

RESPONSE TO CHAPTER 18

Exodus 16:23-30 is the first mention of the word, “*Sabbath*,” in the Bible. It is also the first time since sin entered that any people of any nation are said to “rest” on a particular day of the week. This is at the very least 2500 years since Genesis 4 and is clearly a new revelation from God. Only the Israelites were given this special revelation. “**Tomorrow is the rest of the holy Sabbath to the LORD** (Yahweh)” was not given to, and does not include, any other race of people. Pharaoh had previously said in Exodus 5:2 “Who is the LORD [Yahweh, Jehovah], that I should obey his voice to let Israel go? I know not the LORD, neither will I let Israel go.” Not only was the Sabbath rest not known universally, but God as LORD, Yahweh, was not known universally. The Sabbath “**unto the LORD**” was now made known only to Jacob’s descendants by divine revelation!

- It is true that Pharaoh did not know the Lord, but it is an assumption to conclude that meant NO ONE ELSE, somehow, knew the Lord.
- For example, Gen. 4:26 says “then men began to call upon the name of the Lord (YHWH).” So, God was indeed somehow known universally to mankind.
- It seems the only ones who didn’t know God by the name YHWH were Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob (Exo. 6:3).
- Given that God’s name YHWH existed prior to being known by some, it is reasonable that the Sabbath also existed prior to being known by some.
- It is true the noun “sabbath” first appears in Exo. 16:23, but Exo. 20:11 places that same noun into the Genesis creation account.
- Exodus is a continuation of the Genesis story. The first chap. of Exo. picks up where the last chap. of Gen left off. Upon reaching Exo. 20:11, Moses comments again on the creation account, and adds that there God kept the Sabbath (noun).
- Arguing that since we don’t see anyone keeping the Sabbath for 2500 years until Exo. 16, therefore the Sabbath did not exist for 2500 years, is like arguing that since we don’t see anyone “praying” for 1000 years or so until Gen. 20:7, therefore the institution of prayer did not exist for 1000 or so years after creation.
- The critic is making an “argument from silence.” Lack of evidence is not evidence.”
- On the contrary, we learned that Mark 2:27, another brief commentary on creation like Exo. 20:11, says that the Sabbath was “made for man,” the man Adam and his descendants.

The Israelites did not know how to act properly on this very first divinely revealed Sabbath day and some immediately ignored it. “The LORD has given you [Israel] the Sabbath” means **only Israel**. When Israel had transgressed God’s commandments about gathering, baking and boiling the manna, God asked “How long do you refuse to keep my commandments and my laws?” Thus the Sabbath-rest commandment became not only the very first commandment of the Law officially given, but it also became the very first one transgressed! Transgression of it did not yet carry the death penalty because the Old Covenant had not been ratified.

- The Israelites did not know how to act in many cases, not just regarding the Sabbath, since they were enslaved for 400 years.
- If the Sabbath was the first commandment broken, what is this supposed to prove? Nothing. Actually, it seems the first Sabbath breaking in Exo. 16 involved much more than the sin of breaking it. According to verses 2-3, they were murmuring, lustful, and ungrateful.
- Evidently, more than one commandment was being broken. Verse 28 says “commandments” and “laws” in the plural forms.

Notice that the exact wording of the Sabbath commandments does not even command corporate worship! “Abide every man in his place, let no man go out of his place on the seventh day. So the people rested on the seventh day.” It was a day of total rest inside one’s own residence! Since the Jewish and SDA concept of corporate worship at the Temple, in the synagogues or in their churches are greatly evolved concepts from Exodus 16, it should be self-evident that the current concept of Sabbath worship cannot possibly reflect an eternal moral principle of the character of God.

