

Rest in Christ

The Rhythms of Rest

Lesson #9 for August 28, 2021

Scriptures: Genesis 1; 2:3; Exodus 20:8-11; 16:14-31; Deuteronomy 5:12-15; Psalm 92; Isaiah 58:13-14.

1. Any study on “Rest in Christ” should make Seventh-day Adventists think immediately of the Sabbath.
2. Try to imagine yourself watching the events of creation week. Is it possible that when God re-creates the earth, He will take seven days again? Light, firmament (the sky), trees and land, birds and fish, and animals. But, not one single human being had yet been created. God was waiting for the grand finale; He created humans as a unique order of beings.

All heaven took a deep and joyful interest in the creation of the world and of man. Human beings were **a new and distinct order**. They were made “in the image of God,” and it was the Creator’s design that they should populate the earth. They were to live in close communion with heaven, receiving power from the Source of all power. Upheld by God, they were to live sinless lives.—Ellen G. White, *Review and Herald*,* February 11, 1902, par. 1.[†] Compare *SDABC*, vol. 1, 1081.3.

3. Try to imagine God Himself coming down to this little tiny planet, scooping up some clay or mud, and beginning to form a man. **Then, God bent over and kissed Adam with the breath of life.** Why not make Eve first? What do you think the angels were thinking as they watched that spectacle? Only a short time later and after having reviewed all the animals and giving them their names and probably categorizing them, Adam was put to sleep. A rib was taken from his side, and Eve was created. God looked upon His work and said it was “very good.”
4. But, God had not finished creating. It was then time to create a memorial. God did not make a memorial out of stone or brick or wood or even precious gems or gold; **He made a memorial out of time.** Why do you think God chose to do that? No one can change it, although some have tried. One cannot deface it. One cannot enlarge it or diminish it. One may think s/he can do that; but, s/he cannot. And it belongs equally to all human beings living on this earth. Each person has the same amount of time.
5. More than that, God created two beings to represent Himself, not just one: A male and a female who should be united in holy marriage; thus, creating a unit to be like God.
6. Conservative Christians believe that God has omniscience. He has the ability not only to know everything, but also to know the future as distinctly as He knows the past. What was God thinking as He created Adam and Eve, realizing what was coming? Remember that Revelation 12 makes it very clear that Satan was already on this earth. He had already caused rebellion in heaven and had been thrown out after war developed; and then, he was present on this earth **trying to find any means he could to disrupt God’s plan.**
7. What did Adam think when he woke up from that deep sleep? Try to imagine his thoughts as he saw his new bride. And what did she think of him?

Genesis 2:7,21-24: ⁷ Then the LORD God took some soil from the ground and formed a man out of it; he breathed life-giving breath into his nostrils and the man began to live....

²¹ Then the LORD God made the man fall into a deep sleep, and while he was sleeping, he took out one of the man’s ribs and closed up the flesh. ²²He formed a woman out of the rib and brought her to him. ²³Then the man said,

“At last, here is one of my own kind—

Bone taken from my bone, and flesh from my flesh.

‘Woman’ is her name because she was taken out of man.”

²⁴That is why a man leaves his father and mother and is united with his wife, and they become one.—American Bible Society. (1992). *The Holy Bible: The Good News Translation** (2nd ed., Genesis 2:7,21-24). New York: American Bible Society. [Are we the only procreators in the universe?][†]

