98-99). Other variations for *sabattu*, such as *sabattum* and *šapattum* depends on the use of the Akkadian, Sumerian or Babylonian version of the word (Pinches 1908:526). Some of these variants are used in the works of Heath (1995:21), Kimball (1978: 307), Kraeling (1933: 220-221), Meek (1914: 202-203), Pinches (2002: 34), Smith (1880: 308) and others.

The Akkadian term *sabattu*, which in Babylonian narratives is described as a “day of rest of the heart”⁴⁹, is often associated with the biblical Sabbath (Bacchiocchi 1980:19; Kraeling 1933:220; Neufeld 1976:1245; Pooler 1911:39; VanGemeren 1996:1157). Many scholars, however, note that the term *sabattu* referred to the middle of the lunar month, the 15th day⁵⁰, which was the day of the full moon (Eichrodt 1959:132; Hess 1995:146; Kraeling 1933:220; Meek 1914:205; Neufeld 1976:1245; Pinches 2002:13; Shea 1984:15). Meek (1914:203) sees an etymological relation to the Akkadian term *gamaru* which means “to complete” or “bring to an end” and argues “Sabattu, then, could mean the day on which the moon was complete or full”.

Ancient Near Eastern cultures were familiar with a seven day week based on the lunar cycle. This 7 day weekly cycle had no relation to the term *sabattu*, though the connection between the *sabattu* and the lunar cycle is often related to the Sabbath and new moons found in the Old Testament (Eichrodt 1959:119, 129-132; Jastrow 1914:101; Meek 1904:201-212⁵¹; Nichols 1891:36-42).

Kimball (1978: 307) not only acknowledges connections between the biblical Sabbath and the Babylonian *sabattu*, but also draws parallels between the *Enuma Elish* and the Genesis creation accounts as it relates to the day of rest. Both Wallace (1988:237-243) and Westermann (1984:41-43) highlight the aspect of rest of the creator in Ancient Near Eastern creation accounts, and specifically in the *Enuma Elish*, which they believe to be the origin of the Sabbath rest of the Creator in Genesis 2:2-3. Westermann (1984:41-43), however, shows that the Babylonian creation myths were not the only ones to relate to the rest or withdrawal of the creator after completion of creation, but that these elements seem to be widespread.⁵² According to Clifford (1985:509-510), Nemet-Nejat (1998:186), Pinches (1908:24; 2002:13) Van Zyl (1977:18) and Wallace (1988:237-239) the *Enuma Elish* and other creation myths indicate that human beings were was created for the purpose of

⁴⁹ Hess (1995: 146) prefers the translation “day of easing of the heart”.

⁵⁰ Various scholars note that the *sabattu* could also fall on the 14th day as is evident from the ancient Babylonian tablets (Jastrow 1914: 100; Pinches 1908: 24).

⁵¹ Meek does not subscribe to the exilic origin of the Sabbath amongst the Hebrews, but does recognise the Sabbath-Lunation connection. He rather promotes a cessation of the Sabbath-Lunation connection when he states: “It was in the Exile or in the years immediately preceding it that the Sabbath became dissociated from the moon and came at length to be identified with the seventh day” (Meek 1914: 209).

⁵² Westermann 1984: 41) cites Pettazzoni who in turn shows similar instances in Australian creation myths.

servicing the gods and thus provide them with rest.⁵³ There was therefore no relation between the creator's rest and that of man, but the creator's rest was at the expense of the work of humanity.

Based on the parallels evident between the *Enuma Elish* and Genesis 2:2-3 in terms of the *sabattu* and the Sabbath, as well as the aspect of rest of the creator, it seems understandable that many scholars have concluded, after initial investigation, that the *Enuma Elish* was the origin for the Sabbath concept amongst the Hebrews in exile in Babylon. This conclusion in turn had the effect of a much later dating of the Genesis 1 and 2 creation accounts and also impacted the view of the Sabbath as a creation ordinance.

2.1.2 Criticism on the Enuma Elish as origin of the Sabbath

With closer scrutiny most of the arguments in favour of the exilic origin of the biblical Sabbath do not seem to carry much weight. The view that all world myths, including that of the Judeo-Christian tradition, derives from Babylonian mythology became so common that it was termed "Pan-Babylonianism" (Chavalas 2002:34-35; Ouro 2011:5; Winckler 2006a:3-36; 1907:3-79).

This approach gave rise to "Parallelomania" which refers to the obsessive search for parallels between the Bible narrative and Ancient Near Eastern texts (Ouro 2011:5; Sandmel 1962:1-13)⁵⁴. The danger of this methodology is evident when Ouro (2011:15) refers to and quotes Sjöberg, who claimed that his re-examination of Mesopotamian myth and cult showed that there was no connection between the "tree of life" and Mesopotamian seals, and that any such claims were a result of Pan-Babylonianism since "[t]here is no Sumerian or Akkadian expression 'Tree of life.'"

It is clear that incorrect conclusions drawn from Pan-Babylonianism such as Sjöberg refers to can wreak havoc with our understanding of biblical narratives and completely distort our view of

⁵³ The aspect of mankind having been created as a slave species have become popular in the last three decades in publications such as *The Earth Chronicles* series by Zecharia Sitchin and *Slave Species of god* by Michael Tellinger. These books are however not academically reliable in their interpretation of ancient texts.

⁵⁴ Lutz Doering wrote an article accessible through Academia.edu entitled 'Parallels without "Parallelomania" Methodological reflections on Comparative Analysis of Halakhah in the Dead Sea Scrolls' in which helpful guidelines to avoid Parallelomania is given.

Scripture, as well as the relation between elements found within Ancient Near Eastern cultures.

Kraeling (1933:222) notes that Menes, Mowinckel and Weber all support the idea of the Sabbath having existed in pre-exilic times as a weekly day of observance, which would refute the Babylonian origin theories with accompanying exilic dates. Max Weber's argument rests on the apparent existence of Sabbath practice amongst those who remained in Israel during the exile as he sees evidenced in Nehemiah 13. Weber (1967:149-150) states, "the honouring of the Sabbath in both countries is hardly due to genuine borrowing, but to a common tradition. Differences appear even in the earliest mention of the Sabbath."⁵⁵ He then recognises a relation between the Babylonian *sabattu* and the Hebrew Sabbath linguistically, not as a result of the Hebrew exposure to the Babylonian creation myths, but rather as a result of a much earlier shared cultural history. Unlike Weber, Meyer (Kraeling 1933:227) does not deem a relation between the Babylonian term *sabattu* and Sabbath probable, although he agrees with Weber on the socio-economic origin of the day as well as its pre-exilic practice amongst the Hebrews.

Another significant difference between the *sabattu* and the Sabbath relates to the way in which the day was observed. Meek (1914:202) points out that *sabattu* was definitely not a day of rest, due to the ample evidence of contracts dated on those particular days. Heath (1995:21) concurs by pointing to a complete lack of evidence of a cessation of work on the Babylonian *sabattu*, and farther separates the *sabattu* and the Sabbath when she argues that "An even greater distinction between sabbath and sabattu is seen in that the Babylonian day was ominously evil, a day in which demonic forces were at work. Nothing could be further from the blessed, beautiful, holy day of the Hebrews."

Meek (1914:203) further states:

The Sabbath used to be, and by many scholars still is, identified with the Babylonian "favorable, unfavorable days", which for the intercalary month

⁵⁵ Weber does however understand the Sabbath to have had a Lunar origin strongly relating it to the *šapattu* of the Babylonian sabbath tradition. He understands the break from lunation as a post-exilic development to distance the Hebrews from pagan influences. See Kraeling (1933:226).

of Elul fell on the 7th, 14th, 19th⁵⁶, 21th, and 28th days, but there is absolutely no evidence that these have any connection whatsoever with *sabattu*. Indeed, as we have noted, there is as yet no evidence anywhere that *sabattu* was applied to any day other than the 15th, and to assign this term to other days, ... is the purest assumption and is based upon a preconceived idea as to what the Sabbath was.

It is recognised that the Babylonians did follow a weekly 7 day cycle, but the *sabattu* concept had no relation to it whatsoever. The Babylonian weekly cycle was determined by the lunar cycle which reset the 7 day cycle with every new moon (Eichrodt 1961:132; Sarna 1991:111; Vos 1948:155). The weekly Sabbath as it is found in Scripture was not determined by the cycle of the moon (Neufeld 1976:1246). The biblical Sabbaths which had lunar connections were feast days as is evident from Leviticus 23 (Andrews 2010:54-59). The dates of the annual feast Sabbaths of the Old Testament were calculated according to the lunar cycle, an aspect not present in the weekly Sabbaths which fell on every consecutive seventh day with no link to the lunar cycle whatsoever (VanGemeren 1996:1158). Heschel (1975:10) agrees when he says of the Sabbath that “[i]ts date is not determined by any event in nature, such as the moon, but by the act of creation”

Eichrodt (1961:132) also recognises another difference between the *sabattu* and the biblical Sabbath in terms of the former not being a day of rest, but rather a day of “precautionary measures” and elaborates by stating that the adherents of *sabattu* had to pacify the gods and “appease their anger” on the “day of pacification of the heart”.⁵⁷

Pinches (1908:22) agrees when he explains that the 7th, 14th, 19th, 21st and 28th days, “were called *u-hul-gallu* or *ûmu limnu*, ‘the evil day’ (the 19th being a week of weeks, from the 1st day of the preceding month), because it was unlawful to do certain things on those days” and that *sabbatum* referred exclusively to the 15th of the lunar month.

⁵⁶ The 19th is not a direct multiple of 7, but was regarded as the 7th 7 of the previous month, the 49th day of the previous lunation.

⁵⁷ Eichrodt’s rendering of the “day of rest of the heart”. See also footnote 7.

The persistence of many scholars to hold fast to the Babylonian origins of the Priestly Genesis account is noteworthy in the light of the conclusions drawn by scholars who do not approach the matter from a theological perspective. Hoffmeier (1983:40) states:

In the past several decades Assyriologists who have studied the Babylonian creation story have rejected any possible connection between Genesis and the *Enuma Elish*. Among these are W. G. Lambert, Millard, and earlier Kinnier Wilson and Heidel. Despite the conclusions of these Assyriologists most Old Testament scholars continue to uphold the Mesopotamian connections.

In his article published in the Journal of the Ancient Near Eastern Society (JANES) entitled "*Thoughts on Genesis 1 & 2 and Egyptian Cosmology*" Hoffmeier (1983:40-41) agrees with Sayce's (1887:267) view that "excessive attention" has been given to the *Enuma Elish* and not enough to other Ancient Near Eastern sources, in particular the possible Egyptian influences. This sentiment is also reflected by Hasel (1972:2) when he comments:

The last six decades have witnessed vast increases in knowledge of the various factors involved in the matter of parallels and relationships. W. G. Lambert and others remind us that one can no longer talk glibly about Babylonian civilization, because we now know that it was composed of three main strands before the end of the third millennium B.C. Furthermore, it is no longer scientifically sound to assume that all ideas originated in Mesopotamia and moved westward as H. Winckler's "pan-Babylonian" theory had claimed under the support of Friedrich Delitzsch and others.

Hazel thus rejects the notion that Babylonian mythology forms the basis for other Ancient Near Eastern myths.

Focussing on the relation between the first Genesis creation account and the *Enuma Elish*, both Hasel (1972:17-18) and Ouro (2011:14-15) shows how the differences between the two accounts are numerous and significant, as well as how other scholars have also pointed out that "the general analogy between both stories does not suggest a direct borrowing on

the part of Gn 1 from *Enuma elish*" (Hasel 1972:18). Regalado (2002:110) agrees when he states that there are more differences than similarities between the Babylonian creation accounts and the biblical versions of creation. This view is echoed by Ouro when he states "what similarities exist are superficial and could well be incidental. The differences, on the other hand, are significant" (Ouro 2011:13).

Gunkel (1984:47) also refers to this aspect when he speaks of:

The difference between the Babylonian creation account and that of Genesis 1 is great; it could hardly be more pronounced. In the Babylonian account everything is wild and grotesque; it is barbaric, riotous poetry. In Genesis 1 everything is quietly solemn and elevated; it is expansive and occasionally somewhat pedantic prose. There the gods emerged in the course of things; here God is one and the same from the very beginning. In the Babylonian account there is the deity who slays the monster in heated combat and forms the world out of its corpse; in Genesis 1 there is God 'who speaks and it is so'.

The Biblical account has no trace of the conflict that led to creation, or the combat between gods at creation as is found in the Babylonian creation narrative (Berkhof 1976:151). Rather it speaks of the unity of the *Elohim* who created by the spoken word without a trace of violence during the process of creating. From the Jewish perspective the differences between the Ancient Near Eastern creation accounts are also deemed chaotic, "unrelievedly wild, cruel, even foul" when seen "in contrast with the simplicity and sublimity of Genesis 1" (Hertz 1960:193)

Another significant difference between the two accounts is that the *Enuma Elish* end with the construction of the Esagila⁵⁸, the temple of Marduk, which points to the sanctification of space, whereas the first Biblical account ends with the sanctification not of space, but of time, an aspect that will be discussed in more detail later in this study (Genesis 2:2-3; Ouro 2011:22-23; Rodríguez 2001:58-59).

⁵⁸ The Babylonians associated the Esagila with the Tower of Babel (Pinches 1908:385).

Hasel (1972:19-20) concludes that there are even evidence to show that the author of the first Genesis account purposefully attempted to refute the other creation myths prevalent at the time of its writing, a conclusion echoed the work of Harlow (2008:172), Hempel (1953:109-167), Eichrodt (1959:186-187) and Wurtheim (1970:28-38).

I agree with Budge (1921:29-30) when he concludes that:

[T]here is no foundation whatsoever for the assertion which has so often been made that the Two Accounts of the Creation which are given in the early chapters in Genesis are derived from the Seven Tablets of Creation described in the preceding pages. It is true that there are many points of resemblance between the narratives in cuneiform and Hebrew, and these often illustrate each other, but the fundamental conceptions of the Babylonian and Hebrew accounts are essentially different.

It becomes very difficult to see how a monthly *sabattu* which marked the full moon at the middle of the month could be the origin of a weekly day of observance among the Hebrews. Similarly it is hard to understand how the weekly “evil day” of the Babylonian creation myth, a day which was never referred to as a *sabattu*, could be identified with the Sabbath of the Bible which is described as blessed and sanctified (Genesis 2:3). There seems to have been an eclectic approach to the two very different Babylonian concepts, that of the weekly evil day and the monthly *sabattu*, where the 7 day rhythm of the first and the name of the second was selectively taken and superimposed on the biblical Sabbath to make it fit. Furthermore, the evil nature of the Babylonian lunar weekly was changed to a hallowed and blessed consecutive 7th day with no lunar connections, while the Babylonian *sabattu*, which was never associated with rest, morphed into the day of rest *per excellence* when it made its appearance in the Hebrew form.

As far as the origin of the Sabbath is concerned, a simple dating of the first biblical creation account to the time of the Babylonian exile is no longer tenable in the light of the numerous inconsistencies pointed out when considering the merits of this view.

2.2 The Seventh-day Adventist understanding of Creation

There exists no uniform view on creation in SDA ranks as liberal and conservative theologians within the ranks greatly differ in their understanding and interpretation of Genesis 1:1-2:4a.⁵⁹ This study reflects the more conservative, traditional approach held in SDA ranks. Seventh-day Adventists traditionally and in general believe in a literal 7 day creation week, 7 consecutive 24 hour periods of time in which God created.

The 28 Fundamental Beliefs of the Seventh-day Adventist Church (2013) declares in the 6th:

God is Creator of all things, and has revealed in Scripture the authentic account of His creative activity. In six days the Lord made “the heaven and the earth” and all living things upon the earth, and rested on the seventh day of that first week. Thus He established the Sabbath as a perpetual memorial of His completed creative work. The first man and woman were made in the image of God as the crowning work of Creation, given dominion over the world, and charged with responsibility to care for it. When the world was finished it was “very good,” declaring the glory of God. (Gen. 1; 2; Ex. 20:8-11; Ps. 19:1-6; 33:6, 9; 104; Heb. 11:3.)

It is clear from the terminology “authentic account” and “the seventh day of that first week” that the Seventh-day Adventist approach to creation accounts in general, but the first account in particular, is to interpret the text literally, therefore the first 34 verses of the book of Genesis is accepted as reflecting 7 literal consecutive periods of 24 hours during which God created all that exists.

When this view was challenged by some within the Adventist community⁶⁰ who interpreted the term day as a long period of time, the Fundamental Belief was redefined to more clearly

⁵⁹ Although the Church has an official view voted at the General Conference Session held in San Antonio in 2015 which modified and more clearly specified the Church’s stance, the academics and members do hold differing views amongst themselves as the some do not subscribe to the literal creation account of Genesis 1. This aspect is discussed in more detail later in this document.

⁶⁰ An example being La Sierra University, an Adventist tertiary education institution. See <http://www.sdadefend.com/Defend-foundation/LaSierraUniv.pdf>.

state what it meant at the General Conference Session held in San Antonio in July 2015. The words “recent” and “six literal days” were added to counter that misrepresentation.⁶¹

The literal understanding of a week of creation is supported by the very specific cycle of evening and morning found in the first creation account (Genesis 1:5, 8, 13, 19, 23 and 31) with Genesis 2:2-3 repeating the “seventh day” three times, emphasizing not only the day aspect, but also the importance of that specific day as the seventh.⁶² The view of literal days of creation is nothing new. Other than the Church Father Theophilus, who seems to be the first to have insisted that the days of creation were literal days, Tertullian, Irenaeus and others also supported this view (Berkhof 1979:126). This has also been the view of the religious Jewish community according to *The Pentateuch and Hoftorahs* (Hertz 1960:2).

Creationism is rightly defined by Lombaard⁶³ (2012:146):

Creationism is a view on how all that exists has come into being, taking most particularly the First Testament/Old Testament/Hebrew Bible account of Gen 1 (although a more precise demarcation would be Gen 1:1–2:4a) as a literal, “eye witness” description (captured in text by means of divine inspiration of the Scriptures and always associated with a Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch) of how God created everything.

This definition addresses a very important aspect of the SDA understanding of the authorship of Genesis as a whole, but of Genesis 1:1-2:4a in particular, namely the divine inspiration as given to Moses as the author of the Pentateuch (Nichol 1978:I, 201). This view was held for many centuries, long before the founding of the SDA Church, and only came into question with the development of higher criticism in the mid 1700’s, and thereafter when theories regarding various authors and compilation as the origin of Genesis were proposed (Nichol 1978:I, 201-202). The merits of arguments for and against the Mosaic

⁶¹ See also <http://advindicate.com/articles/2015/7/12/creation-wording-strengthened-in-fundamental-belief-number-six>.

⁶² Ratzlaf (1989: 22, 23) and Carson (1982: 349-351) strongly opposed the view of the seventh-day being a single day of equal duration with the first six days of creation. They argue that the seventh day was open ended because the format of evening and morning encountered on every preceding day of creation is omitted. Keil and Delitzsch (1978:I(i), 69-70) strongly differ with Ratzlaf and Carson insisting on the literal time delimitation of the preceding days.

⁶³ Although Lombaard’s definition is used it is noted that he does not subscribe to creationism.

authorship fall outside the scope of this study, though the Creationist nature of the SDA view is noted.⁶⁴

Creation, as described in the first biblical account, is understood within SDA circles to have been a divine, supernatural act in which the Trinity – Father, Son and Holy Spirit – each played a part, with the Son having been the “active agent” who created *ex nihilo* the environment that exists in our solar system, in six consecutive days (Neufeld 1976:356-357). In his commentary on the book of Hebrews, Knight (2003:32) also places Jesus, in the text referred to as the “Word” (cf John 1:1, 14), as the central figure in the process of creation of the universe. Various aspects of the SDA view seems to be supported by later biblical authors in their reflections on and references to creation (Gen. 1:1-2:4a; Ex. 20:11; Ps. 8:3, 33:6-9; Neh. 9:6; John 1:1-3, 14; Col. 1:16-17; Heb. 1:1-2, 11:3; Rev. 14:7)⁶⁵.

The SDA view of Creation is thoroughly creationist, as the SDA Bible Commentary states emphatically:

Throughout its history the Seventh-day Adventist Church has held that the first 35 verses of the book of Genesis contain a valid, factual account of literal events that occurred during seven consecutive rotations of Planet Earth—the creation week. This interpretation places within creation week the origin of the parent stock for all organisms supported by the planet and also the origin of the physical circumstances on which the continuing life of this parent stock depends. (Nichol 1978:I, 17)

The SDA Church can thus be categorised in the Christian fundamentalist group, although “the creationist view far predates ‘fundamentalism’” (Lombaard 2012:146). The creationist view has been held from the very earliest times in the history of the Christian Church. God’s creation *ex nihilo* is reflected on in the works of “Justin Martyr, Irenaeus, Tertullian, Clement of Alexandria, Origen, and others” (Berkhof 1976:126)

⁶⁴ For a brief list of the main arguments for and against the Mosaic authorship, see Nichol (1978:I, 202-203).

⁶⁵ Many more references could be cited from scripture but for the sake of time and space these must suffice as a representative sample from both Old and New Testaments. Berkhof (1976:127-128) also points to the vast body of evidence in scripture that attests to the creative work of God in creation.

Christian fundamentalists are often accused of ignoring scientific “facts” that seem to refute the Bible as seen from the creationist perspective (Lombaard 2012:146-147). On the contrary, the SDA church rather searches to align the biblical record and science. White (1904:258) believes “a correct understanding of both will always prove them to be in harmony”. This approach is not unique to the SDA adherents as is evident from the work of Hendry (1960:59) when he argues “[t]here can be no conflict between Christian faith and scientific theory if this difference is properly understood”. He then explains that we as created beings are limited in our understanding and experience because we are caught inside creation and cannot fathom conditions prior to that which is within creation. We can therefore not always rely on science within creation to accurately reflect conditions prior to or during creation.

Traditionally SDA’s have been very critical of higher criticism as is reflected by Ellen White (1911:474) when she states⁶⁶:

The warnings of the Word of God regarding the perils surrounding the Christian church belong to us today. As in the days of the apostles men tried by tradition and philosophy to destroy faith in the Scriptures, so today, by the pleasing sentiments of higher criticism, evolution, spiritualism, theosophy, and pantheism, the enemy of righteousness is seeking to lead souls into forbidden paths. To many the Bible is as a lamp without oil⁶⁷, because they have turned their minds into channels of speculative belief that bring misunderstanding and confusion. The work of higher criticism, in dissecting, conjecturing, reconstructing, is destroying faith in the Bible as a divine revelation. It is robbing God's word of power to control, uplift, and inspire human lives. By spiritualism,

⁶⁶ Very outspoken against higher criticism White (1897) also stated: “Man can be exalted only by laying hold of the merits of a crucified and risen Savior. The finest intellect, the most exalted position will not secure heaven. Satan had the highest education that could be obtained. This education he received under the greatest of all teachers. When men talk of higher criticism; when they pass their judgment upon the word of God, call their attention to the fact that they have forgotten who was the first and wisest critic. He has had thousands of years of practical experience. He it is who teaches the so-called higher critics of the world today. God will punish all those who, as higher critics, exalt themselves, and criticise God's Holy word.

⁶⁷ The reference to a “lamp without oil” alludes to the attitude of those who by higher criticism claim that the Bible is fallible and thereby diminishes the integrity of it as truly inspired by the Holy Spirit. The lamp signifies the Bible (cf Psalm 119: 105) and the oil signifies the Holy Spirit (cf 1Samuel 16:13).

multitudes are taught to believe that desire is the highest law, that license is liberty, and that man is accountable only to himself.

This view should, however, not be seen as a stance against scientific academic pursuits in better understanding the Scriptures, but rather as the stance from which scientific academic pursuits are undertaken. Rather than searching for and highlighting differences, the aim is to harmonise and integrate occurrences where differences or contradictions between the biblical narrative and science seem to exist.⁶⁸ This stance obviously impacts the hermeneutic used, which is also not simple or clearly defined as various models have been proposed and no consensus exists as to the hermeneutic methodology used in Adventist circles⁶⁹, although the traditional historical-critical method which denies miracles and/or supernatural intervention is uniformly rejected as a model (Davidson 1993:95-114; Miller, N P 2009:241-262; Reid 1998).⁷⁰ Reid (1998) argues that “Adventists held a high view of Scripture” prior to 1950 but “[t]oday we face a very different picture” as new guidelines for an Adventist hermeneutic are proposed and the debate on an Adventist hermeneutic heats up”.

The possibility of the miraculous and the supernatural is never rejected and/or ascribed to the lack of scientific knowledge of the author, but is rather accepted as the manifestation of God’s power which is also a real possibility in the present and a hope for the future. Johnsson (1999) views the acknowledgement of the divine supernatural as imperative to an Adventist hermeneutic when he states “much of modern critical scholarship attempts to study the Scriptures while bracketing out any possibility of a divine element—which is in fact the constitutive factor”. Davidson (1993:95-114) agrees when he argues for a model

⁶⁸ A prime example is the article by Jiri Moskala (2011) *A Fresh Look at Two Genesis Creation Accounts: Contradictions? Where the complimentary nature of the two accounts, rather than the differences are highlighted and harmonised by considering the different perspectives each account is written from.*

⁶⁹ Though a 1986 Annual Council of the Seventh-day Adventist Church voted a “Methods of Bible Study” document to outline the accepted principles of hermeneutics to be used, not all scholars agree with the methodology prescribed. At the GC Session in San Antonio in 2015 the Church in session approved a motion that the principles of Adventist hermeneutics be examined and more clearly defined as the study of Women’s Ordination showed great discrepancies in the way different Adventist scholars interpret the Bible and thus a lack of “unified biblical hermeneutic” (Wright 2015). The acceptance of the motion evidences the fact that a large portion of Adventist scholars consider the current principles outdated and/or in need of review and change.

⁷⁰ Du Preez (2006:178-195) notes that some liberal Adventists scholars make use of a modified version of the historical-critical approach to Bible interpretation, with devastating impact on crucial (Conservative) Adventist understanding and interpretation of eschatology, etc.

which includes and accepts the “primacy and sufficiency of scripture” and continues to outline the essentials of such a hermeneutic along the lines of a “Hermeneutical ‘Decalogue’”.⁷¹

2.3 Conclusion

There exists no uniform view on creation in SDA ranks as liberal and conservative theologians within the ranks greatly differ in their understanding and interpretation of Genesis 1:1-2:4a. This study reflects the more conservative, traditional and officially voted approach held in SDA ranks. The view that the narrative of Genesis 1:1-2:4a came into existence as a reaction to, or was even influenced by the Babylonian creation myth the *Enuma Elish*, or any other Ancient Near Eastern creation myth encountered prior to, during or after the Babylonian exile, is rejected within traditional SDA circles. The priestly authorship of the first creation account, the conclusion drawn from higher criticism, is therefore also rejected in favour of the Mosaic authorship. The traditional view of higher criticism within SDA ranks is very negative and perceived to be an attack on the integrity and validity of the Bible as the Word of God. This view is, however, not universally held in Adventist ranks any more.

Seventh-day Adventists traditionally and in general believe in a literal 7 day creation week, 7 consecutive 24 hour periods of time in which God created.⁷² It was a creation *ex nihilo* during which God created by speaking everything into existence, being dependant on no pre-existing matter whatsoever. In this supernatural free will act every person in the Trinity was involved, with the Son being the active agent.

A traditional historical-critical hermeneutic which does not allow for miracles or supernatural intervention is not accepted. From the very outset the SDA approach to the Bible accepts the supernatural origins of the universe as it is described in the Genesis accounts, and to a large extent it shapes and sets the tone for their understanding of Scripture, how it is interpreted and what it is understood to teach. From this understanding

⁷¹ Davidson (1993: 97) does note that “[u]nlike the Decalogue of Exodus 20, this outline is not infallible!” .

⁷² Many liberal Adventist scholars vehemently oppose this view and their views are often reflected in *Spectrum Magazine* which portrays more liberal views held within the Adventist ranks. <http://spectrummagazine.org/>.

we can continue to analyse the SDA understanding of and subsequent spirituality as it relates to the Sabbath.

Chapter 3

The Old Testament as source of Sabbath Spirituality

The Old Testament has been greatly undervalued as a source of Christian spirituality.⁷³ One reason sometimes brought to the fore is the divide between history and the present, the then and the now, the gap between the biblical world and our world that needs to be bridged (Lombaard 2012:9-10). In Lombaard's evaluation of works that deal with Old Testament spirituality he recognises in some of them a "disregard [for] the existence of a rupture in need of bridging" (Lombaard 2012:122). From the way Scripture is approached in conservative Adventism, Lombaard's criticism will undoubtedly apply:

The Bible is presented as a seamless book; the way it is read is unproblematic; the historical context of both the then and the now is subordinated to such an extent to the supernatural worth of the Bible that their importance shows through nowhere. (Lombaard 2012:123)

The Bible is indeed perceived as a grand narrative in conservative Adventism; a singular work written by the hand of many writers over many centuries who were ultimately inspired to pen the thoughts the Holy Spirit instilled (Neufeld 1976:1237; Pfandl 2010:1-5). This, however, does not mean that there is no recognition of the difference in context of the biblical narrative and the modern application of the principles encountered in it (Du Preez 2006:178-194).

That having been stated, Conservative Adventism does not recognise any contextual motivation for a distinction or change in observance of the Sabbath from the Old Testament era to today (Bacchiocchi 1998:89-90; Bates 2009:12-18; MacCarty 2011:14-40). Just as no change in any of the other nine Commandments are valid, so the fourth is understood to be valid and binding on all the faithful. This understanding of the unchanged status of the Sabbath puts the Old Testament on an equal footing with the New Testament, especially as far as Sabbath observance, and therefore Sabbath spirituality, is concerned.

⁷³ Lombaard (2012:1-26) discusses ten possible reasons for the lack sourcing Christian Spirituality from the Old Testament.

3.1 The Creator, Sabbath and Creation

The Creator, creation and the Sabbath have a strong relation to one another which becomes evident when the creation narrative of Genesis 1-2:4a is considered (Lichtenwalter 2011:293). The creation account seems to capture much more than meets the eye at first glance.

3.1.1 Seven

Seven has been a number of great significance since antiquity, not only in the Ancient Near Eastern cultures such as the Hebrews and the Babylonians, but also amongst peoples from Europe, the British Isles, India and China (Douglas 1990:845; Horn 1979:1009).⁷⁴ Its eminence is also found in more than just the religious environment and is widely recognisable in nature, physiology, chemistry, sound, music and even colour (Bullinger 2003:3-19).

