DARK DAY MINISTRIES

σαββατισμός
Sabbatismos

The Sabbath under the Gospel

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A treatise on the doctrine of the Sabbath under the better and eternal Covenant in Christ's blood. The very best of the arguments for the Sabbatarian positions are debunked and the Spiritual-Sabbatarian (or Non / Anti-Sabbatarian) position is affirmed from Scripture.

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Sabbatismos – the Sabbath under the Gospel

by Richard Storey (30/07/12)

In this study, I will be examining the Sabbath under the New, better and eternal Covenant of Christ; I will also need to examine the Law (or old covenant) and its place with respect to the Gospel (or New Covenant). There are three views regarding the Sabbath: Seventh-day Sabbatarianism which teaches that the Sabbath continues on the seventh day of the week and has done so since creation; First-day Sabbatarianism which teaches that Christ, having established the new creation and now resting from His work, changed the Sabbath to the first day of the week; and Anti-Sabbatarianism or Non-Sabbatarianism which teaches that the Sabbath was a shadow of Christ and the rest from all works that we have in Him. I personally hold to Anti-Sabbatarianism though I prefer the term Non-Sabbatarian of the two; yet neither adequately expresses the belief that we have an eternal Sabbath to come and that we enter into the peace and eternal life of it now, in Jesus Christ.
By God's grace, I will refute the very best of the argumentation for either form of Sabbatarianism and present the argument for Non-Sabbatarianism.

Before I do so, I would very briefly like to explain that nothing has caused me as much grief in my walk with Christ as this very topic. I was, at one time, a legalistic Seventh-day Sabbatarian; I grievously could not be convinced of the First-day Sabbatarian position by dear brethren whom I love. I only ever found any true spiritual rest in Christ, not in any day; I longed to be free from the thunder of the law upon my soul for never knowing whether I was truly doing as God would have me do. But now I know that Christ has set me free from all of my works, both good and bad and I believe this is the New Testament teaching regarding the Sabbath.

I will start by stating the typical argument presented by most Non-Sabbatarians. This argument, when well-stated, is perfectly adequate, but it is not nearly as thorough as it should be as it does not deal with the many questions and conflictions in the mind of the Sabbatarian. I will, therefore, go on to deal with the major and minor arguments presented by Sabbatarians of either sort.

Here is the typical Non-Sabbatarian position outlined:

Colossians 2:16-17 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:*
Which are a shadow of things to come; but the body *is* of Christ.

The Greek word for 'sabbath days' here is 'sabbaton' which elsewhere in Scripture is used to refer to the weekly Sabbath; for example:

Mark 2:23-24 And it came to pass, that he went through the corn fields on the sabbath day; and his disciples began, as they went, to pluck the ears of corn.
And the Pharisees said unto him, Behold, why do they on the sabbath day that which is not lawful?

At no other instance in the Bible is this word used to represent anything other than the weekly Sabbath, yet, in this verse in Colossians, Sabbatarians would have us take it to mean something completely different. The Sabbatarian would state that the word is used here in the plural sense and that it is referring to all of the ceremonial sabbaths but not the weekly Sabbath. Whereas the learned Dr. Gill, who was himself a Sabbatarian, says this of the verse:

'[S]ome copies read in the singular number, "or of the Sabbath"; which were all peculiar to the Jews, were never binding on the Gentiles, and to which believers in Christ, be they who they will, are by no means obliged; nor ought they to observe them, the one any more than the other; and should they be imposed upon them, they ought to reject them...'

William Tyndale, architect of the English language and master of Greek and Hebrew who gave his life that we might have a sound translation of the Bible in English, translated the word in the singular, as the weekly Sabbath, in his 1526 edition:

'Let no man therfore trouble youre conciences aboute meate and drynke: or for a pece of an holydaye, as the holydaye of the newe mone or of **the saboth daye**, which are nothinge but shaddowes of thynges to come: but the body is in Christ.' (emphasis added)

And even if the plural of sabbaton *is* used, this in no way detracts from it referring to the weekly Sabbath, as we see from its usage in other verses:

Luke 4:16 And [Jesus] came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up: and, as his custom was, he went into the synagogue on the sabbath day, and stood up for to read.

Matthew 28:1 In the end of the sabbath, as it began to dawn toward the first *day* of the week, came Mary Magdalene and the other Mary to see the sepulchre.

Also, we have an Old Testament precedent to interpret Colossians 2:16 as representing yearly feasts, the monthly new moons and the weekly Sabbath; look at how the same language is used in Ezekiel and Hosea:

Ezekiel 45:17 And it shall be the prince's part *to give* burnt offerings, and meat offerings, and drink offerings, in the feasts, and in the new moons, and in the sabbaths, in all solemnities of the house of Israel...

Hosea 2:11 I will also cause all her mirth to cease, her feast days, her new moons, and her sabbaths, and all her solemn feasts.

There are other similar passages one could use, but the point is clear: there appears to be no scriptural warrant to interpret this verse any other way. Matthew Poole, famous commentator and a Sabbatarian, admits the clear description of the weekly Sabbath in this verse, writing that Colossians 2:16 refers to 'festivals and sabbaths, whether annual, or monthly, or weekly, from the Levitical institutions.'

Indeed, the early church unanimously interpreted this verse in the same manner. Here are some quotes to reveal their understanding of the Sabbath in the New Testament:

*Letter of **Ignatius** to the Magnesians* (106-117 A.D.): '...no longer observing the Sabbath, but living in the observance of the Lord's Day, on which also our life has sprung up again by Him and by His death'.[1] (Ignatius was a disciple of John the Apostle)

Didache (=*Teaching of the Twelve Apostles*) (c.125 A.D.): 'But every Lord's day do ye gather yourselves together, and break bread, and give thanksgiving after having confessed your transgressions, that your sacrifice may be pure.'[2]

*Letter of **Barnabas*** (100-150 A.D.) says that Christians keep the 'eighth day' because that is the day Jesus rose from the dead.[3]

Justin Martyr (c.150 A.D.): 'But Sunday is the day on which we all hold our common assembly...'[4]

Dionysius of Corinth (170 A.D.) mentions the Lord's Day.[5]

Tertullian (200 A.D.): 'To us Sabbaths are foreign.'[6]

Clement of Alexandria (193-217/220 A.D.) taught that the Lord's Day is the eighth day.[7]

Anatolius of Alexandria (270-280 A.D.): '...the Lord's resurrection, which took place on the Lord's day, will lead us to celebrate it'.[8]

Victorinus of Petau (martyred 304 A.D.): '...lest we should appear to observe any Sabbath with the Jews, which Christ Himself, the Lord of the Sabbath, says by His prophets that "His soul hateth; " which Sabbath He in His body abolished...'[9]

Peter of Alexandria (306 A.D.): 'But the Lord's day we celebrate as a day of joy, because on it He rose again'.[10]

I could continue quoting Christian writings past the time of the Nicene Council but the point is already established and is summed up perfectly by Lutheran historian Bishop Grimelund : 'The Christians in the ancient church very soon distinguished the first day of the week, Sunday; however, not as a Sabbath, but as an assembly day of the church, to study the Word of God together, and to celebrate the ordinances one with another: without a shadow of doubt, this took place as early as the first part of the second century.'[11]

Now, in the New Testament, even after Christ's resurrection, the seventh day Sabbath is still referred to as the Sabbath but, as we see in Acts, this was purely a time for proselytising the Jews:

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[1] ch.9, p.62
[2] vol.7 ch.14 p.381
[3] ch.10, p.143
[4] *First Apology of Justin Martyr*, ch.67, p.186
[5] *fragment 2*, vol.8, p.765
[6] *On Idolatry*, 14:6
[7] *Stromata*, book 5, ch.14, p.466
[8] *Paschal Canon*, ch.16, vol.6, p.151
[9] *On the Creation of the World*, p.341-342
[10] *The Canonical Epistle*, Canon 15, p.278
[11] *History of the Sabbath*, p. 60

Acts 16:13 And on the sabbath we went out of the city by a river side, where prayer was wont to be made; and we sat down, and spake unto the women which resorted *thither*.

Acts 17:2 And Paul, as his manner was, went in unto them, and three sabbath days reasoned with them out of the scriptures…

Nowhere do we see that the Sabbath is anything more than this in the New Testament, much less do we see that it was changed to the first day of the week. Indeed, the final and only other time it is mentioned in the New Testament is in the epistle to the Colossians, as we have read. Certainly, in Paul's epistles we do not read of any person exhorted for not keeping the Sabbath correctly; amidst the atrocious behaviour of the Corinthians, for instance, is it conceivable that they happened to be exemplary Sabbatarians?

The arguments I have just presented are as far as most Non-Sabbatarians would normally take things and you can tell that, though well-intentioned, they have never had to personally and spiritually grapple with the issue of the Sabbath; they have not been greatly grieved on the matter, battling with both sides of the argument for fear of walking sinfully in the dear love and Spirit of Christ, for fear of grieving the Holy Spirit. Therefore, for the love of the brethren and a desire to see Sabbatarians set free in Christ and to recognise that He is the rest for our souls from the covenants of the Old Testament, I shall endeavour to tackle the main arguments presented by Sabbatarians:

- The Sabbath is a perpetual creation ordinance and a natural law or moral law binding on all men
- Hebrews 4:9 teaches that we are to keep a Sabbath
- Christ said that we are not to break the least commandment
- Christ said there would be a Sabbath at the end of the world (Matthew 24:20)
- The Old Testament prophesies of Sabbath continuation under the Gospel
- Eighth day ceremonies in the Old Testament prefigured the change of the Sabbath to the first day
- There was a transition period from the seventh day Sabbath to the first day.

