

## The “Change” of the **Law**

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“ ‘He will speak against the Most High and oppress his holy people and try to change the set times and the laws. The holy people will be delivered into his hands for a time, times and half a time’ ” (Dan. 7:25, NIV).



Both of these are sand, so what is the difference? There is a stark difference between them, so the previous statement seems rather irrelevant. A similar conjecture will occur with the Sabbath when the day is changed to Sunday, but we must remember how different these two days are and, most important, why they are different.

## Introduction

# *Heroes, Capes, and the Law*

Dan. 7:25

“ ‘ ‘He shall speak words against the Most High, / and shall wear out the saints of the Most High, / and shall think to change the times and the law; / and they shall be given into his hand / for a time, times, and half a time’ ’ ” (Dan. 7:25, ESV).

It’s difficult to write new, fresh, and creative content about the law of God. What can I say that hasn’t been said a thousand times before?

### **As I look at the world around me, I see so many yearning for a hero—for hope.**

As I look at the world around me, I see so many yearning for a hero—for hope. Even within my own church, it seems as if people could use some hope sometimes. When we . . . when I picture a hero, usually it’s a fit, good-looking man or woman in an outfit that makes them stand out from everyone else. They usually have some sort of symbol that means something to the rest of the world, that symbolizes the hope that they bring. Some of these heroes even have entire fandoms dedicated to them.

Sometimes I wonder whether the law could ever be a symbol of hope to us, like the S is on the chest of you-know-who. Granted, the law is no hero in itself—I’ve seen people even make it out to be a villain. But what if it could be a beacon of hope? And yet, to compare the law to an imaginary hero and its industry would be a gross devaluing of its sacredness.

So how can we find hope within the law? We can’t. The law is only an arrow to point us to the character of our true Hero, Jesus. He is the only One who can give us hope. Strangely enough, there’s one part of the law, of that arrow, that this dark and twisted world wants to change. It’s the part of the arrow that points us in the right direction—the arrowhead so to speak. It’s the part of the law that separates the Ten Commandments from every other moral code out there. It is the part of the law that commands us to rest. In this busy and complicated world, the Sabbath is like a refuge for us. That little crucial piece of the arrow that the world attacks is the piece that tells you and me to rest in Jesus.

No, the Sabbath isn’t exactly glamorous or fashionable (and we could debate its potential for a fandom), but this week as we explore together this arrow and its arrowhead, maybe, just maybe, it can point us in the direction of our Hope and toward the Light in these last few dark days.

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*Casey Vaughn, Lapeer, Michigan, USA*

Daniel 7

## Evidence *The Great Adventist Biblical Error*

In Daniel 7, four beasts are mentioned from verses 1 to 7, and each of the four beasts gets one verse. The lion, the raised bearlike beast, the leopard-like beast, and the dreadful beast all receive the same one-verse treatment. If we consider the horns a fifth power, then the ten horns plus the little horn also only get one verse; thus, in the entire sequence, the earthly kingdoms in Daniel 7:1–8 receive only one verse each. Because of this, we can conclude that these powers are important, but they are only relatively important because the descriptions of the beasts finish quickly.

### **The Ancient of Days is the most important changer of history.**

However, notice the number of verses Scripture dedicates to the activities of Heaven. The Ancient of Days is described in verse 9; in the same verse, He seats Himself on a throne to judge—which is biblical code for intervene in human affairs—and then His activities are described in verses 10–14. So to compare, each power got one verse for itself, but the divine activities of the Ancient of Days and Son of Man received a total of five verses.

Human powers are important but not that important in Daniel 7.

But divine activities? They are very important, so they get much more emphasis.

So what can I prove from this?

The Bible devotes more words to describing the actions of Heaven than the actions of human powers in this passage and in all apocalyptic passages.

And this is important to note because biblical presentations should do the same; they should do the same because when we emphasize the power of God to intervene in human affairs, we are filled with awe at the might of our Lord. Moreover, we are encouraged and comforted, for we know that human powers have importance in changing history, but the Ancient of Days is the most important changer of history—both for the world and for you and me.

### **REACT**

1. What is the significance of the divine activities described in Daniel 7:9–14 as they relate to the war the little horn wages against the Most High?

2. The Bible is clear that God intervenes in human affairs. In what ways do you see God intervening in human affairs today—both globally and personally?

