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## *What the Sealing Means*

#0421

Study Given by W. D. Frazee—November 1965

In the September of the Roman Catholic Journal called, *The US Catholic Magazine*, there appeared a somewhat lengthy article entitled, *Why the Seventh-day Adventist Are Succeeding*. This is an interesting day when the Roman Catholic Church is taking cognizance of this little denomination. Well, obviously this morning we won't have time to read the entire article, but I would like to call your attention to a few things in it. This article is in the ecumenical spirit, raising the question, "What can we learn from our separated brethren? What can we learn from our *Adventist* friends? It praises the Seventh-day Adventist Church for its zeal, its church school system, its health reform message, and the results in the comparative freedom from lung cancer and other diseases that Adventists enjoy and so on. Here are a few statements that I'll glean here and there from the article:

"Unlike most Christian denominations, the Seventh-day Adventist church has barely been touched by the current ecumenical movement. Roman Catholicism fares rather poorly in Adventist preaching and literature. Some Adventist authors carry on an old fashioned vendetta against the Church of Rome, whose Pope's were responsible for changing the observance of the Sabbath from Saturday to Sunday, and thereby heading Christendom down the road to apostasy."

Now obviously, that's simply this author reflecting what he feels is the Adventist view. Obviously, *he* doesn't think that the change of the Sabbath from Saturday to Sunday headed Christendom down the road to apostasy. Further in the article occur these statements:

"Most Protestants, as well as Catholics, reject the Adventist interpretation of the Sabbath commandment as demanding the observance of Saturday. Nevertheless we might profit from an examination of how the Adventists try to keep their Sabbath holy. For the devout Adventist the Sabbath begins at sundown Friday as it does for the orthodox Jews. Meals are prepared on Friday so that food preparation need not take up the wife's time on the Sabbath. Saturday morning is spent in church and Sabbath School. The rest of the day is devoted to Bible reading and study, simple family recreation such as nature walks, prayer, and discussing Bible topics with friends. The radio and television are silent until the end of the Sabbath at sundown on Saturday."

Now isn't that a nice picture of Seventh-day Adventists observing the Sabbath? Now I go back to the article:

"Could we contrast this observance of the Sabbath with that which characterizes the conduct of millions of Christians? In too many homes Sunday may be a day free from regular employment, but it is really just another day of the week. If we take a stroll through many neighborhoods we will see Christians painting their homes, washing the car, hanging storm windows or screens, carrying on various do-it-yourself projects. We know that shopping centers and stores could not make a profit on Sunday if millions of Christians did not choose that day of the week to buy furniture, automobiles, appliances, groceries, and clothing. We profess to be shocked that the Soviets deliberately erased the religious significance of Sunday in order to undermine the role of religion in the lives of the Russian people. Have we not done much the same thing in the United States, and often in defiance of the laws designed to preserve the values of a day of rest?

"Our Adventist friends remind us that the Sabbath was not given only to a band of desert peoples centuries ago but to each generation of men. God asks that all men set apart one day out of seven to His service as well as to the recreation of the human body and spirit. The author of man's nature knew that such a day was essential to man's spiritual, emotional, and physical well-being. We not only disobey His commandment but we flirt with personal disaster when we ignore the significance of the Sabbath. As Catholics we have often aimed at a minimal observance of the Lord's day; we attend Mass and avoid servile work, broadly defined. Perhaps the Adventists can remind us that the creative and holy observance of the day demands more than this bare minimum."

This is very interesting, isn't it? Very interesting. Then the author speaks of our extensive welfare program limited not merely to Adventists. And he speaks of our Dorcas and welfare societies, and the fact that Adventists don't believe in killing; that they're non-combatants. Then he says:

"We can see that the decision to become an Adventist would not be made lightly. The convert would be expected to tithe his income, attend Sabbath services every week, abstain from all unnecessary work on the Sabbath, forgo liquor and tobacco, educate his children in parochial schools, avoid dancing, card playing, and movies, give up cosmetics and jewelry, sever any connection with a secret society. Yet the Adventists

seem to be purposeful, contented people who derive a deep satisfaction from their religion.”

Isn't that wonderful? By the way, I thought as I read this, I hope everybody that takes members into the church will be sure and note that this is the standard that our Catholic friends think converts are accepting in coming into the church. There are details there that sometimes need emphasis.

Now in the closing part of the article, there are two statements I want to call your attention to. After telling about the history of our movement, how it arose back in 1844 with William Miller, how they were disappointed and decided they wouldn't set any more dates but look for the imminent return of Christ:

“To this basic doctrine of Adventists the tiny New England congregation added the belief that Christians should observe the Old Testament Sabbath rather than Sunday which had been designated by an early Pope. The role of the Pope in changing the observance has given the movement an anti-Catholic orientation. Many Adventists seem to consider the Pope to be the Antichrist.”

Notice how, from the beginning to the end, the Sabbath stands out as the great landmark of this movement. Of course, there's nothing surprising about that. I seem to hear in this the echo:

“The Sabbath will be the great test of loyalty; for it is the point of truth especially controverted... While one class, by accepting the sign of submission to earthly powers, receive the mark of the beast, the other, choosing the token of allegiance to divine authority, receive the seal of God” *Great Controversy*, page 605.