In Scripture the number seven resembles perfection, completion, fullness and fulfilment (Bullinger 2003:158; Douglas 1990:845; Gaffin 2009:31; Horn 1979:1009). Seven does not always symbolise the positive, but rather the completion of whatever the context speaks of.⁷⁵ For the purposes of the current study we will confine ourselves to the Biblical relevance of seven as it relates to creation and specifically the Sabbath.⁷⁶

As far as creation is concerned, the number seven is undoubtedly associated with “good”. The term is used seven times in Genesis 1.⁷⁷ Furthermore the term “seventh day” occurs 3 times in Genesis 2:2-3 where God declared the day blessed and hallowed because He

⁷⁴ Horn (1979:1009) claims that the “widespread recognition attached to the number 7 implies that the concept was already well known and firmly established in the thinking of people before the dispersion of races” and believes its origins can be drawn back to creation itself.

⁷⁵ This is evidenced by Lamech, the seventh from Adam in the line through Cain who seems to resemble the embodiment of evil and self-righteousness, to be juxtaposed with Enoch, the seventh from Adam through Seth who resembles the epitome of faithfulness. (Genesis 4:18-24, 5:20-25; Hebrews 11:5; Jude 14-15).

⁷⁶ Throughout Scripture the numbers 7 and its multiples (14, 49, 70, 490 and similar) are prominent. Seven times during the first creation account we find a declaration that it was “good”, and the book of Revelation is saturated with symbols in sevens such as the candlesticks, churches, spirits, seals, vials and plagues. See Bullinger (2003:158-195) for a fairly comprehensive study on the occurrences of seven and its multiples in the Bible. See also Horn (1979:1010) and Douglas (1990:845) for more concise lists.

⁷⁷ Verses 4, 10, 12, 18, 21, 25, 31 in the KJV.

Himself rested on that day as an example for humanity of how the Sabbath was to be kept. This repetition clearly shows the significance of the fact that it was a completed work of creation – Bullinger (2003:167) even points to the root of the term as representing satisfaction. Seven times in the six days that empirically observable elements of creation were established, it was described as being “good” (טוב), the last of which describes the totality of created matter as “very good” (טוב מאד), which points to the completeness of the things made that relate to space. Three times the term “seventh day” is used, yet in a completely different way it is said to be good – by declaring it blessed and sanctified (Genesis 2:3). This was not a work of space, but rather of time (Heschel 2005:13-24).

Rodríguez (2002:4) quotes Wenham who expresses the prominence of the Sabbath by stating:

“[T]he seventh day is the very first thing to be hallowed in Scripture, to acquire that special status that properly belongs to God alone. In this way Genesis emphasizes the sacredness of the Sabbath. Coupled with the threefold reference to God resting from all his work on that day, these verses give the clearest of hints of how man created in the divine image should conduct himself on the seventh day.”

The term Sabbath is not expressly used when the seventh day is mentioned in Genesis 2:2-3, though the root word שָׁבַת (Sabbath) is the nominative derived from the verb שָׁבַת (shavat) which means rest or cessation. According to VanGemeren (1996:IV, 1158) and Andreasen (1972:121) it is likely that the noun Sabbath was not in use in early Israelite history when referring to the seventh day, although the practise of resting on that day was.⁷⁸ They base their view on the fact that the verb is encountered much more often than the noun in the Pentateuch. Both accounts of the Decalogue (Exodus 20 and Deuteronomy 5) do, albeit, undeniably link the seventh day with the Sabbath, as does Exodus 16.⁷⁹ There can thus be no doubt that the seventh day and the Sabbath referred to the same period of time.

⁷⁸ This understanding has the implication that Pharaoh could have been enraged by the Israelites' keeping of the Sabbath in Exodus 5:5. The root of the word Sabbath is the word used for rest in this verse. Nichol (1978:605).

⁷⁹ The Exodus 20 account has stronger ties with the Creation than has the Deuteronomy 5 account. The two accounts are dealt with in more detail later in this chapter. Exodus 16 initially implies the Sabbath when the

God's rest in creation was not due to exhaustion, or for the sake of recuperation, but should rather be understood as an anthropomorphic expression since an all-powerful God does not require or need rest in the human sense (Douglas 1990:1042; Horn 1979:935). Why would God then rest if He did not require it? Horn (1979:959) states of God's rest that:

This "rest" was not because of weariness or fatigue (Is 40:28), but because the task was complete, and the world perfect (see Gen 1:31). He found that it measured up in every way to His ideal for it, and He ceased His labors because His handiwork could not be improved upon.

Horn then argues that rest, being an integral part of the creation week, was not for the benefit of God, but as with all the previous acts of Creation, for the benefit of humanity, "particularly his moral and spiritual good" (Horn 1979:959).

Adventist scholars Andrews (2010:7)⁸⁰ and Bacchiocchi (1998:82-83) are in accord when both state that God did not need six days in which to create our solar system. God could have created in an instant, but chose "to accomplish the result in successive steps" (Andrews 2010:7). Bacchiocchi argues that it was for the sake of humanity that God created over a period of six days in order to establish the week as an example for humans to live by.⁸¹ He believes this was a way in which God willingly submitted to human limitations in order to set an example, and that it also serves as an indication of his later willingness to take on the limitations of human form for the sake of salvation of the Human Race (Bacchiocchi 1998:82-83).⁸²

instruction is given to gather manna for six days but not on the seventh (Exodus 16:4,5), and later in the same chapter the term Sabbath is used for the first time (Exodus 16:23,25,26,29).

⁸⁰ JN Andrews played a major role in the development of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, even being called the "ablest man in our ranks" and became the first SDA missionary (Collins 2005:148-166; Schwartz & Greenleaf 1995:59, 74, 98 141). Andrews University, considered the flagship of SDA tertiary education institutions was named after him (Collins 2005:166). His work referenced above *History of the Sabbath* is considered a classic work on the origin and development of the Sabbath and Sabbath observance.

⁸¹ The Seventh day is set aside as the day on which to immerse oneself in relationship with the Creator.

⁸² This condescension is also reflected in Philippians 2:6-8. The link between creation and salvation in terms of the Sabbath will be examined in more detail later in this chapter.

The seventh day was the culmination of the creative activities of God (Cole 2003:9, Lichtenwaller 2011:293; Neufeld 1976:1240). As such the true purpose of Creation comes into focus and the motivation for looking back and calling the creative activities of the previous six days “very good” (טוֹב לְאֵד) is because the stage is now set for the climax of Creation; relationship between Creator and human beings (Rodríguez 2005:9). Heschel (2005:14) reflects on the idea that the Sabbath is the ultimate objective of Creation when he quotes Rabbi Solomo Alkabez and *The Evening Service for the Sabbath* writing “‘Last in creation, first in intention,’ the Sabbath is ‘the end of the creation of heaven and earth.’” It is clear from the context that he uses the word “end” not as cessation, but rather as purpose or goal. Gulley (2003:221) believes that God wishes to draw close especially on the Sabbath and he explains it thus:

Just as Yahweh created Adam and Eve, so with the mention of the Sabbath the word for God is Yahweh, the God up-close. On the six days Elohim spoke things into existence in space; on the seventh day Yahweh comes to be with humans in time - up close. A work in time by a God up-close speaks volumes about the distinction of the Sabbath compared to the works of creation in space on the other days.

Horn (1979:960) argues that Sabbath was not meant to be spent in idleness and states that a holy convocation was called for on the Sabbath according to Leviticus 23:3 and Ezekiel 46:3, that point to communal worship on that day. In the same vein Spence & Exell (1977:38) point out that the rest of the Sabbath does not reflect total inactivity, but rather the “cessation from the lower order of work for the higher” referring to communion with God as the purpose of the Sabbath. Even as early as the times of the reformation scholars, among them Calvin (1984:103-104), understood the Sabbath to be about worship; a time to “more readily apply their minds to the Creator of the world”.

During the first six days the physical space in which mankind was to live was created and on the seventh, time to worship, time to commune with God (MacCarty 2011:12-13,67-68)⁸³.

⁸³ Heschel (2005:13-24) reflects on the Sabbath as a Palace in time and also refers to the Sabbath as “a sanctuary in time”. The ultimate work of creation is a work of time, and not space as with the preceding six days.

True to the principle of seven, mankind's strive for perfection, can only be complete, can only reach fullness and fulfilment, when it is in relationship with the Creator (Gane 2003:13,19; Lichtenwalter 2011:293). That is what Sabbath, what the seventh of week days is all about. Heschel (2005:54) declares that the "world would not be complete if the six days did not culminate in the Sabbath" and that the Sabbath "does not represent the substance but the presence of God, His relationship to man" (Heschel 2005:60).

3.1.2 The Weekly Cycle

Almost all divisions of time are based on the movement of heavenly bodies.⁸⁴ The cycles of the earth around its axis and around the sun determine days and years and the cycle of the moon in relation to the earth and the sun determines months. There is, however, no cycle of the heavenly bodies that determines the week (Cassuto 1967:244; Gane 1999:315; 2003:13; Heschel 2005:10; Horn 1979:959; Sarna 1991:111). Some scholars claim this lack of a celestial metronome to determine the weekly cycle as evidence that God's act of Creation, as well as the declaration of the seventh day as a day blessed and sanctified, are the only authority for the seven day weekly cycle which is evident throughout Ancient Near Eastern cultures (Horn 1979:959).⁸⁵

Some scholars, among them Ratzlaff (1990:22-24) and Pipa (Donato 2011:121) who are arguably the most prominent, claim that the formula established in Genesis 1 of specifying "evening and morning" is obviously absent in Genesis 2:1-4a, and in their understanding this proves that the week of creation was not cyclical, but the seventh day or Sabbath state was designed by God to be continual. They claim that this state was interrupted by the fall of man, but will be implemented again after the consequences of sin has been dealt and done away with.

In answer to this argument, and consistent with the Conservative Adventist view, Gane (2003:13) shows that cyclical time was established even before human beings were created.

⁸⁴ Years, months and days according to the earth's rotation around the sun, the moon's rotation around the earth and the earth's rotation around its own axes respectively.

⁸⁵ As was evident in Chapter 1 not all the Ancient Near Eastern cultures follow a consecutive weekly cycle. Some determine the weekly cycle according to the new moons, thus following a lunisolar calendar. Weeks are thus reset every month according to the new moon. This would cause months to end with an incomplete week where the new week starts after the previous week ended.

On the first day light and darkness are separated and a cyclical day-night routine was established. Furthermore, the absence of the evening-morning reference in no way proves the continuance of the seventh-day state, but serves as a literary device used to emphasise the difference between the preceding six days and the seventh and highlighting the seventh amongst days (Cole 2003:7; Donato 2011:13-14)⁸⁶. This idea is supported by the fact that the sevenfold reference to the first six days as being “good”⁸⁷ binds them as a unit different to the remaining day, while God’s act of blessing and consecration of the seventh indicates its eminence (Genesis 2:3).

Yet another indication to the cyclical nature of the seventh day is found in the blessing pronounced on it in the light of the blessings found in Genesis 1. Gulley (1998:339) answers scholars such as Carson (1982:28,34) and Ratzlaff (1990:21) who argue that Sabbath had its origin in the Ten Commandments given to Israel, by pointing out that God’s blessing of the seventh day has to be understood also in the light of the two prior blessings found in Genesis 1:22 and 28 where animals and humans were blessed. He quotes Murphy who stated that “the solemn act of blessing and hallowing is the institution of a *perpetual order* of seventh day rest: in the same manner as the blessing of the animals denoted a *perpetuity* of self-multiplication, and the blessing of humanity indicated further a *perpetuity* of dominion over the earth and its produce” (emphasis added). Cole (2003:7) and Gane (2003:12; 1999:314) agree that the blessings pronounced on both animals and humans with the accompanying mandate to multiply, constitute a perpetual cycle; this would indicate that the blessing of the seventh day also implies a perpetuation of the weekly cycle culminating in the consecutive seventh days.

Heschel (2005:75) understood the significance and pre-eminence of the day by highlighting the way God chose to put emphasis on it; “[t]hings created in six days He considered *good*, the seventh day He made *holy*”. The seventh day having been mentioned three times in verses 2 and 3 of Genesis 2 points to the importance of this day in the specific sequential

⁸⁶ This literary device is also used elsewhere in Scripture i.e. in the book of Amos (Shalom 1991:76). The first six days has a parallel between the first and second set of three days and the seventh day fall outside of this parallel which further emphasize the difference to the preceding days.

⁸⁷ Genesis 1:4, 10, 12, 18, 21, 25 and 31 creates a numerical symbol of completion of the physical aspects of Creation.

rhythm of the week itself as instituted by God (Bacchiocchi 1998:83; Donato 2011:13).⁸⁸ He did not only bless the day, He also sanctified it, emphasizing even more the holiness of this day in His economy since the Sabbath was the first of all that was created to be sanctified (Bacchiocchi 1998:86-87; Donato 2011:13).

3.1.3 Sabbath as Creation Ordinance

The significance of the Sabbath as a creation ordinance lies in the fact that it could impact the validity of the observance of Sabbath today as it would no longer be a law given only to the Jews, but would be applicable to and for the benefit of all of humanity (Bacchiocchi 1998:61).⁸⁹ Arguably the greatest argument against the Sabbath as a creation ordinance is the lack of an explicit commandment in Genesis 2:1-4a to keep the Sabbath (Bacchiocchi 1998:75; Keil & Delitzch 1978:I(i), 119). When rejecting the creation origin, the institution of the Sabbath as an observance expected from human beings is transferred to the time of the Exodus as there, for the first time, the explicit command is encountered in chapter 20 (Carson 1982:28,34; Keil & Delitzch 1978:I(i), 119; Ratzlaff 1990:21).⁹⁰

Even without the express verbal commandment many scholars believe that man, having been created in the image of God, followed His example as set in Genesis 2:2-3 as a principle to set their lives by (Bacchiocchi 1998:76-78; Cole 2003:8-9; Donato 2011:12). Calvin claims that by Gods own keeping of the Sabbath in resting on the seventh day, it was implicitly commanded that humanity must observe the seventh day in imitation of the Creator (Gaffin 2009:30).⁹¹ Rodríguez (2002:2) emphatically states that the Sabbath originated at the end of the creation week as “an expression of the divine will” for the purpose of establishing a time for humans to enter into “deep personal communion with the Creator”. The expectation

⁸⁸ Baab (2005:101) holds a view in stark contrast to this view by claiming that the Sabbath keeper can choose not only the day, but even the timeframe of the Sabbath.

⁸⁹ It is recognised here that not all scholars who accept Sabbath as a creation ordinance necessarily agree that it should be observed in the New Testament age.

⁹⁰ It is significant to note Carson’s inconsistency in hermeneutics when it comes to creation ordinances. He rejects the Sabbath as a creation ordinance due to the lack of an explicit command, yet accept marriage as a creation ordinance when it, too, lacks an explicit command (Carson 2002:105-106). This variable application of hermeneutic principle is cause for concern as to the true motivation for rejecting the Sabbath as creation ordinance.

⁹¹ Keil & Delitzch (1978:I(ii), 120-121) strongly oppose the idea of Sabbath keeping as an observance done in imitation of God, but promote the idea that it was a blessing given them to provide rest from work that was no longer that which God gave them to do.

was for humanity to do as God did since humans were created in His image. LaRondelle (1971:72) explains it thus:

God's rest then means His ceasing the work of creation in order to be free for the fellowship with man, the object of his love, for the rejoicing and celebration of His completed work together with his son on earth, *the imago Dei*, his festive partner.

MacCarty (2011:12) and Bacchiocchi (1998:76) both oppose the Sinai origin of the Sabbath command and point to the existence and knowledge of God's laws before the exodus from Egypt. They rightly consider the accounts regarding men such as Cain and Abel (Genesis 4:6-11), Noah (Genesis 6:6-9), Abraham (Genesis 18:23, 26:5) and Joseph (Genesis 39:9) as evidence of this knowledge and/or existence. Even the destruction of almost all of humanity by a flood because of their wickedness (Genesis 6:5) alludes to the existence of a system that established and determined what was good and right or bad and wrong. Such a system could not have originated from man, but only from God, since the contravention thereof was considered sin against God (Genesis 39:9). All of these accounts point to a pre-Sinai set of governing principles that has a direct relation to what was later explicitly codified at Sinai as the Ten Commandments. The implication is that the express commandment lacking from Genesis does not constitute proof that it was not expected of humans to observe the Sabbath. In fact, when the commandment is encountered in Exodus 20:8, it explicitly states that one is to remember the Sabbath, which implies pre-existence and prior knowledge of "what had been an obligation from the beginning" (Childs 1974:316; Rodríguez 2002:5).

The founding members of the Seventh-day Adventist Church and early Adventist pioneers came to believe in the observance of the seventh-day Sabbath, an institution understood to be a creation ordinance (Andrews 2010:10-20; Knight 2004:39-42; Schwartz & Greenleaf 2000:56-59; Loughborough 2013:136-145). Among the first pioneers to have observed the Sabbath was Joseph Bates, who stated in his tract *The Seventh Day Sabbath, a Perpetual Sign* that "we understand that God established the seventh day Sabbath in Paradise"⁹², on

⁹² As highlighted in Chapter 1, conservative Adventism has a literal interpretation of the creation accounts and do not ascribe Genesis 1-11 to the Mythological kade as many other scholars do. Thus Bates' quote here is an

the very day he rested from all his work” (Bates 2009:8). This view remained throughout the development of the SDA Church and is still reflected in the writings of modern SDA scholars such as Bacchiocchi (1998:62-63), Cole (2003:8-9), Gane (2011:3), Gulley (1998:338-340), Horn (1979:959), MacCarty (Donato 2011:11-14) and Neufeld (1976:1237).

The view that Sabbath is a creation ordinance is not unique to SDA’s. Many other scholars over the Christian Age have also recognised the origins of the Sabbath as having been instituted at Creation (Donato 2011:119-123; Douglas 1990:1042; Gaffin 2009:141,149⁹³; Heschel 1975:10,14; Von Rad 1972:61-63; Vos 1948:159).⁹⁴ Although Calvin never used the term “creation ordinance”⁹⁵, it is evident and implicit in the *Institutes* that he agreed with the principles which are consistent with recognising the Sabbath as such (Gaffin 2009:30-32).

The weekly Sabbath as a creation ordinance also sets it apart from the ceremonial Sabbaths detailed in Leviticus 23. Rodríguez (2005:1-18) claims that the ceremonial Sabbaths were all associated with specific sacrifices to be made on days determined according to the new moons. Unlike the weekly Sabbath, the ceremonial Sabbaths were dependent on the lunar cycle and all of them pointed to and reached their fulfilment in Christ. He does recognise the fact that certain sacrifices were associated with the seventh-day Sabbath⁹⁶, but as a creation

example of how conservative Adventists understand the Garden of Eden to be a real locality where actual historical events took place.

⁹³ Gaffin studied Calvin’s application of the fourth Commandment and pointed out how he would argue for the Sabbath as a creation ordinance against Anabaptists but against it when reflecting on Rome.

⁹⁴ The association of Sabbath with the seventh day of Creation does not in and of itself mean that it is viewed as a literal day or, if so, as the last day of the week, or of the observance practices of the Sabbath. Von Rad (1972:62-63) states that the “Sabbath at Creation, as the last of the creative days, is not limited” and continues to point to its protological and eschatological relevance which has much more than the literal day at heart. Pippa (Donato 2011:73-74, 119-123) argues against the observance of the seventh day Sabbath but still agrees that Sabbath was instituted at Creation. Arand (Donato 2011:93, 216-261) also acknowledge the creation origin of the Sabbath, but has a completely different interpretation of its practice in the light of Luther’s interpretation of the fourth commandment. Heschel (1975:21) even states that “[t]he Sabbath preceded creation and the Sabbath completed creation; it is all of the spirit that the world can bear”. These views do however not impact the fact that all of the mentioned scholars also make the connection between the seventh day of Creation and the Sabbath.

⁹⁵ The phrase was not in use during the era Calvin lived in and only came into use some time later.

⁹⁶ Numbers 28:9-10 speaks of additional sacrifices to be performed on the seventh-day Sabbath. This additional sacrifice is what Jesus alluded to in Matthew 12 when He answers the charges against the disciples and is discussed in more detail in the next chapter.

ordinance the weekly Sabbath existed long before the ceremonial Sabbaths, while in Eden animal sacrifice was unthinkable.

He explains:

Sacrifices were associated with the Sabbath only after the covenant was made and the sacrificial system was instituted in Israel. Sacrifices are not an indispensable component of Sabbath observance in the Bible; it could clearly be kept independent of them. (Rodríguez 2005:9)

The seventh day was blessed, indicating the benefit it holds for those entering into the rest it offers. That blessing did not have God in mind, but rather humanity (Rodríguez 2002:3). Where rituals for the sanctification of people and things abound in Scripture, the sanctification of time is a work of God alone; there is no prescribed ritual for humans to sanctify time. Humans can, notwithstanding, preserve the holiness of the day God sanctified by observing it as such and by following “the Exemplar's archetypal pattern” which was set at creation (Rodríguez 2002:3-4).

The Sabbath as a creation ordinance would also imply that the combined blessing and sanctification of the day is meant for all of humanity. Sabbath restored in eternity (Isaiah 66:23) supports this idea since “all flesh” will then come to worship before God and benefit from the blessing of the day in restored relationship with God (Rodríguez 2002:8).

3.1.4 The Sabbath Test

Exodus 16 contains a fascinating test, based on Sabbath principle, even before the codifying of the Decalogue. Rodríguez (2002:4), when discussing Exodus 16, argues that “The ease with which the narrative flows and the almost casual way in which the Sabbath is introduced have suggested to a number of scholars that the narrative presupposes the Sabbath institution.” Sabbath was thus an existing practice amongst the Israelites which ties in with the previously view held in Adventism that the rest spoken of in Exodus 5:5 refers to Sabbath observance (Nichol 1978:I, 519-520; White 2005:258, 757). Exodus 16:4 states “Then said the LORD unto Moses, Behold, I will rain bread from heaven for you; and the people shall go out and gather a certain rate every day, that I may prove them, whether they will walk in my law, or no.” The provision of manna was not without responsibility on

the side of the receivers thereof. The test was a test of obedience to see whether the people would adhere to the instructions regarding gathering the manna which are given in brief in verse 5 but expounded in more detail in verses 16 through 30 (Keil & Delitzch 1978:I(ii), 64-65). Childs (1974:290) argues that the way the theme is introduced without an express command in Exodus 16 is evidence that “the existence of the Sabbath is assumed by the writer”. The narrative is concerned with the how of Sabbath observance, not whether it should be observed or not.

These instructions are referred to as God’s law (verse 4), which was not codified in terms of the written Ten Commandments yet, and Moses gave specific instruction that preparation must be made the day before the Sabbath day so that no work of gathering or preparation would be necessary on the seventh day (verse 23). The people seemed to have failed the test from the very beginning, not observing the Sabbath as the Lord commanded (Exodus 16:27). Significant also is the fact that God regards the going out to gather manna on the seventh day, when no manna was to be found, as a violation of “my commandments and my laws” (Exodus 16:28).

The manna that was provided on the sixth day, later referred to as the preparation day (Mark 15:42; John 19:31), was of double measure and did not stink or breed worms on the Sabbath day as it did on other days when it was left over, a miracle⁹⁷ that further shows the significance of the seventh day in God’s regard (Exodus 16:20,24).⁹⁸ The parallel between the work to be done gathering manna during the six days and the six days of work during creation is unmistakable, while the very next day is referred to as the “holy Sabbath unto the Lord” in Exodus 16:23, which reflects Genesis 2:2-3. The form and function of the Sabbath in Exodus 16 mirror the seventh day of the creation week. In addition, the term

⁹⁷ Keil & Delitzch (1978:I(ii), 69-74) and Nichol (1978:I, 577-578) acknowledge and reject the notion that the manna was a natural occurrence referred to as tamarisk “manna” citing several differences in the nature of and characteristic appearance of the biblical and natural phenomenon.

⁹⁸ Keil & Delitzch (1978:I(ii), 68-69) is of the opinion that the conduct of the people in having to be taught how to behave regarding the manna is proof that they were “not acquainted with any sabbatical observance at that time”. I strongly disagree since the principles regarding manna would not have been applicable until there was provision of manna and, as Nichol (1978:580) states “the Israelites had largely lost sight of God’s holy day during their sojourn in Egypt” as they later also did when in exile in Babylon. Furthermore the view that the Sabbath was “raised into a legal institution” only with the codifying of the Decalogue completely disregards God’s view that it was a commandment and a law and reflects on God’s character as being unfair in expecting legal adherence to instructions that was not law yet.

Sabbath is used for the first time to refer to the seventh day, while the other days are merely referred to by numeral (Genesis 16:23,26; Nichol 1978:I, 578).

In the light of what the Sabbath is all about as revealed in 3.1.1, it is noteworthy that once again God provides all week long, and in double measure on the sixth day to accommodate for the Sabbath, yet on the Sabbath the focus is not on the miraculous provision, but on the miracle working Provider. The provision is not given on the Sabbath so it does not draw the attention away from the Provider.

A pot⁹⁹ of manna was to be kept and was later placed in the Ark of the Covenant as a reminder of God's provision to his people on their sojourn through the desert (Exodus 16:33). The significance of adherence to this instruction will become clear later in this study.

3.1.5 Sabbath and the Decalogue (Exodus 20)

According to Exodus 20:11 the motivation for remembering the Sabbath is "for in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day: wherefore the LORD blessed the sabbath day, and hallowed it." We are thus pointed to the act of creation and the establishment of the day of rest, the Sabbath day, at the end of that creation week (Andrews 2010:29-33; Bates 2009:10; MacCarty 2011:62-65; VanGemeren 1996:I, 1158¹⁰⁰; Vos 1948:155).

The pre-existence of the Sabbath is implied by the fact that the fourth Commandment starts with the word "Remember" and shows that the writer assumes prior knowledge of the significance of the day (Bates 2009:10; Cassuto 1967:186; Childs 1974:290; Nichol 1978:I, 604). Rodrigues (2002:5) adds that the retrospective remembrance calls to mind the prospective obligation of observance which brings it into the present as a continual awareness of the fact that God created everything. The universality of the Sabbath is evident also in the fact that the Sabbath blessing of rest is extended to animals (which has no national affiliation). Fretheim (1991:229) concurs and amplifies the consequences when

⁹⁹ According to Hebrews 9:4 it was a golden pot.

¹⁰⁰ VanGemeren does point to the Creation as origin for the Sabbath but he expressly denies that it sets a sequence for observance when he states "[t]his link between Sabbath and creation does in no way imply that there is some divine order of creation according to which work and rest alternate".

stating that Sabbath observance is "a religious act with cosmic implications". He also sees Sabbath observance as part of the governance roll of human beings when he explains that to "keep the sabbath is to participate in God's intention for the rhythm of creation. Not keeping the sabbath is a violation of the created order; it returns one aspect of that order to chaos" (Fretheim 1991:229).¹⁰¹

The fourth Commandment reaffirms God's earlier division of the creation week into the first six days and a separate and significant seventh when it states "six days shalt thou labour, and do all thy work: but the seventh day is the sabbath of the LORD thy God" (Exodus 20:9-10a); as well as confirming once again the aspect of imitating the Creator in the rest offered on that day. The very command also points to a literal understanding of creation having been enacted in seven consecutive twenty-four hour periods of time which is used as the model for six days of working and a seventh for rest.

It is clear from Exodus 20:10 that the blessing of the Sabbath was to be extended not just to the family of the observer, but also to all those in the sphere of influence under the observer; to servants, to creatures of burden and even to strangers in his domain. This universality of the Sabbath as intended for all is clearly evident. The Sabbath was not intended to be exclusive, but rather to be an inclusive event where the zenith of Creation was for the sake of every living soul and available to anyone willing to participate (Nichol 1978:I, 605).

The motivation for the Sabbath in Exodus 20:11 points back to creation, but specifically to the Creator. The Sabbath is to be observed because God created the world humanity inhabits and all that humanity needs to sustain itself and prosper. The universal intention of Sabbath as a blessing not only for humanity, but for all created beings, is evident from the extension of Sabbath rest to animals as well.

¹⁰¹ Fretheim's references to "creation order" is indicative of his understanding of Sabbath as a creation ordinance which is also a perpetual one to be maintained by humanity.

3.2 The Creator, Sabbath and Salvation

The link between the Creator, Sabbath and creation has been examined earlier by considering the first instance of the Decalogue, but another link exists between the Creator, Sabbath and salvation that is not as clearly evident in Exodus 20, but comes to the fore in the Decalogue as presented in Deuteronomy 5:12-15.

3.2.1 Sabbath and the Decalogue (Deuteronomy 5)

The Decalogue as encountered in Deuteronomy 5 has one significant difference to the Decalogue in Exodus 20. That difference relates to the motivation for Sabbath observance (Keil & Delitzsch 1978:I(ii), 105). Unlike the Exodus 20:11 rendition which points to God's act of creation, the Deuteronomy 5:15 version points to redemption of God's people by His hand.

And remember that you were a slave in the land of Egypt, and Jehovah your God brought you out from there with a mighty hand and with a stretched-out arm. Therefore Jehovah your God commanded you to keep the sabbath day. (MKJV, Deuteronomy 5:15)

The focus in Deuteronomy 5:15 is on redemption, not creation. Although this link between the Sabbath and redemption is not stated in the fourth Commandment in Exodus 20:8-11, it is not completely absent in the Decalogue in Exodus 20. The Ten Words are introduced, as in Deuteronomy, with the words "I am the LORD thy God, which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage." Keil & Delitzsch (1978:I(ii), 113-114) rightly state that this declaration serves as a preamble in Exodus 20:2 as it does in Deuteronomy 5:6 and "prepared the minds of the people for obeying". It was also frequently repeated in the same or similar terms in other parts of the Pentateuch (Exodus 29:46; Leviticus 19:36, 23:43, 25:38,55; 26:13 etc.).¹⁰²

Though the Decalogue in Deuteronomy 5 emphasizes the aspect of salvation from slavery as motivation for the Sabbath, and not the creation as in the Exodus 20 account, this should

¹⁰² Keil & Delitzsch (1978:I(ii),114) argues that "I am Jehovah your God" and "I am Jehovah" serves as abridged versions of this same expression which would cause this declaration of God as redeemer to occur much more often in the Pentateuch.

not be seen as a contradiction, or even as an irreconcilable difference (Douglas 1990:1042; Keil & Delitzsch 1978:I(ii), 121; Pfandl 2010:169-173). Rodríguez argues that “[o]ne should not conclude that in Deuteronomy the Sabbath was instituted because of the Exodus” but rather that because of the Exodus we are urged to keep it. There is a possibility that the Exodus allowed the Israelites to once again enjoy a Sabbath rest since in Adventism the rest in Exodus 5:5 is interpreted as referring to Sabbath rest (Nichol 1978:519-520; White 2005:258, 757). The redemption is not seen simply as the redemption of ancient Israel from slavery, but links the creative work of God with redemption in the sense that redemption is also creating anew, or a re-creation¹⁰³ (Allender 2009:56; Cohen 1965:10; MacCarty 2011:65-66). Creation and salvation/redemption are two sides of the same coin, both being acts by which God manifested (and continues to show) his love for humanity (Neufeld 1976:1239; Pfandl 2010:169-173). Childs (1986:70) agrees when he states that “creation and salvation are two aspects of the one theological reality”.