Then I shall discuss the origins of either form of Sabbatarianism before drawing to a conclusion.

The Sabbath is a perpetual creation ordinance and a natural law or moral law binding on all men –

Is the Sabbath a creation ordinance?

The argument goes something like this: 'In Genesis, we see the start of everything: agriculture, language, work, marriage and family and all human endeavour (Genesis 1:28, 2:8 & 24); worship is also one of the things we see established and, as God

sanctified and blessed the seventh day, worship and/or rest on this day is therefore a perpetual ordinance for all men. After all, didn't the Lord say:

Mark 2:27 ...The sabbath was made for man...'

Well, let's firstly examine what we see in Genesis. In order to logically conclude, with no presuppositions, that Sabbath-keeping was a creation ordinance, we should have at least one implicit example of any of the following: A commandment given to man to keep a seven day week; a commandment given to keep one of those days as a Sabbath; or an individual recognising one of these commandments.

Yet, in Genesis, what do we see?
Genesis 2:2 And on the seventh day God ended his work which he had made; and he rested on the seventh day from all his work which he had made.
And God blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it: because that in it he had rested from all his work which God created and made.

Now, only God rested on this day. Not that God needs rest; we see that truly God does continue to work in a certain sense on the Sabbath –

John 5:17 But Jesus answered them, My Father worketh hitherto, and I work.

The Lord Jesus here is of course declaring Himself God by declaring Himself as the Sustainer of life and, in this sense, God did and does continue to work. He had ceased from *creating* on the seventh day because He had established all the laws of physics acting in the universe of time, space and matter and the living beings to occupy this planet so unique to His attention. Yet our God ever works in the world; He is not a God that is far away. And He certainly does not grow tired:

Isaiah 40:28 Hast thou not known? hast thou not heard, *that* the everlasting God, the LORD, the Creator of the ends of the earth, fainteth not, neither is weary? *there is* no searching of his understanding.

Notice that in the commandment itself we see that the Lord blessed the day because He personally rested from His own creative work:

Exodus 20:8-11 Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy.
Six days shalt thou labour, and do all thy work:
But the seventh day *is* the sabbath of the LORD thy God: *in it* thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy manservant, nor thy maidservant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that *is* within thy gates:
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. (emphasis added)

This is similar to the language of Genesis where we are told that God blessed and sanctified the day '*because* that in it he had rested from all his work'. Notice, we do not read of any person or other creature resting with the Creator. This is simply Moses, the author of Genesis, retrospectively describing God's rest by inspiration of

the Holy Spirit. The whole of Genesis, including God's rest, is not written from the perspective of Adam and therefore there is nothing in the text to indicate that God's rest applied *to* Adam.

Are we given any indication then to suggest that there are those who were to rest with God prior Moses?

'What about the fact that the commandment is to "remember" the Sabbath day; surely the children of Israel are being told to recall something from history?' The Brown-Driver-Briggs Lexicon says the Hebrew word 'zakar' here, in its qal-infinitive form, means: 'to *mark*...to *mention*...(make) mention (of), be mindful, recount, record, remember, make to be remembered...' This word rather means to commemorate from that point forward rather than to recall something from the past.

Nevertheless, Sabbatarians argue that we do see people gathering for worship and for religious ordinances on the seventh day of the week in Genesis, if not rest from servile work:

Genesis 4:3 And in process of time it came to pass, that Cain brought of the fruit of the ground an offering unto the LORD.

Many suggest that, as the words 'in process of time' can also mean 'at the end of days', this therefore means Cain and Abel brought sacrifices at the end of the week. Sabbatarian Dr. Gill writes honestly of the words to reveal the unscripturalness of such an interpretation: 'Or "at the end of days"; which some understand of the end of seven days, at the end of the week, or on the seventh day, which they suppose to be the sabbath day, these sons of Adam brought their offerings to the Lord: but this proceeds upon an hypothesis not sufficiently established, that the seventh day sabbath was now appointed to be observed in a religious way; rather, according to Aben Ezra, it was at the end of the year; So "after days" in Judges 11:4 is meant after a year; and which we there render, as here, "in process of time".'

The plain reading of the text declares that no one else was doing any creating, only God, and God alone was resting; furthermore, God did not start creating again the following week but rested completely, just as Christ now rests perpetually from His finished work in the new creation:

Hebrews 10:12 But this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God...

So there is no precedent or implication of a weekly holyday for men in Genesis; in fact the only thing we can ascertain from other verses in Scripture is that the weekly Sabbath was introduced to men with the Law given to Moses.
We know that the Law was given to Moses and the children of Israel 430 years after Abraham:

Galatians 3:17 And this I say, *that* the covenant, that was confirmed before of God in Christ, the law, which was four hundred and thirty years after, cannot disannul, that it should make the promise of none effect.

And we see that the Sabbath was introduced with that Law:

Nehemiah 9:13-14 Thou camest down also upon mount Sinai, and spakest with them from heaven, and gavest them right judgments, and true laws, good statutes and commandments:
And madest known unto them thy holy sabbath, and commandedst them precepts, statutes, and laws, by the hand of Moses thy servant…

Ezekiel 20:11-12 And I gave them my statutes, and shewed them my judgments, which *if* a man do, he shall even live in them.
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.

This Law with the commandment of the Sabbath was not given prior to Moses:

Deuteronomy 5:3 The LORD made not this covenant with our fathers, but with us, *even* us, who *are* all of us here alive this day.

The famous Puritan John Milton, a Non-Sabbatarian, wrote this of the matter:
'That the Israelites had not so much as heard of the Sabbath before this time, seems to be confirmed by several passages of the prophets.
'Whether its institution was ever made known to Adam, or whether any commandment relative to its observance was given previous to the delivery of the law on Mt. Sinai…cannot be ascertained.'[12]

It may come as a surprise that there were Puritans who were not Sabbatarians, yet we see the same conclusion reached by famous Sabbatarians also. For instance, John Bunyan, author of *The Pilgrim's Progress*, wrote:
'Now as to the imposing of the seventh day Sabbath upon men from Adam to Moses, of that we find nothing in holy writ, either from precept or example.
'The seventh day Sabbath, therefore, was not from paradise, nor from nature, nor from the fathers, but from the wilderness and from Sinai.'[13]

And this interpretation should come as no surprise, not simply because the prophets declare it so, but because we see that, before the Law was given to Moses, the Lord tests the children of Israel:

Exodus 16:4-5 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.
And it shall come to pass, that on the sixth day they shall prepare *that* which they bring in; and it shall be twice as much as they gather daily.

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[12] *Christian Doctrine*, vol. I, p. 299
[13] *Complete Works*, pp. 892 & 895

And this is the first sign of its institution amongst men; note that even if 'remember', in the fourth commandment of Exodus 20:8, were to mean to recall something in the past, it could only ever be referring back to this test-run of the Sabbath which the Lord conducted.
If the Sabbath were a universal creation ordinance, how could the children of Israel have had so little knowledge of the concept that God had to do a test-run to see if they would walk in His Law? Even if they had been slaves in Egypt, their culture had been well-established for many generations; 400 years are not long enough to entirely eliminate a people's culture or memory of it, especially when cultural boundaries were being upheld by the Egyptians against the Hebrews. Jewish culture has not been eliminated in the past 2000 years, along with any knowledge of what a Sabbath is, despite God's judgment upon the Jewish people and their having been scattered. The Babylonians were not able to eliminate the cultural heritage of Daniel and the other young Hebrews and yet they were *actively* seeking to instruct them in Babylonian language and culture, to see them entirely assimilated. Why should we expect that the Egyptians eradicated all knowledge of the idea of a Sabbath with far less effort? More than this though, we are only given reason to assume that they would have aggravated the Jews regarding the Sabbath by forcing them to work extremely hard on the seventh day:

Exodus 1:14 And they made their lives bitter with hard bondage, in morter, and in brick, and in all manner of service in the field: all their service, wherein they made them serve, *was* with rigour.

Scripture does not even indicate that they were forced to work on an instituted Sabbath day; this is purely imagination. In fact, all we are told is that Pharaoh's efforts had the opposite effect to those intended:

Exodus 1:12 But the more they afflicted them, the more they multiplied and grew. And they were grieved because of the children of Israel.

Far from having their people and culture eradicated, even the Egyptian midwives were disobeying Pharaoh when he ordered the death of the Hebrew boys, causing them to wax mightier:

Exodus 1:17 But the midwives feared God, and did not as the king of Egypt commanded them, but saved the men children alive.

Yet, we are supposed to imagine that some underlying storyline of Hebrews being forced to break the Sabbath is occurring during all this with God making absolutely no mention of it, nothing even implied.

What we are told explicitly is that the Sabbath is established at the giving of the Law of Moses and no amount of picture-painting around the Scriptures can detract from it. Yet Sabbatarians will usually respond to these facts by desperately contending that Moses had called for the people to observe the Sabbath during the oppressive tyranny of Pharaoh:

Exodus 5:5 And Pharaoh said, Behold, the people of the land now *are* many, and ye make them rest from their burdens.