8. Since God is love, (1 John 4:8,16) He determined to make creatures who could best exercise their individuality in a relationship of true love.
9. Think how different this story is from all the other explanations that have been suggested by Satan—working through human beings—for the origins of our world, life, and man.
10. **Then, God made the seventh-day Sabbath.** What did it actually consist of?
11. Each day in our world’s existence is composed of a single spin of this earth. There is no difference between the way the earth spins, or the rate at which it spins on the Sabbath. The only thing that sets the Sabbath apart is God’s special blessing on that day. God has chosen to set the Sabbath apart for a special time of fellowship with His human children.
12. It is interesting to note that not all of God’s children are celebrating the Sabbath at one time. Those who live on opposite sides of this earth are living in different days. So, God chooses to bless each group separately!
13. As we have already studied, the word *Sabbath* means rest. The Hebrew word *shabbat* means rest. **God was not tired; but rather, He wanted to stop and celebrate what had been done.** And He wanted us to stop our daily activities at the end of six days and celebrate with Him on the Sabbath.
14. With all the blessings that God intended to include in the Sabbath, you can be sure that Satan chose to do—and continues to choose to do—everything he possibly can to break up, destroy, or diminish the blessings of the Sabbath.
15. So, what impact has the corruption of the Sabbath had on the human race?

Had the Sabbath been universally kept, man’s thoughts and affections would have been led to the Creator as the object of reverence and worship, and there would never have been an idolater, an atheist, or an infidel.—Ellen G. White, *The Great Controversy** 437.2.[†]

16. Moses began writing his five books of the Bible very soon after the invention of the alphabet. Prior to that time, writing was very complicated and was either in hieroglyphics or cuneiform. But, most likely somewhere in the Egyptian realm, people began to develop a kind of alphabet. As part of the Egyptian royal family, Moses was there and learned that alphabet and wrote, using that primitive alphabet, the wonderful books we now study.
17. Almost immediately after his return from Midian to lead the children of Israel out of Egypt, **those 10 plagues served the purpose of convincing the children of Israel that their God was real and powerful!** Had they begun to doubt their God?
18. When the Israelites reached Mount Sinai, God instructed them from the top of that mountain about the rules that He wanted to be kept throughout the history of humanity.

Exodus 20:8-11: ⁸“Observe the Sabbath and keep it holy. ⁹You have six days in which to do your work, ¹⁰but the seventh day is a day of rest dedicated to me. On that day no one is to work—neither you, your children, your slaves, your animals, nor the foreigners who live in your country. ¹¹In six days I, the LORD, made the earth,

the sky, the sea, and everything in them, but on the seventh day I rested. That is why I, the LORD, blessed the Sabbath and made it holy.”—*Good News Bible*.^{*}
[What does *holy* mean?][†]

19. So, the Sabbath is intended to be a memorial each week to remind us of where we came from. So, if you had to choose, which would you rather be: (1) A child of the God of the universe, especially blessed by Them each Sabbath day? Or, (2) Having evolved or descended from random parts of slime or ooze at the bottom of the ocean?
20. But, God knew what was coming; He had prepared for the entrance of sin. And so, **down through the centuries, He attached additional meanings to the Sabbath.**

And since the Sabbath is a memorial of the work of creation, it is a token of the love and power of Christ.—Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages*^{*} 281.3.

21. Is it reasonable for God to ask us to dedicate one-seventh of our time as a day of rest and fellowship with Him? Isn't that a big cost? We are also to give a tenth of our income.
22. Are we supposed to be or feel different on the Sabbath? If so, why? Is there anything in nature that tells us that it is Sabbath? In what ways has God asked us to celebrate with Him? Should the Sabbath be regarded as this earth's birthday? What sets birthdays apart from other days? What about an anniversary?
23. Because of their rebellion and despite the glorious beginning of that exodus and the incredible relationship God tried to establish with the children of Israel at Mount Sinai, Israel had to wander in the wilderness for 40 years while that first generation died out. All during that time, they saw the pillar of cloud by day and the pillar of fire by night, hanging over the tent or tabernacle in the center of the camp—the site where God Himself dwelt.
24. What questions do you think the children who were born during the exodus asked of their parents when they looked at the pillar of cloud by day or the pillar of fire by night? What would you have said to your children if you had been there? Have you seen a pillar of fire?
25. But, **even before the experience at Sinai, God had given the children of Israel reasons to celebrate the Sabbath and understand its importance.**

Exodus 16:14-31: ¹⁴When the dew evaporated, there was something thin and flaky on the surface of the desert. It was as delicate as frost. ¹⁵When the Israelites saw it, they didn't know what it was and asked each other, "What is it?" [The word *manna* in Hebrew means "What is it?"]