There we have it. It might be well for us to briefly review some of the Roman Catholic statements on this matter. Notice what the *Convert's Catechism of Catholic Doctrine* by Peter Geiermann, page 50 says on this matter:

“Which is the Sabbath day?

“Saturday is the Sabbath day.

“Why do we observe Sunday instead of Saturday?

“We observe Sunday instead of Saturday because the Catholic Church transferred the solemnity from Saturday to Sunday.”

This is very clear.

Cardinal Gibbons, for many years a cardinal there in Baltimore, in his well-known book says:

“But you may read the Bible from Genesis to Revelation and you will not find a single line authorizing the sanctification of Sunday. The Scriptures enforce the religious observance of Saturday, a day which we never sanctify” *The Faith of our Fathers*, page 111.

You see, it's very clear that this Sabbath question is more than the matter of a day: it's the question of whether the church speaking through the Pope or Christ speaking through the Bible, is the real authority. That's the question.

Notice the book put out by the Paulist Press in New York City, a Roman Catholic book with questions and answers on many different subjects:

“QUESTION: What Bible authority is there for changing the Sabbath from the seventh to the first day of the week? Who gave the Pope the authority to change a command of God?

“ANSWER: If the Bible is the only guide for the Christian, then the Seventh-day Adventist is right in observing the Saturday with the Jew. But Catholics learn what to believe and do from the divine infallible authority established by Jesus Christ, the Catholic Church” *The Question Box*, page 179.

And on this issue comes the last great battle. I repeat, it's more than a day. It's a philosophy of life. Are we looking to men or to Christ? Are we looking to human ordinances or to the eternal, unchangeable law of God? That's the whole question.

I want to introduce another Scripture into our study:

“And after these things I saw four angels standing on the four corners of the earth, holding the four winds of the earth, that the wind should not blow on the earth, nor on the sea, nor on any tree” Revelation 7:1.

What are those winds? Strife, war, confusion, persecution—all the elements of destruction. What are the angels doing? Holding them. But in the vision, they seem about ready to let go and let the winds blow. But John sees *another* angel ascending from the east, having the seal of the living God.

“And I saw another angel ascending from the east, having the seal of the living God: and he cried with a loud voice to the four angels, to whom it was given to hurt the earth and the sea, Saying, Hurt not the earth, neither the sea, nor the trees, till we have sealed the servants of our God in their foreheads” Revelation 7:2–3.

Here is the sealing of the remnant just before the last, great crisis. And that awful storm of destruction is going to come over this world suddenly, unexpectedly when *they* shall say peace and security, then sudden destruction cometh upon them. Here is the same picture, but here we see what's holding back that awful, overwhelming surprise. The angels of God are holding it back until the servants of God are sealed in their foreheads. You and I know what that seal is. What is it? The Sabbath.

“Moreover also I gave them My Sabbaths, to be a sign between Me and them, that they might know that I am the LORD that sanctify them. And hallow My Sabbaths; and they shall be a sign between Me and you, that ye may know that I am the LORD your God” Ezekiel 20:12, 20.

So the Sabbath *is* the central feature in God's holy law, which is to be imprinted so deep into the minds and hearts of the remnant that nothing can shake them. Notice this interesting comment by Ellen G. White:

“Just as soon as the people of God are sealed in their foreheads—it is not any seal or mark that can be seen, but a settling into the truth both intellectually and spiritually, so they cannot be moved—just as soon as God's people are sealed and prepared for the shaking, it will come. Indeed, it has begun already; the judgments of God are now upon the land, to give us warning, that we may know what is coming” *Bible Commentary*, Volume 4, page 1161.

You notice the interesting statement; just as soon as something is done, this awful shaking will come. Indeed it has begun already. Well, which is it? Well, it's both. The judgments of God with the resulting shaking have begun. And yet, in a sense, it's future. These winds are blowing a bit as the angels loosen their hold, but the real blowing of the wind, the real trouble, the real persecution, the real strife, the real overwhelming trouble that's to come upon this world, is yet future. All that is held in check until you and I get settled. That's it. Until you and I get settled.

Someone says, “Well, I'm settled.” Are you? Let's see how much wind can you stand? Can you stand up in an 80-mile-an-hour wind? What about a 100-mile-an-hour wind? What about a hurricane of 150 miles an hour? Ah my dear friends, the winds are going to blow. And it's going to mean something to the universe of God to look down upon this little planet and watch the 144,000 *stand* when hurricane, the howling hurricane of the wrath of the dragon is turned loose, with no restriction, nothing to hold it back. Again:

“And the dragon was wroth with the woman, and went to make war with the remnant of her seed, which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ” Revelation 12:17.

In the soon-coming conflict, we're going to see and feel the *full* force of all that. So this little time right now is the preparing time. That's the theme of this whole

series. Now is the time to prepare for what's soon to come upon the world as an overwhelming surprise. And it's very clear that the central feature of that preparation is to get the Sabbath *sealed* in our foreheads so deep that nothing can efface it.