'The word rest here in Hebrew,' they declare, 'is "shawbath" and has the same root as the word for the Sabbath – "Shabbath".' This is ridiculous when we consider that this word simply means to cease and is used in Genesis to mean just that:

Genesis 8:22 While the earth remaineth, seedtime and harvest, and cold and heat, and summer and winter, and day and night shall not cease [shawbath].

I defy any Sabbatarian to declare just as boldly that the seasons are breaking the fourth commandment.

Furthermore, the early church certainly did not hold to the idea that the Sabbath was a creation ordinance, revealing this doctrine's late and sandy foundation:

Justin Martyr writes this in his *Dialogue with Trypho the Jew* (~150 A.D.):
'Moreover, all those righteous men [prior to Moses] already mentioned, though they kept no Sabbaths, were pleasing to God; and after them Abraham with all his descendants until Moses...
'But if we do not admit this, we shall be liable to fall into foolish opinion, as if it were not the same God who existed in the times of Enoch and all the rest, who neither were circumcised after the flesh, nor observed Sabbaths, nor any other rites, seeing that Moses enjoined such observances... For if there was no need of circumcision before Abraham, or of the observance of Sabbaths, of feasts and sacrifices, before Moses; no more need is there of them now, after that, according to the will of God, Jesus Christ the Son of God has been born without sin, of a virgin sprung from the stock of Abraham.'[14]

Tertullian writes this in his *Answer to the Jews* in 200 A.D.: 'Let him who contends that the Sabbath is still to be observed a balm of salvation, and circumcision on the eighth day because of threat of death, teach us that in earliest times righteous men kept Sabbath or practiced circumcision, and so were made friends of God... Therefore, since God originated Adam uncircumcised, and inobservant of the Sabbath, consequently his offspring also, Abel, offering Him sacrifices, uncircumcised and inobservant of the Sabbath, was by Him commended... Noah also, uncircumcised - yes, and inobservant of the Sabbath - God freed from the deluge. For Enoch, too, a most righteous man, uncircumcised and inobservant of the Sabbath, He translated from this world... Melchizedek also, "the priest of most high God," uncircumcised and inobservant of the Sabbath, was chosen to the priesthood of God.'[15]

Eusebius writes in 300 A.D.: 'They did not care about circumcision of the body, neither do we. They did not care about observing Sabbaths, nor do we. They did not

[14] 'Dialogue with Trypho the Jew', *Ante-Nicene Fathers* , vol. 1, pp. 204 & 206
[15] 'An Answer to the Jews' 2:10; 4:1, *Ante-Nicene Fathers*, vol. 3, page 153

avoid certain kinds of food, neither did they regard the other distinctions which Moses first delivered to their posterity to be observed as symbols; nor do Christians of the present day do such things'.[16]

Augustine writes in 412 A.D.: 'Well, now, I should like to be told what there is in these Ten Commandments, except the observance of the Sabbath, which ought not to be kept by a Christian?'[17]

Even the Jews themselves did not hold to the doctrine of the Sabbath being a universal creation ordinance; in the Book of Jubilees 2:31 (160-100B.C.), we read: '[God] allowed no other people or peoples to keep the Sabbath on this day, except Israel only; to it alone he granted to eat and drink and keep the Sabbath on it'. Visiting strangers and the converted Gentile patriarchs are of course exceptions and viewed with the Sabbath being applied as a national or civil law.

Historically, if there were a seven day week and/or worship on one of those days were issued to man at the creation, then we would see evidence of this in the ancient cultures, as we do for the other events of Genesis and the Books of Moses, but we do not. Historically, we can see that some ancient cultures, such as the Babylonians, were able to establish that, according to the patterns of the moon, a seven day week is the most obvious division of time, showing our God's signature in His creation; they later adopted certain rest days and sacrifices to their gods on the seventh day from the Hebrews but, before the Babylonian captivity, not all cultures observed a seven day week.[18] There were all manner of ancient weekly systems consisting of up to 20 days in various cultures.
We cannot conclude from any evidence that a seven day weekly system was given to man, outside of the natural revelation of creation, prior to the great flood or after the dispersal of peoples at the tower of Babel; much less can we conclude that there is anything in nature to indicate that men should conduct no work on one of those seven days. If the Sabbath were a creation ordinance and kept by Noah and his children after the flood, we would see some evidence of it or at least a distortion of the concept in the ancient cultures which separated from Babel. We do not.

Scientifically, there is nothing in nature to indicate that man should rest for a 24 hour period as a matter of morality. Certainly, the argument presented that there is some sort of biological clock in man or animals which requires one day's rest out of seven is bogus. In fact it is physically impossible to keep the Sabbath in certain parts of this planet and therefore it cannot be universally applied.

In order for Sabbath-keeping to be a creation ordinance it would *have* to be universal, but this is not at all apparent from Scripture, nature or from history.

Is the Sabbath a universal moral law?
Here, the main argument typically presented is this: 'Jesus said:

Mark 2:27 ...The sabbath was made for man...

[16] *Church History*, 1:4:8
[17] *The Spirit and the Letter*, 24
[18] Senn, F. (1997) *Christian Liturgy: Catholic and Evangelical*

Therefore, the Sabbath *is* a universal moral law established at creation, not just for the Jews but binding on all men.' Really? Does the word 'man' here truly denote all of mankind? Many First-day Sabbatarians are Calvinistic in their soteriology and are quick to point out that this same Greek word 'anthropos' does not refer to all mankind in verses such as Romans 5:18 or 1Timothy 2:1-4; rightly so! Why then can they not be more consistent and apply the same rule to this verse. The totality of Scripture does not tell us that the Sabbath was intended for all men but rather that it was intended for men and was given to men, specifically, Israel:

Deuteronomy 5:15 And remember that thou wast a servant in the land of Egypt, and *that* the LORD thy God brought thee out thence through a mighty hand and by a stretched out arm: therefore the LORD thy God commanded thee to keep the sabbath day.

Did the Lord bring all the Gentile nations out of Egypt? No. Then, according to this verse, the Lord does not command them to keep the Sabbath. Indeed, it is intended as a specific sign between God and Israel to distinguish them *from* the other nations:

Exodus 31:13 Speak thou also unto the children of Israel, saying, Verily my sabbaths ye shall keep: for it *is* a sign between me and you throughout your generations; that *ye* may know that I *am* the LORD that doth sanctify you.

Psalm 147:19-20 He sheweth his word unto Jacob, his statutes and his judgments unto Israel.
He hath not dealt so with any nation: and *as for his* judgments, they have not known them. Praise ye the LORD.

Romans 9:4 Who are Israelites; to whom *pertaineth* the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the service *of God,* and the promises…

This is why the Sabbaths are often described as belonging to Israel, as we saw in Hosea 2:11, one of many examples.
Therefore the Sabbath is not binding on all men universally but was rather the sign of the Mosaic covenant. And *this* alone is what makes it moral as a law and a necessary addition to the tables of stone.
Let us look at circumcision as an example. Circumcision was the sign and seal of the Abrahamic covenant:

Genesis 17:10-11 This *is* my covenant, which ye shall keep, between me and you and thy seed after thee; Every man child among you shall be circumcised.
And ye shall circumcise the flesh of your foreskin; and it shall be a token of the covenant betwixt me and you.
Romans 4:11 And he received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith which *he had yet* being uncircumcised…

Now, is there something immoral about leaving your child uncircumcised? No.

1Corinthians 7:18-19 Is any man called being circumcised? let him not become uncircumcised. Is any called in uncircumcision? let him not be circumcised.
Circumcision is nothing…

If it is not immoral, then why was God ready to kill when Moses had not circumcised his child?

Exodus 4:24-26 And it came to pass by the way in the inn, that the LORD met him, and sought to kill him.
Then Zipporah took a sharp stone, and cut off the foreskin of her son, and cast *it* at his feet, and said, Surely a bloody husband *art* thou to me.
So he let him go: then she said, A bloody husband *thou art,* because of the circumcision.

Clearly his wife's distaste towards circumcision had caused Moses to appease his wife rather than the Lord. And surely *this* was the immorality of the act - Moses was ready to break the sign of the covenant God made with Abraham.
As another example, what if a husband were to take off his wedding ring and cast it at the feet of his wife? Is there anything hateful in the act of casting small pieces of metal at your wife's feet? No. But it is because the ring represents a covenant between those two individuals that the act then becomes significant.
So too, when that Israelite began to pick up sticks on the Sabbath, there was nothing immoral in the act of picking up sticks rather than remaining idle. It is because he did this on the Sabbath, which was a covenant sign between him and God, that this then became immoral.

The Sabbath was written on those two tablets of stone because it was the sign of that Mosaic covenant, the breaking of which is completely immoral. In this regard alone, that it was the sign of that covenant, can it be considered a moral commandment. Yet it was one only intended for the nation of Israel, as we have seen.
Otherwise, the Sabbath is entirely distinct from the other 9 moral commandments:
- it does not reflect God's moral character, nor that imparted to man who is made in His image;
- it cannot be revealed by general or natural revelation but requires test-runs to establish it in man's mind (Exodus 16);
- it was not established from creation;
- it should be unchangeable or immutable (not changing from one day to another);
- it was not binding on all men but Israel only;
- it was subservient to a ceremonial law:
John 7:23 If a man on the sabbath day receive circumcision, that the law of Moses should not be broken...;
- it is supposed to have positive exceptions based on 'mercy, charity or necessity,' rather than being a moral absolute with no exceptions. One would not consider having committed idolatry in order to gain the opportunity to witness to someone of a different faith legitimate, nor would one consider murdering another and stealing their vehicle in order to get to church on time as legitimate, but needing to buy petrol on the Sabbath for the same reasons *is* somehow considered legitimate.
- it is not a moral absolute which cannot be broken under any circumstances; the Lord Jesus says:

Matthew 12:5 Or have ye not read in the law, how that on the sabbath days the priests in the temple profane the sabbath, and are blameless?