Moses said to them, "This is the food that the LORD has given you to eat. ¹⁶The LORD has commanded that each of you is to gather as much of it as he needs, two litres for each member of his household."

¹⁷ The Israelites did this, some gathering more, others less. ¹⁸When they measured it, those who gathered much did not have too much, and those who gathered less did not have too little. Each had gathered just what he needed. ¹⁹Moses said to them, "No one is to keep any of it for tomorrow." ²⁰But some of them did not listen to Moses and saved part of it. The next morning it was full of worms and smelt rotten, and Moses was angry with them. ²¹Every morning each one gathered as much as he needed; and when the sun grew hot, what was left on the ground melted. [God made no provision for left-overs!]

²² On the sixth day they gathered twice as much food, four litres for each person. All the leaders of the community came and told Moses about it, ²³and he said to them, "The LORD has commanded that tomorrow is a holy day of rest, dedicated to him. Bake today what you want to bake and boil what you want to boil.

Whatever is left should be put aside and kept for tomorrow.”²⁴As Moses had commanded, **they kept what was left until the next day; it did not spoil or get worms in it.**²⁵Moses said, “**Eat this today, because today is the Sabbath, a day of rest dedicated to the LORD, and you will not find any food outside the camp.**”²⁶You must gather food for six days, but on the seventh day, the day of rest, there will be none.”

²⁷ On the seventh day some of the people went out to gather food, but they did not find any.²⁸Then the LORD said to Moses, “How much longer will you people refuse to obey my commands?²⁹Remember that I, the LORD, have given you a day of rest, and that is why on the sixth day I will always give you enough food for two days. Everyone is to stay where he is on the seventh day and not leave his home.”³⁰**So the people did no work on the seventh day.**

³¹ The people of Israel called the food manna. It was like a small white seed, and tasted like biscuits [cookies] made with honey.—*Good News Bible*.^{*†}

26. Did every single person, even the children, gather enough for their own needs? Did the children eat as they gathered—as we do when we are picking fruit? Into what kind of containers did they gather their manna? How did God arrange for each person to have exactly the amount s/he needed even though some gathered more and some less?

27. **This experience recorded by Moses is proof that the Sabbath existed even before the giving of the Ten Commandments!** Furthermore, with the giving of the Ten Commandments at Mount Sinai, **they were told to “Remember.”** This suggests that they were already aware of the truth about the Sabbath. What lessons should they have learned from the manna? Think about it: A fresh supply of food every day of the week except Sabbath. But, if any was left over on any day except Friday, it got rotten and developed worms. On Friday, a double portion was collected and remained fresh to be eaten either on Friday or on the Sabbath. Thus, every week, the children of Israel were reminded of God’s command to keep the Sabbath holy.

28. But, God was prepared to give them even more reasons for celebrating the Sabbath.

Deuteronomy 5:5-22:⁵ [Moses recounted to Israel:] “The LORD said,⁶ ‘I am the LORD your God, who rescued you from Egypt, where you were slaves.

⁷ “ ‘Worship no god but me.

⁸ “ ‘Do not make for yourselves images of anything in heaven or on earth or in the water under the earth.⁹Do not bow down to any idol or worship it, for **I am the LORD your God and I tolerate no rivals.** I bring punishment on those who hate me and on their descendants down to the third and fourth generation.¹⁰But I show my love to thousands of generations of those who love me and obey my laws.

¹¹ “ ‘Do not use my name for evil purposes, for I, the LORD your God, will punish anyone who misuses my name.