*This* is the great issue. We see it's recognized by the Catholics as the great separating point between their movement and ours. God recognized it, and makes it a subject of prophecy. The seal going into the minds of the remnant, and the mark of the beast being enforced by economic pressure upon all the rest of the world. And on that issue all the world will be divided into those two great classes. Most will take the mark of the beast because they've been preparing for it. They've gotten into the habit of accepting the rule of man instead of the rule of God. They've gotten into the habit of accepting peace and security as they view it instead of truth and liberty. But God's people have learned to love His law, and love the Savior, Who is the author of the law. And as the result, they come to the place where the truth, the Sabbath, is so identified with them and they with it, that the only way you could take the Sabbath, the truth, the message, out of them would be to burn them up, to kill them in some way. And that, of course, is what the world is eventually going to try to do. But you know how God is going to interfere.

I want you to see in Isaiah 58, what it is that's going to enable us to have that kind of settling into the truth, particularly in the matter of the Sabbath. You remember that this great medical missionary chapter is also the great chapter of Sabbath reform. The remnant are pictured as raising up the foundations of many generations, they're restorers, reformers. The promise to them is:

"And they that shall be of thee shall build the old waste: thou shalt raise up the foundations of many generations; and thou shalt be called, The repairer of the breach, The restorer of paths to dwell in. If thou turn away thy foot from the sabbath, from doing thy pleasure on My holy day; and call the sabbath a delight, the holy of the LORD, honourable; and shalt honour Him, not doing thine own ways, nor finding thine own pleasure, nor speaking thine own words" Isaiah 58:12-13.

What is that word, 'delight'? Oh, that's a picture of special pleasure. Is that right? It's just the opposite to the concept that it's a yoke of bondage, a day of restriction. Notice the two delights. Call the Sabbath a delight, and delight thyself in the Lord. The two belong together. We can never find the delight in the Sabbath until we see *Jesus* in the Sabbath as the Creator Who made this world in six days, and rested the seventh and blessed it and sanctified it; until we see Jesus as the Redeemer, Who, on Friday afternoon, gave up His life and rested during the holy hours of that Sabbath in Joseph's tomb; as the Great High Priest, Who this morning, is interceding in our behalf in the sanctuary; that that law, with the Sabbath as its seal may be written in our heart. All of this is involved in seeing Jesus in the Sabbath, and in finding in Him and in it, our delight.

"To all who receive the Sabbath as a sign of Christ's creative and redeeming power, it will be a delight. Seeing

Christ in it, they delight themselves in Him” *The Desire of Ages*, page 289.

There it is. The heart of the Sabbath is *Jesus*, the Great Creator, the Redeemer. As that hymn, I love to sing about the Sabbath—*Lord of the Sabbath, and It's Light*—the last stanza:

Oh Jesus, let me ever hail Thy presence  
With the day of rest.  
Then shall Thy servant never fail  
To deem Thy Sabbath doubly blessed.

And dear ones, in order to enter into this, we need to watch that we do not allow the lax habits of Sunday-keepers to enter into our Sabbath-keeping. You noticed that the Roman Catholic paper held up Sabbath-keepers, Seventh-day Adventists, as examples of how to keep the Sabbath that they might well copy on Sunday. But they will never be able to get Sunday-keepers to keep Sunday the way Sabbath-keepers keep the Sabbath; because in order for us to *keep* a day holy it must *be* holy. And yet, as God brings us this holy day from week to week, how many miss the blessing through letting ordinary things come into this extraordinary day.

Just a few thoughts in closing on this:

“We must be guarded, lest the lax practices that prevail among Sunday-keepers shall be followed by those who profess to observe God’s holy rest day. The line of demarcation is to be made clear and distinct between those who bear the mark of God’s kingdom and those who bear the sign of the kingdom of rebellion”  
*Testimonies for the Church, Volume 6*, page 353.

Here you see, the difference is to be clear, not merely in the *day* we rest, but in the *way* we keep the day. Far more sacredness is attached to the Sabbath than is given it by many professed Sabbath-keepers. This chapter, by the way in Volume 6, is full of precious suggestions on the observance of the Sabbath, the things to do during week and on Friday to get ready; the caution against overeating on the Sabbath; the cautions against traveling on the Sabbath. I call attention to that especially in this travel-mad age. People think nothing today of getting in their automobiles and going 20, 30, 40 50, 100 miles any day of the week, that’s just like going over to the neighbors. I think we need to be careful. It’s worth noting:

“I fear that we often travel on this day when it might be avoided” *Testimonies for the Church, Volume 6*, page 359.

But these are details. The great point is to so accept Jesus, as the Creator and Redeemer in the Sabbath, and so love Him and love His truth, that when the great storm comes, we shall be so settled in the truth, so sealed in our foreheads with the seal of God, that *nothing* can move us. *Nothing* can shake us.

Dear Lord, write Thy holy law on the tablets of our hearts. May we be settled intellectually in knowing Thy Sabbath. May we be settled spiritually in loving Thy Sabbath. And thus may we be among that remnant that stands when all the world bows down to the beast and his image. We ask it for the honor of Thy name; for Jesus' sake, amen.

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