- This critic is here committing the word-concept fallacy. Just because a word is missing does not mean the concept is missing. Just like the words “sabbath” or “prayer.” Or even the word “marriage” which is not found in the first few chapters of Genesis, yet we know God married Adam and Eve.
- The question is, how did THEY understand the commandment? Did THEY understand that it was a day of worship? Yes!
 1. By the very fact the Israelites would gather on that day for worship.
 2. By Lev. 23:3, which later says that it's a day of corporate worship.
 3. By Psalm 92, where an Israelite literally dedicates a Psalm to the Sabbath and in context speaks all about worshiping the creator, which the fourth commandment speaks about. Evidently, acknowledging God as creator leads to worshiping Him.
 4. By Jesus’ own act of corporate worship on the Sabbath, and He was an Israelite.
 5. By the act of the apostles, also Israelites, who had corporate worship on the Sabbath.
- Additionally, the very act of obeying the fourth commandment (and the rest of them for that matter) is itself an act of worship.
- It is true that God told them, in this instance in Exo. 16, not to go out their tents on the Sabbath. But this was a punishment for their disobedience, a temporary by-law for not doing as He told them, so they could learn their lesson. Like a child being punished temporarily. Later, we find them being told to leave their homes and gather for corporate worship on the Sabbath (Lev. 23:3). Evidently, staying home that one Sabbath was not an example of how to keep it on every other subsequent Sabbath.
- The critic argues that Exo. 16 says to stay home on the Sabbath. He then argues that the fourth commandment does not contain exact wording commanding corporate worship. It doesn't occur to this critic that the fourth commandment also does not contain

exact wording to stay home on the Sabbath! So if he argues that corporate worship is not commanded in the fourth commandment, I will argue that staying home is not commanded in the fourth commandment. The critic seems incoherent in his argumentations, and unaware of it. Pray for him.

From the creation account in Genesis to Exodus 16 the Sabbath day played absolutely no part in the Abrahamic Covenant and its confirmations in Genesis chapters 12, 13, 15, 17 and 22. The Sabbath was not mentioned in God's dealings with Israel's forefathers, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. Even though violations of the other nine commandments are evident and punished, Sabbath-breaking was never included in the lists of transgressions and punishments.

- Here the critic admits that concepts can exist without words! The other commandments somehow existed, at least in principle, and people were punished for breaking them, and yet, we do not have a "honor thy father and thy mother" or "thou shalt not covet" anywhere until Exodus 20!
- Moreover, the critic is again arguing from silence (another fallacy). The lack of mention does not prove non-existence unless we are told directly it didn't exist. Can the critic find just one verse that says the Sabbath did not exist? He cannot.
- It seems the critic has a double standard originating for his bias against the Sabbath commandment.

(quotes Exodus 19:3-6) Immediately before giving His Law in Exodus 20 onward, God made it clear in Exodus 19 that the Old Covenant, or Mosaic Covenant, in scripture is addressed **only** to the nation Israel! **No other nation was ever commanded to obey the terms of the Old Covenant (19:3-6)**. The identifying reference point is specifically "deliverance as a nation from Egypt." This theme is repeated often in Scripture. Only the nation Israel meets this physical description (19:4). The phrase "to the sons of Israel" is repeated for emphasis many times, at almost every address concerning the Mosaic Law, or Old Covenant.

- Now the critic contradicts himself. In the previous paragraphs, he admits the other nine commandments were being broken beforehand. It was "evident and punished." Now he says no other nation was commanded to obey them! If that's true, why were those other nations punished?
- Simply put, the Law was made with Israel because transgression of that Law was already taking place. The critic admitted this also above, when he acknowledged that the Sabbath was being broken as a commandment in Exodus 16. That was nearly TWO MONTHS before chapters 19-20 when the Ten Commandments were officially given.
- Galatians 3:19 says the Law was added "BECAUSE of TRANSGRESSION." Therefore, transgression of the Law existed prior to Exodus 19-20.
- Romans 5:20 says that the Law entered "that the offense might abound." Therefore, there was an offense against the Law before it was officially given in Exodus 20.
- Romans 3:20 says "by the law is the knowledge of sin." So the Law was given in Exodus 20 to make the people recognize they were in sin. This text also proves there was law, at

least in principle, from the very beginning, since sin existed from Adam (and even prior, when Lucifer coveted in heaven, a clear transgression of the tenth commandment).