¹² “ ‘Observe the Sabbath and keep it holy, as I, the LORD your God, have commanded you.¹³You have six days in which to do your work,¹⁴but the seventh day is a day of rest dedicated to me. On that day no one is to work—neither you, your children, your slaves, your animals, nor the foreigners who live in your country. Your slaves must rest just as you do.¹⁵**Remember that you were slaves in Egypt, and that I, the LORD your God, rescued you by my great power and strength. That is why I command you to observe the Sabbath.**

¹⁶ “ ‘Respect your father and your mother, as I, the LORD your God, command

you, so that all may go well with you and so that you may live a long time in the land that I am giving you.

17 “ ‘Do not commit murder.

18 “ ‘Do not commit adultery.

19 “ ‘Do not steal.

20 “ ‘Do not accuse anyone falsely.

21 “ ‘Do not desire another man’s wife; do not desire his house, his land, his slaves, his cattle, his donkeys, or anything else that he owns.’

22 **“These are the commandments the LORD gave to all of you when you were gathered at the mountain. When he spoke with a mighty voice from the fire and from the thick clouds, he gave these commandments and no others. Then he wrote them on two stone tablets and gave them to me.”**—*Good News Bible*. *†‡

29. **God was giving them additional reasons for celebrating the Sabbath.** After 40 years, this new generation was finally prepared to enter the promised land. But, just before Moses left them, he gave them those three lengthy sermons as recorded in Deuteronomy.
30. Of all the people over the age of 20 who had left Egypt, only Caleb and Joshua entered the land of Canaan. Moses was taken to heaven. What did the new generation think about what had happened to all their ancestors? Did they think that God had killed their parents? What does the Sabbath remind you of as you celebrate from week to week? Do you review in your mind the lessons God has intended for us to learn?
31. God’s plan for His people never ends. This “brief” great controversy with Satan and sin will soon be over. Then, God can continue with His plans for His universe, and He wants each one of us to be a part of it.
32. After the children of Israel had conquered Og and Sihon (two Amorite kings) and their people, they turned southward and camped on the plain of the Jordan River across from Jericho. During their time there, Moses wrote his sermons and presented them to the people. He was busy. But, things were occurring that he was not aware of at first. It was at that time that the Moabite and Midianite women, Israel’s distant relatives, showed up and led many of the Jewish men into idolatry and fertility cult worship practices. As a result, 24,000 of the Israelites died on the very banks of the Jordan River. See Numbers 25.
33. Compare Exodus 20:8-11 with Deuteronomy 5:12-15.
34. Had Moses forgotten what he had written in Exodus when he wrote Deuteronomy 5? Why are there differences? Why is it that, instead of mentioning God’s creation back at the beginning, he said:

Deuteronomy 5:15: “ ‘Remember that you were slaves in Egypt, and that I, the LORD your God, rescued you by my great power and strength. That is why I command you to observe the Sabbath.’ ”—*Good News Bible*. *

This was not a failure of Moses’s memory. Moses was, in fact, **adding more reasons for keeping the Sabbath. Not only were the children of Israel to celebrate God’s creation in the beginning, but also they were to celebrate their deliverance from Egyptian slavery—their “re-creation” or redemption.**

35. So, now we see that God is not only asking us to celebrate creation but **also redemption.** And the redemption from Egypt was more clearly present in their minds than the distant creation. Thus, it was important for them to associate God’s work with both of those events.

36. And what about us? **We can celebrate redemption from the horrors of sin.** Do we ever experience the freedom from sin that God intends for us to experience? Do we recognize that each Sabbath is to point us back to our Savior and Friend? Remember these words from John 1:1-14.

John 1:1-14: ¹ In the beginning the Word already existed; the Word was with God, and the Word was God. ²From the very beginning the Word was with God. ³Through him God made all things; not one thing in all creation was made without him. ⁴The Word was the source of life, and this life brought light to humanity. ⁵The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has never put it out.