'Wait a moment,' the Sabbatarian will interject, 'Rahab the harlot lied about the spies to hide them and we see that killing is fine during war in the Scriptures, so this doesn't apply to all of the other 9 commandments either.'
Actually, the commandment regarding lying is as follows:

Exodus 20:16 Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour.

Rahab was not lying *against* her neighbours cause or character but was defending them from ungodly harm in much the same way as the Egyptian midwives did in Exodus, as we have seen. This cannot be constituted as breaking the 9th commandment.

Proverbs 24:11-12 If thou forbear to deliver *them that are* drawn unto death, and *those that are* ready to be slain;
If thou sayest, Behold, we knew it not; doth not he that pondereth the heart consider *it?* and he that keepeth thy soul, doth *not* he know *it?* and shall *not* he render to *every* man according to his works?

As for killing being acceptable in legitimate warfare, the commandment regarding killing is as follows:

Exodus 20:13 Thou shalt not kill.

The famous Puritan commentator Matthew Henry comments concisely on this verse and the Hebrew word for 'kill':
'[T]hou shalt not do any thing hurtful or injurious to the health, ease, and life, of thy own body, or any other person's unjustly... This is one of the laws of nature, and was strongly enforced by the precepts given to Noah and his sons (Genesis 9:5-6). It does not forbid killing in lawful war, or in our own necessary defence, nor the magistrate's putting offenders to death, for those things tend to the preserving of life; but it forbids all malice and hatred to the person of any (for *he that hateth his brother is a murderer*), and all personal revenge arising therefrom...'
As the Lord says regarding the morality of these two commandments:

Leviticus 19:16-18 Thou shalt not go up and down *as* a talebearer among thy people: neither shalt thou stand against the blood of thy neighbour: I *am* the LORD.
Thou shalt not hate thy brother in thine heart: thou shalt in any wise rebuke thy neighbour, and not suffer sin upon him.
Thou shalt not avenge, nor bear any grudge against the children of thy people, but thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself: I *am* the LORD.

For these reasons, murder and bearing false witness against another cannot be considered to be breakable in any circumstance as we see the Sabbath is and as ceremonial laws are. These reasons alone place the Sabbath commandment outside of the category of a moral commandment, were it not for its being the seal of the

covenant.
More than this though, the Lord Jesus Christ Himself distinguishes the Sabbath commandment from the others on the tables of stone. We have already read the verse concerning the Sabbath having been made for man, but let us read the rest of it:

Mark 2:27 And he said unto them, The sabbath was made for man, and not man for the sabbath…

Which of the other of the 9 commandments can this be said of?
Let us examine them all:

Deuteronomy 5:6-7 I *am* the LORD thy God, which brought thee out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage.
Thou shalt have none other gods before me.

Can we say that men were made to have one God? Yes, Adam was made in God's image and for His glory.

Deuteronomy 5:8-9 Thou shalt not make thee *any* graven image, *or* any likeness *of any thing* that *is* in heaven above, or that *is* in the earth beneath, or that *is* in the waters beneath the earth:
Thou shalt not bow down thyself unto them, nor serve them: for I the LORD thy God *am* a jealous God…

Can we say that men were made to have no idols? Yes, man was made upright and dwelt in God's presence with no idols.

Deuteronomy 5:11 Thou shalt not take the name of the LORD thy God in vain: for the LORD will not hold *him* guiltless that taketh his name in vain.

Can we say that men were made to call upon the name of the Lord? Yes, man was created in God's presence and they did not commune in vain as we see in the first few chapters of Genesis.

Deuteronomy 5:16 Honour thy father and thy mother, as the LORD thy God hath commanded thee; that thy days may be prolonged, and that it may go well with thee, in the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee.

Can we say that men were created to honour their parents and all authority over them? Yes, as the apostle says:

Ephesians 6:1-2 Children, obey your parents in the Lord: for this is right.
Honour thy father and mother; (which is the first commandment with promise;)

Therefore, it is a matter of morality and indeed it reflects a character of godliness:

Malachi 1:6 A son honoureth *his* father, and a servant his master: if then I *be* a father, where *is* mine honour?

Deuteronomy 5:17 Thou shalt not kill.

Can we say that men were not created to kill each other? Yes.

Deuteronomy 5:18 Neither shalt thou commit adultery.

Can we say that men were created to only have sexual relations within the ordinance which God has set? Yes. Dr. Gill notes, regarding the Lord's words to be fruitful and multiply in Genesis 1:28, 'marriage is an ordinance of God, instituted in paradise, and is honourable; and…procreation is a natural action…and may be performed without sin'. God made the world to be inhabited, as He declares:

Isaiah 45:18 …God himself that formed the earth and made it; he hath established it, he created it not in vain, he formed it to be inhabited…

And we see that marriage predates ancient history; anthropologically, cultures have always had the concept of marriage and their consciences concerned with the matter. Therefore, we can say, yes, God made man to populate the earth but only through the means He established. Men were created to not commit adultery whether they themselves are married or not (Deuteronomy 22:22). See the tenth commandment to better understand how this applies to the conscience and therefore as a moral law.

Deuteronomy 5:19 Neither shalt thou steal.

Were men created to own their own possessions and not to take another's? Yes.

Deuteronomy 5:20 Neither shalt thou bear false witness against thy neighbour.

Were men created to speak the truth one with another? Yes.

Deuteronomy 5:21 Neither shalt thou desire thy neighbour's wife…or any *thing* that *is* thy neighbour's.

Were men created to be content with such things as they have, with God's blessings and mercy? Yes.

These are all 'right' as Paul would say and they are all matters that can burden natural man's conscience.

Romans 2:14-15 [The Gentiles] shew the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and *their* thoughts the mean while accusing or else excusing one another…

Men know inside themselves that there must be a Creator and, in their darkened understanding, they know that it is wrong to curse that God. Even the most savage of tribes moved by God's Spirit at the hearing of His Word from missionaries have declared they knew their murders and adulteries were wrong in their dark hearts, but never do we see consciences naturally pricked regarding resting entirely from servile work on one day of a seven day week. It is not a natural phenomenon and therefore

cannot be a universal, moral law. Indeed, it would require a test run, such as we see in Exodus 16, to incorporate Sabbath-keeping into a culture.

To conclude on this first point, the Sabbath is not a perpetual creation ordinance, nor is it a natural law or moral law binding on all men. The Lord Jesus Christ distinguishes it, the prophets distinguish it and its very nature distinguishes it from the moral laws of the Decalogue written in stone. The reason it is contained with these is because it was the sign of the Mosaic covenant, which has been done away; to break God's covenant *is* immoral. The other 9 commandments are all reinstated in the New Testament, the better Covenant, yet the Sabbath commandment is not; it is conspicuously absent from the New Testament, apart from Colossians 2:16 of course, as we have seen.
This leads us to the next Sabbatarian argument…

Hebrews 4:9 teaches that we are to keep a Sabbath –

Let's look at the key verse in the New Testament (and in reality the *only* verse in the New Testament) used by Sabbatarians to affirm that there is a Sabbath day to be kept under the New Covenant:

Hebrews 4:8-10 For if Jesus [the Greek equivalent of the Hebrew name for Joshua of the Old Testament] had given them rest, then would he not afterward have spoken of another day.
There remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God.
For he that is entered into his [God's] rest, he also hath ceased from his own works, as God *did* from his.

The word 'rest', underlined here, is a Greek noun - 'sabbatismos', which is an entirely unique word to the Scriptures. It means 'sabbatism' (according to the major Lexicons) and can also be translated as 'Sabbath-rest' or 'Sabbath-like rest'. The Authorised Version translators, Geneva Bible translators and William Tyndale have all translated this simply as 'rest', which is perfectly adequate when we consider that both the Sabbath and the rest that the Israelites were seeking in Canaan (Hebrews 3:18) have been used by the apostle as examples of this special rest he is describing in Hebrews chapter 4. *This* rest, which the Sabbath was foreshadowing, is entered into by faith (Hebrews 4:3); we are given the examples of those who had the gospel preached to them in Moses' time but could not enter in because they didn't have saving faith. There is also a ceasing from one's own works in this rest, as we see in the context (Hebrews 4:10). The result of this context is that the overwhelming majority of expositors and exegetes of the Bible, even notable Sabbatarians, cannot with any intellectual honesty interpret Hebrews 4 as describing anything other than the Gospel rest we have in Christ and the expectation of heavenly rest; nor can they interpret the Sabbatism of verse 9 as referring to anything other than the Sabbath as an example of the rest we have in Christ.
This is why Thayer's Lexicon defines 'sabbatismos' as 'the blessed rest from toils and troubles looked for in the age to come by the true worshippers of God'.