This redemption from slavery in Egypt is further highlighted by the minor, yet significant, difference between Exodus 20:10 and Deuteronomy 5:14 where the latter specifically reiterates that the servants must be granted rest just as the master rests, which is not in like manner repeated in the earlier account of the commandment. When it states “that thy manservant and thy maidservant may rest as well as thou”, it presents a sense of equality amongst human beings in the Sabbath (Allender 2009:181). The oppression suffered in Egypt, which prevented the free worship of God, should not be perpetrated by those who have been set free from oppression, especially when they have others in their care or employ. Human beings might be in hierarchal relationship with one another during the first six days of the week, but on the Sabbath everyone is equal in relation to one another before the Creator (Allender 2009:85-86; Brueggemann 2014:70-73)¹⁰⁴. The equality in Sabbath observance was also not meant only for the Israelites. Cole (2000:223-229) shows how the Sabbath, according to Exodus 20:10, 23:12 and Deuteronomy 5:14, is inclusive of all “aliens”

¹⁰³ The creating a new or re-creation is also linked to the “new man” (Ephesians 4:24; Colossians 3:10) and “new creature” (2 Corinthians 5:17; Galatians 6:15) concepts in the New Testament which will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 4.

¹⁰⁴ Brueggemann also points to the release from debt on the Sabbatical year as a system to prevent exploitation of the poor and vulnerable and a means of assisting in establishing a more equal society rather than a permanently impoverished underclass. To prevent confusion or misunderstanding it needs to be stated that Brueggemann is not the renowned theologian Walter Brueggemann but in fact the pseudonym for W. M. McPheeters.

– an indication that the Israelites were merely the conduit through which the Sabbath was brought to all of humanity.¹⁰⁵ In this way it prefigures the idea of “all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them: for this is the law and the prophets” (Matthew 7:12). In a sense the extension of Sabbath grace to others is an expression of God’s image in us, since He first extended Sabbath grace to us. Sabbath is thus an opportunity to extend an invitation to everybody to join in communion with God.

The Sabbath commandment in Deuteronomy 5, by signifying God as the redeemer from slavery, connects the Commandments in a special way with salvation. Neufeld (1976:1239) states that the “centrality of the Sabbath, both to the covenant and the eternal Law of God, provides the basis for its significance to the Christian”. The anticipation of salvation in Jesus is symbolised in the Old Testament by the salvific activity of God with the Exodus, and is integrated with the Sabbath as the signifier of the One who saved.

3.3 Sabbath as a Sign

The Sabbath is designated as a sign between God and humanity in Exodus 31:13 as well as in Ezekiel 20:12 and 20. In these instances the Sabbaths referred to are the seventh-day Sabbath and not the ceremonial Sabbaths (Keil & Delitzsch 1986:I(ii), 269-270; Greenhill 1994:496).¹⁰⁶ This is also evident from the text when it refers to “my Sabbaths”. Du Preez (2008:17-26,155-168) provides clear and detailed guidelines on the linguistic markers that indicate which of the two categories of Sabbaths the Bible refers to, and the cases at hand are undeniably weekly Sabbaths.

According to Spence & Exell (1977:375) the Sabbath was a mutual sign between God and His people; “[b]y its institution he owned them as a people; by its observance they owned him as their God”. The Sabbath is thus represented as a reciprocal expression of willing relationship. Both Fairbairn (1863:216-218) and Ellison (1956:81) strongly argues that it is not merely the outward observance of the day that constituted a sign, but rather the holiness of heart and conduct that constitute the sign. It is the relational desire that motivated the observance of the seventh day that constitutes the essence of Sabbath

¹⁰⁵ The Sabbath as blessing to all mankind is further explored in Chapter 4.

¹⁰⁶ Also referred to as feast Sabbaths or annual Sabbaths.

keeping. Sabbath observance without the relational focus would be nothing but vain oblation, as is evident from what God truly desires from the ceremonies and services (Isaiah 1:11-19).

In both Exodus 31:13 and Ezekiel 20:12 God states that the Sabbath is a sign of the sanctification of His people, which brings to memory the aspect of redemption of His people from slavery as expressed in both versions of the Decalogue (Exodus 20:2; Deuteronomy 5:6,15) – sanctification in terms of a separation, a setting apart, or a taking out of. Sabbath observance is therefore a willing physical, emotional and psychological rest and separation of self from the world's demands and pressures in order to commune with a holy God in whom we are spiritually set aside.

Cohen (1965:8) views the providence of the manna and the way God provided the double portions on the sixth day, with no manna being given on the seventh day, as a way Sabbath principles were taught “in a visual and physical way” during the forty year sojourn of Israel through the desert. We have already considered the Sabbath as a test of obedience (Exodus 16:4-5, 21-30) before it was codified in the Decalogue. The observance of Sabbath was a sign of recognition that (1) God was the Creator (Exodus 20:8-11), (2) God was Saviour of his people (Deuteronomy 5:12-15), and (3) the observers' obedience was a test that proved their loyalty to and belief in God (Exodus 16:4-5, 21-30). Not observing the Sabbath was logically then a rejection of the relationship and belief in God as Creator and Saviour.

We have already considered the reasons why there is no valid connection between the biblical Sabbath and seemingly related terms and concepts encountered amongst other nations that formed part of the Ancient Near Eastern culture in Chapter 2. It is, however, necessary to refer to one scholar here who addresses the specific aspect of the Sabbath as a sign in relation to the nations the Israelites lived amongst. Kohler (1917:214) points out that the motive of the “Mosaic Code” was to distinguish Israel from their neighbours. For that reason he argues:

Had the Sabbath been really known in Babylonia as a holy day outside of the priestly cult, the Biblical Sabbath could never have been made the sign of the

covenant, or a mark distinguishing the Jewish people from the rest, as is already done by Deutero-Isaiah and by Ezekiel.

Ancient Near Eastern culture does, however, hold a significant feature that supports the Sabbath as a sign of covenant between God and his people. Kline (1963:13-15) points out that the 10 Commandment law given to Moses had similarities to treaties signed in the Ancient Near Eastern in that the initiator of such a treaty was identified in the middle of such documents.¹⁰⁷ These documents each bore a seal that provided the name, title and territory of the initiator, which verified the document as authentic. References to such, or similar, seals in Scripture are found in 1Kings 21:8 and Esther 8:8.

The placement of the Sabbath commandment in the centre of the 10 Commandments signifies it as the seal of God as initiator of the covenant. Kline (1960:138-139) explains:

As a further detail in the parallelism of external appearance it, is tempting to see in the sabbath sign presented in the midst of the ten words the equivalent of the suzerain's dynastic seal found in the midst of the obverse of the international treaty documents. Since in the case of the decalogue, the suzerain is Yahweh, there will be no representation of him on his seal. But the sabbath is declared his "sign of the covenant" (Exod. 31:13-17). By means of the sabbath, God's image-bearer [Gen 1:26-27], as a pledge of covenant consecration, images the pattern of the divine act of creation which proclaims God's absolute sovereignty over man. God has stamped on world history the sign of the sabbath as his seal of ownership and authority.

This does not mean that the fourth Commandment is more important than the other nine; it is, however, the only commandment that has all the identifying elements of a sovereign; "the LORD [name] made [title: creator] heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is

¹⁰⁷ A historical example dated between 1250-1220 B.C, some 200 years after the accepted date of the Exodus according to Adventist scholars, is a clay tablet on display in the Louvre Museum in Paris. It details an agreement between, king of the Hittites and his vassal, the king of Ugarit and bears Tudhaliya IV's seal in its center to attest to its authenticity, making the document official.

[territory]" (Exodus 20:11). The Sabbath thus carries all three requirements of a seal of authority.¹⁰⁸

Miller (P D 2009:117) and Brueggemann (2014:1-2) agrees with Kline in his conviction that the Sabbath is the centrepiece of the Commandments. They see it as the bridge that links the first three commandments, which speak to the relationship between humans and God, with the last six commandments, which speak to the relationship between a person and fellow human beings. This commandment addresses in the two versions (Exodus 20:8-11 and Deuteronomy 5:12-15) both these sets of relationships, and therefore forms the core or heart of the 10 Commandments. VanGemeren (1996:IV, 1159) even refers to the "growing theological importance" of the Sabbath commandment as the sign of covenant between God and his people, a view that Nelson (2002:81-82) agrees with by explaining that the two different formulations of the fourth commandment "increases the importance of the Sabbath". Mueller (2003:149), in agreement, states "the climax of the Decalogue is the Sabbath commandment".

Another clear indication of the importance of the Sabbath as a sign, is the specific mention of this central commandment in Exodus 31, directly prior to God handing Moses the tables of stone inscribed with the Ten Commandments. The fourth commandment is not only mentioned, but is detailed from verse 13 to 17, with the last verse again detailing the motivation of the Sabbath given as the creative work of six days and the rest of God on the seventh. The designation of the seventh-day Sabbath as "my sabbaths" is significant also, because of the following proclamation in the same verse; "that ye may know that I am the LORD that doth sanctify you". This indicates that the Sabbath is not just a sign to others, but to self as well. It is an act of willing association and subjection to the One who sanctified by setting apart and saving, and so the Sabbath is a sign willingly received, not one enforced.

To the modern reader verse 15 might seem extreme, since it clearly mandates the execution of the person breaking the Sabbath commandment by working on it. Keil & Delitzsch

¹⁰⁸ The Sabbath as a seal will be dealt with in Chapter 6.

(1978:I(ii), 218) view the breaking of the Sabbath commandment as a “breach of covenant”, and therefore a rejection of the relationship between God and the Sabbath-breaker.

It is significant to note that the Bible presents the Ten Commandments as having been written by the finger of God (Exodus 24:12; 31:18; 32:16). God’s writing of the Ten Commandments, on stone and in person, indicates the immutability of that which was written (Nichol 1978:I, 662). Keil and Delitzsch (1978:I(ii), 219) agree on the significance of God having written the words Himself, and add that it, along with the material used to engrave upon, “were intended to indicate the imperishable duration of the words of God”.

Even after Moses cast down the first set, God instructed him to provide the stone for the second set, but wrote on it Himself (Exodus 34:1,28¹⁰⁹; Deuteronomy 10:1-4).

The interpretation of the immutability of the Ten Commandments in Adventism is derived from the understanding that it, having been written by the finger of God, is “of divine, and not human composition” (White 1950:88). Nichol (1978:I, 674), providing some insight into the conservative Adventist perspective by referencing some New Testament texts, states:

The repeated writing of the law upon tables of stone proves it to be eternal and unalterable (Matt. 5:17-19; Rom 13:8-10; Eph.6:2; James 2:8-12; 1 John 2:3, 4; 5:2, 3).

The Sabbath, designated in the fourth Commandment and pointing to the Son of God as Creator and Redeemer, would by implication also remain immutable.

3.4 Worship of the Creator/Redeemer

Throughout the Old Testament God is recognised, presented to other nations and worshiped as the Creator of all things by many of the Bible authors (Job 33:4-6; Psalm 8; Psalm 148:5, Proverbs 8:22-26; Isaiah 42:5, Jeremiah 51:15; Amos 5:8; Malachi 2:10). God also declares to humanity through Job and the prophets Isaiah and Jeremiah amongst others, that He is the Creator (Job 38:4-9; Isaiah 40:28, 41:17-20, 45:12, Jeremiah 1:5). The

¹⁰⁹ In this verse “he” refers not to Moses having written, but to God (Keil & Delitzsch 1978:I(ii), 243; Nichol 1978:I, 676).

fact that God is the Creator of the heavens and earth is sometimes presented as the distinguishing factor between the God of Israel and other gods (Jonah 1:9).

Faith in the One that created and saved them in the past, gave the faithful hope for the future and ample reason to rejoice and praise. Nowhere is this better expressed than in the Psalms. Psalm 102 is an excellent example of how God's creative work is recalled and gives hope for the future, even if relief from circumstance only comes in following generations.¹¹⁰ Similar examples, focussing on God's creative work, are found in Psalms 33, 96, 115, 121, 124 and 146 with Psalm 136 detailing both the creative and redemptive work of God in the words of praise and worship uttered. On the other hand, Psalms 78, 81, 105 and 135 are but a few examples of how God's strong hand in the salvation from Egypt is recognised. The motivations for the Sabbath saturate the songs of worship sung to God.

It is evident from both the message of the songs and the prominence it had in worship that the Old Testament Israel had a firm belief in the veracity of the Genesis creation accounts. They worshipped God for his great acts of which creation and redemption are foremost.

3.5 Sabbath as Worship

As has been evident in this chapter thus far, the Sabbath is all about worship; worship of God as Creator and Redeemer of his people. This worship has been shown to be a test of obedience as well as a sign of reciprocal relationship between God and his people, and as such is something that should be willingly entered into. God created the Sabbath, showing his desire for such a relationship, and human beings can observe the Sabbath as evidence of the reciprocal desire to enter into that relationship with God. The outward observance of the Sabbath without the true spiritual desire for relationship with God is, however, not keeping the Sabbath.

Since Sabbath observance was a uniquely Israelite practice in the Ancient Near Eastern that signified their belief in God as their Creator and Redeemer, it stands to reason that their breaking of the Sabbath, or neglecting its observance, signified a break in relationship with

¹¹⁰ Verse 25 calls to memory the creative work of God which forms the basis for the hope for generations to come.

God, thus not recognising his creative and redemptive work. This was often indicative of and following their worship of pagan idols (Ezekiel 20:16,24, 23:36-39).

Sabbath desecration was a very serious matter and carried a capital punishment in the Mosaic Law (Exodus 31:14-15, 35:2; Numbers 15:32-36). Many dire consequences followed the neglect of Sabbath observance, and it is also listed as one of the reasons the nation was carried off into captivity (Ezekiel 20:13,21; Nehemiah 13:17-18; Jeremiah 17:19-27; Horn 1979:960). Even after having seen and experienced the consequences of profaning the Sabbath, many did not change their ways, and measures had to be taken to ensure that it was observed in Jerusalem after the exile (Nehemiah 10:31; 13:14-22; Horn 1979:960).¹¹¹

Conversely, there are many blessings pronounced on those who would keep the Sabbath, and these blessings were not limited only to the Israelites, but was extended to all nations (Isaiah 56:1-6, 58:13-14; Jeremiah 17:24-26). This constitutes an open invitation in Old Testament times for anyone who wished to enter into relationship with God, to enjoy the blessings of the Sabbath as an expression of worshipful recognition of and obedience to God for the great works He has done in both creation and redemption.

Isaiah 58:13-14 is a clear indicator of what Sabbath observance constitutes. It is a setting aside of work and even speech focussed on material things for the sake of time and relationship with God. Rawlinson (Spence & Exell 1977:X 371) states:

The act of worship shall not be done merely from a sense of duty, because commanded, but because they are congenial to the soul of the worshipper.
A right use of the sabbath will help to form in men habits of devotion, which will make religion a joy and a delight to them.

Sabbath thus points not only to the One worshipped, but also to the two most prominent reasons for worshipping Him; his creative and redemptive acts, and is done so for the reasons

¹¹¹ Cataldo (2008:9) considers Nehemiah's regulating of access to Jerusalem on Sabbaths as "control of economic production and exchange, and control over access to goods and services" for the sake of establishing a socio-political hierarchy. This is not likely since Nehemiah was rather concerned with reinstating the system of worship that existed before and were more likely implementing the principles found in Exodus 20:10, Deuteronomy 5:14 and Isaiah 58:13.

of obedience and to express the relationship with Him as a sign of mutual, willing commitment. As such it is an expression of the worth-ship the observer places on the sign of covenant with God.

3.6 Sabbath and Eternity

Isaiah 66:22-23 states: “For as the new heavens and the new earth, which I will make, shall remain before me, saith the LORD, so shall your seed and your name remain. And it shall come to pass, that from one new moon to another, and from one sabbath to another, shall all flesh come to worship before me, saith the LORD.” Here the expectation of the observance of new moons and Sabbaths by “all flesh”¹¹² in eternity is undeniable.

The first question to answer, would be, what are the connections between the new moons and the Sabbaths, if any? Or, put simply, which Sabbath is spoken of – weekly, annual or both?

The ceremonial Sabbaths were determined by the lunar cycle (Leviticus 23), and at first glance the mention of the new moon in such close relation to the Sabbath might lead one to believe that this passage envisages a ceremonial Sabbath system in eternity.¹¹³ Since it is generally accepted that the ceremonial Sabbaths or feast Sabbaths pointed to Christ and was therefore fulfilled in Him (Du Preez 2008:89-94; Pfandl 2010b:391-397), and not to be observed thereafter, the specific mention of a cycle dependant on the new moon deserves closer scrutiny.

Du Preez (2015:112-115) clearly shows how the King James Version rendering of “new moon” in Isaiah 66:23 is not ideal as the term is better translated as “month” when considering its use elsewhere and the use of related terms as well. Translating it “month” rather than new moon” would be a better rendering of the original and is the rendition of preference in the YLT, NKJV, RSV, NASB and other translations.

¹¹² “All flesh” includes the animal kingdom to which Sabbath graces are to be extended as well.

¹¹³ Similarly the new moon and the sabbath is mentioned in Colossians 2 but unlike the case in Isaiah, the Colossians instance points to feast Sabbaths which is discussed in chapter 4.

The new moons or rather months referred to in Isaiah 66:23 had no direct connection with the Sabbaths referred to in the same verse, and can therefore not be ceremonial or feast Sabbaths, but should be translated a month, which would sever any perceived ties with Sabbaths. It follows that the Sabbaths spoken of in verse 23 has to refer to the weekly Sabbath. The daily life envisaged in eternity is in part described in Isaiah 65:21-25.¹¹⁴ That life entails labour to be performed which is at least in part similar to the work given to Adam in Genesis 2:15 (Keil & Delitzch 1978:VII, 490; Nichol 1978:IV, 334; White 1998:303-304). There would be the same need for rest that motivated the Creator to establish the Sabbath in Eden in the first place; a seven day cycle which culminates in the Sabbath, when “all flesh [shall] come to worship before me, saith the LORD” (Isaiah 66:23).

The expectation is therefore of a weekly Sabbath to be celebrated in eternity, which will not be a continuous, never ending Sabbath, but rather a cyclical Sabbath that will be celebrated as had all along been intended – as a special time for worship after days of labour, according to Isaiah 65 and 66. Rodríguez (2002:5) states:

The observance of the Sabbath by "all flesh," that is to say by humankind, becomes in Isaiah an eschatological expectation that will become a reality in the new heavens and the new earth (Isa 66:23).

This is a source of hope for the contemporary Sabbath observer that something established in the beginning, which will also be observed in eternity, can be partaken of in the present as an expression of faith in things to come.

3.7 Sabbath Language

In the Genesis creation accounts and the two renditions of the Sabbath Commandment (Exodus 20:8-11 and Deuteronomy 5:12-15) certain words, phrases and concepts strongly associated with Creation are used. The phrase “the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is” from the first rendition, and the term “rest”, as well as the concept of ceasing from work, are sometimes referred to as Sabbath language, because it calls to mind both creation and the command to keep the Sabbath as a memorial of creation (Johnston 1987:46-47; Letseli 2012:1-6; Lichtenwalter 2011:304,308,317-319).

¹¹⁴ Verse 17 of the same chapter makes it clear that the new earth is also in vision here.

Within Conservative Adventism the use of these words strongly suggest or imply Sabbath observance where these words, phrases or concepts are used without expressly mentioning the Sabbath. The use of Sabbath language is discussed primarily when Sabbath in eschatology is discussed in chapter 6.

3.8 Conclusion

Everything associated with the Sabbath points to the significance of this day as extraordinary. The numerical significance of Sabbath as the seventh day symbolises the completeness and satisfaction inherent in it. It is the culmination of creation, when the creation is set aside for the sake of relational engagement with the Creator. It points to the fact that not things, but relationship with God is the purpose of everything that exists. For this reason the Sabbath is highlighted as exceptional and in a completely different way than to simply state that it was 'good', as the previous six days were. It was sanctified and blessed, setting it aside from and imbuing it with a holiness that no other day could ever have. Since an almighty God does not require rest, the purpose of Sabbath rather points to divine interaction with human beings as the object of primary interest in creation.

This weekly cycle of seven days in itself represents God reaching out to humanity by limiting his own creative power in order to establish a rhythm suitable for man, a self-imposed limitation for the sake of relationship which would recur when God became human to re-establish the broken relationship. Sabbath is thus established as a creation ordinance which pre-existed the Decalogue.

The Sabbath was, unlike the first days of creation which were works of space, a work of time for the sake of relationship between humans and the Creator. Its observance is presented in Exodus 16 as a test of obedience to God's law, which occurs before the giving of the law in codex form in Exodus 34. This test, based on the provision of daily requirements for sustaining life, was indicative of the acceptance of the authority of the giver. It served as an indicator of submission to the governing principles of the One who provided and sustained.

The two versions of the fourth commandment highlight the two aspects that motivate the Sabbath; God is Creator and Redeemer. These two aspects are not conflicting, as redemption and re-creation are synonymous concepts, thus creation and redemption are two sides of the same coin. Sabbath observance is thus a declaration by physical expression of belief in God as Creator and Redeemer, and as such serves as a sign of relationship between God, who created the Sabbath for the purpose of relationship, and the observer, who enters the Sabbath in obedience to the call to relationship.

The Sabbath calls for equality among men before God, to give equality in terms of opportunity and time to enter into relationship with God. The Psalmist, in worship of the Creator and Saviour, calls to memory the great works reflected by Sabbath observance, both works that touch the core of every believer – irrespective of socio-political or economic status. The seventh day invites its adherents to worshipful communion with God. This is a free will act in which adherents separate themselves from the material focus of the world for the sake of that which is spiritual and eternal. It is a sanctification of time according to the rhythm God established, and motivated by loving relationship with Him.

The Sabbath does not only look back at what God has done in the past, but also looks forward in anticipation of what He will again do in the future. The vision of a new heaven and a new earth where creation will once more be what it was originally meant to be, is envisaged and celebrated, because salvation has been fulfilled and manifested universally. In this perfect new world, (the promised land), human beings will again function according to God's original intention, and in harmony with the same design keep the Sabbath and partake of the tree of life as the creation cycles continue into infinity.

Sabbath observance in the Old Testament is thus much more than a mere ritualistic observance of the fourth commandment. This expression of faith requires a living and loving relationship as it is meant to be a declaration of faith in God as a personal life-giver. Only the One who created in the beginning is able to recreate human beings when they are redeemed, and only He can create again when a new heaven and a new earth are established. Those who only by faith believed that God once created, will have the privilege

of observing the creation performed when all is again set in the order God originally intended.

Sabbath is thus observed even today as a commemoration of the creative and redemptive acts of loving God, and in anticipation of the corporate redemption of the faithful and the re-creation of a new habitat for those faithful to inhabit at the end of time. The Sabbath observance connects the contemporary worshiper with the Old Testament Sabbath observer, and bridges the gap of time by the expression of faith in the very same God who provided for the Israel of old, and can still provide for the spiritual Israel of the modern era. This observance is an expression of relationship and a willing acceptance of the government principles of the Creator and Redeemer who today can intervene in the life of the believer just as He has done in ancient times.

Chapter 4

The New Testament as source of Sabbath Spirituality

Many scholars are of the opinion that the New Testament era brought a great change to the significance and even overall relevance of the Law of the Old Testament, which includes and has bearing on Sabbath observance as well (Pipa 2011:119-171; Blomberg:305-358; Unger 1966:51-59). In their estimation the Law, although observed by Jesus and his disciples, was no longer valid after the death and resurrection of Jesus. Adventist scholars such as Gane (2003:1-19) and others argue that the moral law, the Ten Commandments, is still valid and is in fact eternal. The moral law is understood to be enhanced and put into perspective specifically by the way Jesus applied the law to everyday life situations, where the significance of the Sabbath is also brought to the fore (MacCarty 2011:9-72).

The attitude towards the Old Testament as understood by New Testament authors is foundational to the understanding of the Law in general, and even more specifically to the Sabbath. There are several different views on this matter, each supported by referencing various texts from the New Testament. One example is the way Jesus spoke of the Law and how He behaved. Smith (1989:88-93), when discussing Matthew 5:17-20, points out that Jesus specifically stated that He did not “come to destroy the law, or the prophets” but to fulfil it.¹¹⁵ Smith explains how the way Jesus interpreted the law and gave expression to it often greatly varied from the way the religious leaders of the time understood the law, even to the extent that His actions were understood to “contradict the Law and break it”, also as far as Sabbath was concerned. After offering different ways this tension can be interpreted, Smith concludes by saying “Matthew’s portrait of Jesus will disappoint anyone who imagines that discipleship should mean escape from morality into spiritual experience”. How should the perceived tension between the New and Old Testaments then be understood, as well as the tension between Jesus and the religious establishment of his time? What is the implication it holds for Sabbath spirituality drawn from the New Testament?

¹¹⁵ Nolland (2005:218) emphatically states that the term fulfil must be understood to be the opposite of annull or destroying the law within the context Jesus is quoted as using it in Matthew 5:17-20.

As far as the Sabbath is concerned, considering the New Testament attitude towards creation and salvation by and in Jesus Christ should cast light on the motivation for the Adventist perspective of the Sabbath and its observance. Many aspects of both creation and Salvation are found in all of the New Testament's constituent books. The way in which the authors and subjects of these books relate to these aspects will provide an understanding of how their spirituality was influenced by it, and can thus provide a basis for the spirituality drawn from it.

4.1 Creation according to the New Testament.

The gospels contain various direct as well as indirect references to the creation accounts as found in Genesis. Without exception they point to a firm belief in the veracity of those accounts as reporting on a real historical event.

4.1.1 Creation in the Gospels

The first verses of the Gospel of John provide arguably the clearest, most direct link between Jesus, the Son of God, and creation. John 1:1-3¹¹⁶ use the term "the Word" when referring to the Second Person in the Trinity, and emphatically state that "All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made" (John 1:3, 10 KJV). This very Word became flesh according to John 1:14, and thus the Person of the Godhead that is most directly linked to the active work of creation is none other than Jesus Himself. Erdman (1929:14) recognises that the Word that became flesh is yet another way in which the self-manifestation of God, which has always been a function of the second Person of the Godhead, even as the "pre-incarnate Christ", was expressed. Thus the incarnation, like the six creation days, was a willing self-limitation by God for the sake of mankind and serves as evidence of Him reaching out to humanity for the sake of restoration in relationship (John 3:16).

The very words used by John in John 1:1-3 call to memory that of the opening verse of Genesis 1, and also point to the pre-existence of the Son, even before the world was created

¹¹⁶ Some scholars argue that the first verses of the Gospel of John were not initially part of this Gospel, but were added at a later stage by another writer (Schnackenburg 1968:222; Robinson 1962:120-129). That discussion, though noted, falls outside of the scope of this study and will not be entertained in this study.

(Barnes 1949:173-175, 180; Carson 1991:113-117; Hendriksen 1969: 69; Keener 2003:I, 369; Keuders 1951:36; Neyrey 2007:41-7; Torrance & Torrance 1974:7).¹¹⁷ This same view is also held within conservative Adventism (MacCarty 2007:50; Nichol 1978:V, 896-898). The link established between Jesus and creation more closely links Jesus to the Sabbath as well, for the Sabbath, pointing to the Creator, invariably points to Jesus. It is within this context that the verses in Matthew 12:8, Mark 2:28 and Luke 6:5 are to be understood, highlighting the Son of man as the Lord of the Sabbath (Nichol 1978:V, 589).¹¹⁸

Matthew and Mark both record that Jesus not only believed the biblical creation account of Genesis, but also based his teaching on the authority that these accounts held in classical Hebrew culture. This is evident in Matthew 19:4-6 and Mark 13:19 (Nichol 1978:V, 453; Smith 1989:228).¹¹⁹ Being the very Creator that created, his teachings were then based on the principles He himself established at creation, and without a doubt set his interpretation and application of it above reproach as the final authoritative word on it.

Matthew also reports, and is echoed by Luke¹²⁰, that Jesus referred to the Father as “Lord of Heaven and Earth” (Matthew 11:25; Luke10:21). Any notion that this term is not related to God’s creative activity is proven invalid as Luke recalls Paul’s teaching where the term is used in direct relation to creation in Acts 17:24. Both these verses then confirm that Jesus’ worldview was creationist in nature.

We find then in all four Gospels to some extent a direct or indirect connection between Jesus and creation, whether it is in linking Him to the very act of creating, his expressed

¹¹⁷ Similarly, when John uses the word “beginning” in 1John 2:7 and 2John 6, it is clear that in John’s mind the “new commandment” he refers to is indeed not new, but one to be interpreted and lived anew as Christ has set the example.

¹¹⁸ “Lord of the Sabbath” does not refer to the fact that Jesus intended to change the Sabbath, but rather that He identified himself as the One identified by the Sabbath. More on these verses later in the chapter.

¹¹⁹ Many scholars argue that it is not possible to deduce from the Bible what Jesus believed. This view is, however, not universal, and prominent scholars, among them Carson (1982; 58), disagree, as is evident when he emphatically states that “[a]lthough some critics will doubt that we can know anything of Jesus' own views on the Sabbath, I do not share their scepticism”. He does not share the Adventist view on the Sabbath, but the issue at hand here is not the view held, but the principle that one can deduce what Jesus believed from the biblical record of his utterances.

¹²⁰ Luke 1:1-2. Nichol (1978:V, 669) refers to Luke, amongst others, as “ear-witnesses” as he received his knowledge of the ministry of Jesus from the re-telling of others. It is therefore likely that, due to the similarity of the texts concerned, the account he refers to in Luke 10:21 was related to him by Matthew.

belief in the biblical accounts of creation, or his teaching based on the principles established at creation. Invariably the Sabbath, as a memorial of creation, then attests to the work that the pre-incarnate Christ did and the principles He established.

4.1.2 Creation in the Acts of the Apostles

On various occasions during their preaching in the book of Acts, the Apostles presented God to the audience as the Creator of heaven and earth (14:15, 17:24), a belief shared by fellow believers (4:24).¹²¹ God as Creator is specifically made prominent when evangelising those from pagan heritage.¹²² The Jews already believed that God was the Creator and only needed to understand that Jesus was the Messiah.