⁶ God sent his messenger, a man named John, ⁷who came to tell people about the light, so that all should hear the message and believe. ⁸He himself was not the light; he came to tell about the light. ⁹This was the real light—the light that comes into the world and shines on everyone.

¹⁰ The Word was in the world, and though God made the world through him, yet the world did not recognize him. ¹¹**He came to his own country, but his own people did not receive him.** ¹²Some, however, did receive him and believed in him; so he gave them the right to become God's children. ¹³They did not become God's children by natural means, that is, by being born as the children of a human father; God himself was their Father.

¹⁴ The Word became a human being and, full of grace and truth, lived among us. We saw his glory, the glory which he received as the Father's only Son.—*Good News Bible*.^{*†}

37. Why do you think God commands us to keep the Sabbath? Wouldn't it have been more friendly and more in keeping with the freedom that God promotes just to ask us simply to keep a sabbath? But, there is in the Ten Commandments a command to keep the Sabbath just as He commands avoiding murder and theft. So, which do you think is more serious: (1) Murder? (2) Theft? or (3) Sabbath-breaking?

38. There are many passages in Scripture celebrating the Sabbath. There is an entire Sabbath song found in Psalm 92. But, consider these words:

Isaiah 58:13-14: ¹³The LORD says, "If you treat the Sabbath as sacred and do not pursue your own interests on that day; if you value my holy day and honour it by not travelling, working, or talking idly on that day, ¹⁴then you will find the joy that comes from serving me. I will make you honoured all over the world, and you will enjoy the land I gave to your ancestor, Jacob. I, the LORD, have spoken."—*Good News Bible*.^{*}

39. Sabbathkeeping should be a time of ultimate celebration and joy.

40. But, Sabbathkeeping does not begin at sundown on Friday. Every day of the week should be a time for us to think about how we can prepare for the most important day of the week. Furthermore, when Friday comes, it is known as "the preparation day."

Mark 15:42: It was Preparation day (that is, the day before the Sabbath)...—*Good News Bible*.^{*}

41. What are we supposed to do on the Sabbath? **One of the important things we should do on the Sabbath is to celebrate and fellowship with family members.**

Leviticus 19:3: [The LORD told Moses to say to the Israelites:] "Each of you must respect his mother and his father, and must keep the Sabbath, as I have commanded. I am the LORD your God."—*Good News Bible*.^{*†}

42. But, we should not forget that, like Jesus, we need to be involved in **corporate worship** with fellow believers.

Leviticus 23:3: You have six days in which to do your work, but remember that the seventh day, the Sabbath, is a day of rest. On that day do not work, but gather for worship. The Sabbath belongs to the LORD, no matter where you live.—*Good News Bible*.^{*†}

Luke 4:16: Then Jesus went to Nazareth, where he had been brought up, and **on the Sabbath he went as usual to the synagogue**. He stood up to read the Scriptures.—*Good News Bible*.^{*†} [He had done that many times before.][‡]

Hebrews 10:25: Let us not give up the habit of meeting together, as some are doing. Instead, let us encourage one another all the more, since you see that the Day of the Lord is coming nearer.—*Good News Bible*.^{*}

43. So, how do you regard the Sabbath? Do you look forward to the Sabbath as a great time of rest—and not just for sleeping?
44. But, in our day, there are serious questions that are being raised about the Sabbath. How do you feel about these questions?

1. Some Christians, including even some Adventists, consider theistic evolution a viable explanation of Creation. How does the Sabbath show theistic evolution and Seventh-day Adventism to be incompatible? What purpose is there in keeping the seventh day holy in commemoration of billions of years, especially when the Word of God is explicit about its being made holy after the first six days of Creation?

2. What do you say to the **argument that the day doesn't matter, just as long as we have one day of rest a week**? Or, on the other hand, how do we respond to the **claim that Jesus is our Sabbath rest**, and, therefore, there is no need to keep any day as a day of rest?

3. How can keeping the Sabbath holy **be a reminder of freedom and liberation**? **How can we avoid making it restrictive and legalistic**?