Matthew Poole writes of this verse that 'the Spirit concludes from his former proofs, that there is a more excellent rest revealed to faith in the gospel, which is remaining, future, and to come… A sabbatism, which is a state and season of a most glorious rest, (see Hebrews 4:10), shall be enjoyed by sincere believers, the true Israel of God…'
John Trapp writes that the sabbatismos is '[a] sabbatism, an eternal rest'.
John Calvin writes: 'He draws the conclusion, that there is a sabbathizing reserved for God's people, that is, a spiritual rest; to which God daily invites us… This is a definition of that perpetual Sabbath in which there is the highest felicity, when there will be a likeness between men and God, to whom they will be united.'
Matthew Henry calls this sabbatism '[a] rest of grace, and comfort, and holiness, in the gospel state. This is the rest wherewith the Lord Jesus, our Joshua, causes weary souls and awakened consciences to rest, and this is the refreshing. A rest in glory, the everlasting sabbatism of heaven…where the people of God shall enjoy the end of their faith and the object of all their desires.'
The vast majority of commentators, modern or old, regardless of doctrinal difference, are in agreement.
This is why William Tyndale translated this verse thus: 'There remayneth therfore **yet** a rest unto the people of god.' (emphasis added)
Truly, we can say that the context makes this point obvious and that, in the multitude of counsellors, it is safe to interpret this chapter likewise (Proverbs 11:14 & 24:6).

The real question which Hebrews 4 raises, however, is this: Has Christ given us rest for our souls or not? If He has then, according to verse 8, we cannot speak of another day. What does the Lord Jesus Himself say?

Matthew 11:28-30 Come unto me, all *ye* that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.
Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls.
For my yoke *is* easy, and my burden is light.

Now the rest for our souls here, which Christ says He will most certainly give His sheep, is the Greek word 'anapausis' which shares exactly the same root for the word 'rest' in Hebrews 4:8; the word in verse 8 is 'katapausis', as it is in verse 4 to describe God's rest on the seventh day:

Hebrews 4:4 For he spake in a certain place of the seventh *day* on this wise, And God did rest the seventh day from all his works.

These two words, the rest that Christ gives us and the rest spoken of in Hebrews 4, are different uses of the same foundational verb 'paus' which means to cease, particularly from work. Therefore, if Jesus Christ has given us rest, the Sabbath has been fulfilled in and by Him and, therefore, we cannot speak of another Sabbath day but we have already passed into eternal life and await our remaining eternal rest. We rest from all of our works, both good and bad, in Christ. I believe Dr. Gill puts it truthfully and eloquently when he comments that 'a truly sensible sinner enjoys no rest, but in Christ'.
Likewise, Robert Hawker when he notes that, 'though Joshua did bring the people

into Canaan, yet this was only typical of a better rest, which remaineth for the people of God. Hence it is plain, by the Lord's speaking of another rest, this of Joshua's was not the one intended. Christ himself is indeed the rest wherewith the Lord causeth the weary to rest, and this is the refreshing... Reader! it will be your happiness, and mine, if, under divine teaching, we are come to Christ, as our rest; and from a knowledge of Him, are made sensible of his bountiful dealing with us, in the rest of salvation'.

Christ said that we are not to break the least commandment –

Is that *really* what the Lord Jesus was teaching? Let's examine the verses in question:

Matthew 5:17-20 Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil.
For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled.
Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven: but whosoever shall do and teach *them,* the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven.
For I say unto you, That except your righteousness shall exceed *the righteousness* of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven.

So, Jesus has stated that:
1. The Law, i.e. the entire old Mosaic covenant, will not pass away until it is fulfilled.
2. A man's righteousness must exceed that of the scribes and Pharisees to enter the kingdom of heaven, not breaking the Law *at all* as they do (John 7:19).
3. Jesus has come to fulfil, i.e. keep, that Law as well as the prophecies.

From these three premises we can only conclude that Christ alone can fulfil the Law for us. Therefore, as fearful sinners seeking peace, we must desire as Paul did:

Philippians 3:9 [To] be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith...

Romans 10:4 For Christ *is* the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth. (See also Galatians 2:21)

Christ has fulfilled the Law with the high standard that He sets in the proceeding verses of Matthew 5, that if we hate in our heart, we are murderers, and if we lust in our heart, we are adulterers. We, in our fallen state, can *never* possibly do so. We can teach the commandments, just as the Pharisees did, but we can never *do and teach* them (Matthew 5:19). Christ alone can and has done this.

In light of this, to state that 'the least' commandment from the old covenant must be kept by a Christian is to wed the Christian back to the Law, to return him back to the schoolmaster from whom he has been discharged –

Galatians 3:24-25 Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster *to bring us* unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith.
But after that faith is come, we are no longer under a schoolmaster.

Notice that 'the least' commandment cannot be referring to any of the ten commandments but is referring to the minutiae of the Law as laid out in the Torah, thus Christ refers to the jots and tittles of it. And what does the New Testament have to say regarding the Law?

Hebrews 7:11-12, 18 If therefore perfection were by the Levitical priesthood, (for under it the people received the law,) what further need *was there* that another priest should rise after the order of Melchisedec, and not be called after the order of Aaron?
For the priesthood being changed, there is made of necessity a change also of the law.
For there is verily a disannulling of the commandment going before for the weakness and unprofitableness thereof.

Is there a contradiction here? Is the apostle teaching that the least commandment has passed away? The old covenant *has* passed away, but there is absolutely no contradiction:

Hebrews 8:6-9, 13 But now hath [Jesus] obtained a more excellent ministry, by how much also he is the mediator of a better covenant, which was established upon better promises.
For if that first *covenant* had been faultless, then should no place have been sought for the second.
For finding fault with them, he saith, Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah:
Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day when I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt…
In that he saith, A new *covenant,* he hath made the first old. Now that which decayeth and waxeth old *is* ready to vanish away.

The better Covenant teaches us that the entirety of the old covenant has passed away and that we are under a completely New Covenant with a completely different priesthood and therefore a brand new set of precepts; better still, we are led directly by God's very Spirit working in our hearts and correcting us as a Father (Hebrews 12:5-11).
The Old Testament is most certainly written for our learning, but we are to interpret it, even the Sabbath commandment, in light of the New Testament and Christ; we must not apply the Old to the New Testament but vice versa.

To declare that, in these verses of Matthew, Christ is teaching that, under the New, better and eternal Covenant, we must keep the least commandment of the old covenant is, by the same logic to teach that we must have a righteousness that is of

ourselves and which exceeds that of the scribes and the Pharisees; this is *not* the teaching of the New Testament and the truth which His Spirit leads us to.

The Sabbatarian would lash out, 'Should we sin then that grace might abound?' (Romans 6:1)
If you can show me the New Testament precept for Sabbath-keeping then I should hate to sin against it.

Christ said there would be a Sabbath at the end of the world (Matthew 24:20) –
The line of reasoning here is that:
1. Matthew 24:20 is referring to the second coming of Christ; and
2. There would be a continuation of the Sabbath amongst Christians after Christ's resurrection and ascension into heaven.

Firstly, Matthew 24:20 is not referring to the second coming but to the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 A.D. I shall not argue this point here as it is irrelevant to the conclusion that we reach. Suffice it to say that Christ is asked two questions by His disciples in Matthew 24:

Matthew 24:3 And as he sat upon the mount of Olives, the disciples came unto him privately, saying, Tell us, when shall these things be? and what *shall be* the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world?

And our Lord Jesus answers both questions in the chapter: the first, regarding 'these things', i.e. the destruction of the temple which He has prophesied of in the previous verse, and the second question, regarding His second coming.
Nevertheless, the point is that a continuation of the Sabbath for Christians after Christ's ascension is assumed from verse 20. Yet, this is not what we are told in the context:

Matthew 24:19-20 And woe unto them that are with child, and to them that give suck in those days!
But pray ye that your flight be not in the winter, neither on the sabbath day…

Christ is warning of hindrances to fleeing from the abominable standard and idols of the armies of Roman prince Titus as they would come to conduct the most horrific siege in history. Christ explains that there would be those who would read and understand Daniel's prophecy concerning this matter.
The Sabbath, however, is listed by Christ among potential hindrances such as winter, having the burden of sucklings and even the snare of one's material possessions (verse 18). The Sabbath is listed as one of these hindrances because the Jews would enforce their rules to not exceed a Sabbath day's journey (2000 cubits).

To conclude this point, this verse is in no way speaking of a continuation of the Sabbath *for* Christ's sheep but is a warning against those who would be zealously

continuing in the weak and beggarly elements of the Law of Moses, whether Christians or not:

Acts 21:20-21 ...Thou seest, brother, how many thousands of Jews there are which believe; and they are all zealous of the law:
And they are informed of thee, that thou teachest all the Jews which are among the Gentiles to forsake Moses...

All we *can* say for certain is that Christ and His Holy Spirit refer to the seventh day of the week as the Sabbath up until 70 A.D., meaning that God, who cannot lie, does not refer to the day having been changed up until this point.
But, in any event, the Jews, including our Lord, observed a lunar calendar, not the solar calendar established in western civilisation by the Roman Empire, which we now use; even if the Sabbath were to continue to the end of the world, Sabbatarians are potentially resting on the wrong day. If calendars can change, then they are admitting that the Sabbath can arbitrarily be changed also; we can just invent different calendars for ourselves and worship or rest whenever we want.