The arguments presented when evangelising a pagan audience, as in Acts 14 and 17, are markedly different to those aimed at Jews or mixed audiences (Hanson 1967:149). To the pagan mind the aspect of a Creator God that became flesh for the sake of saving, was foreign indeed, and put the “God of heaven and earth” in a completely different category than the gods the pagans were familiar with (Lenski 1961:577-579).¹²³ It was imperative that the creatorship of God was established, since the “designation of God as creator of all is a biblical *topos*” vital to understanding his loving nature as well as his uniqueness and omnipotence (Johnson 1992:83). Presenting God as Creator also “serves as a scriptural testimony against idolatry” (Johnson 1992:249). In contrast with the pagan gods, the Creator God of heaven and earth was to be worshiped as the only true God (Foakes-Jackson 1931: 127). The existence of pagan creation accounts have been noted and discussed in Chapter 2, and indicated a vastly different creation circumstance from the biblical accounts to those of the pagan myths, which were founded in conflict. These creation accounts were the motivation for the emphasis on God as the only and true Creator when preaching to pagan believers, and served the purpose of not only pointing to God as the sole Creator, but also showed his nature in contrast to that of the pagan gods. Among the pagans different gods reigned supreme in heaven, on earth and in the sea, a concept which is strongly

¹²¹ Very significant are references that call to mind the creation account.

¹²² The reason was most likely to counteract the creation myths their pagan beliefs espoused, where creation was the result of conflict. By presenting God as creating without conflict, the character of God and how He differs from their gods were made more evident. See Chapter 2.

¹²³ This is also the gist in terms of salvation in 1 Corinthians 2:9-10 and Isaiah 64:4.

contrasted by the God proclaimed in Scripture who created heaven, earth, sea and all that is in them (Nichol 1978:VI, 298).

The phrasing of Acts 4:24 and 14:15 in which both verses refer to heaven, earth, the sea and all that is contained in it, calls to mind the Sabbath language of Exodus 20:11.¹²⁴ Worship of the Creator expressed by Sabbath observance was something foreign to pagans of the time. The presentation of God as Creator in their evangelistic efforts would invariably have been used, as would the connection with Sabbath observance, which seems most evident in Acts 13:42 and 44 where the proselytes requested the sermon be repeated on the following Sabbath.

The breaking of the Sabbath would have been vehemently opposed by the Christian Jews if it occurred in the early church of New Testament times, yet no evidence of such conflict exists in the narrative. Rodríguez (2002:14) concurs by saying that:

Hardly anything else would have created more friction between Gentile and Jewish believers than the Gentile violation of the sanctity of the Sabbath. There is no evidence in the New Testament to demonstrate that such controversy was going on.

In the light of their shared worship in the synagogues one would expect ample evidence of conflict if it did exist, thus the lack evidences continued observance.

Considering the message of God as Creator of heaven and earth, it follows that the link between Sabbath and the Creator would be part of the message. Rodríguez (2002:8-9) convincingly refutes the arguments against Sabbath as an integral part of the message by those using passages such as Acts 15:20, 28-29, and also shows how Luke, who is generally believed to have targeted a gentile audience, bookended his gospel with stories related to the Sabbath.

¹²⁴ In this regard the Old Testament reflected on God in similar fashion as evidenced by Psalm 69:34, 96:11, 135:6, 145:6.

4.1.3 Creation in the Epistles

Throughout the epistles of Paul the creative work of God is a recurring theme (Romans 1:20-25; 9:20, 1Corinthians 11:7-9, Ephesians 3:9, Colossians 1:16-17, 1Timothy 2:12-14, 4:3, Hebrews 1:2, 2:7, 11:3).

There is a strong relation between the theology in the Pauline letters and that found in the Gospels and Acts. Both Paul (Ephesians 3:9, Hebrews 1:2) and John (John 1:1-3, 14) believed and taught that all things were created by the One who became the incarnate Jesus Christ. Paul believed that the Genesis accounts of creation were authoritative to the extent that he based his teaching on it (1Timothy 2:12-14), as did Jesus, according to the first Gospel account (Matthew 19:4-6). Paul wrote Hebrews¹²⁵ 11:3¹²⁶ in harmony with what he taught in Acts 14:15 and 17:24 – that everything that exists was made by God, as also reflected in John 1:3.

The creation accounts are also reflected in the general epistle of James (3:9) where the creation of humanity in the image of God, according to Genesis 1:26-27, is echoed, showing that the author accepted the validity and authority of the Genesis creation accounts (Nichol 1978:VII, 527).

The second epistle of Peter associates the destruction of the heavens and the earth also with the promise of a new heaven and a new earth, which implies re-creation (2 Peter 3:13). Since the context of this verse is the destruction of the first heaven and earth, which comes at the day of the Lord (2 Peter 3:10-13) when Jesus returns to start the destruction of that which He created, the implication is that He will also be responsible for the re-creation of the new.¹²⁷

The epistle authors, Paul and James, can now, based on their writings, be added to the list of New Testament teachers Matthew, Mark, Luke, John and Peter who incorporated in their teachings aspects related to the biblical creation accounts, to which the Sabbath points.

¹²⁵ Conservative Adventism generally believes that the apostle Paul was the writer of the book of Hebrews.

¹²⁶ The plural form, “worlds” is indicative of the totality of the creation having been formed by God.

¹²⁷ The re-creation aspect is addressed in 4.1.4.

4.1.4 Creation in the book of Revelation

Creation is several times brought to mind in the Apocalypse by John. Revelation 3:14 introduces the orator of the message to the Laodiceans, as “the beginning of the creation of God”, who is Jesus Himself.¹²⁸ In the very next chapter, a scene in the heavenly throne room is depicted, and here the first person of the Godhead receives worship for having willed the creative work (Revelation 4:11).¹²⁹

Both Revelation 5:13 and 10:6 mention the elements of heaven, earth, the sea and the things that are therein, which is indicative of all of creation, and was previously noted in relation to ministry to pagans in the book of Acts. Letseli (2012:1-6) recognises in Revelation 10:6 the similarity to the wording used in Exodus 20:11 and identifies it as specific “Sabbath language”, arguing that “there is also a compelling evidence to conclude that the Hebrew apocalyptic John had Sabbath in mind when he penned Rev. 10:5, 6.”

John also records an angel calling humanity to worship in typical Sabbath language, which is the language of creation. It calls recipients of the message to “worship him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters” (Revelation 14:7). This reference is a quote from Exodus 20:11 (MacCarty 2011:71, Stefanovic 2002:444-445). MacCarty (2011:71), commenting on this verse, argues that “Revelation’s end-time appeal to worship contains an allusion to the Sabbath commandment.”¹³⁰

Revelation 21:1 and 5 have creation in view as well, but this time it does not reflect creation in the past, but rather a re-creation in future which could only be worked by the original Creator (Stefanovic 2002:575-576, 578-579). Envisaged here is a re-creation, once again without the stain of sin, as the original creation was intended to be. This creation is not creation *ex nihilo* as with the first, but the use of the word *καινος* rather than *νεο* indicates a re-creation from the purified remains of the first (Gemser 1959:III, 813; Nichol

¹²⁸ John 1:1-3,14.

¹²⁹ It is significant to note that Jesus always did the bidding of the Father and abided by the Father’s will. Here the unity of the Godhead is seen as Jesus, as active agent of creation once again, can be understood as having done the will of the Father by creating.

¹³⁰ The Sabbath and the Apocalypse are discussed in more detail in Chapter 6. Suffice it to note here that reference to creation and Sabbath language exists also in Revelation.

1978:VII, 889). The new heaven and new earth are then created by Him who created the first and saved it from the fallen condition it ended up in. Thus creation and salvation are again evident as the two sides of the Sabbath coin.

4.2 Jesus, the Sabbath and Salvation

The undeniable relation between Jesus as the Creator, and the Sabbath that recognises the creative work He has done, has already been established; in the Exodus 20 account of the fourth commandment the focus is on that aspect. Deuteronomy 5, however, has a different motivation for the Sabbath commandment as has been noted in Chapter 3. The focus in Deuteronomy 5 is salvation from Egypt, which serves as a type for sin (Fannin 2014:8; Manous 1906:643).¹³¹ In the New Testament this view is consistent with Hebrews 11:24-26 which juxtaposes Christ with Egypt, as Christ and sin are juxtaposed in Romans 5:21.

Gulley (1998:340-341) argues that there is no creator/redeemer dichotomy since God is both Creator and Redeemer, two aspects of the same being. John 1:1-3 & 14 also support this view in presenting Christ, the Word, who was in the beginning, and by whom all things were made, as Creator who became flesh to work salvation for man.

To a large extent the life of Christ would exemplify the true significance of the Sabbath as intended by the very Person the Sabbath pointed to, and one can draw from his observance the true realization of Sabbath in principle and practice.

4.2.1 Jesus and the Sabbath

Having grown up a Jew, it is to be expected that Jesus would keep the Sabbath as we also see related in Mark 1:21, 6:2, Luke 4:31, 6:6, 13:10. This custom was continued throughout his ministry.¹³² His Sabbath observance was, however, a source of contention and conflict as well, which is referred to as the Sabbath controversies (Papaioannou 2009:244-243). All four gospels relate stories on the conflict that flowed from the way in which Jesus himself observed the Sabbath, or what He allowed his disciples to do on the Sabbath (Matthew 12:1-14; Mark 2:23-3:6; Luke 6:1-11, 13:10-17; 14:1-6; John 5:1-18).

¹³¹ Fannin (2014:8) clearly yet simply explains the type. "We're to come out of sin, just like God brought Israel out of Egypt, a type of sin." Manous (1906:643) specifically quotes from Deuteronomy 15.

¹³² Donahue and Harrington (2002:113) point out that the dative plural of the word Sabbath in Mark 1:21 could also imply repetitive Sabbaths, and they add other arguments for this repetitive view.

John 5:17-18 is often used as proof that Jesus not only broke the Sabbath, but also that God did not truly rest on the Sabbath. Scholars such as Bultmann (1971:244-245), Cullmann (1953:89-90), Lindars (1972:218), Rordorf (1968:98) and Sanders (1968:163) all claim that by virtue of either *cura continua*, *creatio continua* or *acta salutis*¹³³ God continued working, and therefore did not rest as was supposed in Genesis 2:1-3. The implication would be that in following God's image, Sabbath would also not be obligatory to man.

Bacchiocchi (1981:11-14) shows that both *cura continua* and *creatio continua* are not sustainable in the light of the linguistics and context of the Gospel of John. The *acta salutis*, however, is sustainable not only from the text and context, but also from both Old Testament type and the example of Christ himself in the way He behaved on the Sabbath, and therefore greatly enhances our understanding of Sabbath spirituality as well (Bacchiocchi 1981:15-19).

Bacchiocchi's argument is best understood within the framework of the pericope his argument is based on, namely Matthew 12:1-8, which tells the story of how the disciples were plucking grain on the Sabbath. Jesus, though Himself not engaging in the plucking, was accused of allowing what was not permitted on the Sabbath and therefore condoning the breaking of the Law. In the light of Matthew 5:17-20, it would be impossible to claim that Jesus himself wilfully broke, or allowed the breaking of the Law. It is evident that Jesus had a very different understanding of the Law, and that He did not consider the oral tradition, known as the Halakah, as authoritative.¹³⁴ So how are we to understand Jesus' answers and reasoning in Matthew 12:3-8?

¹³³ These scholars do not specifically use these terms, but support the principles these terms represent. *Cura continua* – continual care or upkeep. *Creatio continua* – continual creation. *Acta Salutis* – redemptive activity. The three have in common the continued and continual work of God, which negates the weekly rest of the Sabbath and supports the idea of Sabbath being only indicative of the eternal Sabbath to come. These views have existed from the early church era already, and in the case of *cura continua*, can even be traced back to Rabbinic teaching (Bacchiocchi 1981:4-11).

¹³⁴ Froom (1978: II, 189-190) speaks of the Halakah "embracing minute precepts not found in the written law", which greatly added to the volume of the law, and even caused disagreement between opposing groups such as the Hillel and Shammai schools on questions like whether an egg laid on the Sabbath may be eaten or not.

The plucking of wheat in a field to satisfy immediate hunger as you passed by such a field was not illegal *per se* (Deuteronomy 23:25), but in conjunction with the interpretation of Exodus 34:21, it was problematic. Senior (1998:136) states "Observance of the Sabbath rest in conformity with Exod[us] 34:21 was a constant focus of debate among Jewish teachers long before precise regulations were codified in the Mishnah", thus the practice of Sabbath has long been a matter of debate (see also Harrington 1991:175-179). The contention here centred on the difference of interpretation of the Law by the religious authorities of the time and Jesus (Donahue & Harrington 2002:113; Hooker 1991:106).

Bacchiocchi (1984:304) points out that the first argument Jesus raised came from the historical section of the Old Testament, and views Jesus as the anti-type of King David. Jesus, in his account of David having taken some of the bread of the presence, focuses on the need and hunger that David and his men experienced.¹³⁵ Many scholars view this as an example to show Jesus' authority over the law rather than an attempt to show that the actions of the disciples were lawful (Banks 1967:117; Jewett 1972: 37). Bacchiocchi (1998:157-158) and Hill (1972:211) both point out that Jesus, in fact, found precedent for the disciples' actions within the Law itself, and therefore upheld rather than superseded the Law. The issue at hand is thus the interpretation of the Law by Jesus versus the way the religious elite of the day interpreted the Law.

The second argument, however, comes straight from the Torah where Jesus rightly states that the priests were "blameless" (Matthew 12:5). Bacchiocchi (1984:304) states:

Why were the priests "guiltless"? The answer seems to be found in the redemptive nature of their sabbath work. An important function of the sabbath was to provide physical and spiritual "release" (υψεσις). The intensification of the Temple services and sacrifices on the sabbath pointed to the special release from sin and guilt that God offered to the people on that day. ... According to Matthew, Christ finds in the redemptive work performed by the priests on the sabbath a valid basis to justify his own

¹³⁵ Several commentators report on the differences between the story Jesus related and that found in the Old Testament account of 1Samuel 21 both in terms of detail mentioned by Jesus and in terms of incorrect reference to the serving High Priest (Donahue & Harrington 2002:112; Gundry 1993:141; Johnson 1960: 67-68).

sabbath ministry, because he views it as "something greater than the temple" (12:6). This apparently means that the redemption offered typologically through the Temple's services and the sacrifices offered by the priests, is now being provided antitypically through the saving mission of the Son of Man, the Messiah. Therefore, just as the priests were "guiltless" in performing their sabbath services in the Temple, so were Jesus' disciples in serving the One who is greater than the Temple.

Additional sacrifices were expected to be performed by the priests in the Old Testament sacrificial system (Numbers 28:9-10) which, seen superficially, violated the general prohibition of cooking on the Sabbath (Exodus 16:23). Jesus used this fact to defend His Sabbath activity which the religious leaders of his day objected to (Matthew 12:5). Yet when we understand that though the preparation of food was, strictly speaking, "to work", the sacrificial offering pointed to Jesus as Saviour, and a double sacrifice was expected on the Sabbath which, in the modern era where we believe in the royal priesthood of all believers (1Peter 2:9), would point in greater measure on that day to the obligation to minister Christ and the accompanying release from bondage (Deuteronomy 5:15). This aspect again highlights the fact that Sabbath is not a day to be idle, but time ordained by God to focus on doing good to and setting free those who are in some way still in bondage.

Mclver (1995:231-243) agrees with Bacchiocchi on the first two arguments raised by Jesus, and expands on the third, where Jesus establishes a hierarchy of applicable principles. Matthew quotes from Hosea 6:6¹³⁶ – the principle of mercy being more desirable than sacrifice.¹³⁷ In no way is sacrifice set aside or done away with, but it is subordinate to mercy. Mclver's conclusion is that the Gospel of Matthew wholly supports the continuation of the Law. By using the Sabbath in Matthew as an example, he highlights "the hierarchy of obligations found within the law: human need takes precedence (12:3-4), as does the holy (12:4), and mercy is more important than sacrifice (12:7). If these principles are taken into consideration, the disciples are guiltless before the law."

¹³⁶ In Hosea 6:6 the Hebrew parallel is clearly seen between mercy and the knowledge of God on the one hand and sacrifice and burnt offerings on the other.

¹³⁷ The pre-eminence of the practice of mercy over form is clear here (Nichol 1978:V, 904).

After these three arguments Jesus presented, we find the account of Jesus healing the man with the withered hand (Matthew 12:10-14)¹³⁸, and the accusation brought against Jesus that He broke the Sabbath commandment by healing on the holy day. Within the larger pericope of Mark 2:18-3:6, which conveys the same occurrences as related in Matthew 12, it is evident that the religious powers of the day were so focussed on the do's and don't's that they no longer did good on the Sabbath when opportunity presented itself. It is also significant that the man with the withered hand did not ask for healing, but that Jesus initiated the action; He did not always need to be prompted, but acted sometimes out of his own volition (Donahue & Harrington 2002:117; Hendriksen 1975:111). Jesus' answer to their anticipated accusation was to pose the question whether it was lawful to do good on the Sabbath, or evil, to save, or to kill? From this question it is clear that the intent of the Sabbath is, amongst other things, to release from bondage, to set free those who are oppressed or suffering. Strict Sabbath rule observance rather than service in mercy would violate the true intention of the day that points to the Creator and Saviour. Rodríguez (2002:11) states: "Doing good cannot wait for the Sabbath to end, because doing good is not incompatible with the Sabbath!"

Papaioannou (2009:247), in commenting on John 5:18, also agrees with this principle when he proclaims that "the healing of the sick is redemptive work and as such it can never cease". He argues that the translation of the verse is not true to the term λύω, which should be translated "loose", rather than "break". The implication would be that Jesus indeed did not break the Sabbath, but simply loosened the Sabbath from the restrictive bonds the religious leaders of the time imposed on it, highlighting the true intent of the day.

The gospel writers seem to have grouped the Sabbath healing accounts together to some extent, since it is evident from the Luke 6 account of events that the plucking of the grain and healing of the man with the withered hand did not occur on the same Sabbath, something not evident from the same account in Matthew 12 (Nichol 1978:V, 744).

¹³⁸ Although Mark and Luke do not present all the arguments related in Matthew 12, the account of the man with the withered hand follows both (Mark3:1-6, Luke 6:6-11).

Significant to note is the number of Sabbath healings recorded in Scripture:

1. Healing of the demoniac (Mark 1:21-28)
2. Healing of Peter's mother-in-law (Mark 1:29-31)
3. Healing of the man with the withered hand (Mark 3:1-5)
4. Healing of the paralytic (John 5:1-16)
5. Healing of the blind man (John 9:1-7)
6. Healing of the woman who had a spirit of infirmity for 18 years (Luke 13:10-17)
7. Healing of the man suffering from dropsy (Luke 14:1-6)

Seven healings on the Sabbath are recorded throughout Christ's ministry on earth. Approximately one third of all the recorded healings performed by Jesus occurred on the Sabbath (Bacchiocchi 1984:308; Nichol 1978:V, 744-745). The focal point of Sabbath in Jesus' expression of the day clearly focuses on the ministry to human beings and releasing mankind from bondage, rather than adding the Sabbath as another form of bondage to the suffering they already endure.

The mention of the Sabbath in Matthew 24:20 is very significant, since it seems a clear indication that Jesus envisioned the observance of Sabbath after his ascension to heaven. Nine different interpretations categorise the different views held on the understanding of this verse (Shea 2002:23-35). Within Adventism this verse does not only have a bearing on the occurrences of 70 AD, but also on apocalyptic events, and will therefore be discussed in more detail in chapter 6. Rodríguez (2002:9) rightly states that the "gospels demonstrate that Jesus did not anticipate the abrogation or modification of the Sabbath commandment during his ministry or after his resurrection".

It is clear that in all of Jesus' disputations regarding the Sabbath, the conflict was rooted in the Halakah regulations added to the Sabbath, and not in the biblical injunctions concerning it. Harrington (1991:54-55) emphasizes that Sabbath observance was a given, it "is the manner, not the fact, of Jesus' Sabbath observance" that was the issue.

The relevance of Sabbath as an observance for gentile believers is clear from the inclusion of the various Sabbath controversies in the Gospels of Mark and Luke who had gentile

audiences in mind, otherwise only Matthew would have been likely to include such narrative as he wrote to Jewish Christians (Rodríguez 2002:15). Christian Sabbath-keeping should thus be modelled after Jesus' example of service, rather than the legalistic and restrictive bondage of Jewish Sabbath observance (Rodríguez 2002:17)

4.2.2 "The Son of Man is Lord of the Sabbath"

Many commentators, when dealing with Mark 2:27-28, speak of the "Jewish Sabbath" or use expressions that exclude any other nation from the obligation of its observance, and present that as the Sabbath day Jesus was referring to (Donahue & Harrington 2002:112-114; Hooker 1991:104). They and others also question whether these verses were the authentic words of Jesus, and not possibly added by the redactor at a later stage, which would greatly impact the significance (Donahue & Harrington 2002:112-114; Hooker 1991:104; Iersel 1998:159). Others, however, believe verse 27, "The sabbath was made for man, and not man for the sabbath", to have been a pronouncement common within Jewish wisdom, as it was also reflected in those terms in the second century AD in Jewish tradition by disciples of Hillel (Donahue & Harrington 2002:112; Hooker 1991:104; Johnson 1960:68; Juel 1990:54-55). It would be most unlikely that this saying originated with the words spoken by Jesus, considering the views the religious elite of the day had of Jesus.

It is important to note that all of humanity is included in the expression, since the word translated "man" is ἄνθρωπος, from where our modern day term anthropology came, which does not refer only to one nationality such as the Jews, but to all of mankind, all of humanity (Nichol 1978:V, 588).¹³⁹ Even amongst non-Adventist commentators some hold the view that the Mark 2:27 expression has all of humanity in view, not just the Jews, and relate this verse with the creation accounts (Gundry 1993:142; Hendriksen 1975:108).¹⁴⁰ Thus it is understood by many that the Sabbath was intended as a blessing for all of humanity and established for mankind's benefit, and not that mankind was created for the sake of having people to observe the day for the sake of the day (Nichol 1978:V, 588).

¹³⁹ Buber (1946:8) similarly expands the relevance of the Sabbath from human to universal law in his understanding of it.

¹⁴⁰ Gundry (1993:142) provides an alternative literal translation of the verse at hand, which strongly alludes to creation, which reads "and the man did not come into being on account of the Sabbath". This would establish a strong link between Jesus, creation and the Sabbath yet again.

At the centre of the Mark 2:27-28 expression is the matter of authority, which some understand to be Jesus' authority as "Lord also of the Sabbath" to release mankind from Sabbath obligation, implementing a change from the Old Testament to a new order (Donahue & Harrington 2002:113, Hooker 1991:104; Johnson 1960).

There is, however, a completely different way to understand this expression. All laws have to be interpreted, and the interpretation of such laws can greatly vary when it comes to application of its precepts. In every country there is a highest authority who serves as the final interpreter of the law and whose interpretation is the final authority. Bacchiocchi (1998:158) understands Matthew 12:8 and Mark 2:28 in this light, claiming that it is the prerogative of Jesus as the "*true divine interpreter*". Jesus, the One the Sabbath points to, is therefore the One who is the ultimate Expresser of Sabbath spirituality, and He provided the perfect example of intention of Sabbath-keeping.¹⁴¹ In that sense, Jesus is both "the founder and perfecter" of the Sabbath.¹⁴² Bacchiocchi (1998:159-161) then points out how this proclamation is followed directly by the account of Jesus healing the man with the withered hand, which was not an act contrary to the Sabbath, but rather an act that exemplified true Sabbath observance as the Creator and Redeemer intended it; releasing captives from their bondage.

4.2.3 Jesus and the Manna

In Chapter 3 the relationship between the manna provided in the wilderness and the Sabbath test was briefly discussed. In the New Testament Jesus expands on the significance of the manna when He declares, "I am the bread of life" (John 6:35). He makes the connection with the manna that nourished the Israelites in the desert, but which was temporary, and merely a type of Himself who is the true bread from heaven. Sanders and Mastin (1968:193) see an unmistakable reference here that supersedes any mere

¹⁴¹ In similar vein of reasoning Pipa (Donato 2011:374-375) responds to Bloomberg's understanding of the Sabbath, and argues that the "Holy Spirit's interpretation of the Exodus 20:11" proves the point. In Pipa's case it relates to the Sabbath, though mentioned by that term only in Exodus 16, is understood to have originated as such in Genesis 2:1-3 already. The authority of God's interpretation, whether it be the Holy Spirit or Jesus, supersedes any of man's interpretations.

¹⁴² Faith without works is dead (James 2:14-26), thus the way faith is expressed or lived shows the quality of the faith. In that light Jesus, as the author of the Sabbath, also perfectly lived its intention.

metaphorical understanding of the bread, and relate it also to the words Jesus spoke at the Last Supper (John 6:31-51). The manna thus served as a physical type where the body is nourished, to be a symbol of the spiritual reality that Jesus is the nourishment we need to be spiritually sustained.¹⁴³

The obedience in observance of the seven day cycle was a test in Exodus 16. With Jesus being the fulfilment of the manna, the aspect of obedience to the observance becomes vital, also in the light of what the Sabbath stands for in terms of creation and salvation. Sabbath observance thus symbolises an acknowledgement that we as spiritual Israel are wholly dependent on Christ in our sojourn out of spiritual Egypt (sin) to spiritual Caanan (heaven). While in the wilderness (fallen Earth), we are sustained spiritually only by the grace of God supplying us with manna (Christ) for our daily sustenance.

4.2.4 Jesus the Saviour

Jesus as the fulfilment of the anticipated Messiah is the predominant theme of the New Testament (John 1:29, 36; Acts 13:23). The sermons of Peter in Acts 2 and 5, as well as Philip's teaching in Acts 8, reflect this. The central theme revolves around Him as the expected Saviour of mankind. Stephen's sermon in Acts 7 strikingly points this out by focussing on the bondage of Israel in Egypt, describing how it came about, how they suffered, how they were led out and still would not obey; how they persecuted and killed His prophets, and finally how this occurred again in the killing of the Messiah Himself. This sermon consummated in the killing of the very prophet that brought them that message, as Stephen was stoned at the end thereof (Acts 7:59-60).

In the New Testament Egypt serves as a type of sin to which mankind is in bondage as Israel was in the Old Testament. God, and indeed Jesus (Jude 1:5), saved Israel from that bondage as believers are saved from sin according to New Testament teaching (Galatians 5:1). Like the Sabbath called to remembrance the salvation from bondage according to Deuteronomy, so the Sabbath points to the very same Saviour as the one who saves mankind from the bondage of sin and death.

¹⁴³ This in no way should be interpreted that we are not dependant on Him for our physical ability to provide ourselves with the necessities of life. The very breath we take from moment to moment is sustained by Him.

This aspect of salvation is connected to the work of creation in 2 Corinthians 5:17 since only He who created humanity in the first place is able to make fallen humankind a “new creation” once Christ is accepted as Saviour. The “new man” is brought to view also in Ephesians 2:15 and 4:24 in specific relation to Christ. Gane (2011:9) highlights the connection between the Creator and re-creation when he says that David called on the Creator to re-create him morally. It is this belief in the One who created that provides hope of re-creation in Him, both now in the temporal and in the day of the Lord which would eternally establish the new creation of the faithful (1 Corinthians 15:50-54). Doukhan (1999:154) brings the associated hope in clear perspective when he says:

Biblical hope is a vision of the future which is paradoxically channelled through memory. As the event of creation is remembered, one can think of the event of recreation; therefore, one can hope.

The connection between creation and re-creation is undeniable, and both have their manifestation in Christ, and are the motivating factors for Sabbath observance.

The New Testament bears witness to not only Jesus’ own observance of Sabbath, but also his defence of claims that his followers neglected its observance. The Sabbath controversies do not point to a negation or cessation of Sabbath observance, but rather a stripping of the Sabbath from oppressive bondage in terms of its observance. It was never a matter of whether it should be observed, but rather of how it should be observed. Jesus, as Lord of the Sabbath, restored the proper observance of the day as a day for liberation from bondage, and restoration of relation with God. Contemporary Sabbath observance should reflect this essence just as it reflects the expected culmination of this sign with the eternal liberation from bondage and complete re-creation at the return of the very Saviour who created originally.

4.3 The Epistles and the Sabbath

The Sabbath and/or Sabbath spirituality is addressed directly and indirectly in various epistles of the New Testament. In some cases, like Colossians and Hebrews, the general interpretation of the texts greatly varies between Adventist scholars and others. Some of

the texts will be discussed in brief to highlight the Adventist understanding and how it relates to the spirituality derived from it.

4.3.1 Colossians 2 and Romans 14:5

Many Adventist as well as non-Adventist scholars are of the opinion that the seventh-day Sabbath has not been done away with when considering Colossians 2:16¹⁴⁴ (Barnes 1873:252-253; Gane 2003:7-19; Martin 1996:107; MacCarty 2007:192-193, 2011:29-30; Pipa 2011:146; Thurston 1962:41). This verse is often used by those opposing modern Sabbath observance to show that seventh-day Sabbath observance is no longer obligatory today (Blomberg 2011: 241-248; Moo 2008:222).

Arguably the most influential study on Colossians 2 in Adventist circles is the work *Judging the Sabbath* in which Du Preez (2008) does a comprehensive study of this verse, the context it is found in, as well as the linguistics involved. Du Preez convincingly shows that the immediate context of this verse clearly shows it to refer specifically to the ceremonial Sabbaths of the sacrificial system of ancient Israel, the only Sabbaths to be considered shadows of Christ (Du Preez 2008:86).¹⁴⁵

Holbrook (2002:72) agrees when he states:

When the sanctuary shadow system ended and the gospel ritual types met their antitype in Christ, then the whole system ceased from its historic function. The moral Law of the Ten Commandments remained, however, to define the Creator's will in the New Covenant (cf. Jer 31:31-34; Heb 8:8-12). Thus, the seventh-day Sabbath continues to be obligatory. For the Christian believer's a spiritual Israelite (Gal 3:25-29; 6:15, 16) it too is a double sign of God's creative power/authority and saving grace.

Thus, to the Adventist mind the seventh-day Sabbath is by no means negated by Colossians 2:16, and remains a legitimate expression of faith in Christ as Creator and Saviour according to conscience (Reynolds 2009:208-222).

¹⁴⁴ "Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holyday, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath days:".

¹⁴⁵ Adventist scholar Bacchiocchi (2008:248-249) is of the opinion that the weekly Sabbath is indeed in view in this verse, though his reasons are convincingly countered in Du Preez's (2008) *Judging the Sabbath*.