# Logos

## *What Happened?*

Daniel 7

### ***How Did New Testament Figures Relate to the Sabbath? (Luke 4:14–16; 23:50–24:3; Acts 13:14, 42–44; 16:12, 13)***

If you have ever talked with Sunday-keeping Christians about why they keep Sunday as their day of worship and not the seventh-day Sabbath, it is possible that they have responded by stating that Jesus changed the Sabbath to Sunday. They might also have said that the law was nailed to the cross—thus doing away with the need to keep the Sabbath. Some attribute their practice to the notion that early church Christians kept Sunday as the Sabbath. We need to look to the Bible to see what it says about how Christians are to relate to the Bible and how the Sabbath was “changed.”

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### **I, too, as His follower, must keep the Sabbath.**

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Luke, the writer of the Gospel account bearing his name and the book Acts of the Apostles, records a number of instances in which Jesus and the Christian church maintained Sabbath observance. When Jesus was officially beginning His earthly ministry, He went into the synagogue on the Sabbath day (the seventh day) as was His custom (Luke 4:14–16). Luke’s record shows us that Jesus’ custom was to go into the synagogue every Sabbath for worship.

After Jesus’ crucifixion, a man named Joseph from the city of Arimathea came to retrieve Jesus’ body and place Him in a tomb (Luke 23:50–53). This occurred on the day of preparation for the Sabbath, or Friday (verse 54). Jesus lay in the tomb and did not come to life until the first day of the week, Sunday, on which day Christians all over the world celebrate Easter (Luke 24:1–3). Interestingly, even in His death, Jesus kept the seventh-day Sabbath rest! Furthermore, Joseph and the women who assisted with Jesus’ burial rested on the Sabbath according to the commandment (Luke 23:56).

We have seen that Jesus was a Sabbath keeper and that believers in Him still kept the Sabbath at the time of His death. But what about after Christ’s ascension? Luke provides accounts of which day early Christians kept as holy.

When Paul and Barnabas, apostles in the church, entered the city of Antioch, they went into the synagogue on the Sabbath day and began to read from the Law and the prophets to teach the people about Jesus (Acts 13:14, 15). (This sounds very much like what Jesus’ custom was.) This episode was not the only instance of them observing the Sabbath. The Gentiles asked Paul and Barnabas to come back the next Sabbath to preach to them again (verse 42). The next Sabbath, almost the whole city came out to hear the words the apostles had to speak (verse 44). In another instance, Paul, Timothy, and Silas went, on the Sabbath day, to a riverside and taught a group of women who had assembled for prayer there (Acts 16:13–15). These occasions show that the

leadership of the early Christian church worshiped on the Sabbath as Jesus did.

It is our privilege and duty, as Christians, to imitate Jesus, for He is our example in all things (1 Pet. 2:21). So if the Savior Himself kept the Sabbath, and His followers in the early church kept the Sabbath, I, too, as His follower, must keep the Sabbath.

### ***What About New Testament References to Sunday? (John 20:19–23; Acts 20:6, 7)***

There are very few references to Sunday in the New Testament. But none of these presents Sunday as a day of worship. It just so happens to be the day on which certain events occurred. In John's account of Jesus' appearance to His disciples after His resurrection, the disciples were not gathered in worship but were hiding for fear of the Jews (John 20:19–23). Luke records Paul's travels to Greece and Macedonia. Paul stayed in Troas for seven days, and on the first day of the week, the disciples came together to break bread (Acts 20:6, 7). Some interpret the breaking of bread to mean that they gathered for worship. However, breaking bread was a regular, daily occurrence for Christians during that time and did not signify a holy day (Acts 2:42–47).

For many years following Jesus' return to heaven, Christians faithfully followed the example of Jesus and the apostles in keeping the seventh-day Sabbath. The only day of worship mentioned in the New Testament, as we have seen, is the seventh-day Sabbath.

### ***Then How Did the Day Get “Changed”? (Dan. 7:1–8, 21–25; Revelation 13; 14:6, 7)***

Jesus has repeatedly given His people the gift of prophecy throughout human history to give them hope and direction as they face a future of difficulty and uncertainty. The book of Daniel prophesied a religiopolitical power that would attempt to change the times and laws of God, a reference to the only law of God that deals with time—the Sabbath commandment (Dan. 7:25). John shares a prophecy of the same religiopolitical power in different terms in Revelation 13.