The Old Testament prophesies of Sabbath continuation under the Gospel –

Here are the verses quoted to affirm that Sabbatarianism was prophesied as New Testament practice:

Isaiah 58:13-14 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:
Then shalt thou delight thyself in the LORD; and I will cause thee to ride upon the high places of the earth, and feed thee with the heritage of Jacob thy father: for the mouth of the LORD hath spoken *it*.

If we are to interpret this as being a literal Sabbath then we must also interpret the following verses as teaching that, in the New Covenant, we Gentiles are literally to bring sacrifices upon an altar to the holy mountain:

Isaiah 56:6-7 Also the sons of the stranger, that join themselves to the LORD, to serve him, and to love the name of the LORD, to be his servants, every one that keepeth the sabbath from polluting it, and taketh hold of my covenant;
Even them will I bring to my holy mountain, and make them joyful in my house of prayer: their burnt offerings and their sacrifices *shall be* accepted upon mine altar; for mine house shall be called an house of prayer for all people.

Yet this would be a denial of the spiritual reality in Christ which these things foreshadowed. Furthermore, we must also interpret from these verses in Isaiah that

there will be new moons and Sabbaths either in the eternal state or in this present Gospel era, this day of salvation:

Isaiah 66:22-24 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.
And they shall go forth, and look upon the carcases of the men that have transgressed against me: for their worm shall not die, neither shall their fire be quenched; and they shall be an abhorring unto all flesh.

But we know that no such new moons exist now for Christians in the better Covenant or in the eternal state:

Revelation 21:22-24 And I saw no temple therein: for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it.
And the city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it: for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb *is* the light thereof.
And the nations of them which are saved shall walk in the light of it: and the kings of the earth do bring their glory and honour into it.

These verses in Revelation certainly put to silence any literal interpretation of the verses we have read in Isaiah. But more than this, one cannot consistently interpret the Sabbath as being a literal continuation of the Sabbath day from these verses in Isaiah, for then one would have to do so with the holydays of the new moon and this is something which the Sabbatarian interpretation of Colossians 2:16 simply does not allow. The only logical conclusion left is: the Sabbath day was a shadow of Christ and the Sabbath expressed in Isaiah cannot be interpreted otherwise.

Another supposed prophecy put forward by the First-day Sabbatarians is from Psalm 118:

Psalm 118:19-24 Open to me the gates of righteousness: I will go into them, *and* I will praise the LORD:
This gate of the LORD, into which the righteous shall enter.
I will praise thee: for thou hast heard me, and art become my salvation.
The stone *which* the builders refused is become the head *stone* of the corner.
This is the LORD'S doing; it *is* marvellous in our eyes.
This *is* the day *which* the LORD hath made; we will rejoice and be glad in it.

They state that this 'day which the LORD hath made' is clearly referring to the Sabbath having been changed to the first day of the week, when Christ rose from the dead and when He ascended into heaven for us. But the Sabbath is nowhere mentioned or implied in this Psalm. Christ speaks of this Psalm as referring to the establishment of His church:

Matthew 21:42-43 Jesus saith unto them, Did ye never read in the scriptures, The stone which the builders rejected, the same is become the head of the corner: this is the Lord's doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes?

Therefore say I unto you, The kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof.

The 'day' spoken of here can only be interpreted, according to other Scriptures, as the day of salvation, that acceptable time or acceptable year spoken of by the prophets when prophesying of the Messiah's coming kingdom and the light that would go to the Gentiles:

2Corinthians 6:2 (For he saith, I have heard thee in a time accepted, and in the day of salvation have I succoured thee: behold, now *is* the accepted time; behold, now *is* the day of salvation.)

There is nothing but a desperate presupposition that could bring someone to read of some Sabbath change in these verses.

Eighth day ceremonies in the Old Testament prefigured the change of the Sabbath to the first day –

The next argument unique to First-day Sabbatarianism is that certain celebrations which took place on the eighth day, i.e. the first day of the week or the day after the Sabbath, were a shadow of the Sabbath change from the seventh day to the first.

Circumcision took place on the eighth day for instance:

Leviticus 12:3 And in the eighth day the flesh of his foreskin shall be circumcised.

Also, we see that certain sabbath feasts were to be kept on the eighth day or first day of the week:

Lev 23:35-36 & 39 On the first day *shall be* an holy convocation: ye shall do no servile work *therein.*
Seven days ye shall offer an offering made by fire unto the LORD: on the eighth day shall be an holy convocation unto you; and ye shall offer an offering made by fire unto the LORD: it *is* a solemn assembly; *and* ye shall do no servile work *therein.*
Also in the fifteenth day of the seventh month, when ye have gathered in the fruit of the land, ye shall keep a feast unto the LORD seven days: on the first day *shall be* a sabbath, and on the eighth day *shall be* a sabbath.

There is one huge problem with interpreting these as foreshadowing a Sabbath change. It is not that, for the Sabbath to be a moral law, it must be unchanging or immutable, as we have already seen. It is, again, the interpretation that such Sabbatarians will hold to regarding the very first verses we examined in this study:

Colossians 2:16-17 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:*
Which are a shadow of things to come; but the body *is* of Christ.

If these special sabbaths and feasts which fall on the first day of the week are shadows of anything, we are told explicitly in the New Testament that they are shadows of Christ. According to the Holy Spirit, they are not shadows of a future festival or of a Sabbath change. This is a glaring contradiction.

Therefore, one cannot derive *any* prophecy of a Sabbath-change from the Old Testament.

There was a transition period from the seventh day Sabbath to the first day –

The final argument unique to First-day Sabbatarianism is that the reason the seventh day Sabbath is still called the Sabbath by the Holy Spirit in Acts, and by Christ in Matthew 24, is because there was some mystical transitional period and, at the fulfilment of this, it would then have become apparent to Christians and acceptable for the Holy Spirit to call the first day of the week 'the Sabbath'.
This idea is nowhere implied in Scripture, but the First-day Sabbatarian argues that it is; they reason that, just as we see the Passover feast changed to the Lord's Supper and Jewish ceremonies like circumcision conducted and certain foods abstained from to avoid offending the consciences of Jewish brethren, so too there was clearly a change from the seventh day Sabbath to the first day. We are given no Scriptures to even imply that such a controversy took place in the New Testament, which most certainly would have done if the Jews were told that their Sabbath was to be changed. The other transitions listed by the First-day Sabbatarian are all clearly and explicitly established in the New Testament but as for a Sabbath change, we hear nothing from Paul but that it was fulfilled in Christ (Colossians 2:17). Nonetheless, let us entertain the idea that there was a transition period for a Sabbath change.
The obvious question then arises: When did this extra-Biblical transition period reach fruition? As we have seen, the early church had no idea it was occurring. We can see from the early church writings that, from the 1st century well into at least the 6th, Christians saw no relationship between the Lord's Day and the fourth commandment; they viewed the Sabbath as ceremonial, only moral in that it was the sign of the Mosaic covenant between Israel after the flesh and God, and was fulfilled in Christ. This is well-documented by Phillip Schaff in his well-known *The History of the Christian Church.*

So then, when we look sensibly and realistically at history, do we see some transition period taking place?

The origins of either form of Sabbatarianism –

Before we look at this supposed transition period, the origins of Seventh-day Sabbatarianism must first be established. There were of course certain Jews who continued to keep the Sabbath after Christ's resurrection as we see in the New Testament. For Paul, it was merely his habit to proselytise to Jews on that day when they were all met in the synagogue. Seventh-day Sabbatarians will nevertheless try to affirm that early Christians *all* kept the Sabbath too according to the manner of the Jews. They will typically quote two sources - Socrates Scholasticus and Sozomen, contemporary historians from later centuries, completely ignoring the primary sources of the early church writings themselves, which, as we have seen, deny the keeping of a Sabbath altogether. Irenæus, Eusebius, Hippolytus and Jerome, among others, write of a heretical Judeo-Christian cult from the 2nd century called the Ebionites who denied Christ's divinity, thought Paul was an apostate and observed circumcision and the seventh day Sabbath.[19] This is all we hear from the early church concerning professing Christians resting on the seventh day. Some, such as the great contender Athanasius, would celebrate the creation on the seventh day but were emphatic about 'not being infected with Judaism' by openly stating, 'We keep no Sabbath day',[20] whilst celebrating the Lord's Day also. Others in the 4th century did this too.[21] Whilst the Ebionites also kept both the Lord's Day and the seventh day Sabbath, they seem to stand alone in strictly keeping the Sabbath according to the Old Testament.[22] As the great Hebrew Christian historian, Alfred Edersheim, notes, 'their punctilious Sabbath-observance…is surely sufficient to prove that they had no connection with the origin of Christianity.'[23] The historical evidence does not favour Seventh-day Sabbatarianism at all, it defies it.

But, returning to the transition period theory put forward by First-day Sabbatarians, what we find is that the Lord's Day, the first day of the week, was only viewed for the purposes of conducting New Testament ordinances by the early church. We see that this is the extent to which the New Testament shows the practice of the early church. The Lord's Supper and tithing were conducted on the Lord's Day; certain significance is given to the first day of the week by the church, certainly as the Lord's resurrection, His appearing specifically on that day to the disciples, His ascension into heaven and Pentecost all occurred on that day.

Acts 20:7 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.
1Corinthians 16:2 Upon the first *day* of the week let every one of you lay by him in store, as *God* hath prospered him, that there be no gatherings when I come.