- Therefore, yes, the covenant was made with the Israelites and the Law was given to them, but it was because they were His chosen people (Exo. 19:5-6). Nevertheless, that does not prove that God's Law did not exist prior to them.

Unlike the **unconditional** Abrahamic Covenant, **this Mosaic Covenant was conditional upon national Israel's obedience (19:5)**. Every commandment, every statute, every ordinance, and every Sabbath in this covenant was to end (as a covenant) if its conditions were not met by literal Israel (and they were not met). **This passage, Exodus 19:4-6, is extremely important!** Either Israel was to be saved under this covenant (and it was not), or by the New Covenant (which terms were met by Christ and is unconditional to true believers in national Israel).

- That the Old Covenant was conditional upon their obedience to the commandments does not prove the commandments would end, anymore than that the New Covenant was conditional to obedience would prove the New Covenant commandments would end if they did not obey. Existence of the commandments does not depend on anyone's obedience. They will exist, whether obeyed or not.
- Breaking the covenant hurts the people, not the laws contained in the covenant. For thousands of years the Israelites broke the covenant, and yet those commandments continued to exist. Even after the Old Covenant ended, elements of it continued to exist. For example, Ephesians 6:1-3 says to keep the 6th commandment, long after the Old Covenant ended.
- We'd need to have a discussion of what is the New Covenant. In brief, it is the same Ten Commandments that were on stone, now written in the heart (Jer. 31:31, 33, cf. 2 Cor. 3:3-6).

There are two different versions of the Ten Commandments in God's Word. While most Christians make the Exodus 20 version their standard, few place more importance on the second and final version found in Deuteronomy 5.

- There are two versions, because the Exodus version was given by God directly, whereas the Deuteronomic version was Moses repeating the Law 40 years later to remind the Israelites.
- But within the Deuteronomic version, Moses twice tells the people to look to the version God gave as the more exact version. For example, verse 12 says, "as the Lord your God commanded you." And verse 16 says the same thing.
- Therefore, the Exodus version is the standard, or "go-to" version. If you want to know exactly what God requires, go there first.

When the introductions in Exodus 20:1-2 and Deuteronomy 5:1-6 are compared, it is clear that the LORD (Yahweh) was giving His entire Law only to the nation Israel (Deut. 5:1) whom He had just delivered from Egyptian slavery (Ex. 20:2; Deut. 5:6). The Law is the same as the Mosaic, or Old, Covenant (Deut. 5:3).

- Once again, giving THEM the Law does not prove it did not exist prior, as I proved above.

When Deuteronomy 5:3 says “**The LORD did not make this covenant with our fathers,**” Moses is referring to Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and their descendants up until deliverance from Egypt.

- This text says the “covenant” was not made with their fathers. It does not say the commandments contained in that covenant did not exist prior. A covenant is only made when the rules first exist. In modern terms, its like buying a house. The bank has its rules before it decides to enter into a covenant, or agreement, using those rules, with the borrower.
- We have evidence laws existed prior to the covenant as I outlined above. In fact, even the patriarch Abraham, “obeyed my voice, and kept my charge, my commandments, my statutes, and my laws” (Gen. 26:5).

Again, there is no reason to conclude that the seventh-day Sabbath, a key part of the Mosaic Covenant, had previously been given to, or observed by, previous generations prior to Exodus 16.

- In this comment the critic indirectly admits the Sabbath commandment existed in Exodus 16 prior to the covenant that was made in Exodus 20.
- When it comes to previous generations, though, actually there are many reasons to conclude the seventh-day Sabbath existed prior, as I already outlined previously. See especially my comments on Mark 2:27.

In Deuteronomy Moses made it clear that the Ten Commandments which he was about to re-read were part of the whole Law, the entire Covenant, including statutes and judgments. These laws were only for national Israel and had not been given to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, their forefathers, “as a set of laws.”

- If “commandments, statutes, and judgments” were not given to Abraham, why does God say that Abraham kept, “my commandments, my statutes, and my laws” in Gen. 26:5?