In similar fashion to Colossians 2:16, we also find another text often used to oppose modern Sabbath observance – in Romans 14:5. Blomberg (2011:347-348), applying the verse to seventh-day observance, does not take into account the ceremonial context the verse is found in as highlighted by MacCarty (2011:31-32). Verses 2 and 3 speak of the dietary observance, and the instruction not to judge in these matters is strikingly similar to that of Colossians 2:16. The lack of distinction between the two kinds of Sabbaths seems to be the root of the incorrect conclusions Blomberg came to, although another possibility for the day referred to also exists.

Du Preez (2015: 219) quotes from Dederen’s analysis of Romans 14:5 which argues that the days referred to in the verse are neither seventh-day Sabbaths nor ceremonial feast Sabbaths, but probably points to “practices of abstinence and fasting on regular fixed dates”. He partly bases his argument on the fact that “the whole discussion concerns ‘unessentials,’ matters in which God has not spoken clearly in His Word” (Du Preez 2015:217). Both the weekly and annual Sabbaths are dealt with quite clearly in Scripture.

In either case the context of Romans 14:5 clearly does not have the seventh-day Sabbath in mind, but rather the ceremonial Sabbaths or some other fixed dates on which abstinence from food was practiced.

4.3.2 Hebrews 4

As with Colossians 2:16, Hebrews 4:9 is often hotly disputed. To the Adventist, this verse in context points not to any other Sabbath than the seventh-day Sabbath and its continued observance. Many scholars, such as Pipa (2011:75-76), Blomberg (2011:86) and others object.

O’Brien (2010:170-171) argues that it points to an eternal Sabbath celebration rather than to a continuation of the Old Testament Sabbath observance. Staunch opponents of Church Era seventh-day Sabbath observance such as Blomberg (2011:350), Pipa (2011:153-165) and Mossotti (2001:1-12) agree with O’Briens in the sense that they also believe it to not refer to the seventh-day Sabbath.

MacCarty (2011:24-29) highlights seven reasons why the Sabbath rest of Hebrews 4 can be no other than the seventh-day Sabbath that remains in place for the New Testament era as well. Amongst other reasons, he points to the use of the term σαββατισμός, and not κατάπαυσις as the term translated in Hebrews 4:9, which already indicates the difference between the rests spoken of here and in other parts of Hebrews. Roberts ([n.d.]:10-11) points out how this term, σαββατισμός, is consistently pointing to the seventh-day Sabbath in extra-biblical writings such as Didache, the Gospel of Thomas and other contemporary writings.

Gane (1999:318-321) points firmly to the aspect of obedience to God when he links Hebrews 4 with Psalm 95. He states:

Hebrews 4 appeals to Christians to succeed where people in Old Testament times failed. The condition for entering and remaining in God's rest is belief, and that is still true during the Christian era or Hebrews 4 would not need to make its appeal to make every effort to enter that rest, so that no one may fall through such disobedience as theirs." Gane (1999:320)

Rodríguez (2002:26-28) strongly argues that persistence in faithfulness will lead to the eschatological rest the believer awaits. That does not mean a cessation of obedience in observing that which points to the One in whom the eschatological rest will be realised. In a sense the continued observance of the Sabbath is an expression of persevering faith in the One who implemented the rest at creation in the first place, and through whose work of salvation the fullness of restoration, without which there can be no complete rest, would not be possible. Holding fast to the rest in the present expresses the expectation of the fulfilled eschatological rest.

Gallo, in his study of Hebrews 4:9, shows that σαββατισμός "is always used literally" in both Christian and non-Christian sources and to refer to "the actual literal observance of the Sabbath on the seventh-day of the week" (Du Preez 2015:208).

To the conservative Adventist keeping the seventh-day Sabbath is not a burden, but a wilful expression of obedience in recognition of their Creator and Saviour, an act which is driven by love, not obligation. The Sabbath rest of Hebrews 4 indicates to them the continual observance of the seventh-day as the Sabbath.

4.3.3 The Johannine Letters

The same words encountered in the Epistle of John are used in the Gospel account.¹⁴⁶ When he opens the first Epistle, using terms such as “the beginning” and “the word of life”, it brings to mind the opening words of his Gospel account (Harrington 2002:120; Kistemaker 1986:233-234; Moffatt 1966: 1-2). He continues with the message of his Gospel account which emphasised the idea of God having created and having become human (verses 1-4, 14), and states that the original message that was proclaimed before Jesus, has manifested and found its epitome in Christ (Marshall 1979:99-101). Kysar (1986:32), in commenting on 1 John 1:2, agrees when he says that “message was made manifest, a reference to the revelation of God in Christ”. John refers to “the beginning” again in Chapter 2:7 and in 2 John 5 in the context of Christ having brought the old command into a new context by having shown the true application thereof and thereby setting the perfect example (Dodd 1966:34; Harrington 2002:178-179; Kistemaker 1986:260-261, 377-378; Kruse 2000:82-83).¹⁴⁷

This relates to the Sabbath in two ways. Firstly, the connection with the creation is generally recognised via the John 1:1-3 account. Secondly, the connection with Christ the Saviour, the one who exemplified the expression of the old commandment to such an extent that it is seen as new “in Him and in you” (1 John 2:8), is the focal point of the passages. Christ, therefore, having shown the way we should be living the command to “love thy neighbour”, lived as Creator and Saviour the intent of the Sabbath as well, to do good to others. The new commandment is thus consistent with the significance and observance of Sabbath, since it is both eternal, having existed “from the beginning”, and an expression of the true fulfilment

¹⁴⁶ Whether the epistles were written first, or the gospel account, is not significant here, but rather the similarity of language used, as the one supports the other either way.

¹⁴⁷ Marshall (1979:128-129) here abandons his view on “the beginning” held earlier and states that in now refers only to the time of Christ and thereafter. Kruse (2000:51-52) shares the view that “the beginning” in the letters of John speaks only of the time of Jesus’ incarnation.

of what the Law was intended to be as lived by Christ. This new commandment is only observable by us once Christ our Saviour is received in the believer's life as a gift of new life from God in Christ.

The epistles do not reflect a cessation of the Sabbath, but rather point to a continued observance of the seventh-day Sabbath, which was not a shadow of Christ, but still is a sign of mutual relationship. The Epistles reflect on Jesus as both Creator and Saviour, the two motivating factors for Sabbath observance.

4.4 Conclusion

To the Conservative Adventist there is no radical disconnect between the Old and New Testaments in terms of teaching, only a fulfilment of types which met antitype in Jesus as Messiah. The same reasons that motivated Sabbath observance in the Old Testament saturate the New Testament and are even enhanced by the fact that it is in Jesus that these aspects are brought to its zenith.

The worship of God as Creator continues in the New Testament, and is even brought into clearer focus as Jesus is identified as the Creator incarnate in John 1:1-3 and 14. We clearly find that Jesus believed in and based relevant teaching on the biblical accounts of creation. His disciples and believers in general also prescribed to the same.

The belief that God created the heavens, earth, sea and all that is in them was an integral part of the message to pagans in the New Testament, and was emphasised due to their prior belief in a number of creation myths. The terminology expressing this belief abounds in the Genesis creation accounts, and is also the language of the Sabbath, as is evident in the gospels, the epistles and the Apocalypse of John. The Exodus 20 account of the fourth commandment has Jesus in view, and the observance of this commandment confirms the belief in Him as the Creator, who was sent for the salvation of humanity.

Through the Sabbath controversies Jesus is shown not to have done away with the fourth commandment, but rather to have stripped from it the burdensome regulations enforced by the religious leaders of the time. In his observance of the Sabbath, which was considered

breaking the Sabbath by some of his contemporaries, He brought the true essence of Sabbath observance to light; showing what was meant by doing good and releasing people from bondage. The aspect of salvation is even more prominent in the sense that salvation, typified by the physical exodus from Egypt, has come to its fulfilment in the work of redemption performed by Jesus Christ. The Deuteronomy 5 version of the fourth commandment brings Jesus into view again, and comes to fullness in the sense that the salvation from Egypt was merely a prefiguring of the true salvation He brings to those brought out of spiritual Egypt. Jesus, being the original Creator, is also the re-Creator; the One who makes the new believer into a new creation.

To the conservative Adventist, the observance of Sabbath is consistent with the practice of Jesus, the Apostles and the early Christian community as seen throughout Acts and the Epistles, and with what they believed and taught regarding creation, the Sabbath and its observance. The New Testament also confirms that which was evidenced in the Old Testament – that Sabbath is not a day to be idle, but rather a day above all other to bring freedom from bondage to all in need thereof. As a royal priesthood, modern day Sabbath observers should strive to live the example set by Christ in his earthly ministry, reaching out to those in need.

Sabbath observance is to the conservative Adventist a continuance of the belief system of the original church of the first century, and connects them in principle and practice with the teachings of the New Testament. Gulley sums it up best when he states:

Sabbath followed both gifts, for Christ created humans on Creation Friday and redeemed them on Crucifixion Friday. The first full day to follow both creations by Christ was a Sabbath to celebrate his finished work and to rest in that work” (Gulley 1998:340).

From the testimony of the New Testament it is evident that the belief in creation as portrayed in the Old Testament accounts was a recurring and central theme. It also reflects the expected re-creation, utilising Sabbath language in anticipation of the acts of Jesus in the future. Sabbath observance expresses belief in the Creator of Genesis as the expected re-Creator of the Apocalypse.

Chapter 5

Sabbath in Church History

Four main streams of thought exist on the Sabbath in the Christian era. These four radically differing views are each eloquently argued for in the work *Perspectives on the Sabbath: 4 Views* (Donato 2011), in which MacCarty presents the view that the seventh-day Sabbath is still a required moral obligation today, Pipa argues that Sunday took the place of the Jewish Sabbath, Arand promotes the view that though a rest is still required, it is not related to any specific day, and Blomberg is of the opinion that the Old Testament Sabbath was fulfilled in Christ and is in no way binding on modern-day believers. In all four presentations Church history plays a part to some extent, and it becomes clear that the understanding of the flow of history as it relates to the Sabbath has bearing on the spirituality of the modern-day believer.

This chapter is by no means an exhaustive study of changes and attitudes towards the Sabbath throughout Church history, but serves to point out that throughout Church history there has in every age been a group, or groups, committed to the observance of the seventh-day Sabbath. These groups were most often the minority, but as will be shown, their commitment to the Sabbath was on many an occasion a commitment that led to poverty, social exclusion and even death.

5.1 The Early Church Records of Sabbath Observance

The historical record shows that there was never a time when the issue of Sabbath observance was universally settled in Christianity.

Pipa (2011:146-153) claims that Paul “abrogated the observance of the seventh-day Sabbath” and that the “New Testament church immediately began to worship on the first day of the week”.¹⁴⁸ He rightly refers to the works of second and third century Fathers such

¹⁴⁸ He references Acts 20:7 in this regard: “And upon the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul preached unto them, ready to depart on the morrow; and continued his speech until midnight”. It is noteworthy that Acts 2:46 indicates that the breaking of bread amongst the early believers was a daily occurrence and therefore does not necessarily point to a specific day being promoted.

as Ignatius, Justin Martyr, Irenaeus and Tertullian who all believed that the seventh-day Sabbath was no longer to be observed. Some, like Ignatius, promoted the Lord's Day, understood to be Sunday, as the day to be observed in its stead. Rordorf (1968:237), Schaff (1985:202) and Stott (Beckwith & Stott 1980:52) are convinced not only that the day was changed, but also that it was a change attributable, in origin, to the apostles.

If this was indeed the case, one would expect a universal acceptance of the Lord's Day (believed to refer to Sunday) amongst all new believers to Christendom, and a radical separation of worship between traditional Jews who have accepted Christianity and other Christians. This is, however, not the case. On the contrary, we find that there is ample evidence of the two groups worshipping together even into the fourth century AD (Mayo 2006:340-341). This relationship was not free from strain, as is evident from the Birkat Haminim, or "blessing against heretics", which was introduced in the late first century to the 18 prayers recited in the synagogue, and are believed by some to have been aimed at the Christian believers who attended the synagogues (Heemstra 2010:179-212).¹⁴⁹

The socio-political environment of the first century is pivotal to understanding the dynamics between the fledgling Christian religion, Judaism and the multitude of pagan religions that flourished all over the then-known world. Judaism was known for its peculiar habit of Sabbath observance. The early Christians initially worshipped with the Jews in their synagogues (Acts 13:14, 13:42, 14:1, 17:1, 17:10, 17:17, 18:4; Bacchiocchi 1977:135-139; MacCarty 2011:23-24; Kraft 1965:32). This association was, however, not advantageous due to the anti-Jewish sentiments widely held at that time (Bacchiocchi 1977:167-185). Even before the Flavian dynasty (AD 69–96) relations between the Jews and Rome were strained, as is evident from the expulsion of Jews from Rome in 49 AD (Bacchiocchi 1977:167). The Christians were also expelled in this process, and the non-distinction is probably best

The assumption that the breaking of bread necessarily points to communion is not legitimate, as the term was a common Jewish expression to mean having a meal together (Nichol:VI, 148-149). The Lord's Supper is, according to 1 Corinthians 11:26, not limited to use only on a specific day of worship, and could therefore not be used to argue for a specific day as a day to be observed.

¹⁴⁹ The Birkath Haminim was rather a curse than a blessing. Recent scholarship regarding the nature and intent of the Birkath Haminim reveals a move away from previously held positions that it was aimed at Christians specifically and, though the gentile church was aimed at with the addition of the term "*notzrim*", it was most probably a much later (late second to third century) addition (Kloppenborg 2011:2; Mayo 2006:325-344).

attested to by Batiffol (1911:19) when he states that “the Roman police had not yet come to distinguish the Christians from the Jews”.

Christians, being associated with the Jews because of the Sabbath, wished to dissociate themselves from the Jews in order not to be wrongly associated with the rebels, as is evident from the Epistle of Barnabas, penned in Alexandria and dated around the time of the Bar Kochba rebellion (Bacchiocchi 1977:218; Johnston 2011:322; Shea 1966:150).¹⁵⁰ This epistle constitutes the first recorded account of the Sabbath being replaced with the first day, and understands the Sabbath as indicative of the rest during the millennium (Bacchiocchi 1977:218-220). The anti-Jewish sentiment reached such magnitude that Hadrian expelled Jews from Jerusalem, and also forbid Sabbath observance when the uprising was crushed in 135 AD, events which could also have enticed early Christians to consider an alternative to the Sabbath which they held in common with Jews (Bacchiocchi 1977:171; Kraft 1965:18-33; Shea 1966:152-156).

The strong arguments against Judaizing in the works of Ignatius, Justin Martyr, Irenaeus and Tertullian that are also reflected in the Epistle of Barnabas, actually point to the fact that many Christians did indeed keep the Sabbath throughout the early Christian centuries (Bacchiocchi 1977: 213-235; Strand 1971:129-146). To change the day would require a theological foundation, which is found in the Epistle of Barnabas as well as in other writings which refer to the “eighth day”, or day after the Sabbath, as the day to be observed (Strand 1971:129-146)¹⁵¹.

Arguably the most widely referenced law regarding Sunday observance is the law established by Constantine in 321 AD, yet this law does not contain any Christian religious reference, as MacCarty (2011:42-43) clearly points out when he quotes from the Codex Justinianus:

¹⁵⁰ This anti-Jewish sentiment in the Epistle of Barnabas is noted by several other scholars (Bacchiocchi 1977:218-223; Cairus 2001:117; Shea 1966:173).

¹⁵¹ The eighth day idea does not have its origin with the Epistle of Barnabas, but can be traced back to pre-Christian writings such as the Book of Jubilees (Shea 1966:159) It does, however, fall outside of the scope of this paper.

On the venerable Day of the Sun [note: not “the day of Christ’s resurrection,” but the venerable day of the sun] let the magistrates and people residing in cities rest, and let all workshops be closed. In the country, however, persons engaged in agriculture may freely and lawfully continue their pursuits.

In fact, the wording seems peculiarly pagan without a whisper of Christian motivation. Amongst other things, court sessions were not allowed to be held on Sundays except for the purpose of freeing slaves. Soldiers were allowed to omit daily military exercises, yet public games continued, which gave the day more the flavour of a holiday than a holy day (Hurlbut 1954:77).

Though this law did not relate to Christian religious observance, Canon 29 of the Council of Laodicea (A.D 364) certainly did. It stated:

Christians must not Judaize by resting on the Sabbath, but must work on that day, rather honouring the Lord’s Day; and, if they can, resting then as Christians. But if any shall be found to be Judaisers, let them be anathema from Christ. (Schaff [n.d.]:314)

This Canon specifically forbade the observance of Sabbath in favour of Sunday observance with the threat of excommunication should it not be adhered to. It would not have been necessary to establish so prominently this injunction if Sabbath observance had been universally abandoned in Christian churches from around the late first to early second century as many have claimed.

Strand (1982:323) points to Socrates Scholasticus’ *Ecclesiastical History* as further evidence of continued Sabbath observance, since it emphatically states:

For although almost all churches throughout the world celebrate the sacred mysteries on the Sabbath of every week, yet the Christians of Alexandria and at Rome, on account of some ancient tradition, have ceased to do this.

From this quote it is evident that the observation of Sabbath was the norm, rather than the exception, except in Alexandria and Rome, as late as the 5th Century AD which is the date assigned to Scholasticus's writing.

Contemporaneous with these events, history notes the rise of groups in Southern France, Northern Spain and Italy that were Sabbath-keepers who opposed the observance of the Roman Church's day of worship (Wilkinson 1997:58-70).¹⁵² Amongst the early leaders was Vigilantius, a staunch opponent of the practices of Rome such as relic worship, invocation of saints, vigils, tapers and the likes, for which no Bible mandate is evident (Froom 1978:I, 441, 819-820). Vigilantius, who resided in the foothills of the Alpine valleys which were later known as the home of the Voudois, or Waldenses, is described by some as a "forerunner of the reformation", not conforming to the precepts of the dominant Church of the day, but rather opposing it openly. He was a proponent of the seventh-day Sabbath, which the inhabitants of his time, as well as those of later times, are known for (Wilkinson 1997:75).

We find evidence of Sabbath observance, even in the writings that speak against or prohibit it, from the first to the fifth centuries – which indicates that the universal acceptance of Sunday as the day of worship is a fallacy. What is evident, however, is that various motivations, both socio-political and theological, were presented during that time to justify Sunday observance. Not all were convinced by these arguments and many, if not most, kept the Sabbath day rather than the (new) Lord's Day (Strand 1982:323).

5.2 Sabbath and Sunday – The Dark Ages

The Dark Ages are generally accepted to refer to the period from the fifth to the fifteenth centuries, a time also associated with Papal control and persecution of those opposed to its teachings. Much of the record of Sabbath observance from this period takes the form of testimony of its error, and uses terms denouncing those who practice it (Andrews 2010:245-261).

¹⁵² The reference to these groups as Waldenses are often considered incorrect as the name is said to have originated with Peter Waldo around 1170 AD. Yet Froom (I, 830-831) shows that Waldo was not the originator, but a much later figure in a long line of groups who shared the same or similar sentiments towards the Sabbath and the Roman Church.

Anti-Sabbatarian sentiments and efforts to bring an end to Sabbath observance continued from the fourth into the sixth century, as did resistance to it. The history of the church in Ireland and Scotland from the fifth to the sixth century AD exemplifies this fact. Individuals such as Patrick, an evangelist born in Scotland, but doing most of his work and establishing many churches in Ireland, and who was also later sainted by the Roman Church, as well as Columba, a product of the schools Patrick established in the Isle of Iona to teach missionaries, were staunch Sabbath observers and taught the same (Moffat 1882:140; Sharpe 1995:96). Columba's dying words are said to have been "Today is Saturday, the day which the Holy Scriptures call the Sabbath, or rest. And it will truly be my day of rest, for it shall be the last of my laborious life", which reflects his passionate observance of the day as something more than just a mere portion of time, but rather as something signifying much more (Andrews 2010:246). These missionaries evangelised with great success throughout Ireland, Scotland and even into England. Their Sabbath observance, as well as that of their proselytes, caused conflict between the churches in Scotland and Ireland and the Roman Catholic Church, which then sent Augustine to evangelise the barbarians of the British Isles (Andrews 2010:245-246).¹⁵³

5.2.1 The Roman Influence

Interesting to note is the extent some clergy went to in order to justify the change from Sabbath to Sunday. No Christian could ever argue with the change if it was an instruction from Jesus himself, and that was the exact claim made in a letter, apparently from Jesus, found on the altar by a priest presiding at the Mass in St Peters in Rome, having supernaturally been sent to earth from heaven, or so it was claimed (Meyer & Strachan 1905:201). The letter was presented to the Culdee in Ireland to settle the Sabbath vs Sunday issue. The supposed "Epistle of Jesus" was used to also frighten the highly superstitious peasants into believing that wild beasts would be sent to devour those who dare to refuse Sunday observance (Meyer & Strachan 1905:193).

¹⁵³ It is claimed that Columba passed away on a seventh-day Sabbath and that his last words were spoken in relation to the fact the he was now to rest (die) on the Sabbath as did God, a thought he considered precious and appropriate (Andrews 2010:246).

From Church History it is evident that the Roman Church established itself early on as a dominant power, not only in religious but also in political matters, especially from the fourth century onwards, but more so after 538 AD when Rome became the seat of its power (Cassidy & Norris 2007:403-425; Wright 1982:40-83).¹⁵⁴ During the fourth century the writings of the fathers of the church and the letters of the bishops were added to Canon Law, and as time progressed the Roman Church became more structured and organised into hierarchies as its size and influence grew (Cassidy & Norris 2007:394; Cassidy & Norris 2008:249-273). Though not without internal strife, through various allegiances with kings and countries the political importance of the papacy was an ever increasing factor in religious and secular matters (Wright 1982:147-185). Politics became part and parcel of the wielding of papal power.

As their power increased, the tendency developed to use secular force to impose their will and dominate their enemies and those who dissented from their teachings. Wilkinson (1997:142) says that it "is generally recognized that a union of church and state is more intolerant than a political state". Gulley (2007:39) contributes by stating that "Heretics were not only excommunicated from church, but considered criminals against the state. Hence, in the middle ages the Roman church persecuted, even with death, those disagreeing with her dogmas." He then shows how the unity of church and state inevitably led to persecution from the time of the early fathers through history to modern times.

The Roman Catholic Church considered Sunday observance indicative of their power and authority since the change from the Sabbath day to the first day of the week was their doing, as Gaspare de Fosso, Archbishop of Reggio Calabria, exclaimed at the Council of Trent: The Sabbath, the most glorious day in the law, has been changed into the Lord's day. This has not been done by the command of Christ, but by the authority of the church. (Welter 1901:274).

¹⁵⁴ The Roman Church regulated social society to such an extent that Church Courts were established and accused were brought to trial for various reasons. In some cases where legal action was only permitted by licence from secular authority it was opposed vehemently to further establish the independent authority of the Roman Church, while attempts to provide immunity for clerics of the Church from appearing before secular courts were not always successful (Wright 1982: 57-58).

This argument was effectively used to show that the Reformers did accept the authority of the Papacy, since they had no Bible mandate for observing the first day of the week, and yet claimed that their views were based on *Sola Scriptura* (Wilkinson 1997:309). Those who opposed this sign of their ecclesiastical authority inevitably challenged their authority and was dealt with, amongst other things, by branding them Judaizers for observing that which the Church considered only applicable to the Jews (Perez 2004:34-42). The branding as Judaizers of people observing the seventh-day Sabbath has been noted from as early as the days of Lucian in the second century, as Wilkinson (1997:51) points out.

Various groups throughout history challenged the Papal authority on matters of religious observance. Where preaching of precepts and principles not sanctioned by the Roman Church occurred, the perpetrators were declared heretics and persecuted. Amongst these were the Waldenses and the Cathars who were victims of the Inquisition (Cannon 1960:209; Hill 2006:210-214; Logan 2002:209-211).

Later, during the 16th century, the Reformation as such set in motion a great thrust by the church to eradicate any opposition to its power and authority. To spearhead this thrust against the Protestants, the Society of Jesus, or Jesuit Order, which was structured along military lines, came to the fore after being founded by Ignatius Loyola, himself being a former soldier (Hill 2006:261-263)

5.2.2 The Waldenses

Though the origin of the Waldenses can be traced to before the Dark Ages, and some argue it can be traced to a time even before the reign of Constantine, the main spread and effect of their teaching is evident from this time (Andrews 2010:247). The claim is made that the Waldenses were named after Peter Waldo of Lyons, a leader of the Waldenses, yet the actual beliefs held by their predecessors from the Alpine valleys from before Peter Waldo's time, lead Froom (1987:I, 836-839) to speak of proto-Waldenses to indicate the existence of groups with similar beliefs from earlier times.¹⁵⁵ The Waldenses suffered persecution due to their rejection of Roman Catholic teaching, and so, due to the fact that they had to flee for

¹⁵⁵ Froom (1987:I, 944-945) references several sources that point to a pre-Peter Waldo origin of the Waldenses.

their lives, their message and belief system spread all over Europe, to the British Isles and even into Asia Minor (Andrews 2010:248).

It has been a long held view in Adventism that the Waldenses, sometimes referred to as Sabbatati (and also Insabbatati)¹⁵⁶, kept the seventh-day Sabbath as the day set aside for religious observance (Froom 1987:I, 836; Wilkinson 1997:255).¹⁵⁷ Many other groups, who shared their views of the Sabbath, were known from earlier times, such as the Albigenses¹⁵⁸, Bohemian Brethren, Picards and Paulicians (Wilkinson 1997:208-211).

One specific belief held by the Waldenses and many of these related groups, was that the Papacy was the very Antichrist spoken of by Daniel, Paul and John (Froom 1987:I, 860-886). In turn, Pope Gregory I, in 608 AD, claimed that those keeping the seventh-day Sabbath were both Judaisers and Antichrists (Wilkinson 1997:318). The Waldenses were excommunicated from the Roman Catholic Church by Pope Lucius III in 1184 for preaching their message without express Papal approval (Hill 2006:210-211; Shelley 1982:227). Their continued resistance to Papal authority led to these groups being persecuted viciously, especially after Pope Innocent III called for a crusade against their likes in 1208 (Hurlbut 1954:141-142). Like the Culdee, the Waldenses and similar groups were known for their life of poverty and simplicity, which was in stark contrast to the growing opulence of the Roman church (Shelly 1982:226-227).

5.3 The Reformers on the Day of Worship

Though names such as Luther, Calvin, Huss and Jerome come to mind and are strongly associated with the Reformation, and the recognised date of this era is associated with the times these men lived in, some events from before their era already served as a precursor for the Reformation. Arguably the greatest effect of the Reformation was the fact that the Bible was translated into the common vernacular and people could read and interpret the Scriptures for themselves, rather than being dependant on the Roman Church for its

¹⁵⁶ Sabbatati refers to the Sabbath and yet, for reasons of rejecting the instituted Roman Catholic feast days, they were also referred to as Insabbatati.

¹⁵⁷ In recent years the issue of Sabbath observance amongst the Waldenses has been disputed in the works of Prescott (1998) and Tourn (1989) amongst others.

¹⁵⁸ The Albigenses were also known as the Cathari, which bears the meaning "pure ones" (Shelley 1982:228).

interpretation and application to religious and secular life (Marshall 2004:91). The translation of the Bible into the language of the people was, in fact, started prior to the Reformation by men like Wycliffe (Marshall 2004:84-90).

The reformers challenged the status quo and questioned the validity of the Roman church's teaching, even though they were themselves trained in the Roman tradition (Fernandez-Armesto & Wilson 1996:30-38). Their protest against Rome did not, however, address all the traditions established by Rome, and though they promoted principles, such as *Sola Scriptura*, they often did not follow through with this principle to its final conclusion. In the case of the Sabbath-Sunday change, they stopped short of arguing it as a *Sola Scriptura* vs tradition matter.

In the works of Luther the Sabbath is not considered related to Sunday observance, thus the latter does not flow from the former, but rather the Sunday is celebrated in the light of the resurrection of Christ. Arand (Donato 2011:219) points out that Luther understood the Ten Commandments to be applicable to the Christian since they express the way God intended things to be, but in his catechetical writings he interprets it differently, to the effect that the Sabbath is no longer an obligation, though the other Commandments are considered of continuing importance.

Calvin seems inconsistent as far as his view on the origin of Sabbath and its relation to Sunday is concerned. Depending on the audience he addressed, he would change his position regarding it as Gaffin (1998:25) points out when he says "against Rome he denies that the observance of Sunday is based on a Creation ordinance, while against Anabaptists he affirms it." Strangely enough Calvin, though protesting against the traditions of the Roman church in other issues, accepts without biblical mandate the observance of the Lord's Day rather than the Sabbath on the strength of the "ancients"¹⁵⁹, which also constitutes tradition rather than biblical injunction. Calvin does, however, also not strictly insist on any specific day of observance, as long as superstition is not involved in the allocation of the day (Gaffin 1998:26).

¹⁵⁹ When referring to the "ancients" Calvin has the early fathers of the church in mind (Gaffin 1998:41).

Though in staunch opposition to Rome, the day identified with Roman Catholic authority did not feature much in the rhetoric and writings of the reformers. Luther, Calvin and other reformers did, however, unequivocally identify the Papal system, and the Pope as its chief official, as the Antichrist, something prevalent and closely connected to Sabbath observance in conservative Adventism.¹⁶⁰ Before, during and after the Reformation various individuals, based on their study of the Bible, pointed to the Papal institution and/or the Pope as the Antichrist. Amongst them are Archbishop Arnulf of Rheims (Froom 1978:I, 540-543), Joachim (Froom 1978:I, 700), Robert Grosseteste (Froom 1978:I, 621-625), John Wycliffe (Froom 1978:I, 805-806), John Huss (Froom 1978:II, 113-114, 116-119), Martin Luther (Froom 1978:I, 21, 805-806), William Tyndale (Froom 1978:II, 354-355), Thomas Cranmer (Froom 1978:I, 805-806), John Calvin (Froom 1978:II, 436-438), John Knox (Froom 1978:I, 805-806, II 454), John Napier (Froom 1978:II, 641), Cotton Mather (Froom 1978:III, 150-151), and John Wesley (Froom 1978:II, 694).

A contemporary and colleague of Luther, who attended the ceremony where Luther received his Doctorate, Andreas Bodenstein von Karlstadt, has been considered a “proto-Sabbatarian” by some who consider his approach to the Law much more positive than that of Luther (Allen 2006:131-134). Allen (2006:135) also points out that “Gordon Rupp considers Karlstadt to be a ‘Proto-Puritan,’ especially in his discussion of the Sabbath” and continues to state that “[t]he outlines of Reformation-era Sabbatarian teachings can be discerned from Daniel Liechty's reconstruction of the teachings of the Anabaptist Sabbatarians.” We find then that some of the reformers, albeit in this instance one who is sometimes regarded as a “Prodigal Reformer”, did consider the Sabbath as a day to be observed rather than the Sunday of the Roman church. Approaches to Scripture similar to that of Karlstadt greatly influenced the Puritan view that followed shortly.