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[19] Irenæus, *Adversus Hæreses*, i. 262; Origen, *Contra Celsum*, ii. 1; Eusebius, *Hist. Eccl.* iii. 27; Hippolytus, *Refutatio Hæresium*, vii. 34; Jerome, *Commentary on Isaiah*, i. 3, 12; on Matt. xii. 13
[20] Barclay, W. (1973) *The Ten Commandments For Today*, New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, p. 31
[21] *Apostolic Constitutions* (~380 A.D.) 8, 33, 1, ANF VII, p. 495; cf. ibid. 7, 36, 1, ANF VII, p. 474
[22] Eusebius (~315 A.D.) *Ecclesiastical History*, Book 3, Chapter 27
[23] Edersheim, A. (1881) *Sketches of Jewish Social Life in the Days of Christ*, James Pott & Co., p.185

The Lord's Day was seen correctly by the early church as a New Testament pattern for the keeping of ordinances. However, when Constantine brought about the un-Biblical mingling of church and state, many heresies began to arise and leaven the churches and rather than remain independent and refute the heresies through writing and preaching, councils began to look to the Emperor to give the final word across the Empire as to which side of the doctrinal debate would be tolerated legally. This of course, along with the heresies themselves, made the way for the rise of the Antichrist.

With church and state mixed, the state of course looked to the Old Testament Theocracy for its civil laws. This is all of course entirely repugnant to the New Testament church order as established by the apostles.

In 321 A.D., Constantine passed a law that 'the venerable day of the sun', i.e. the first day of the week, would be a day of rest throughout the Roman Empire.[24] And, despite Augustine and other significant apologists continuing to recognise the spiritual significance of the Sabbath as fulfilled in Christ, early in the dark ages of Papal tyranny, Christians were brought back under the Law – both of Moses and of Rome: 'In the time of Justinian, 685 a.d., the laws of the empire on the subject were gathered into the codes, which contained the law of the Roman empire, and from the year 800, when Charlemagne was crowned, this code was of force and effect all over the "Holy Roman Empire." ...During the Middle Ages there were decrees and canons of popes and of councils concerning the observance of Sunday, which, though ecclesiastical, were of civil force because enforced by the civil power. 'Charlemagne's numerous strict Sunday regulations were explicitly based upon the Old-Testament command to keep the Sabbath day holy.'[25] Further to civil enforcement, Rome sought to justify these laws intellectually; Papist philosopher Thomas Aquinas developed the idea that *all* of the ten commandments were natural laws and that the fourth commandment was a moral law binding on all men.[26]

Once the glorious Reformation ended the dark ages for certain European nations, governments began to adopt Protestant constitutions. Again, the mingling of church and state caused nations to look to the Theocracy established under the Mosaic covenant for their national laws. However, the early Reformers rather adopted the early church's view regarding the Sabbath, at least initially so. Zwingli declared 'that it was lawful on the Lord's day, after divine service, for any man to pursue his labours.' Beza taught that 'no cessation of work on the Lord's day is required of Christians.' Bucer goes further yet, 'and doth not only call it a superstition, but an apostasy from Christ to think that working on the Lord's day, in itself considered, is a sinful thing.'[27]

Cranmer and Tyndale both taught that the Sabbath had been abolished and that the

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[24] Schaff, P. (1902 5th ed.) *History of the Christian Church*, vol. 3, p. 380

[25] (1949) *The New Schaff-Herzog Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge*, vol. XI, pp. 145 & 147

[26] Bauckham, R.J. (1982) "Sabbath and Sunday in the Medieval Church in the West", Carson's *From Sabbath to Lord's Day*, Wipf & Stock Publishers/Zondervan, pp. 299–310

[27] Cox's *Sabbath Laws* &c., pp.286-9

Lord's Day was for New Testament ordinances.[28]
However, this was not the case with all and it did not last for long as most of the Reformers began to follow Aquinas' line of reasoning rather than God's Word. What very soon developed was a legalistic attitude towards the Lord's Day and the imposition of the fourth commandment from the Mosaic Law on the New Covenant. We see this particularly with the Puritans in England and Scotland who later developed strict laws regarding what had been coined 'the Christian Sabbath'. This led to a slight division between the strict 'Puritan Sabbath' which one sees enshrined in the Westminster Confession of Faith and the 'Continental Sabbath' of the Heidelberg Catechism which does not expressly forbid recreational activities; although, in practice, the tendency was towards a legalistic, almost Judaising, observance in both camps.

So where exactly is the pedigree for this doctrine that there was a change of the Sabbath over a transition period? There is no pedigree; in fact, when we look at the historical facts, we see that Sabbatarianism is rather part and pillar of popery, having been founded upon the diabolical union of church with state and the false doctrines of popish philosophy, leaving a terrible hangover in the minds of the Reformers who were all, of course, ex-Romanist priests.
Are we to believe that, upon this ungodly mess, the Sabbath was finally changed after many centuries at the whim of the Puritans? I cannot abide such a doctrine in light of all this.

Dr. Gill, as we have stated, was a First-day Sabbatarian, yet he is nonetheless brought to recognise these truths in his commentary on Romans 14:5: '[O]ne that is strong in faith, and has a greater degree of the knowledge of the Gospel, and of evangelical liberty, knows that the distinction of days, as well as of meats, is taken away, since the word was made flesh, and tabernacled among us, Christ the passover is sacrificed for us, the firstfruits of the Spirit have been received, and light by the church from the sun of righteousness, and Christ the true sabbath and rest is come; and therefore, being firmly persuaded there is no more holiness in days than there is in places, has the same regard for one day as another. The difference between these two lay here, the weak brother regarded a day for the sake of a day, as having by a positive law, he supposed to be in force, a superiority to another, and he regarded worship for the sake of this day; the stronger brother, though he also observed a day for divine worship, which is the Lord's day, since there must be some time for it as well as place, yet he observed the day for the sake of worship, and not worship for the sake of the day…'

As Puritanical literature is seeing somewhat of a revival in the early 21st century, it is essential that all Christians decide whether they will be in bondage to a legalistic Sabbatarian position or recognise that the Lord of the Sabbath has fulfilled the Sabbath and that the Lord's Day is for the ordinances of the New Covenant. History has shown that there can be no grey area. My prayer is that the unity of the Spirit in

[28] Tyndale's *Answer to More*, book i, chap. Xxv

the bond of peace might reign and no man might judge another on this matter but might discuss the matter sensibly, lovingly and objectively from the Scriptures.

The fruits of Sabbatarianism –

As a Sabbatarian, I found that an un-Christian form a legalism was nurtured in my heart as I began to develop my own arbitrary rules of how one might keep the Sabbath under the grace of the New and better Covenant. Indeed, it seems that without any indication of any rules in the New Testament, a certain anarchy reigns as to how Christians keep their Sabbath, with the rules differing from church to church in a purely arbitrary manner. Some cook, some do not; some drive a car and some realise that to do so is to cause an ignition in the car's engine and is therefore lighting a fire on the Sabbath. There is even inconsistency as to the timing of the Sabbath; many Sabbatarians do not keep their Sabbath from sundown to sundown as it was established by God, supposedly as a creation ordinance (Leviticus 23:32), or from sunrise, when the Lord's tomb was found empty. Christian liberty is apparently allowed in the matter with no New Testament principles to indicate any Sabbath regulations at all. And when one desires to have a set of authoritative rules on how to keep the Sabbath, one is typically directed to the words of men in the Westminster Confession of Faith or other.
Furthermore, I found that Sabbatarianism nurtured a spirit of Pharisaic pride, superiority and a judgmental attitude in me. I found that the focus on a day caused me to be endeavouring to work to bring myself closer to God, closer to His favour by my own actions rather than ceasing from all my works in Christ as the New Testament calls me to do, knowing that I am only acceptable in God's sight through Him. I found that, for me, the Sabbath caused me to be wedded back to the Law after I had been wedded to Christ and, according to the Holy Spirit, I was therefore committing spiritual adultery (Romans 7:1-4).

I find that Sabbatarians of either persuasion are quick to expound views of a deeper, more spiritual Sabbath whereby all of one's being must be devoted to Christ on that day. The apostle Paul writes that we must do this always (2Corinthians 10:5) but nonetheless the Sabbatarian will emphasise this point for a particular day and yet I have found them to unrepentantly discuss the football and all manner of worldliness on that day with no church discipline even dreamt of by any of the congregation. If a brother was harbouring hatred in his heart for another, there would, I pray, be an exhortation on the matter, but for the supposed spiritual Sabbath-breaking of this supposedly 'higher or greater Sabbath', there seems to be great inconsistency.
I cannot condemn because I was no different as a Sabbatarian.

Conclusion –

To conclude, I feel I must express my love of the Lord's Day. I love to be with brethren and worship my God – Father, Son and Holy Spirit. I will not do any less than the New Testament directs for assembly on that Day, nor shall I call it or attribute to it anything more than the New Testament does. Moreover, to knowingly and openly do something contrary to the conscience of a nearby Sabbatarian may cause them to sin against their conscience and would, thus, be an offence to God. Therefore, Christian care and wisdom is needed (Romans 14:4-5).