This power that would attempt to change the Sabbath would arise out of the fourth major world empire, Rome. It would last until the end of time, challenging God's authority and persecuting the people of God who keep His commandments. The power attacks the Sabbath because it is a sign of God's authority as Creator and Ruler of earth. The remnant people of God, however, understanding the beauty and importance of the seventh-day commandment, proclaim a message in the last days that warns people to fear and worship God as Creator of all things (Rev. 14:6, 7). Right at the heart of the last message of the gospel of salvation in Jesus Christ is the message to remember God as Creator by keeping the Sabbath.

### ***REACT***

1. What are the evidences that Christians should keep the Sabbath to honor Jesus?
2. Is keeping the Sabbath incompatible with the gospel of Jesus Christ?

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*Paul Anthony Turner, Louisville, Kentucky, USA*

## Testimony *The World at Stake*

James 2:10

“Men will surely set up their laws to counterwork the laws of God. They will seek to compel the consciences of others, and in their zeal to enforce these laws they will oppress their fellow men.”<sup>1</sup>

“That some specification of the law spoken by God’s own voice has been set aside is the claim which Satan now puts forward. He need not assail the whole law; if he can lead men to disregard one precept, his purpose is gained. For “whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all.” James 2:10. By consenting to break one precept, men are brought under Satan’s power.”<sup>2</sup>

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### “The warfare against God’s law will continue until the end of time.”

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“He [Satan] told his angels . . . that the Ten Commandments were so plain that many would believe that they were still binding; therefore he must seek to corrupt the fourth commandment, which brings to view the living God. He led on his representatives to attempt to change the Sabbath, and alter the only commandment of the ten which brings to view the true God, the maker of the heavens and the earth. Satan presented before them the glorious resurrection of Jesus, and told them that by His rising on the first day of the week, He changed the Sabbath from the seventh to the first day of the week. Thus Satan used the resurrection to serve his purpose. He and his angels rejoiced that the errors they had prepared took so well with the professed friends of Christ.

“Satan, working through unconsecrated leaders of the church, tampered with the fourth commandment . . . and essayed to set aside the ancient Sabbath, the day which God had blessed and sanctified (Genesis 2:2, 3), and in its stead to exalt the festival observed by the heathen as “the venerable day of the sun.”<sup>3</sup>

“The warfare against God’s law will continue until the end of time. All will be called to choose between the law of God and the laws of men. There will be but two classes. Every character will be fully developed. All will show whether they have chosen the side of loyalty or that of rebellion.

“Then the end will come. God will vindicate His law and deliver His people. Satan and all who join him in rebellion will be cut off. Sin and sinners will perish, root and branch.”<sup>4</sup>

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1. Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages*, p. 763.

2. Ellen G. White, *From Heaven with Love*, p. 510.

3. Ellen G. White, *The Faith I Live By*, p. 81.

4. White, *From Heaven with Love*, p. 510.

Is. 66:18–24;  
Jer. 17:19–27

## How-to *The Sabbath After the Sabbath?*

The seventh-day Sabbath is very important to God. It is the stamp of His government, and there is so much more to the Sabbath than just worshipping on the “right day.” To experience the Sabbath fully, you must dedicate your life to the Lord. This dedication includes your time, your resources, and your mind. The Sabbath is not kept for the things that we do; it is kept as a result of the transformation of our hearts. The spirit of the Sabbath does not commence or end within the 24-hour period. It goes beyond it and reaches into our lives throughout the week.

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### **The spirit of the Sabbath does not commence or end within the 24-hour period.**

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*Time.* When I was younger, I felt burdened by the 24-hour period of sunset to sunset. I couldn’t do what I wanted, so the Sabbath was more of a frustration than a delight. What made the difference was how I used my time during the week. If I dedicated my time throughout the week to the Lord and His service, I found it to be easier to have a “Sabbath” mentality during the time of rest. If I did not, I usually saw the Sabbath as disrupting my everyday tasks. How much time do you spend with the Savior each day? Reflect with Him on ways you spend time that may be a detriment to your Sabbath experience.

*Resources.* The Sabbath is not only a day to rejoice and delight in the rest that God gives to us but a day to share, a day of relief for the people of God. Seeing the Sabbath as a means of helping others shifts our mentality to one of service and selflessness. Jesus used the Sabbath to heal the sick and give vision to the blind. We, too, can help others to recuperate their sight and lead them to the everlasting Savior.