5.4 Puritans

History testifies to disputes among the Puritans of the sixteenth century on the issue of the Sabbath, in particular to its nature being moral or ceremonial, and the Dedham Sabbath

¹⁶⁰ Chapter 6 will deal with this aspect in more detail.

Debate serves as an excellent example (Primus 1986:87-102).¹⁶¹ The issue at hand was not so much the concept of a Sabbath *per se*, but rather which day, the seventh or the Sunday, constituted Sabbath in the Christian era. The non-seventh-day Puritans, represented by Sandes, considered “redemption as ‘re-creation,’ thus linking redemption to creation and implicitly linking the doctrines of resurrection and creation”, but the link of creation and resurrection justified to them the change from the seventh-day Sabbath to Sunday (Primus 1986:94).

Crick, representing the seventh-day Sabbatarians, focussed on the theology of Sabbath and was less concerned with issues of observance, as is often the case with other documents of the sixteenth century, than with the biblical foundation for accepting one day and rejecting another (Primus 1986:101).

Puritans were also amongst the pilgrims on the Mayflower in 1620, who escaped persecution in Europe because of the unity of Church and State by fleeing to the New World (Gulley 2007:45). Orr (1994) shows how modern-day seventh-day Sabbatarianism can be traced back to the Puritans, when considering the hermeneutic approach applied.

5.5 Sabbath in Adventism

The founders of the Seventh-day Adventist Church did not hold to the seventh-day Sabbath as a legal biblical obligation at the time of the Great Disappointment in 1844. Both the Millerite Movement and the subsequent Second Advent Movement consisted of people from diverse denominational backgrounds (Schwarz & Greenleaf 2000:14-15). One of these denominations was the Seventh-day Baptists, to which Rachael Oaks belonged when she shared the importance of the Sabbath with Frederick Wheeler in 1844 (Collins 2007:60-61). During that same year T M Prebble, a former Baptist minister who travelled with William Miller and actively preached the soon return of Jesus, also accepted the Sabbath, and later published a tract on the subject, which ended up in the hands of Joseph Bates (one of the three primary founders of the Seventh-day Adventist Church) in the next year (Collins 2005:48-51; Knight 2004:39-42; Schwarz & Greenleaf 2000:56-57). In 1846 Bates, in turn,

¹⁶¹ The Dedham Sabbath Debate considered three issues. Was the first day of the week sacrosanct? Was the nature of the “rest” divine command or church tradition? Was Sunday the New Testament Sabbath?

was instrumental in convincing Ellen White and her husband James White of the importance of Sabbath observance, and thus all three the central figures in the founding of the Seventh-day Adventist Church became Sabbath observers (Schwarz & Greenleaf 2000:65).

The Sabbath message proved even more important in the light of the three angels' messages of Revelation 14:6-13 and the understanding of the mark of the beast, which became a theme of study and controversy soon afterwards (Knight 2004:43-47; Schwarz & Greenleaf 2000:164-166). During what came to be known as the Sabbath Conferences the relationship between the Sabbath and the third angel's message was studied, and participants could present their views and discuss their differences to come to a clearer understanding of the issue, in order to develop a theology accordingly (Knight 2004:52-55; Schwarz & Greenleaf 2000:65-66). Thus the seventh-day Sabbath became one of the two cornerstones that are represented in the name Seventh-day Adventist Church (Schwarz & Greenleaf 2000:91-92).

There is within the Seventh-day Adventist Church a struggle relating to the Sabbath which centres in the creation account of Genesis 1. Some liberal Adventist scholars object to the literal six day creation account and "the alleged ambiguity of the phrase 'in six days'", and opt rather for Theistic Evolution as a model from which to view Genesis 1 (Pfandl 2010a:1). Gulley (2004:55-58) points out the challenges with this approach and the resulting implications, one of which is the removal of "a literal Sabbath as the climax of a literal creation week, which calls into question the fourth commandment".

The significance of the onslaught against the Sabbath, especially with regards to the Apocalypse within conservative Adventism, will be discussed in Chapter 6 of this study.

5.6 Contemporary Practice

In contemporary society there are various denominations that practice the observance of the seventh-day Sabbath (Höschele 2007:39-40). These groups differ on other aspects of theology, with some African religious groups even considering themselves Jews and not Christian (Bradford 1999:187-198; Höschele 2007:40).

Sabbath observance is particularly strong in Africa today, and its roots go back to Old Testament times (Bradford 1999:87-120). Both Höshele (2007:40) and Bradford (1999:115-118) note the difference in approach to academics and Scripture between African scholars and European scholars, which could be a great underlying factor as to the contrast in Sabbath practice.

The Sabbath received special attention in terms of research and discussion in recent years. As referred to in Chapter 1, the University of South Africa held a Sabbath Conference in 1994 with the theme *The Biblical Day of Rest*¹⁶² and it was attended by scholars from various denominations in South Africa. One of the issues discussed was that of sports being played on Sundays. Bacchiocchi (1998:266-267) notes that the consideration of the day of rest was in part triggered by the refusal of some international rugby players to play on a Sunday.

The opposition to Sabbath observance has become more articulated in recent years than it had been before, with the dedication of a whole issue of *Die Boodsapper*, the official news publication of the Afrikaanse Protestantse Kerk, being dedicated to the issue of Sunday vs Sabbath. The issue was entitled *Die Dag van die Here* and featured almost exclusively articles on the keeping of Sunday as day of worship, and arguments against the keeping of Saturday as the Sabbath. The general attitude in the publication, which reflects the general attitude of non-Sabbatarians to seventh-day Sabbath observance, is that it is legalistic to keep an Old Testament commandment in the era of grace, and Douma (2011:47) even goes as far as calling the seventh-day Sabbath a “wetties-asketiese godsdienstigheid van ‘n Joodsheidense tipe”.

Although the essence of Sabbath as a relational expression of faith in Jesus as both Creator and Saviour can never be associated with the mere legalistic observance of Sabbath, it remains in the conservative Adventist’s mind a legal requirement, albeit one that can only be fully adhered to from the relational desire to do so. The legalistic label is attached due to the fact that the relational value and desire to keep the Sabbath in recognition of Jesus as

¹⁶² A book with the same title appeared in which papers presented at the conference were published.

Creator and Saviour, is not distinguished. In this regard, my own experience is that people would ask why I would punish myself by denying myself the pleasures of sport, shopping and social gatherings on the day *par excellence* associated for those activities, while I perceive myself not in any way as punished, but rather as blessed at the opportunity to set aside the day appointed for communion with Christ. On the other hand, the fact that Sabbath observance is considered legalistic, could also be indicative of a lack of reflection of the character of Jesus by observers of the seventh-day Sabbath when sharing their belief with non-Sabbatarians.

5.7 Blue Laws and Sunday Alliances

Secular laws that restrict or ban activities for the sake of promoting the observance of Sunday as a day of worship are referred to as “blue laws”, and typically address issues such as business hours of shops and industries, sports and other recreational activities such as hunting (Burda & Weil 2004:2¹⁶³, National Shooting Sports Foundation 2011:2; European Sunday Alliance 2011:1-2).

As early as the seventh century, we find specific legislation promoted by Queen Margaret to regulate the day of worship and to force the observance of Sunday rather than Sabbath, in order to break the Celtic Church’s habit of seventh-day observance. Wilkinson (1997:106) quotes Bellesheim, the Roman Catholic historian, as stating:

The queen further protested against the prevailing abuse of Sunday desecration. “Let us,” she said, “venerate the Lord’s day, inasmuch as upon it our Savior rose from the dead: let us do not servile work on that day.”...The Scots in this matter had no doubt kept up the traditional practice of the ancient monastic Church of Ireland, which observed Saturday rather than Sunday as a day of rest.

As so many times thereafter, the unity of Church and State, personified by Queen Margaret, led to severe persecution of citizens by the state on matters of religion (Wilkinson 1997:105).

¹⁶³ Burda & Weil (2004) details the economic impact of blue laws on the economy as well as on social well-being.

Many centuries later, in the United States of America, where the separation of Church and State is firmly established in the first amendment, an attempt was made to have Sunday observance regulated. H W Blair, Republican senator from New Hampshire, in 1888 proposed such a law, but this proposal was successfully opposed by A T Jones (Knight 2004:88; Schwartz & Greenleaf 2000:243-244).¹⁶⁴ In that very same year, The Lord's Day Alliance (LDA), an organisation dedicated to the establishment of Sunday as a world-wide day of rest, was established and is active to this day. The LDAUSA president, D C McNair (2011:8) stated:

We of the Lord's Day Alliance of the United States will be celebrating our 125th anniversary in 2013, having been founded in 1888. We are not sign carriers. Nor are we out trying to close down businesses that operate on Sundays, but we know the blessings that God puts before those who live in obedience to God's will, blessings often not coming immediately and not necessarily in the form of a better profit and loss statement. We wish these blessings for others as well.

Other similar organisations exist, even in secular Europe, such as the European Sunday Alliance.¹⁶⁵

Not all the organisations working towards the establishment of Sunday as a day of rest, have a purely religious motivation for their cause. The European Sunday Alliance motivates their drive for Sunday as a work-free day by pointing to the benefits it will have for social cohesion, family and health. Similar sentiments are reflected also in South Africa, and it is noteworthy that the selection of the day to be used as a day of rest is traced back to its religious origin:

Although laws prohibiting the sale of alcohol on Sundays seem like unjustified pro-Christian state bias, some argue that nowadays they serve non-religious purposes, and are therefore justified. They claim that the

¹⁶⁴ A T Jones' argument in defence of his view is accessible at http://www.champs-of-truth.com/reform/NATIONAL_SUNDAY_LAW.pdf

¹⁶⁵ <http://www.europeansundayalliance.eu/>. Though not religiously motivated according to their founding statement it is significant that their day of choice coincides with the New Covenant day of worship and their activities are strongly supported by the Catholic Church and many other Protestant churches and organisations as is evident from their membership list which includes amongst others The Conference of European Churches.

legal prohibition on the sale of alcohol is justified because it enhances the recreational atmosphere of what **has become a secular 'pause day'**.
[Emphasis added] (Lenta [n.d.]:1)¹⁶⁶

With the Roman Catholic Church relating their religious authority with the observance of Sunday, it is understandable that they would also support the aims of organisations such as the Lord's Day Alliance and the European Sunday Alliance. This support is reflected in a speech by Pope Benedict XVI to the Italian Christian Workers Association (A.C.L.I.), at Clementine Hall on Friday, January 27, 2006 in which he stated that "Sunday is the day of rest for all workers".

Gulley (2007 :35-63) shows how the trends of persecution from the Reformation and Puritan times are again seen in recent years in the United States, and how a drive to unite church and state seems to be growing stronger even though history clearly indicates the destructive power it inevitably wields.

Wilkinson (1997:107) states "[n]othing so quickly leads to persecution as Sunday laws." The Seventh-day Adventist expectation is that blue laws will once again become an issue in the last days, and will greatly impact on seventh-day Sabbath observance (White 1992:123-142). Blue laws play a vital part in the understanding of Adventist eschatology, and as such history is pointed to as a sample of how history will be repeated, but with greater force and more persecution than before (White 1992:123-142).

Conclusion

From this brief overview of Sabbath observance during the New Testament Era, a continued observance of the seventh day is evident through the ages, though by different communities in different places at different times. It does, however, seem obvious that there were some Sabbath observers keeping the seventh day throughout the ages, from the beginning of the New Testament era until today, in an unbroken lineage.

¹⁶⁶ Lenta [n.d.] speaks of the Sunday as a Sabbath and notes that not everybody has Sunday as their Sabbath, which infers that he recognises Sabbath as a day of rest but which can be kept on any day of the week depending on preference or religious persuasion.

Sabbath observance has met with constant opposition, though in different forms and with different intensities as time progressed. It may not have been the only reason for the persecution of these groups, but in the case of the Inquisition in Spain, Sabbath observance does seem to have been a major factor, as those persecuted were branded Judaisers.

History shows how Sunday observance was associated with the authority of the Roman Catholic Church over religious matters, and observance of the Sabbath would therefore indicate a rejection of Papal power. Throughout history, and especially during the Inquisition, the Roman church made use of secular power to suppress those who challenged its authority.

The rhetoric regarding the Sabbath is also not something only confined to history. It is a contemporary issue wherever Seventh-day Adventists interact with other Christian groups, and even caused a denomination to give prominent attention to the issue in their circulars.

The issue of Blue Laws, both in the past and in our day, is an issue paid a lot of attention to in Adventist communities, as the enforcement of Sunday observance plays a significant part in Adventist eschatology. Adventists strongly relate to those groups in history who were regarded as different and were persecuted for keeping the Sabbath. In a sense their tribulations are seen as a forerunning of their own future, as these groups in some way typify the struggle they anticipate in the end time. Sabbath observance plays a pivotal part in Seventh-day Adventist eschatology due to the Historicist approach to the prophetic books of the Bible, especially Daniel and Revelation, as will be shown next.

Chapter 6

The role of the Sabbath in Seventh-day Adventist Eschatology

The Sabbath plays a major role in end time events from the Seventh-day Adventist perspective. The primary reason for this unique view is their hermeneutic approach to Scripture. Conservative Adventism rejects the historical critical method of Bible interpretation (Reid 1998:1-4). They believe that this method undermines faith in God and the requirement of obedience to God's commandments in favour of subordinating the Word of God to human reason and human criticism (General Conference Committee Annual Council 1986). The Adventist approach does not reject the accounts of supernatural occurrences¹⁶⁷ and miracles¹⁶⁸, and takes prophecies seriously as legitimate and trustworthy accounts that are sure to be, are being, or already have been fulfilled in the flow of history¹⁶⁹. It also understands the biblical narrative to be reliable accounts of actual historical events (General Conference Committee Annual Council 1986).

Where other denominations use either preterism, idealism or futurism as model to interpret the prophetic content of the book of Daniel and the entire book of Revelation, Adventists make use of historicism (Du Preez 2007:52-55).

Stefanovic (2002:10) says of historicism:

The historical method holds that the book of Revelation provides a symbolic presentation of the prophetic outline of the future course of history from the apostolic times until the time of the end. Thus the predictive prophecies are in the process of fulfilment. This method argues that Revelation is rooted in the book of Daniel which deals with sequential periods of history.

This chapter will briefly describe the major prophetic interpretations from the books of Daniel and Revelation relevant to the Sabbath and related end time role players, and the dynamics involved as interpreted and understood in conservative Adventism. It is not meant to be an exhaustive or even comprehensive exposition of Adventist eschatology, neither is it

¹⁶⁷ Such as Creation in literal 7 days.

¹⁶⁸ Examples would include Jesus' numerous healings on the Sabbath.

¹⁶⁹ Here the books Daniel and Revelation are most notable.

meant as an apologetic of the views held. The merits of the interpretation are not the issue at hand. This chapter merely serves as a brief description of the conservative Adventist understanding of end time events, with the aim of providing a framework for understanding the motivation for the spirituality that flows from their interpretation as it relates to Sabbath observance.

It needs to be stated at this point that conservative Adventism is not concerned with politically correct sentiments in terms of identification of the Antichrist or the mark of the beast. Such identification is done based on the flow of history, and how it fits the sequences provided by Bible prophecy. The conservative Adventist understanding of Scripture is not to be adjusted to suit a socially acceptable agenda.¹⁷⁰

6.1 Daniel and Revelation – the Historicist Perspective

Daniel 2 provides a bird's eye view of the flow of history from the Babylonian Empire under Nebuchadnezzar, through the major world empires which follow it, until the establishment of God's kingdom on earth, and further on into Eternity (Smith 1972:29-69; Stefanovic 2007:80-118, White 1980:71-97). The consecutive empires represented by the sequence of metals are the head of gold as the Babylonian Empire, the chest and arms of silver as the Medo-Persian Empire, the thighs of bronze as the Grecian Empire and the legs of iron as the Roman Empire (Doukhan 2000:29-33; Stefanovic 2007: 113-115). The composite feet, of iron and clay that do not cleave together, represents Rome in its divided form, as the Roman Empire broke up into various kingdoms, yet retaining some distinctive Roman characteristics. The rock which hits the feet and shatters the whole image, represents Christ's Second Advent, which makes an end to the earthly empires and establishes God's Kingdom on earth (Doukhan 2000:33-36; Stefanovic 2007: 113-115).

Daniel 7 duplicates the sequence of Daniel 2, but enlarges and expands on the detail presented, especially on the aspect represented by the feet of iron and clay in Daniel 2. The

¹⁷⁰ Adventist groups in certain parts of the world, such as Europe, have abandoned some of these teachings, because it is politically expedient and socially more acceptable to do so.

lion with eagle's wings represents the Babylonian Empire, the bear with three ribs¹⁷¹ in its mouth represents the Medo-Persian Empire, the leopard with four heads¹⁷² represents the Grecian Empire, and the non-descript beast represents Rome in all its forms; Imperial¹⁷³, Divided¹⁷⁴ and Papal¹⁷⁵.

Daniel 8 enlarges and expands even more on the previous dreams and visions, while remaining true to the sequence as from the time of the vision.¹⁷⁶ The ram with two horns represents Medo-Persia, the goat with one notable horn, which is broken off and replaced with four new horns, represents ancient Greece.¹⁷⁷ From one of the four winds of heaven arises a little horn which becomes exceedingly powerful, and represents Rome in its various forms.¹⁷⁸ Daniel then overhears a time aspect being shared in the prophecy, which relates to the time period of two thousand three hundred prophetic days. On receiving the interpretation thereof, it seems too much for Daniel and he faints.

Daniel 9 shares some more information on the vision of Daniel 8.¹⁷⁹ Daniel receives details on the first seventy weeks of the prophecy, and is given a marker to understand when the prophetic time starts. He is also told what happens after the first seven weeks, and what happens at the end of the next sixty two weeks, and finally what happens at the beginning, in the middle of, at the end of, and after the last week.

¹⁷¹ The three ribs are understood to represent the three main conquests by the Medo-Persians into Lydia, Egypt and Babylon (Doukhan 2000:103; Stefanovic 2007:251).

¹⁷² The four heads represent the four generals Cassander, Seleucus, Ptolemy and Lysimachus who, after a struggle with other generals, came to divide and rule over different parts of Alexander's territories after his death (Smith 1972:109).

¹⁷³ Imperial Rome refers to the Roman Empire.

¹⁷⁴ Divided Rome is understood to be the ten primary sections into which the Roman Empire split after its gradual loss of territory to nations that overthrew Roman oppression. This division is often hotly disputed by historians and opponents of Adventism.

¹⁷⁵ Papal Rome refers to the reign of the Papacy as a religio-political force which came to power in 538AD when Rome became their seat of political power.

¹⁷⁶ The vision of Daniel 8 does not include the Babylonian empire, but from the Medo-Persian empire onwards follows the sequence of dominion encountered before.

¹⁷⁷ The notable horn is identified as Alexander the Great, since he was the first king of Greece (Daniel 8:21) and the four horns which arose after he was "broken" off, symbolise the four generals who controlled the four sections Greece was eventually divided into.

¹⁷⁸ Some have argued that the little horn appears out of one of the four horns on the goat, but the linguistics seem to indicate that it rather refers to the four winds, indicative of direction rather than nation. This is also a more consistent interpretation with the sequences encountered in previous dreams and visions of Daniel.

¹⁷⁹ The angel Gabriel comes to assist Daniel in understanding. The angel refers to a vision in Daniel 9:23. Since there is no vision given in Daniel 9, the angel is understood to refer to the vision of Daniel 8 which was not explained in full before Daniel fainted.

Using the day-year principle,¹⁸⁰ Adventist scholars understand the seventy weeks as referring to four hundred and ninety years from the date that a decree was issued by Artaxerxes, which gave complete religio-political control to the Jews to re-establish the temple and Jerusalem.¹⁸¹ Forty nine years later, the end of the seven weeks, saw the temple rebuilt. Four hundred and thirty four years later, the end of the sixty two weeks, saw Jesus baptised and becoming the Messiah. Three and a half years later, Jesus was crucified in 31 AD, which represents the middle of the last week and brought an end to the ceremonial sacrificial system. At the end of the last week, Stephen was stoned, and soon afterwards Saul was called to bring the Gospel to the gentiles, ending the special dispensation of the Jews being the chosen nation to carry the Good News to the world.

Revelation, as a book building on the symbols already established in the Old Testament, and drawing from the imagery thereof, very often contains references or allusions to Old Testament texts.¹⁸² It is therefore not surprising that as far as the Sabbath is concerned, Revelation also builds on the theme of Sabbath observance as an end time issue. Paulien (1998:179-182) proposes guidelines to understanding allusions, as well as for understanding the language and allusions, and verbal, thematic and structural parallels. These interpretive guidelines are evident in the work of commentators such as Letseli (2012) and Scragg (1938).

Revelation 12 describes a woman standing on the moon and clothed with the sun. The Adventist interpretation of this woman is that she symbolises literal Israel from verse 1-5, and spiritual Israel (the church) from verse 6 and after the interlude of verses 7-12 (Nichol 1978:VII, 807; Stefanovic 2002:380). Lichtenwalter (2011:306) points out how there is only one woman and only one dragon, a confirmation of the church being a continuation in the New Covenant of the Old Covenant people of God. Verses 6 and 14 are believed to refer to

¹⁸⁰ According to this principle a day in prophecy represents a year in actual time. The principle is based on many evidences from Scripture amongst which are Numbers 14:34 and Ezekiel 4:6. For a detailed study on the evidences, see Shea (1992).

¹⁸¹ The Bible refers to three decrees. One by Cyrus (Ezra 1), one by Darius (Ezra 6:3-12) and one by Artaxerxes (Ezra 6:13-26). Only the Artaxerxes decree agrees to all the conditions in terms of providing for the rebuilding of both the city of Jerusalem and the Temple in Jerusalem.

¹⁸² Of the 404 verses in the book of Revelation, 178 have been shown to contain direct or indirect references and/or allusions to Old Testament passages (Stefanovic 2002:18).

the period of Papal supremacy from 538 to 1798, a period of 1260 years when it references 1260 days and 3 ½ years respectively.¹⁸³ The dragon, Satan, persecutes a specific remnant within the seed of the woman who has two distinctive characteristics; they keep God's commandments, as well as having the testimony of Jesus (Stefanovic 2002:394-395).

"Having the testimony of Jesus" can be understood in two ways. Firstly, it can be understood as the testimony regarding Jesus, and secondly, as the testimony that Jesus gives through the remnant, who, in turn, proclaims what He has revealed to them (Nichol 1978:VII, 812; Stefanovic 2002:392). These concepts need not be mutually exclusive, since Revelation is both the revealing of Jesus, and the revelation given by Jesus through John (Revelation 1:1-2). The testimony of Jesus is also not limited to the book of Revelation but, as Revelation 19:10 makes clear, includes the "spirit of prophecy" which is manifest throughout Scripture, but particularly so by the New Testament prophets (Stefanovic 2002:393). These New Testament prophets recorded, amongst other things, Jesus' attitude towards the Law and the Sabbath.

Revelation 13 sees the emergence of two beasts, one from the sea and one from the earth. The beast emerging from the sea is associated both with the dragon of Revelation 12 and with the Papal system, the former being the power behind the latter. It is a composite beast of the animals found in Daniel 7, since it tallies the heads of the Daniel 7 account, and has the horns as well, though the sequence in which the animals are identified is the opposite (Nichol 1978:VII, 817).¹⁸⁴ The sea is interpreted as the nations of Europe and the known world at the time of the rise of the Papacy (Nichol 1978:VII, 817).¹⁸⁵ The beast receives a deadly wound (verse 3) which later heals. This is understood as the loss of political power by the Papacy in 1798, when one of Napoleon's generals, Berthier, imprisoned the Pope. The healing of the wound is believed to refer to a process which started in 1929, when political

¹⁸³ The year-day principle applied to the 1260 days of verse 6 is the same as the time, times and half a time of verse 14, which is understood as referring to 3 ½ years (Jewish years having 360 days), which also amounts to 1260 days, and thus 1260 years when the year-day principle is applied (Stefanovic 2002:391). The term "time" is interpreted as a year, "times" as multiple years, and since no number is linked to it, it is interpreted as 2 years, while the dividing of time is seen as half a year (Nichol 1978:IV, 833-834).

¹⁸⁴ Where Daniel has the sequence as lion, bear, leopard, and beast, Revelation speaks of a beast first, and then leopard, bear and lion attributes (Nichol 1978:VII, 817; Smith 1972:561-562; Stefanovic 2002:404).

¹⁸⁵ Revelation 17:15 is often also quoted with reference to the interpretation of lots of water, symbolising multitudes, peoples and nations.

authority was restored to the Papacy.¹⁸⁶ Verse 5 correlates with the 1260 year period of Revelation 12:6 and 14, as 42 months are the same time period as 1260 days and 3 ½ years. Once again a remnant is identified in the form of a group, this time those “whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world” (Revelation 13:8).¹⁸⁷ Revelation 13:1-10 then describe the rise and activities of the Papal system, which include the persecution of the saints.

The second part of Revelation 13 describes the beast that rises from the earth. Where Revelation 13 describes a beast which rises from the sea (sea being a symbol of the nations, tongues and peoples of the known world at the time of the rise of the Papacy), the earth would then indicate a place outside of the known world, discovered and/or populated after the rise of the Papacy. The discovery of the New World is a clear contender, and early Adventist expositors unequivocally identified this beast as a symbol of America, considering comparable aspects of the two-horned power such as symbols, chronology, age, location, manner of its rise, and the character of its government (Smith 1972:571-583). One of the most notable characteristics of the beast from the earth is its lamb-like horns, and the American constitution resembles this in the principle encapsulated and protected by the First Amendment of the United States.¹⁸⁸ The fact that many pilgrims fled Europe because of religious persecution and relocated to North America, a prime example being the Mayflower in 1620, seems to support this idea (Gulley 2007:45-46). This very same beast, however, speaks like a dragon, which indicates that it will not hold to this separation of church and state principle (Nichol 1978:VII, 820).

According to Revelation 13, the beast from the earth (Apostate Protestantism and America in particular) will become a persecuting power that will enforce the will of the beast from the sea (Papacy) on all people groups by causing them to receive the mark of the beast (Nichol 1978:VII, 822). The beast is then explained to have an identifying number, which is

¹⁸⁶ In 1929 the Papacy was restored to Rome and the Vatican once again received political recognition and diplomatic status with the Lateran Pacts recognising the Roman Catholic Church as a state religion.
<<http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/331566/Lateran-Treaty>>

¹⁸⁷ The Jewish calendar had 360 days in year which could be expressed in days as 1260, in months as 42 and in years as 3 ½.

¹⁸⁸ The First Amendment prohibits the state from establishing or interfering with Churches on matters of religion.

six hundred and sixty six, a number believed to be connected to the title Vicarius Filii Dei (Du Preez 2007:299-329; Nichol 1978:VII, 823)¹⁸⁹.

Revelation 14 starts out by describing a group of people identified as the 144 000 who were not defiled with women.¹⁹⁰ This remnant follows the Lamb wherever He goes, and symbolises the righteous.

The first of 3 angels' messages is related from Revelation 14:6 onwards. The first angel's message relates to the One who should be worshipped, because He is the Creator. The second angel's message is that Babylon, the symbol of false worship, idolatry and apostate religion, has fallen. Here Babylon represents not the literal Babylon, but rather serves as a symbol of the Papal system and her daughters¹⁹¹. The third angel introduces the persecution of the saints, as well as the mark of the beast, which represents the power and authority of the beast. The enforcement of false worship is at the centre of the mark of the beast.

In stark contrast to those who worship in apostate fashion, verse 12 emphasizes the importance of continued observance of the commandments, with verse 13 alluding to the idea that persecution can be expected, and will include punishment that will lead to death for some.

Revelation 15 provides an image of those who victoriously conquered, and withstood the trials and persecution, and resisted the mark of the beast, while Revelation 16-19 deal with the apostasy and its consequences for those aligning themselves with the Harlot.

The last three chapters of Revelation deal with the happenings from directly after the Second Coming to the re-creation of heaven and earth, and include the final restoration of relationship between God and the faithful.

¹⁸⁹ When calculating the numerical value of the letters of the title "Vicarius Filii Dei", it amounts to 666.

¹⁹⁰ "Women" should be understood symbolically here. Often in prophecy a woman represents the church. A pure woman represents the true church, and an immoral woman an apostate church. Defiling in the context of this verse indicates that this woman represents an apostate church with the accompanying teachings (Nichol 1978:VII, 826).

¹⁹¹ The harlot woman has many daughters that also share her unfaithful traits (Revelation 17:5).

6.2 Daniel and the Sabbath

Daniel 7:8 and 24 speak of a little horn which arises between the ten horns and uproots three of them, and is understood in the Adventist framework of prophetic interpretation to point to the Roman Catholic system. Verse 25 states that the same power that “shall speak great words against the most High, and shall wear out the saints of the most High” shall also “think to change times and laws”.¹⁹² The term “times” in Daniel 7:25 refers to the seventh-day Sabbath.¹⁹³ Stefanovic (2007:274) comments on the “times and laws” when he states that “the whole expression means ‘the set times regulated by the law’, and it includes the seventh-day Sabbath”, since the Sabbath commandment is the only one in the Decalogue which deals with time.

The verse thus seems to envisage an attempt to change the time set by God’s commandments and on His authority as the day of rest. The attempt to change the seventh-day Sabbath as day of rest to the Sunday, which is the “sign” of Papal authority, contributes to the identification of the Papacy as the Antichrist, a view held “nearly unanimously” by scholars throughout the thirteenth to nineteenth centuries (Donato 2011:44-46).

The only One with the prerogative to change times and seasons, according to Daniel 2:21, is God, thus any other entity attempting to change God’s established times are placing themselves in the place of God, attempting to show itself to be God (2 Thessalonians 2:4). Since the ceremonial Sabbaths pointed to Jesus Christ, and ended at the Cross, and were irrelevant at the time the little horn (the Antichrist) arose, the seventh-day Sabbath remained the only Sabbath still relevant. Here the identification of the Papacy as the Antichrist, as well as its role in the change of the day of observance, is clearly spoken of when Ellen White (1980:234) states that “God had not changed the Sabbath, for He never changes. But the pope had changed it from the seventh to the first day of the week; for he was to change times and laws.”

¹⁹² In conservative Adventism it is believed that God’s times and law can never be changed. There was an attempt to change His times and law in the form of the change of Sabbath from Saturday to Sunday, but since the change was not sanctioned by God, it is merely a human attempt at changing God’s times and law (Nichol 1978:IV, 831-832).