4. **Some claim that keeping the seventh-day Sabbath is an attempt to work our way to heaven**. What is the logic, however, in claiming that by resting on the seventh day, we are trying to work our way to heaven?—*Adult Sabbath School Bible Study Guide*^{*} for Friday, August 27.[†]

45. Could *resting* on any day be a means of *working* our way to heaven? As a seventh-day-Sabbathkeeping Adventist, what has the keeping of the Sabbath done for you? Does it help you to avoid idolatry, atheism, or infidelity? The Sabbath is a kind of oasis in time.
46. Famous scientists, even modern scientists, have been amazed as they have studied the details of God's creation. Frank Borman among the first humans to actually look down on the earth from 250,000 miles away said, quoting Genesis 1:1 (*NKJV*^{*}): "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth."

As he later explained: "I had an enormous feeling that there had to be a power greater than any of us—that there was a God, that there was indeed a beginning."—*Adult Teachers Sabbath School Bible Study Guide*^{*} 119.

47. Many great scientists down through the generations have firmly believed that God was the Creator of our universe. Men like Copernicus, Isaac Newton, and Blaise Pascal were faithful believers in the creation story.
48. Since 1945, people on this earth have been aware of the incredible power of nuclear

explosions. When man sets off a nuclear reaction, a very tiny, tiny bit of matter is turned back into energy, releasing enormous amounts of energy.

49. Now think about what happened when God created the universe. That energy somehow came from Him and somehow was condensed into that matter that has all that energy stored in it.

Psalm 33:6,9: ⁶ The LORD created the heavens by his command,
the sun, moon, and stars by his spoken word....

⁹ When he spoke, the world was created;
at his command everything appeared.—*Good News Bible*.*

50. We cannot even begin to comprehend God's unlimited power.

To get just a small idea of how unlimited God's power is, let's consider just one object in the heavens: the sun. Did God create the sun? Certainly. Genesis 1:14-16 tells the story of God's creating two lights to rule the heavens: the sun to rule the day and the moon to rule the night. We exist on one of the planets that revolve around the sun. The sun produces more energy in one second than humans have produced in all their history. Take all the electrical power and all the energy produced by solar or coal or gas since the beginning of time, and the sun produces more in one second.

The sun has a diameter of approximately 860,000 miles and could hold a million planets the size of earth. But the sun is just one of at least 100 billion stars in our galaxy, the Milky Way. One star called the Pistol Star gives off ten million times the power generated by our sun. One million stars the size of our sun can easily fit within the sphere of the Pistol Star. Some scientists estimate that there are ten billion trillion stars in the universe. Someone has said that there are about the same number of stars as there are grains of sand on the seashore.—*Adult Teachers Sabbath School Bible Study Guide** 120.

Do you think of God every Sabbath and praise His name for being your Creator and Redeemer? Is that what comes to your mind on Friday evening when the Sabbath begins? Ladies, how would you like to prepare manna for eating every day? You would never have to worry about leftovers! How many of the children of Israel, eating that manna for 40 years, fully comprehended its significance in pointing to their Creator and Messiah?

51. God intended for the Sabbath to be a reminder every week of the God who loves us from that first kiss through the rest of eternity. God is no arbitrary legalistic dictator. He has given us the Sabbath as a sign that He has set us apart as His holy people. But, it is only God who has the power to make the changes in our lives that can make us His faithful children.
52. Seventh-day Adventists have been told that the three angels' messages are our ultimate message to be given to the world.

I saw that God had children who do not see and keep the Sabbath. They have not rejected the light upon it. And at the commencement of the time of trouble, we were filled with the Holy Ghost as we went forth and proclaimed the Sabbath more fully.—Ellen G. White, *Early Writings** 33.2.

53. Are we prepared to tell all those around us, including all those around the world that we can possibly reach, the truth about our wonderful God and His Sabbath rest?

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