*Mind.* The Lord desires our hearts. In the Bible, the heart is not the organ that gives life; it is directly associated with the mind. In the last days, those who “keep the commandments of God and have the faith of Jesus” will inherit everlasting life. Jesus said that those who follow Him have the law in their hearts. When we dedicate our week to the Lord and spend time with Him in His Word and in prayer, the Spirit will bring our minds into unity with His purposes, and we will maintain the spirit of the Sabbath in our daily lives.

### **REACT**

1. Does the Sabbath still burden you? Why?
2. How can we keep the spirit of the Sabbath every day?

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*Jose Briones, Berrien Springs, Michigan, USA*

*The “Change” of the Law*

For many centuries, different denominations of Christianity (Baptist, Catholic, Seventh-day Adventist, etc.) have celebrated the Sabbath on two different days: Saturday and Sunday. The fourth commandment says that the seventh day is the holy day.

Many Christians believed that the Sabbath law had changed when in fact it hadn't. Joseph Bates, a Seventh-day Adventist author, stated, "I understand that the SEVENTH day Sabbath is not the LEAST one, among the ALL things that are to be restored before the second advent of Jesus Christ, seeing that the Imperial and Papal power of Rome, since the days of the Apostles, have changed the seventh day Sabbath to the first day of the week!"\* This quote indicates that the changing of the Sabbath law is not a minor mistake—it is a major mistake.

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Daniel 7:25 states, "He will speak against the Most High and oppress his holy people and try to change the set times and the laws. The holy people will be delivered into his hands for a time, times and half a time" (NIV). One of the signs of Christ's second coming is an increase in lawlessness. People will do whatever they want, not paying heed to God's laws. Those who know Saturday is holy but do not, or did not, keep it holy have disobeyed one of God's laws. God does not favor lawlessness because it is a sin.

Accepting Jesus as your Lord and Savior is necessary to go to heaven, but this relationship will result in keeping His commandments—even the fourth commandment. God has rules and order in His Word (the Bible) that we must follow if we claim to be His people and Him to be our Lord.

**REACT**

1. Why is the day of the Sabbath so important to God?
2. Is there more to Sabbath than it being a day of rest and gathering with fellow believers?

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\* Joseph Bates, *The Seventh Day Sabbath, A Perpetual Sign, From the Beginning to the Entering Into the Gates of the Holy City, According to the Commandment*, 2nd ed. (Fairhaven, MA: New Bedford Press of Benjamin Lindsey, 1847), accessed May 14, 2017, <http://biblelight.net/bates.htm>.



Rev. 12:6, 7

## Exploration *Remember*

### **CONCLUDE**

“Do not think that I came to destroy the Law or the Prophets. I did not come to destroy but to fulfill” (Matt. 5:17, NKJV). With these words, Jesus expressed the importance of the Law. By fulfilling the Law, Jesus did not abolish it but gave it a fuller meaning. He expanded the Law’s teachings on murder, adultery, marriage, and the Sabbath. In Matthew 12 Jesus taught that He “is Lord even of the Sabbath” (verse 8) and that “it is lawful to do good on the Sabbath” (verse 12, NIV). Our Creator instituted and sanctified the Sabbath for all humanity (Mark 2:27), not to be a burden but to be a delight and a perpetual sign between God and His people. Thus, the Bible assures us that the Sabbath will be kept throughout eternity (Isa. 66:23). God has indeed blessed us with the Sabbath; let us remember it!

### **CONSIDER**

- Thinking of a world without laws. Why do we need laws?
- Watching the documentary “Revelation: The Bride, the Beast, and Babylon” on YouTube.
- Watching “Oprah Learns Sabbath Is on Saturday From Adventist Moviemaker” on YouTube.
- Finding five people that you can be a blessing to on the Sabbath day. Make it special. You could sing a song for them, bake some bread, write a “thank you” note, share a GLOW tract, give them flowers, prepare a special meal, enjoy nature together, etc.
- Listening to the song “Remember the Sabbath to Keep It Holy” by the Pillar of Faith Singers.

### **CONNECT**

Psalm 92.

Ellen G. White, *The Great Controversy*, chapter 36, “The Impending Conflict”; *The Desire of Ages*, chapter 29, “The Sabbath.”