¹⁹³ Du Preez (2015:117-118) points out why it is not possible for “times” in Daniel 7 to refer to the Jewish festivals.

This view of the Sabbath in apocalyptic events foreshadows a more detailed account of its significance, as Revelation builds on the content of Daniel in its exposition of end time events.

6.3 Revelation and the Sabbath

The book of revelation, though not mentioning the Sabbath by name, contains several references that are understood in conservative Adventism as referring, by implication, to Sabbath observance. Some of these references seem to indicate that the Sabbath will be the pivotal issue in end time events.

6.3.1 The Lord's Day

Revelation 1:10 states that John was in the Spirit on the Lord's day, which is most often interpreted as referring to Sunday (Donato 2011:149-151, 165-167, 309). It is, however, not as clear-cut, since many Adventist and non-Adventist scholars also argue against that view, stating "it is all but impossible to believe that Sunday was established as the Lord's Day, as a holy convocation, and as a Christian response to a creation ordinance in Palestine shortly after the Resurrection. The arguments against this position are virtually conclusive" (Carson 1982: 133-134). Lichtenwalter (2011:314) asks the following question when discussing this issue:

Does one work backward (and thus externally) from developments in Christian history to the text and its meaning—assuming such emerging tradition is faith-positive and in no way evidences creation-reversal compromise and/or apostasy already at work within the church or history?

The term can, instead of pointing to the Sunday, as claimed by early Church history, as easily be argued to point to the seventh-day Sabbath. MacCarty (Donato 2011:35-40), amongst others, points out that there is no biblical proof of the term referring to Sunday, and that the association with Sunday is based on the early church fathers, not on Scripture. Mueller ([n.d. I]:1) points to the similarity in expression between "Lord's day" and "day of the Lord" in the Old and New Testaments, as well as the association between Jesus being "Lord of the Sabbath" to motivate his view that the term points to the Sabbath rather than Sunday. Odom (1944:47) agrees, and likewise points out that the term was associated with Sunday

for the first time in the second century. Lichtenwalter (2011:287-288) supports this view, claiming that the term Lord's Day is "an unambiguous reference to the seventh-day Sabbath" because of the verbal and thematic parallels between Genesis and Revelation, especially as far as creation and re-creation are concerned, and he also adds aspects like the relation between the Sabbath and the exodus, exile and captivity motifs, and the imagery of Revelation.¹⁹⁴

The biblical evidence supports the understanding of the term Lord 's Day as referring to the Sabbath rather than to Sunday. This puts the Sabbath in view in the opening verses of the book of Revelation, and sets the stage for the Sabbath as a central theme and pivotal factor in end time events as will become clear in the remainder of this chapter.

6.3.2 Motivation for worship in Revelation 4, 5 and 7

The Book of Revelation contains the greatest number of references to the term worship and/or worshipping of any of the books of the Bible.¹⁹⁵ Considering the number of times these words are used, it is fair to say that worship is a predominant theme in the book of Revelation. In chapter 4:10 the twenty-four elders fall down to worship God, and the motivation for their worship is expressed in verse 11: "for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created."

In Revelation 5:9 the four beasts and twenty-four elders again fall down in worship, before the Lamb this time, and the motivation for their worship relates to salvation: "for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation".

At the cry of the great multitude extoling Christ for the work of salvation, the angels, elders and four beasts react by bowing down in worship, according to Revelation 7:11. The great

¹⁹⁴ Note that the early Adventist scholars, such as J N Andrews, already argued that the term "Lord's day" does not refer to Sunday (Andrews 2010:130-142). He points out that the link between the Lord's day and Sunday came more than a century after John wrote his Apocalypse.

¹⁹⁵ Revelation contains 24 references to worship/worshipping with the second most being the Psalms with 16 references.

multitude represents those who were saved by the blood of Christ, thus saved, after having come through the great tribulation.

As has been evident earlier in this study, the Sabbath is strongly related to these aspects of creation and salvation and is observed in recognition of both. Both these aspects are now reflected in the heavenly abode as the four creatures and twenty-four elders worship God, which also calls to mind the observance of Sabbath on earth. The Sabbath is eminently linked to both creation and salvation.

6.3.3 Revelation 10's Sabbath Language

As with the rest of the book of Revelation, the Sabbath is not mentioned by name in Revelation 10, but the allusions to the Sabbath is clear from the language employed in verses 5 and 6. Letseli (2012:1) highlights the linguistic and literary similarities of Revelation 10:5-6 when compared to Exodus 20:11. References to *heaven, earth, sea and the things that are therein* are found in both. In verses 5 and 6 he identifies the Sabbath language of the fourth commandment, which alludes to the seventh-day Sabbath and the call to its observance.

Revelation 10 points to this fact, as recognised by Letseli (2012:2-4) (who also quotes Stefanovic on the issue), that Adventists understand Revelation 10 as pointing to the end of the 2300 prophetic days period, which is believed to have come to an end in 1844¹⁹⁶. The scroll in Revelation 10 is also understood to be a fulfilment of the prophecy of Daniel 8, where a scroll is sealed until the time of the end. The eating of the scroll, which was sweet to the taste, but bitter in the stomach, is believed to refer specifically to the Millerite Great Disappointment experience (Loughborough 2010:80-86). During this time the significance of the Sabbath as an observance came to the fore amongst those who were later to become the founders of Seventh-day Adventism (Nichol 1978:797-799; Schwartz & Greenleaf 2000:51-67; Stefanovic 2002:331-332).

¹⁹⁶ The start date of the 70 weeks prophecy of Daniel 9, which is the same date of the 2300 evenings and mornings, is believed to be 457BC which would bring the end of the time prophecy to 1844. The apparent 1 year discrepancy is due to the fact that there were no 0 year which adds 1 year to the calculation.

Revelation 10:6 and 11 are also verbally and thematically linked to Revelation 14:6 and 7 through the use of terms such as “peoples”, “nations” and “tongues”, while Revelation 14 also uses Sabbath language in the related passages. Revelation 14 will be discussed in due course. Suffice to say that Revelation 10 again introduces the Sabbath theme, which is then developed in Revelation 11, 12, 13 and 14.

6.3.4 Revelation 11 and 12

In Revelation 11 John is depicted as seeing the Ark of the Covenant as heaven is opened up to his vision. Scragg (1938:14) comments on Revelation 11:19 when he argues for the continued observance of the Seventh-day Sabbath, and presents five key arguments:

1. It proves that the cross did not abolish the Ten Commandments.
2. It proves that the "Lord's Day" is the day defined in the fourth commandment as the "Sabbath of the Lord."
3. It proves that the commandments observed by the remnant are the Ten Commandments.
4. It proves that sin, which is the transgression of the law, is the transgression of the law John saw in heaven. (See 1 John 3:4.)
5. It supplements and enhances the Sabbath arguments of Daniel 7:25.

Scragg (1938:15) points out that Revelation 11:19 was a pivotal point in E G White's conviction of Sabbath observance in modern times, as the centrality of the Ten Commandments being located inside of the Ark of the Covenant in heaven indicates its continued validity for all peoples in all times.

Likewise Revelation 12 sees the dragon waging war against the remnant of the woman's seed, and according to verse 17, this remnant is identifiable from their unique characteristic of keeping the commandments of God and having the testimony of Jesus. Since the woman represents the people of God from Old Testament times through to the New Testament era, it is significant that no indication is given of the change in the commandments, but rather a continued observance ascribed to those that constitute the remnant, as those that still reflect the original people of God who were faithful and who kept the commandments. The

focal point of these more general references to the Ten Commandments comes to the fore in Chapters 13 and 14.

6.3.5 Revelation 13

The first part of Chapter 13 of Revelation depicts a beast rising from the sea. This beast is identified as the Papal system in conservative Adventism (Neufeld 1976:57). Here the battle for worship is most evident, as the beast from the sea is worshipped, as well as the dragon which gave him his power (Revelation 13:4).

Within conservative Adventism the identification of the Papacy as the Antichrist, with its related push for Sunday observance instead of Sabbath observance, is motivated, in part, by the declaration of the church at the Synod of Laodicea, which is quoted by Kraft (1965:23):

For it is not necessary that Christians judaize and have leisure on the Sabbath, but let them work on that day, and give precedence to the Lord's Day - if indeed they are able to have leisure as Christians.¹⁹⁷

The book of Revelation, being about Jesus invariably, also reveals Him as both Creator and Redeemer, both of which are signified by the Sabbath, the sign of covenant relationship between us and Him. It is a matter of loyalty, obedience and worship. Bacchiocchi (2001:129) states:

The prevailing crisis of the Lord's day could well set the stage for the rising of the politico-religious power of Revelation 13, which will cause many to receive "the mark of the beast" through the legal enforcement of Sundaykeeping [sic]. Seventh-day Adventists believe that this will take place in connection with the last religious crisis affecting mankind (Rev 13:16-17). Because of this the observance of the Sabbath is and will become more and more a test of loyalty and commitment to God.

The First Amendment of the Constitution of the United States of America, which guarantees the freedom of religion, is such an important matter to the Seventh-day Adventist Church

¹⁹⁷ Papal reference to the Lord's Day points to Sunday not to the seventh-day Sabbath.

that they established a Department of Public Affairs and Religious Liberty (<http://www.adventistliberty.org/>) to serve as a watchdog and address issues related to the freedom of religion, not just for themselves, or even the Christian faith, but for all faiths. This is done, in part, due to the expectation of persecution which will start with infringement on their own freedom to observe the Sabbath.

6.3.6 Revelation 14

Revelation 14:6-13 plays a very significant role in the Adventist understanding of end time events. These verses are referred to as the Three Angels' Messages, and are believed to detail the key messages to be proclaimed to the whole world in the time of the end.¹⁹⁸ The importance of these messages in Adventism is evident, amongst other things, from the fact that the three angels' messages are graphically depicted in both the old and new logos of the Adventist church.¹⁹⁹

The message of the first angel is a call to worship God, for his judgment has come²⁰⁰, but the call is to worship the Creator specifically: "worship him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters". The Sabbath language is undeniable. Stefanovic (2002:445) sees the call to worship God as Creator, and the accompanying Sabbath language, as significant for two reasons – firstly, because of the popularity of evolutionary theory, as a challenge to the belief in God as Creator, specifically in modern times, and secondly, because of the strong linguistic link between the words of Revelation 14:7 and Exodus 20:11.²⁰¹ Both Stefanovic (2002:445) and Paulien (1994:126) understand this as an indication of the centrality of Sabbath observance in end time worship as a distinctive characteristic of the remnant people of God.

¹⁹⁸ The term "the time of the end", according to the Adventist understanding, refers to 1844 until the Second Coming.

¹⁹⁹ The first official logo of the Seventh-Day Adventist Church had three angels encircling the globe. The new logo symbolises the angels by depicting three lines, which also resemble a flame circling a sphere.

²⁰⁰ This aspect, a judgment which already commences before the Second Coming of Jesus, is called the Investigative Judgment, or Pre-Advent Judgment. This is one of the unique Seventh-day Adventist teachings that are most vehemently opposed by other denominations. Linguistically speaking, the text does seem to indicate a judgment which is ongoing even before the second and third angels' messages are proclaimed.

²⁰¹ In the Greek the words "the heavens and the earth and the sea and" seem to be a direct, word-for-word quote from the Septuagint version of Exodus 20:11 found in Revelation 14:7.

The second angel's message proclaims that Babylon has fallen. Babylon, in Revelation 14, refers not to literal Babylon, but rather to spiritual Babylon, which is a symbol of apostasy and rebellion against God. In conservative Adventism it is understood to refer to the Roman Catholic Church, and the motivation for the fallen state is "because she made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication", which points to the apostate or false teaching proclaimed by it.

The third angel's message warns of worshipping the beast and/or receiving the mark of the beast in the forehead or on the hand, which would exclude the individual from the eternal blessings (Revelation 14:9-11). The reception of the mark of the beast on the hand or in the forehead, once again, refers not to the literal bodily members, but is rather symbolic of belief and/or practice respectively (Neufeld 1976:856). This correlates with the Law which should be "written" on the hand and in the forehead, as discussed in Chapter 3.

The seal of God stands in opposition to the mark of the beast (Neufeld 1976:1305-1306).²⁰² From the early church era to the fourteenth century, the mark of the beast was merely associated with the Antichrist, but the pre-Reformation expositors amongst Protestants held it to refer to submission to the authority of Rome (Neufeld 1976:856-857). From the early years of the development towards Adventism, a more pronounced understanding developed.

6.4 The Mark of the Beast and the Seal of God

To clearly identify the mark of the beast, Adventists turn to the Roman Catholic Church, already identified as the beast that arose from the sea in the first section of Revelation 13, to assist in identifying its mark.²⁰³ Joseph Bates, in his second edition of the tract *The Seventh Day Sabbath, A Perpetual Sign*, identifies the change of the Sabbath as the mark of Papal power, and therefore the mark of the beast (Froom 1978:IV, 957)²⁰⁴. The

²⁰² This has already been recognised by the Baptist theologian Andrew Fuller in the late 1700's (Froom 1978:III, 535).

²⁰³ Though the Reformers already identified the Papacy as the beast, the mark was identified as various things. To John Cotton it was abiding to the instructions of the Church of Rome (Froom 1978:III, 40). Edward Holyoke shared this view (Froom 1978:III, 96).

²⁰⁴ This interpretation is not a negation of the views held by pre-Reformer and Reformers alike, but is rather a focussing of the view on the issue at hand in Revelation 14.

conceptualisation of this mark in Adventism has gone through a process of refinement in order to more clearly identify and more sharply define it (Froom 1978:IV, 1062). J N Andrews, sharing Bates' view, understood the mark to be "an institution of the Papacy enforced by Protestantism" (Froom 1978:IV, 1097, 1101).²⁰⁵ The opposition to and change of Sabbath observance by the Papal power, as well as the expected enforcement of Sunday worship over Sabbath observance, are collectively considered to embody the "mark of apostasy", or mark of the beast, as was also chronicled by Loughborough (Froom 1978:IV, 1042-1043, 1107). Even from the early days of Adventism, church leaders such as James White, Ellen White and Uriah Smith clearly stated that not mere Sunday observance, but the enforced observance of Sunday in the stead of seventh-day Sabbath observance is to be considered the mark of the beast (Neufeld 1976:857). Thus Sunday observance today is not considered the mark of the beast. Only once it is enforced will it fully become the mark of the beast.

Sunday worship establishes an alternative to that which God established as the identifying sign of covenant and worshipping Him as Creator and Saviour, which is yet another way in which the man of sin and son of perdition "opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God" (2 Thessalonians 2:4).²⁰⁶

To the conservative Adventist the Sabbath constitutes the seal of God, since it reflects all three aspects of a seal as used in Biblical times and even today; a name, a territory and a title (Neufeld 1976:1305-1306). Since the Sabbath Commandment has all these elements, the observance of the Sabbath in verity, and because of the living relationship with Him and not just keeping the rules of the Sabbath, constitutes having the seal of God. The seal of God and the mark of the beast are mutually exclusive, and therefore each of these constitutes an undeniable sign of loyalty to the one worshipped (Neufeld 1976:856).

²⁰⁵ The enforcement by law of Sunday observance instead of Sabbath is brought to view because of Revelation 13:15-17 (Nichol 1978:VII, 822, 976).

²⁰⁶ The temple here does not refer to a literal structural building, but rather to the individual believer as a temple in which the Holy Spirit resides and which belongs to God (1 Corinthians 3:16-17, 6:19-20). As per Romans 6:16 obedience determines true servanthood and identifies thus the one truly worshipped.

The trials associated with the rejection of the mark of the beast, are exclusion from economic activity (Revelation 13:17), and even capital punishment (Revelation 13:15) for rejecting the authority of the beast. Continued Sabbath observance would adversely affect the ability of practitioners to safely remain and function in civil society.²⁰⁷ Though a tremendous trial, the perseverance in keeping the commandments of God (Revelation 12:17, 14:12) is expressed in continued Sabbath observance.

Continued Sabbath observance is expressed in terms of not receiving the mark of the beast. A multitude of people who “had gotten the victory over the beast, and over his image, and over his mark, and over the number of his name” is envisaged in Revelation 15:2. These are understood to be the remnant who spiritually survived the persecution of the great tribulation, and who will reign in victory during the millennium (Revelation 20:7). The victorious group depicted in Revelation 15 sings the song of Moses and the Lamb. This song can only be sung by those who have experienced and withstood the trials of the great tribulation because of their persistence in keeping to the expression of their faith in their Creator and Redeemer by observing the seventh-day Sabbath.

On the counterpart, those who receive the mark of the beast are condemned for it and suffer the consequences (Revelation 14:11, 16:2, 19:20).²⁰⁸

6.5 Sabbath in Eternity

After the final destruction of the wicked, and the cleansing of the earth from sin and the consequences of sin, the heaven and earth are restored by being re-created. This action can only be performed by the One who created in the first instance, and constitutes the corporate restoration of creation to what it was intended to be initially. Revelation 21:1-7 describes the re-creation and restoration which include and revolve around the main purpose of creation – relationship between God and mankind (Nichol 1978:VII, 891). This

²⁰⁷ A compilation of the writings of Ellen White, which points to the challenges that Sabbath observers are expected to face, is called *Country Living*, and promotes the idea of settling in smaller rural towns and more remote areas (White).

²⁰⁸ Within Adventism this suffering, or hell, is seen as annihilation, and not an endless and eternal burning of the wicked (Neufeld 1976:579-581).

restored relationship is even closer than what it originally was, according to White (2005:25) when she states:

It was Satan's purpose to bring about an eternal separation between God and man; but in Christ we become more closely united to God than if we had never fallen. In taking our nature, the Saviour has bound Himself to humanity by a tie that is never to be broken. Through the eternal ages He is linked with us. "God so loved the world, that He gave His only-begotten Son." John 3:16. He gave Him not only to bear our sins, and to die as our sacrifice; He gave Him to the fallen race. To assure us of His immutable counsel of peace, God gave His only-begotten Son to become one of the human family, forever to retain His human nature. This is the pledge that God will fulfil His word.

Having created and redeemed humanity, both the principal motivations for Sabbath observance eternally remain in effect, and in eternity the true purpose of Sabbath observance can be fulfilled – complete and unmarred relational interaction between God and man.

The Sabbath and the monthly cycle, mentioned in Isaiah 66:23 as being observed in eternity, are both reflected in Revelation 22. The monthly partaking of the tree of life is indicative of the monthly gathering of all flesh (Revelation 22:2) while the Sabbath could well be referred to by the reference in terms of fully restored relationship, as well as the mark on the forehead of the faithful (Revelation 22:4). As Moses was not able to see God's face in Exodus, for he would die if he did (Exodus 33:20), conversely, due to the removal of sin and the fully restored relationship in Christ between God and man, the righteous can now "see his face". The name on the forehead is also believed to be indicative of reflecting the character of God and having rejected the mark of the beast (Stefanovic 2002:594). Nichol (1978:VII, 895) links the name and the restored relationship thus:

The divine name in the forehead is a symbol of ownership and authentication. The saints' entire consecration in a life of worship to God is here stressed.

6.6 Conclusion

Amongst conservative Adventists there is great anticipation of Sabbath observation as a central factor in the unravelling of end time events. Though not mentioned by name in Revelation, the occurrence of Sabbath language, as well as the identification of the beast and its mark when applying the historicist approach to prophecy, points to the Roman Catholic Church as the Antichrist who attempts to change times and law. The Sabbath as a sign of covenant with God will be challenged, and an attempt will be made to replace it with an alternative day of worship, Sunday, which will be enforced instead of the seventh-day Sabbath.

The self-proclaimed Roman Catholic sign of authority, Sunday, is already widely and predominantly accepted and observed. Its observance is pushed for from both religious and secular circles, and under the auspices of both religious and secular merit.

The commandment-keeping minority expects to be challenged on their faithful observance of Sabbath to the extent that it will exclude them from economic participation, and even with the eventual threat and implementation of capital punishment for the practice.

Continued observance will, however, be the distinguishing factor indicative of loyalty to God as Creator and Saviour. This will also express faith in the belief that He can and will save the faithful from the fallen creation and again re-create earth. The observance of Sabbath will be the mark signifying God's authority and ownership, as well as having been sanctified to reflect his character in the life of the believer.

Chapter 7

Sabbath Rest and Holistic Health for Humanity

Healthful living is a very important part of Adventist beliefs and teaching. The health reform principles taught are known in Adventist circles as the “health message”, and this is deemed so essential to the greater message of the Adventist Church that it is referred to as the “right arm” of the body. Ellen White (1899), who wrote extensively on health reform, in an article published in the *Review and Herald*, stated:

The Lord desires his church to be a perfect body,--not all arms, not all body without arms, but body and arms together,--and every member working as a part of the one great whole. As the right arm is connected with the body, so the health reform and medical missionary work is connected with the third angel's message, and is to work efficiently as the right arm, for the defense [sic] of the body of truth.

The earnestness with which healthful living is approached is evident today in the number of hospitals, clinics and medical training facilities owned and operated by the Seventh-day Adventist Church and/or individuals and companies associated with the church.²⁰⁹ The motivation for the emphasis on health is the belief that what a person eats has a great influence not only on physical well-being, but also on your spirituality and emotions (White 1957:123; 1976:43-65). Spirituality and physical and emotional well-being are thus closely related to the lifestyle of the individual according to the Adventist view, and should include Sabbath-keeping as a method of dealing with stress (Mueller [n.d. II]:1-2).

Most commentators who agree with the observance of a Sabbath, whether it be on the seventh day or not, agree on the benefits this cycle of rest holds for the observer (Allender 2009:8-9; Baab 2005:40-42; Brueggemann 2014:58-68; Heschel 2005:27-32). In conservative Adventism three aspects of Sabbath observance and its benefits to health are noteworthy.

²⁰⁹ Statistics on Adventist Medical Ministries are available at <https://www.adventistarchives.org/quick-statistics-on-the-seventh-day-adventist-church>. The Adventist church has the second largest hospital system in the world. Brands such as *Kellogg's* internationally and *Nature's Choice* in Southern Africa are examples of brands associated with health which were founded by Adventists. The establishment of sanatoriums to assist people with health is seen as being just as important an expression of the love of God as is the establishment of churches (White 1957:223).

7.1 The human being as a Holistic Entity

Conservative Adventism sees the individual as a holistic being, and strongly supports the idea that physical and spiritual well-being are inseparable, since the one influences the other greatly (Damsteegt 1996:34-50; White 1976:55-56).²¹⁰ Damsteegt explains how Ellen White's view on lifestyle issues even have an impact on spiritual discernment and the way the Bible is interpreted by different people using the same hermeneutic principles (Damsteegt 1996:34-36, 46-47). She regularly speaks on the importance of rest as part of a lifestyle conducive to increased spiritual awareness (Damsteegt 1996: 36, 43-44). This rest includes, but is not limited to Sabbath observance (White 1894:190).²¹¹

Sabbath provides an opportunity for the individual to break away from the general weekly routine, and to withdraw from the pressures of life in order to connect in a special way with God. However, the purpose of Sabbath is not merely, or even primarily, physical rest. It is a time set aside to focus on the relationship with God, and with others who are in need of the revelation of God's purpose and truth in their lives. Sabbath is also not limited to the restoration of relationship with God and other people, but also with the natural environment (Kuhlampi 2010:197). For this reason all of these relationships manifest strongly in Sabbath counsels by leaders of Adventist spirituality, amongst them Ellen White (1957:358).

Excursion on the Sabbath into nature with the family is advised, in order not only for the individual to recuperate from the mental and physical challenges of the past week, but also for family and other relations to re-establish, restore and strengthen bonds with one another (White 1976:86). Interactions with nature are conducive to teaching children about the creative work of God, and to see his handiwork in the beauty of that creation (White 1954:533-534). This reconnection with God, family, others and nature addresses the various

²¹⁰ "No man can become a successful workman in spiritual things until he observes strict temperance in his dietetic habits. God cannot let His Holy Spirit rest upon those who, while they know how they should eat for health, persist in a course that will enfeeble mind and body." (White 1976:55)

²¹¹ Regular and proper time for enough sleep is also emphasised in her writings: "In eating, drinking, and dressing, the laws of health should be diligently followed, and in regulating the hours for sleep, there should be no haphazard work. No student should form the habit of sitting up late at night to burn the midnight oil, and then take the hours of day for sleep. If they have been accustomed to doing this at home, they should seek to correct their habits and go to rest at a seasonable hour, and rise in the morning refreshed for the day's duties. In our schools the lights should be extinguished at half past nine" (White 1894:124).

needs of the whole person, who has most often become so disconnected by modern society that they sometimes are ignorant of the disconnectedness of their existence. For this reason the Sabbath is a day for spiritual well-being, and to focus on God by distancing oneself from secular activities. At such occasions, only the heating of food and putting together of salads which takes almost no effort is acceptable. This is not only done for the sake of other people, but also for the sake of a clearer understanding of the preaching of the Word when members come together to worship. White (1976:63,136) argues that eating too much on the Sabbath causes people to feel drowsy and to become less capable of listening to the message of God brought by the preacher.

These comments exemplify the holistic approach in Adventism to well-being of the individual with self, with family and other relations, with nature as well as with God. Such a lifestyle of restorative balance is considered a virtue when White (1957:157) states that:

Temperance in all things of this life is to be taught and practiced. Temperance in eating, drinking, sleeping, and dressing is one of the grand principles of the religious life. Truth brought into the sanctuary of the soul will guide in the treatment of the body. Nothing that concerns the health of the human agent is to be regarded with indifference. Our eternal welfare depends upon the use we make during this life of our time, strength, and influence.

Kuhalampi (2010:196) adds to this idea by claiming that “Sabbath rest should therefore be understood as a mode of being rather than as a kind of human activity, let alone as inactivity”, and that “the Sabbath as a day of rest is only an outward, experientially perceivable indicator of the more essential spiritual reality, which is to be found and obtained only in Christ himself”. Within this framework Sabbath is seen as beneficial to the establishment and restoration of relationships and a sense of well-being on all levels, emotional, physical, interpersonal and spiritual.

7.2 “Sabbath was Made for Man”

The expression “Sabbath was made for man” is not limited to Israel alone. The term “man” (ἄνθρωπος) points to humanity as a whole – all nations, tongues and people – which is consistent with Sabbath as a creation ordinance. Irrespective of the nationality, all of humanity benefits from a living relationship with the Creator and Redeemer which is expressed in the Sabbath.

Allender (2009:56) observes that “Sabbath remembers creation and anticipates re-creation”, thus pointing not only backwards, but also forward in expectation of the eternal. Heschel (2005:41) reflects on Rabbi Shimeon’s view of the Sabbath and eternity, and states that “eternity was not attained by those who barter time for space but by those who knew how to fill their time with spirit”. Sabbath thus incorporates a view and an attitude towards the eternal that is reflected by its observance in the temporal. It is therefore also an expression of hope in a future where humanity can be at rest with one another and with nature in the presence of God.

Sabbath, as the climax to the week, and set aside for special relationship with God, must not be marred by overexertion during the week to the extent that the purpose of the Sabbath cannot be experienced (White 1882). It is meant to be a blessing, where a taste of the eternal is experienced in the temporal. Heschel (2005:60,73) interprets the Sabbath and eternity to have the same essence, the presence of God, which he believes is an ancient idea, and as such Sabbath serves as a sample of eternity (even if an imperfect sample). The Sabbath then was truly made for the benefit and restoration of mankind in all relationships with other people as well as with the rest of creation. Therefore the Sabbath is also the ideal opportunity to assist those not yet in harmonious relationship to participate in the joy of Sabbath observance by doing good on the Sabbath.

7.3 Sabbath and the Cycle of Seven

As was pointed out in Chapter 3, the establishment of a seven day cycle was not for the sake of God, but for man. It established a rhythm in time for humanity to live by. It has no celestial motivation or correlation. This rhythm is the rhythm God has set, and moving,

therefore, in unison with God's rhythm, expresses trust in all He has done during creation, and showing appreciation for the work of salvation by celebrating Him as Creator and Saviour. Thus Sabbath is representative of a healthy relationship between the human beings and God.

Olafsson (2005:155-163) relates how a covenant between two parties are celebrated on a day commemorating the establishment of that covenant. He effectively uses the analogy of a marriage which is celebrated on the anniversary. The celebration of the anniversary is only significant if it reflects the true relationship which exists between covenant parties. His argument is that the day celebrated cannot replace a non-existent or failed relationship. Similarly, Sabbath does not constitute the whole relationship between man and God. It is a celebration of the relationship between God and the individual, which is celebrated on the day the covenant between God and humanity was established, on the seventh day of creation. Sabbath observance, in this sense, is not an observance seen as an obligation which is enforced against the will of the true observer, but rather a day that both parties, God and man, would willingly and joyfully enter into. Obedience is thus an expression of the dedication and commitment to the relationship, an indication that the observer has been set aside, as it were, sanctified, to faithful relation with God.

As such Sabbath not only commemorates the relationship, but serves to deepen it. This is the intention of Sabbath observance, as evident from the writings of Ellen White. Kuhalampi (2010:102) expresses her understanding as follows:

It is God who is willing and able to transform sinners so that they become holy. This seems to be the supposition from which White regards also the Sabbath as an indicator of sanctification, an essentially divine accomplishment – just as creation, of which the Sabbath is a memorial, was an act of God. In addition to reminding humanity of Christ's sanctifying power, Sabbath-keeping offers a perpetually repeated opportunity for spending time in the presence of the holy God in simple rest, but also in prayer, thanksgiving and worship.

The Sabbath being kept on the seventh day, and the accompanying significance of the number as depicting fullness and completeness, expresses a commitment to full relationship with God, which is also expressed in obedient observation of the day He blessed and sanctified for the purpose of relationship celebration.

This day which anticipates the future universal re-creation of everything that was created in Genesis 1, brings to view the redeemer, Jesus Christ, by who the re-establishment of relationship between mankind and God is possible (1Timothy 2:3-6).

True well-being and an enduring sense of health can never be experienced by humankind outside of a living, loving relationship with God. Though the physical, spiritual, mental, social and emotional trauma of life in a sinful world will always be a reality, the relationship with the Saviour opens the door to the blessed hope of being restored in all these aspects when the relationship culminates in the Second Coming (1Corinthians 15:50-58). It is this restoration to full and perfect relationship with God that is envisioned by the Sabbath, and the symbolism of seven signifies the completeness of the expected restoration.

7.4 Conclusion

Mankind is in need of restoration in relationship with God. All individual are also in need of restoration in all the aspects of their being, mental, physical, emotional, social and spiritual. As a whole, humanity is in need of restoration in its interpersonal relationships as well as in its relationship with the physical environment it inhabits. Sabbath provides the time and opportunity to focus on the Creator and Redeemer of all things and to find restoration in all aspects of life as a holistic being. This restoration starts with setting aside the things that prevent us from connecting with God and concentrating on the study of His life and character.