(quotes Exodus 20-2-17). The Ten Commandments shown above are the shortened version which appears on most “official” displays. Except for numbers 7-9 which add one consonant to change “not” into “neither,” they are almost identical in Hebrew. However, the fourth (Sabbath) commandment changes “remember” (*zaakor*) into “observe” (*shaamor*).

The short version above is most likely closer to the original version given by God to Moses. Careful reading, comparison and internal evidence indicates that the extra words which are usually omitted are probably “explanatory” commentary by Moses.

- Here the critic admits that the Exodus version is the standard version. So, I am not sure why he is making a big deal about the non-standard version in Deuteronomy, unless its to specifically attack the fourth commandment.

Notice the italicized words. Either they are Moses' commentary on God's Words, or else Moses had taken unimaginable liberty in changing God's exact wording. The commandment also indirectly approves of **bond-slavery** which was accepted as part of the Old Covenant. This alone should define the Sabbath as a temporary cultic "ordinance."

- Regulating slavery was not an approval of slavery. God was working with the circumstances of their times. For example, the fifth commandment says they were to keep it, "that thy days may be long upon THE LAND which the LORD thy God giveth thee" (verse 12). And yet, when Paul quotes it to Gentile converts, he understood that the principles remained the same while the circumstances changed. Therefore, he writes it this way, "That it may be well with thee, and thou mayest live long on THE EARTH" (Eph. 6:3). He thus understood it as a universal ordinance, regardless of the fact that it was given to the Israelites under their particular circumstance.

Ex. 20:11 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.

Deut. 5:15 And remember that you were a servant in the land of Egypt, and that the LORD your God brought you out from there through a mighty hand and by a stretched out arm: therefore the LORD your God commanded you to keep the Sabbath day.

IMPORTANT! The two sets of explanations for the Sabbath are completely different in the two sets of Ten Commandments! Why? If the creation were such an important part of the Sabbath commandment, as SDAs claim, then why was it not included in the final version, the most important version, of the Ten Commandments found in Deuteronomy?

- Here the critic says that the Deuteronomic version is the "most important version," yet previously he admitted that the Exodus version is the original version.
- Moreover, if the Deuteronomic version applies the Sabbath to Israel because it mentioned their escape from Egypt, the Exodus version applies universally to all mankind because it mentions the creation of all things! Put together, we see that God intended for the Sabbath to apply to BOTH Israel AND all of man.

Unless Moses knew that God's intention of "remember" was "observe," then we have no explanation for the change in the basic commandment.

- The explanation is simple and the critic somewhat admitted it already. Moses simply repeats the commandments in his own version while offering brief commentary. Yet in Deuteronomy 5 he twice refers to the original version in Exodus 20 as the standard.

However, the every-day rest from Egyptian slavery in Deuteronomy 5:15 must be seen as an improvement on the reason for national Israel to observe the Sabbath. Thus, the “rest” from creation in Exodus 20:11 may not have been an actual part of God’s handwriting on the stones, otherwise Moses was guilty of an extremely serious change in God’s Ten Commandment Law!

- The minor changes in Moses’ version is not an example of intentionally omitting something, or of anything else. The Israelites were by this time 40 years in the wilderness, and most of the originals died. Moses is simply reminding them of their ancestral past.
- Since he still points to Exodus 20 as the original and standard version, therefore what we read in Exodus 20:11 is indeed original.
- The critic is trying to say that the “creation” portion in the commandment may not be original, while saying the Exodus version is original? What?

Almost 40 years had passed between Exodus 20 and Deuteronomy 5. Except for Moses, Joshua and Caleb, all older adults who had been present in Exodus 20 had died. The new generation was about to enter and conquer Canaan with almost the same numerical strength in which the previous generation had refused.

- This time frame of 40 years explains why Moses had to repeat the Law in their hearing.

Deuteronomy has much more importance than Exodus in Judaism. In fact, it is the most important book in all of the Bible! Therefore, its list of Ten Commandments should be more important than the list in Exodus. And, for this reason, the difference between the Sabbath commandment of Exodus 20 and Deuteronomy 5 is important.

- I addressed this already, and showed how the critic is being self-contradictory. His logic is inconsistent and makes no sense whatsoever.