For those who have yet to arrive at my conclusions, I would ask you to pray to almighty God as to why it is that, in the epistles, there is no reiteration of the Sabbath. Ask in prayer why it is that Paul does not rebuke the Corinthians for their obscene Sabbath-breaking. I personally find the answer to be so beautifully and clearly laid out at the Council of Jerusalem in Acts 15. I will not quote extensively from this chapter but I invite all to prayerfully and carefully re-read the subject and conclusion of this Council, even the entire chapter, noting that, though the Sabbath is mentioned, it is only in passing. What an opportunity this would have been for the Holy Spirit to say something to the masses of raw Pagan Gentile converts regarding Sabbath-keeping. What the Spirit did say was far different.

James' conclusion in this chapter is widely overlooked but the truth of it is astonishingly beautiful:

Acts 15:15-19 And to this agree the words of the prophets; as it is written,
After this I will return, and will build again the tabernacle of David, which is fallen down; and I will build again the ruins thereof, and I will set it up:
That the residue of men might seek after the Lord, and all the Gentiles, upon whom my name is called, saith the Lord, who doeth all these things.
Known unto God are all his works from the beginning of the world.
Wherefore my sentence is, that we trouble not them, which from among the Gentiles are turned to God…

James is quoting from Amos 9 to declare that God would personally build the tabernacle by His Spirit - this church, built upon the foundation of the Lord Jesus Christ. This is why Paul can conclude thus:

Galatians 5:18 But if ye be led of the Spirit, ye are not under the law.

And this is why the conclusion of the Council at Jerusalem was to not burden the Gentiles with a yoke the Jews could not bear but to trust that God would build the body of Christ Himself, this Holy Temple made of lively stones. We are yoked to Christ, not to any prior Law or covenant.
No, we are not under the Law; we are under Grace, Truth and the Gospel. There has been a complete change of the priesthood and a complete change of the Law; the old Law has been entirely abolished in Christ and so we must look to the better Covenant for our precepts, knowing that we are entirely led of God's Spirit, who is able to guide us into all truth, correct us and keep us from falling.

John 16:13 Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, *that* shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come.

As for the Sabbath, why should we be surprised that Christ is the fulfilment of the Sabbath? The Sabbath was introduced with the manna from heaven, yet that was not the true bread from heaven; Christ is the true bread from heaven to give us eternal life and so too He is our rest from all our dead works.

Isaiah 28:12 ...[H]e said, This *is* the rest *wherewith* ye may cause the weary to rest; and this *is* the refreshing: yet they would not hear.

Appendix -
Some other questions

Why did God rest on the seventh day at all if the Sabbath day was only going to be significant as a day for the Hebrew people under the Mosaic covenant?

If we view Christ as the fulfillment of the Sabbath as Paul declares in Colossians –

Colossians 2:16-17 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:
Which are a shadow of things to come; but the body is of Christ.
(This referring to the weekly Sabbath, as we see from parallel verses which set a precedent such as Ezekiel 45:17 and Hosea 2:11 etc.)

- we can then see that when God rested on the seventh day, this was because He 'created all things by Jesus Christ'. When He rested on the seventh day, this was a sign of the perfection of His creation before the fall and the perfection of the rest to come in the new creation in Christ. The number 7 is used throughout Scripture to represent perfection; this is why the seventh day would have been chosen by our Lord. The fact that God rests on this day which is a foreshadowing of Christ confirms to us that, truly, all things were made *for* Him (Colossians 1:16).

The Sabbath was then made known to Israel by Moses (not to all mankind from creation), according to Nehemiah 9:13-14. This then called for men to cease from works as God ceased from His work of creation. This, again, is an illustration of Christ,

as these people are being called to cease from all their works, as we cease from all of our works (good or bad) in Christ.

To summarise:
Why did God make a Sabbath day? Because it is symbolic of Christ.
Why did it have to be the seventh day? Because seven is a sign of perfection and God (who declares the end from the beginning) had a perfect plan for His creation by Christ.

The opposing view is that God made man rest on the seventh day because there is something moral in the act of ceasing from servile work for 24 hours in a 7-day period. The first view makes more sense than the latter.

Didn't Noah keep the Sabbath in Genesis 8:10 & 12?

The 'Noah kept the Sabbath' argument holds no water (if you will excuse the pun). He was asked to bring seven clean animals into the ark, whereas two unclean animals. He might have thought seven a godly number. Also, certain ancient civilisations could determine that seven days was the best way to split the moon phases, as we have seen; he might even have been aware of this fact.
But, putting all speculation aside, God gave Noah one week until it would rain (Genesis 7:4); what was to stop Noah from dividing his time by seven days too in his experiments with the raven and the doves? None of this demands the conclusion of Sabbath-keeping; if so, why was he working with those birds on those days? He and his beasts should have been resting, not picking up sticks or olive leaves.
There is nothing in this account to indicate that Sabbath-keeping was taking place; a foreshadowing of it or even the Sabbath as fulfilled by Christ in the new creation, perhaps. But to impose one's presuppositions on the motifs in Genesis is deeply flawed.

If the Sabbath were a creation ordinance, why would God declare the legislation of His Law throughout the Old Testament but simply leave such important matters as motifs, with only vague notions spoken to the people, in Genesis? There most certainly is legislation given in Genesis 9:6 and so why would God not have been explicit about this important matter also? Unless the Sabbath was not given until Moses as Nehemiah 9:13-14 tells us.

Didn't Origen of the early church teach that we must not do any servile work on the Lord's Day, calling it the 'Christian Sabbath'?

Yes, he did. In fact, we can pinpoint the teaching that no work was to be done of the Lord's Day to Origen alone and, yes, he is also thought to have coined the term 'Christian Sabbath'. He is apparently the only one to have interpreted things this way, prior to the Nicene council. The only reason I have not included him in this piece is because he was a gross heretic. As Schaff puts it, 'His predilection for Plato led him into many grand and fascinating errors.'[29] He quite clearly misinterpreted his tutelage and the Scriptures, just as he did when he cut off his private parts, supposedly following the teachings of the Lord Jesus. To use him as the foundation for one's doctrines is sandy indeed and to use terminology he used for those doctrines is troubling. I do not personally consider him to be part of the body of Christ and, as his views on the Lord's Day do not appear to have been especially influential in his time, I do not consider him to be relevant.

The early church declared that the Lord's Day was to be kept according to the NT, assembling together on that day for worship and study of the Word of God, but not following Origen's interpretation.

Didn't Archelaus of the early church keep the seventh day Sabbath and write that all Christians should?

Many Seventh-day Sabbatarian websites will have copied a quote by 'Archaleus' (the name incorrectly spelled) from his *Acts of the Disputation with Manes* from the 3rd century: 'Again, as to the assertion that the Sabbath has been abolished, we deny that He has abolished it plainly; for He was Himself also Lord of the Sabbath.'[30] Before we draw any conclusions, when Archelaus says that the Sabbath hasn't been plainly abolished, does he mean that it has been fulfilled in and by Christ and that we have our rest in Him or is he declaring that the seventh day Sabbath is to continue for Christians. Let's examine the context by reading the rest: 'And this, **the law's relation to the Sabbath, was like the servant who has charge of the bridegroom's chamber**, and who prepares the same with all carefulness, and does not suffer it to be disturbed or touched by any stranger, but **keeps it intact against the time of the bridegroom's arrival**; so that when he is come, the same may be used as it pleases himself, or as it is granted to those to use it whom he has bidden enter along with him. And the Lord Jesus Christ Himself gave His testimony to what we affirm, when He said with His heavenly voice, "Can ye make the children of the bride-chamber fast so long as the bridegroom is with them?" '.

[29] Schaff, P. (1902 5th ed.) *History of the Christian Church*, vol. 3, p.791

[30] Translated by S.D.F. Salmond (1886) *Ante-Nicene Fathers*, Vol. 6, XXXI, Edited by Alexander Roberts, James Donaldson, & A. Cleveland Coxe., Buffalo, NY: Christian Literature Publishing Co.

(emphasis added)
Archelaus then goes on to compare the Sabbath with circumcision, stating that circumcision has also been fulfilled in Christ: 'And again, He did not actually reject circumcision; but we should rather say that He received in Himself and in our stead the cause of circumcision, relieving us by what He Himself endured, and not permitting us to have to suffer any pain to no purpose.'[31]

But to conclude, I think it better that Archelaus himself be allowed to explicitly declare what the Sabbath means to him, as well as how to spell his name: '[T]he legislator [God] desires also that every individual amongst us should be devoted **unceasingly** to this kind of work, even as God Himself is; and he enjoins us consequently to rest **continuously** from secular things, and to engage in no worldly sort of work whatsoever; and **this is called our Sabbath.**'[32] (emphasis added)
For Archelaus, the Sabbath was a continuous rest from all worldliness, never ceasing to look to Christ, to walk in the Spirit, bringing every thought to Him.

Doesn't Revelation 14:12 teach that the saints keep the commandments of God?

Indeed it does, but the same John who was given and wrote the Revelation of Jesus Christ understood that we are under a New Covenant in Him, with new laws and a new priesthood (Hebrews 7:12). This is why he used the same word for 'commandments' in Revelation 14:12 in 1John 3:22-24 to declare to us what the commandments are in this better Covenant:

1John 3:22-24 And whatsoever we ask, we receive of him, because we keep his commandments, and do those things that are pleasing in his sight.
And this is his commandment, That we should believe on the name of his Son Jesus Christ, and love one another, as he gave us commandment.
And he that keepeth his commandments dwelleth in him, and he in him. And hereby we know that he abideth in us, by the Spirit which he hath given us.

[31] Ibid.
[32] Ibid.