Sabbath observance is a celebration of the One who created and redeemed, an opportunity to be restored oneself and to participate in the restoration of others. It appreciates again the habitat which God arranged for humanity to thrive in. It embraces the idea that in the present one can grasp a hold of and taste the blessings of eternity. It expresses belief in the fullness of the future complete restoration to be imparted at the Second Coming.

Chapter 8

The Spiritual Significance of the Sabbath as an Expression of Faith within Conservative Adventism

From this study it is evident that within conservative Adventism there is a lot more to the Sabbath than meets the eye. Rather than a mere Old Testament observance clung to as a legalistic requirement or to gain favour with God, it is a relational expression of faith that holds much more significance than merely remembrance of creation and salvation. It makes a bold statement of what the observer believes about the past, the present and the future.

This view, however, is the minority view amongst Christians, making it imperative to understand the underlying reasons for the differences in views. The first reason would be the status of the Sabbath as a creation ordinance in Adventism²¹²; an institution established by God in Eden (MacCarty 2011:11-14).²¹³ Secondly, and connected to the first, conservative Adventism regards the whole Bible, and by implication also Genesis 1-11, as literal historical narrative of actual events. This view is strongly opposed by many, if not most, scholars today, with Hein (Eskanazi 1991:169-175) being an example. Thirdly, the dispensational interpretation of the Scriptures, which is rejected by Adventists, cause proponents to regard the Law as having been abolished, and the Sabbath, being part of the Law, therefore to be no longer an obligatory observance (Du Preez 2006:124-134). Lastly, the historicist approach to apocalyptic prophecy is a determining factor in the hermeneutic of Adventism, which unfolds with the Sabbath as a pivotal issue in end time events. The rejection of the historicist approach in mainstream Christianity is arguably the single most important reason why they hold a different view of eschatological events (Du Preez 2007:52-55). It is therefore recognised that the conservative Adventist understanding of the Sabbath, including the consequent significance it holds, must be dependent on, but may not necessarily be limited to these four factors.

²¹² Some groups outside of Adventism also consider the Sabbath as a creation ordinance, with Pipa (2011:119-123) serving as an example.

²¹³ Even viewing the Sabbath as a creation ordinance, does not in and of itself mean that its observance on the seventh-day, or even as a one-day-in-seven observance, is implied. Many hold to an any-day view, or even a spiritual understanding of the Sabbath concept.

Recognising these differences in approach to and interpretation of Scripture assists us to arrive at a point where the Sabbath, as understood by conservative Adventists, can be appreciated within the framework of their approach to and practice of Hermeneutics. Here is where the descriptive-analytical nature of Christian spirituality, rather than the prescriptive-normative nature of other fields of study, proves not only valuable, but essential.

Within conservative Adventism, Sabbath as an expression of faith speaks to a belief firstly in the Creator, secondly in the Saviour, and thirdly in community/brotherhood. It is also an expression of faithfulness embodying their hope in and love of Christ.²¹⁴

8.1 Sabbath as an expression of faith in the Creator

The notion of a late development of the Sabbath concept due to an encounter with Babylonian creation myths during the exilic period is rejected, while the literal interpretation of the Genesis 1-2:4a creation account is not only accepted, but the SDA fundamental beliefs have been modified and refined at the San Antonio GC Session in July 2015 to also highlight this interpretation by specifying a “literal six day” and “recent” creation as a clear rejection of the theory of evolution in all its forms, including theistic evolution.²¹⁵

From the conservative Adventist understanding, there is no etymological link between the Babylonian *sabattu* concept and the Sabbath, due to the irreconcilable differences between these two days, as well as between the weekly Babylonian “evil day” and the Sabbath (Horn 1979:961). This rejection of the Babylonian origins of the Sabbath is also rejected by many outside of Adventism (Cohen 1965:2).

²¹⁴ The Holy Spirit, as the Person in the Godhead who testifies of the Creator and Saviour, Jesus Christ, plays a pivotal role in Adventism. Though He might not feature prominently in this study, the role of the Holy Spirit can never be underestimated as it is understood in conservative Adventism – that only through the guidance of the Holy Spirit can the essence and significance of Sabbath observance truly be understood.

²¹⁵ This and other changes were reported on by the Adventist News Network. See <http://news.adventist.org/all-news/news/go/2015-07-07/delegates-approve-landmark-update-of-fundamental-beliefs/>.

The acceptance of the Genesis creation account in chapter 1-2:4a clearly demonstrates the conservative Seventh-day Adventist belief in miracles, subscribing such to the supernatural ability and action of God, which means that the traditional historical-critical method of interpretation is fundamentally rejected as a hermeneutic method.²¹⁶ The general classification of Genesis 1-11 as myth is therefore also rejected in favour of an interpretation of these chapters as historically accurate and commencing with the record of a literal seven-day creation account (Davidson 1993: 95-114; Miller, N P 2009: 241-262; Reid 1998). This worldview already represents a belief in God as the Almighty One who created not from conflict, as the various Babylonian creation myths reflect, but from a serene atmosphere where the Triune God executed creation through the spoken word in perfect harmony and unity, a view Adventists share with the likes of Berkhof (1976:151) and Hertz (1960:193). This view sets God apart from any other so-called gods, and expresses His love for humanity, even before they were created. God lovingly called into being the perfect environment for man, not primarily for the sake of creating space to be occupied, but as a habitat within which the climax of creation, the Sabbath which He both blessed and sanctified, can be enjoyed. Rodríguez (2002:3) captures the idea beautifully when he declares: “The blessing pronounced by God on the seventh day was not for the benefit of God, but for those who where [sic] present with Him, enjoying communion and fellowship with Him, within the fraction of time called seventh day.”

The primacy of Sabbath is also evident from creation being strongly associated with the number seven, which symbolises completion and perfection. Indeed God also reflected on the first six days of creation and seven times stated that it was good, the last time seeing everything that was made, and calling it “very good” (טוֹב מְאֹד). Everything required for the physical environment and habitat of humanity was completed, and then mankind was made to inhabit and have dominion over it. For the seventh day no physical matter was created, but time was set aside, declared holy and blessed – all for humanity to enjoy relationship with God without interference of the demands of life (Gulley 2003:221). The seventh day

²¹⁶ See Du Preez (2006:173-195) for a modified historical-critical approach to Scripture interpretation which is used within Adventism by some liberal scholars and the devastating effect it has when compared to the traditional, more conservative understanding of eschatology in the SDA circles.

therefore truly represents the culmination of creation; a celebration of the relationship between the created human being and his Creator.

The seven-day cycle has no cosmic metronome as the days, the months and the years have. It is on the authority of God alone that this division of time has been established, and is therefore ordained by God as a creation ordinance. As such it is not set for only one group of people, but as a blessing to all of humanity. Already in the establishing of the seven-day cycle God can be seen reaching out to humanity, since He did not need to create in six days to establish the Sabbath, He could have created everything in a single moment. It was for the sake of humanity that He created in six consecutive steps, and then rested on the seventh without being in need of physical, emotional or spiritual rest. This was done as an example for humanity to live by as beings created *imago Dei*. Rodríguez (2002:1) shares this view when he states:

The idea that God rested from His works ascribes to God a human need in order to demonstrate to humans how He planned to supply it for them. The anthropomorphic language clearly points to God's concern for humans who do not only need to work but also to separate a particular time to enjoy deep personal communion with the Creator. The divine action - God's rest - reveals His willingness to join humans in fellowship during the seventh day. It is the Creator, not the creature, who determines the time of rest.

The Exodus 20 rendition of the fourth commandment emphasizes the creative activity of God as motivation for Sabbath observance, an aspect reflective of faith, since no person could have witnessed it. This commandment reaffirms other aspects of the Sabbath, such as the creation, in six days, of the physical environment that humanity occupies, as well as the hallowed time set aside on the seventh. It also reflects the imitation of God's rest to be enacted by man, and the opportunity it provides for such rest to be available to others, as God provided for all observers of Sabbath to enter into his rest also.

Rather than eliminating the Sabbath, the New Testament actually emphasizes each aspect and brings it to a new depth of significance from the conservative Adventist perspective.

John points to the One who created in the beginning, the Word, as the very One who became flesh to work salvation for all of humanity (John 1:1-3,14). The implication is that Sabbath points to Jesus Christ as the Creator who became flesh. Again, as with creating in consecutive steps, He expressed his love for humanity by limiting his divine attributes and becoming a man, this time for the sake of restoring the relationship between humanity and God.

In the Sabbath controversies between Jesus and the religious elite of the first century it was never the *whether*, but always the *how* of the seventh day that was the cause of conflict. Rodríguez (2002:5-7) draws the same conclusion; the manner, and not the fact and legitimacy of Sabbath observance, was in question. Jesus' observance of Sabbath set the example for the faithful to follow, and the link between the Creator and the Sabbath was reaffirmed by his declaration of being Lord of the Sabbath. Instead of distancing Himself from the Sabbath, his teachings reflect a belief in the literal interpretation of the Genesis creation accounts. In the spirit of Revelation 14:12 the contemporary Sabbath observer holds fast to the *imago Dei*, not only as per Genesis, but also as Jesus came to set the perfect example in faith and practice as God who became man, as an even greater progressive revelation of divinity to humanity.

To the conservative Adventist Sabbath observance expresses belief in the fact that Jesus is the very God who also created in the beginning, and who established, blessed and sanctified a time dedicated to the cultivation of the relationship with Him. Sabbath observance shows their willingness to aspire to *imago Dei* in their lives, especially so, in recognition of his creative work, in the practice of keeping holy that which God declared so, the observance of which He demonstrated Himself when He tabernacled with man.

8.2 Sabbath as an expression of faith in the Saviour

Sabbath is not just about the Creator aspect of God. The Deuteronomy 5 motivation for the fourth commandment contributes to the significance of Sabbath observance by highlighting the salvific works of God. Sabbath also calls to mind the redemption of Israel from Egypt through the miraculous actions of God to save those willing to be obedient to His instructions, which caused the angel of death to pass them by; it also recalls how Israel was

set free from bondage in Egypt, where they were deprived of the opportunity to observe the Sabbath (Exodus 5:5²¹⁷). The eve of the commencement of the Exodus saw the institution of the Passover as the typological precursor to Jesus as the Lamb to be slain, which also contributes to the understanding of Egypt as the symbol of sin from which believers are set free by the redemptive activities of Christ. Gulley (2003:215) also highlights the connection between the deliverance at the Red Sea and the salvific work of Christ on Calvary.

Though the Passover ceremony found its antitype in Christ, the seventh-day Sabbath, with its recollected salvific motivation, is indicative of faith in the One who worked the redemption on Calvary. Jesus linked himself to the Sabbath by declaring himself Lord of the Sabbath. This claim was not made to justify the changing of the day, but rather to emphasise the connection between Him as the Saviour Messiah in addition to being the Creator who instituted Sabbath, an additional blessing and show of grace to humanity.

Jesus also declared Himself the manna which came down from heaven; the sustenance by which Israel were to be nourished during their sojourn to Canaan. This providence was not without responsibility on the side of the saved; it was provided as a test of obedience to God's Law. The observance of Sabbath served as the foundation for that test (Rodríguez 2002:1). Once again the symbolism is uncanny, as Egypt as sin and Canaan as heaven indicate that the dependence on God as provider during the life of sanctification of the contemporary believer, among other things, is also expressed by observance of the Sabbath. God did not save and then leave Israel in their sojourn; rather, He saved them and remained with them, providing for their every need, with the expectation that the sign of relationship between them be expressed in their daily and weekly life and routine.

As encountered in the New Testament, salvation entails re-creation, which can only be worked by the One who created in the first place. He who drew up the blueprint of what mankind was supposed to be, is the only One who can set humanity on the track to again be restored in full to that template, by renewing the spirit of human beings at rebirth. Salvation

²¹⁷ Adventism connects the rest spoken of in this verse with Sabbath observance (Nichol 1978:I, 519-520; White 2005:258, 757).

is thus not dissimilar to creation, but rather, as re-creation, it represents the flipside to the coin.

With salvation one is, however, not yet fully restored to the former glory of Adam, but the expectation of complete recreation in every aspect is anticipated when the very Creator and Saviour is manifested at the Second Coming of Christ.

These connections strengthen rather than undo the relevance of Sabbath. Jesus, not only as Creator, but also as Saviour, is at the heart of the matter. It therefore makes sense that He would rather emphasise the connection between Himself and the Sabbath than sever it. Sabbath observance recognises these connections, and brings to mind the unchanging character of God. Gulley (2003:223) clarifies the connection by declaring:

There is a comparison of creation Friday and creation Sabbath with crucifixion Friday and crucifixion Sabbath. Christ is central in both. On creation Friday He gave life to Adam and Eve. On crucifixion Friday He gave life to everyone who accepts it. On creation Friday Christ gave the gift of life to two humans and their posterity. On crucifixion Friday Christ gave the gift of eternal life to whoever accepts it. How significant that the Sabbath following the two gifts was time for celebration of the completed work of Christ.

8.3 Sabbath as an expression of faith in Community

In both the Exodus and Deuteronomy accounts of the Decalogue the aspect of inclusivity and sharing of the blessing with others are present. The Sabbath commandment is unique in this aspect, as it does not just relate to the relationship with God, but also speaks to the relationship with other people. While the traditional division of the first four commandments speaking to the relationship with God, and the remaining six to the relationship with other people, is strictly true, the fact that the Sabbath commandment encompasses both the relationship with God and with others makes it unique and representative of both love for God and love for one's neighbour as for oneself. The fourth Commandment is thus truly the heart of the Commandments, binding the two sections together.

In the Exodus 20 account, but even more so in the Deuteronomy 5 rendition of the fourth commandment, the consideration of others is emphasised. The care of the Creator for humanity should be expressed by the Sabbath observer in search of living in *imago Dei*. Similarly, just as Israel was prevented from observing Sabbath because of their enslavement in Egypt (Exodus 5:5), but was redeemed by God, so should the Sabbath observer, in remembrance thereof, not enslave others by preventing them from observing the Sabbath (Rodríguez 2002:3-4).

A living relationship with God as Creator and Redeemer will invariably impact the believer's relationships with other people as well, an aspect reflected by passages such as John 13:34 and 15:12. True Sabbath-keeping was perfectly lived by Jesus in the acts of kindness and breaking of bondage on that day. As the Priests laboured more on the Sabbath, without breaking it, so Jesus' healing on the Sabbath was not breaking the Sabbath principle, but rather the example to be followed, as the example He set at creation when He rested, was to be followed. Again the *imago Dei* in relation to creation is also reflected as far as salvation is concerned; setting free and breaking bondage as He has set free and broken bondage (Rodríguez 2002:5-7).

Rather than an undoing of the commandments in general and the Sabbath in particular, Jesus highlights in His adherence to the commandments and observance of the Sabbath a clearer and deeper understanding of its significance. This is exactly what is seen in general in Matthew 5:17-19 and in particular in Matthew 12:1-8. Especially significant is the way in which mercy supersedes sacrifice as an expression of the character of a loving God who always reaches out to those in bondage.

Throughout the New Testament it is evident that the Genesis accounts of creation were not only believed to be historical, but also taught as part of the gospel message to heathen peoples. Belief in the historical creation account of Genesis 1-2:4a is evident in the teachings of Jesus, Peter, Paul, Luke and other members of the New Testament church. It highlights the loving nature of God, since creation shows how He reached out to establish a suitable habitat for humanity, as well as reaching out more by becoming a human being in order to

work salvation for them once the relationship was scarred, enabling them to be re-created if and when they accept the price He paid on their behalf. He came to set them free, not only from temporal bondage of sickness and disease, but also from eternal damnation to gain eternal life. Rodríguez (2002:8-9) shows how Sabbath observance was part and parcel of the message to the gentiles.

These aspects, the Creator who became incarnate human for the sake of revealing Himself, and the salvation of mankind, were prevalent in the evangelistic efforts of the apostles to foreign nations. It should be prevalent also today in the mission to reach the unreached. The good news regarding the Creator and Saviour whose inclusive redemptive work, which all nations, kindreds, peoples, and tongues are invited to accept, elevates the believer above mutual distinctiveness of humanity to be considered children of God, and therefore fellow believers. It calls for no longer emphasising division between people, but unifies all faithful in Him who both created and saved them.

As Christ invited us to enter into restored relationship with Him, likewise we are to invite others to enter into restored relationship with Him. We are to be imitators of Christ; *imago Dei*. Sabbath recognises equality before God; it knows no distinction among observers and establishes a community unified by faith in their Creator and Saviour.

8.4 Sabbath as an expression of Faith(fullness)

Sabbath serves as a sign of relationship, and as such observance expresses not only that God is recognised as Creator and Saviour, but also worshipped and honoured as such. Obedience to the Sabbath requirements and compliance with the expectation of the Provider of the manna reflect submission to Him, as well as acknowledgement of the dependence of the observer. It reflects the willingness to adhere to the laws God set in place as a responsibility on the part of the observer (Exodus 16).

So important were the commandments that God wrote the first and second versions of it himself, not leaving it to Moses to copy what He verbally instructed. It was written by the finger of God, to emphasise the immutability and everlasting applicability of His principles of government (Gulley 2003:216). That which God wrote with His own finger cannot contain

error in principle or precept, nor can it be changed by human mandate. Should God change it, it would constitute a flaw in that which He originally established as a system of governance.

Throughout the Old Testament, the Sabbath served as a sign of relationship between God and His people, and was open to anyone who wished to enter into relationship with Him, not only to Israel, as is evident from both renditions of the Decalogue (Exodus 20:8-11; Deuteronomy 5:12-15). God is often in the Old Testament worshipped and praised for His creative work (Psalm 8). The New Testament never calls for a change – thus the sign remains an indicative expression of relational fidelity.

Sabbath observance expresses faith in the veracity of the Genesis creation accounts as encountered in the Bible, and showcases a loyalty to God that supersedes the views of societies and cultures. It indicates that the observer believes that God is who He claims to be, and that He is trusted to have done what He has done in the way He claims to have done it.

Many from Israel, however, neglected and even rejected Sabbath observance, and bore the consequences (Nichol 1978:III, 451). Sabbath observance was even listed as one of the reasons for the exile. This neglect of Sabbath was accompanied by apostasy and idol worship, pointing to a deterioration and neglect of the relationship with the one true God who created and saved His people (MacCarty 2011:18-19). It was a unique sign of Israel's relationship with their Creator, which set them apart from other Ancient Near Eastern cultures, and their neglect thereof caused them to lose their distinctness. They no longer bore the sign of relationship with their Creator and Saviour. The lack of enduring faithfulness was exemplified by the lack of regard for the Sabbath (Nehemiah 13:15-21).

Rodríguez (2002:5) claims that the Sabbath's "origin and normative force is grounded in God's loving will for His people". Thus, when remaining true to God and keeping His Sabbath, the nation was blessed and prospered. Their continued observance exemplified their continued reverence for God as Creator and Saviour, and showed them to be faithful to Him and reciprocating the call to enter His rest for the sake of relationship. Sabbath

reform always accompanied a return to covenant relationship with God, as is also evident in Nehemiah 10:30-33 (MacCarty 2011:19)

Only God could have instituted the Sabbath as indicator of his status as Creator and Saviour, therefore only He could amend it. It does, however, not make sense for the Creator to make a change to the indicator of his status and authority, but it does make sense that He would more clearly indicate the connection, as He did in Matthew 12:8. For that reason He also showed the intent and practice of Sabbath spirituality as it is to be manifested.

Church history bears evidence that rather than abolishing the seventh-day Sabbath, its observance was a continued practice throughout the ages. The view that the Lord's Day, as first day of the week, or Sunday, was soon kept instead of the Sabbath, is not tenable. Evidence shows that this practice, at least until the 5th century, was only prevalent in Alexandria and Rome, and only in later centuries did seventh-day Sabbath-keeping become a minority practice. Such minorities can be traced throughout the centuries when studying groups such as the Waldenses, Albigenses and later select groups of Puritans. Many of these groups were severely persecuted for their faith, in particular because of Sabbath observance, which was seen as a rejection of Catholic authority. Seventh-day Adventists relate strongly with the various groups that remained faithful to Sabbath observance throughout the ages, from the first century to contemporary times, especially those who endured persecution for their expression of faith.

The continued observance of Sabbath in Africa from Bible times is also evidenced in countries like Ethiopia and amongst certain other tribes on the continent. In recent years, a greater awareness of the Sabbath seems to be evident around the world, with the Seventh-day Adventists the fifth largest Sabbath-keeping denomination in Christianity.²¹⁸

Conservative Adventism sees the institution of any other day than the creation-ordained day of worship as an illegitimate substitution of that which God has put in place. They

²¹⁸ According to the February 22, 2015 issue of Christianity Today, only "Catholicism, Eastern Orthodoxy, Anglicanism and Assemblies of God" are larger Christian communions.

believe in remaining faithful to the Sabbath as reflective of the nature of God, even to the extent of accepting various forms of ostracism.

The consciousness and even expectation of persecution because of Sabbath loyalties are strongly evident amongst conservative Adventists, making them a more pronounced division between Christians in favour of and those opposed to seventh-day Sabbath observance. This view is drawn from their understanding of the book of Revelation, which strongly alludes to both creation and Sabbath. From the historicist perspective on Bible prophecy, the Roman Catholic Church and the United States of America will be the main proponents of the enforcement of Sunday observance, which will then become the mark of the beast. In these last days faithfulness in the face of persecution and even death will be expressed by remaining true to the observance of the Sabbath. Lichtenwalter (2011:297) states:

As with Revelation's creation theme, the natural implication of the book's pervading covenant imagery for any discussion of the Sabbath is that, in the biblical scheme of things, the Sabbath is God's enduring covenant sign (Exod 31:12-17; Ezek 20:12, 20; Isa 56:6; cf. Mark 2:27).

8.5 Sabbath as an expression of Hope

Though pointing to the past acts of creation and redemption, Sabbath is also envisaged in the Old Testament as an observance to be delighted in throughout eternity. Isaiah 66 envisages the weekly Sabbath as a continued observance in eternity, having been established in the beginning as a creation ordinance of God. Contrary to the theory that the seventh day in Genesis 2 is meant as an eternal Sabbath, the future view of heavenly activity includes labour similar to that given to Adam in Eden, which would support the weekly day of rest continuing on the new earth. The expectation is that "all flesh" will observe the Sabbath in the New Earth (MacCarty 2010:4; Rodríguez 2002:5).

Sabbath also expresses the anticipated return of Jesus, the blessed hope, at the Second Coming, when the restorative work of redemption will be manifested in the physical bodies of the believers (1 Corinthians 15). This restoration/re-creation where the faithful are clothed with immortality can only be accomplished by the Creator-Redeemer, the very One

Sabbath points to. Gulley (2003:227) correctly concludes that “Christ’s creative work in humanity climaxes at His second coming.”

After the millennium, those true in faith will no longer only believe that God created in the beginning; they will also experience his creative work when the new heavens and the new earth are established (Isaiah 66:22; Revelation 21:1-5). Sabbath observance expresses hope, as it denotes a firm belief in the sure occurrence of both the Second Coming and the expected re-creation of heaven and earth, in which all will be restored. This encourages the observer in whatever circumstances he or she might find themselves now, that the time will come when all will be restored to the blueprint God intended.

8.6 Sabbath as an expression of Love

Once the connection between the Creator and Redeemer and the Sabbath is clear, and Sabbath is understood, not merely as a legal requirement, but as an expression of faith in the One who created and redeemed because He loved us, one can associate with David when he is amazed at the wonder of that love, as he states:

What is man, that thou art mindful of him? and the son of man, that thou visitest him? For thou hast made him a little lower than the angels, and hast crowned him with glory and honour. Thou madest him to have dominion over the works of thy hands; thou hast put all things under his feet. (Psalm 8:4-6)

The love of God for mankind is manifest both in creation, and in the position of dominion given to mankind over creation as representative of God, and also in the work of salvation done on behalf of humanity after their fall into sin and bondage.

The Sabbath test in Exodus 16, when God used the Sabbath principle to determine the willingness of mankind to be obedient to his instruction, provided the opportunity for reciprocal action to enter into the relationship made possible by the merits of anticipated Christ. By his provision of manna He showed his loving and caring kindness, as well as his willingness to miraculously supply the daily requirements of mankind in terms of sustenance (White 2005:297). The receiver of such blessings, in accepting and expressing in obedience

the responsibility associated with divine providence, has the opportunity to reciprocate the act of love.

Sabbath provides the opportunity to express reciprocal love by recognising and accepting the responsibility associated with God's providence by keeping the associated Law. From the relational motivation such responsibility is a delight, an obligation which is not experienced as bondage, but as a blessing. The observer cannot make the Sabbath holy, but can "keep it holy" in recognition of God having declared it such (Rodríguez 2002:2).

As the blessing of procreation of human beings and animals denoted perpetuity of action, so the blessing of the Sabbath also sets a perpetual rhythm in place (Cole 2003:7; Gane 2003:12). Sabbath is a work of time, not of space, which brings equality amongst people, something space does not accommodate. Everyone has the same amount of time in a day as long as they live, but not everyone has equal benefit of space. The occupation of that time is an expression of relationship; on the one hand, with the One who sanctified it and declared it a blessing, and on the other, with those engaged with, and with those with whom the Sabbath blessing of being freed from bondage is shared.

Sabbath was never merely an outward observance which was done because it was commanded, as seems the issue in Amos 8:5 (Nichol 1978:IV, 980). It was always the intention that it would be a willing and loving gesture, a demonstration of faith in and regard for the Creator and Redeemer of the people of God. Only in that sense can the Sabbath truly be a delight and seen as something to enjoy, and not a legalistic observance which limits and restricts against the free will of the observer (Isaiah 58:13-14; Nichol IV 307).

Sabbath has at its core not the actions of God during creation and salvation, but rather the character of the One enacting them. As at creation mankind was expected to follow in *imago Dei*, just so, with the salvific acts of Jesus, believers are to follow in setting free from bondage. The closer the focus on Christ as Creator and Saviour, the clearer his example will become, and the closer the observer can come to walking as Jesus walked, which is the New

Testament translation of *imago Dei* – believing as Jesus believed, doing as Jesus did, loving as Jesus loved.

Conclusion

Sabbath is greatly misunderstood by non-Sabbatarians. To the conservative Adventist in particular, it is a day of great significance and great joy. A far cry from being a restrictive observance legalistically kept in order to satisfy an outdated commandment, Sabbath is considered a gift, a blessing, a delight and a privilege.

Keeping the seventh day holy not only physically expresses belief in a literal seven-day creation, it also acknowledges the fact that the Sabbath was blessed and sanctified for the sake of relationship with the very Creator who set the day apart for that purpose. He established it for the benefit of mankind because He loved (and still loves) humanity, and human beings can reciprocate that expression of love by observing the day in such a manner that the blessedness and sanctity thereof are reflected in the way it is kept. Reflecting on the fact that there is no other cosmic metronome for the weekly Sabbath, induces understanding that the observance of the day recognises God's authority and the rhythm He established. Armed with this knowledge and insight, worshippers answer the call to accept his ordinance as a sign of wilful submission to His supremacy, and obey from a desire to reflect reciprocal commitment to the relationship (Genesis 2:2-3; Exodus 31:16-17).

Sabbath observance also recognises the fact that God is the provider for His people in their sojourn as strangers and pilgrims on earth after having been saved from sin, like the Israelites were strangers and pilgrims in the desert after having been saved from Egypt. Like the Israelites were dependant on the manna for their daily sustenance (Exodus 16), the contemporary Christian is dependant daily on Jesus, the bread that was sent from heaven (John 6:51). The New Testament faithful are as much Israel as was Israel of old, for being in Christ is being Abraham's seed (Galatians 3:29). It brings the age-old observance into the present, while also looking towards the Second Coming when the believers will enter the heavenly realm of which Canaan served as a type. There the saints will observe God creating the new heavens and the new earth (Isaiah 66:22; Revelation 21:1), something they could only believe by faith before. Yet Sabbath observance, unlike the manna, did not cease with

the entry into Canaan. It remained, just as Isaiah 66 indicates perpetuity of weekly Sabbath observance in eternity.

Contrary to the majority view that the Sabbath was abolished in the New Testament, its connection with Jesus as the incarnate Creator and Saviour is emphasised, and draws the conservative Adventist to an even stronger commitment to the observance of the day. John 1:1-3 and 14 clearly make the connection between the Word that created and Christ our Saviour. But Sabbath has much more to it than just remembering who the Creator and Saviour is, the true significance of the day lies in its observance according to the example set by the One the day points to; Jesus. The Sabbath controversies in the synoptic gospels (Matthew 12:1-13; Mark 2:23-3:6; Luke 6:1-11) firmly establish the principle that “mercy and not sacrifice” (Matthew 12:7) should characterise the day. It is a day on which delivery from bondage should be paramount, where the observer reaches out to fellow human beings in order to reflect the *imago Dei* – reaching out to others as God reached out to us by establishing the Sabbath.

Observance of the Sabbath impacts the observer on a physical, spiritual, mental, social and emotional level, and often alienates him/her from society at large in a greater or lesser degree, but greatly benefits the spiritual bond with God, who is revered by the keeping thereof. The expectation of an assault on Sabbath observance in order to obliterate the recognition due to God, and then the aggressive insistence to conform to societal norms in order to quiet the divine call to not conform to worldly standards, are anticipated by conservative Adventists. The establishment of an alternative to the Sabbath, which will be enforced in the time of the end, which will constitute the mark of the beast, will test the resolve of the committed Sabbath observer. Sabbath observance speaks to the worshipper’s faithfulness to, hope in and love of the One who established the sign of relationship – expressed in a life of willingness to commit to the seventh-day Sabbath, even unto death.

Sabbath thus exemplifies a loyalty to our Creator and Saviour, Jesus Christ, who we seek to engage and connect with on the Sabbath, not as the only time that exists for interaction with God, but as a celebration of the relationship enjoyed with Him daily, much like a

committed couple would celebrate their anniversary on a specific day as pinnacle of the continued commitment which they enjoy day by day.

Sabbath spirituality in Conservative Adventism could be summed up in the words of Gulley (2003:221) who eloquently expresses the essence of Sabbath when he states:

Christ spoke everything into existence for humans. He gave them gifts in space. But on the Sabbath He gave them Himself in time, to be their Creator up-close, like His life on planet earth “to tabernacle” among them (John 1:14) and His coming in the earth made new when “God himself will be with them and be their God” (Rev 21:3). This is Immanuel, “God with us” (Matt 1:23). Sabbath keeping is spending time with Christ up close!

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