

The Sabbath Watchman

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Origin of the *Seventh Day*

Part 2

WORLD IN BRIEF

- BENIN
- GHANA
- CONGO
- TANZANIA

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Introduction

“The seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord your God.” Exodus 20:10.

When God created the earth and placed human beings upon it, He divided time into seven periods. Six He gave to us for our own use, to employ in secular business; one He reserved for Himself. Having rested on the seventh day, He blessed and sanctified it. Henceforth, the seventh day was to be regarded as the Lord’s rest day and to be sacredly observed as the memorial of His creative work. It was not the first, second, third, fourth, fifth, or sixth day that was sanctified, or set apart to a holy use; neither was it a seventh part of time and no day in particular; but it was the seventh day, the day upon which God had rested....

When the law was given at Sinai, the Sabbath was placed in the midst of moral precepts, in the very bosom of the Decalogue. But the Sabbath institution was not then made known for the first time. The fourth commandment places its origin at Creation. The Creator’s rest day was hallowed by Adam in holy Eden and by the people of God throughout the patriarchal ages. During Israel’s long bondage in Egypt, under taskmasters that knew not God, they could not keep the Sabbath; therefore the Lord brought them out where they could remember His holy day....

A threefold miracle was wrought in honor of the Sabbath, even before the law was given on Sinai. A double quantity of manna fell on the sixth day, none upon the Sabbath, and the portion needed for the Sabbath was preserved sweet and pure, when if any were kept over at any other time, it became unfit for food. Here is conclusive evidence that the Sabbath was instituted at Creation, when the foundations of the earth were laid, when the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy. And its sacredness remains unchanged, and will so remain even to the close of time. From the Creation, every precept of the divine law has been obligatory on mankind and has been observed by those who fear the Lord. The doctrine that God’s law has been abolished is one of Satan’s devices to compass the ruin of the race....

The holy oracles were especially committed to the Jews; not to be an Israelite was not to belong to the favored people of God.... Now the prophet declares that the stranger who will love and obey God shall enjoy the privileges that have belonged exclusively to the chosen people.—*Signs of the Times*, February 28, 1884.

Ellen G. White.

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Beacon of hope, faith, and truth in a confused world.

We believe:

- The all-wise, loving God created all things in the universe by His Son, Jesus Christ; He is its Owner and Sustainer.
- He met the challenge to His loving leadership and authority by reconciling the world to Himself through the life, death, and resurrection of His Son, the Word made flesh.
- The Holy Spirit, Jesus’ representative on earth, convicts of sin, guides into truth, and, when abiding in man, overcomes all unrighteousness.
- The Bible is the record of God’s dealings with mankind and the standard of all doctrine; the Ten Commandments are the transcript of His character and the foundation of all enduring reform.
- His people, in harmony with God’s Word and under the direction of the Holy Spirit, call all men everywhere to be reconciled to God through faith in Jesus.
- Bible prophecy reveals that earth’s history will soon close with the visible return of Jesus Christ as King to claim all who have accepted Him as the world’s only Redeemer and their Lord.

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Origin of the *Seventh Day* Part 2

By Antonino Di Franca

The Lord himself does not need breaks or rest. He did not rest at the end of each day either during or in the middle of the week, but only at the end of the six creative days. Why did He rest then if He had no need? The only plausible answer is that He did it “for man.” It is biblically attested that “the Sabbath was made for man” (Mark 2:27); God’s rest on the seventh day therefore was “for man”, for our benefit, for our example, as a number of scholars recognize.

“It is the general voice of Scripture that God finished the whole of the creation in six days, and rested the seventh! Giving us an example that we might labor six days, and rest the seventh from all manual exercises.” (Adam Clarke, *The Holy Bible Containing the Old and New Testaments... with a Commentary and Critical Notes*, Vol. 1 – Genesis to Deuteronomy, New York, G. Lane and P. P. Sanford, 1843, p. 39, comments on Genesis 2:2).

“If the first page of the Book of Genesis presents God’s ‘work’ as an example for man, the same is true of God’s ‘rest.’”: “On the seventh day God finished his work which He had done” (Genesis 2:2)” (John Paul II, *Apostolic Letter Dies Domini: Guide to Keeping Sunday Holy*, Chicago, Liturgy Training Publications, 1998, p. 10).

“Genesis 2 states that at the end of Creation Week, God stopped His physical labors, not because He was tired, but because He was setting an example for us.” (Don Roy Hemingway, *The Church of Jerusalem and the Christian Nation Preaching the Word of God*, 2018).

“His rest – writes another author – was a matter of example, for, as already noted, God was not weary. Yet resting was a necessary part in the making of the Sabbath. As God’s rest was an example for man to follow, it was necessary that He rest as long as He expected man to rest; that is, not merely part of the day, but the whole day. Hence the statement is made that God rested not merely on or in the seventh day, but that He rested the seventh day. Ex. 20: 11.” (M. L. Andreasen, *The Sabbath. Which Day and Why?* Review And Herald Publishing Association, Takoma Park, Washington, D.C., 1942, p. 17; 1995 edition, pp. 43-44).

“God made his rest the foundation and model of the rest of man and other creatures on the seventh day.”

“Dieu fit de son repos le fondement et le modèle du repos de l’homme et des autres créatures au septième jour” (*La Sainte Bible*, Texte de la Vulgate, Traduction Française en Regard avec Commentaires, Paris, P. Lethielleux, Libraire-Éditeur, 1895, p. 29, comment on Genesis 2:3).

“God rested, i.e. ceased His work at the end of the Creation week because His work was done, not because He was tired ...There is evidence that God intended not only to celebrate, but also to provide an example for human beings ...Thus far, we have found that God’s rest served as an example for human Sabbath observance.” (Roy Gane, “*Sabbath and the New Covenant*,” in *Journal of the Adventist Theological Society*, 10/1-2 (1999), pp. 312-313).

“It seems clear, therefore, that the divine origin and institution of the Sabbath took place at the beginning of human history. At that time God not only provided a divine example for keeping the seventh day as a day of rest, but also blessed and set apart the seventh day for the use and benefit of man” (G. H. Waterman, “*Sabbath*,” *The Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible*, Grand Rapids, Mich., 1975, Vol. V, p. 183).

“In Genesis 2:1-2 God mandates the Sabbath as a day of rest for all mankind by his own example and his sanctifying the Sabbath Day... thousand years later God would write with His own hand the commandment to ‘remember the Sabbath Day by keeping it holy’ (Ex. 20:8)” (Daniel A. Betters, *The Perpetual Significance of the Lord’s Day*. A Thesis Project, Charlotte, North Carolina, Reformed Theological Seminary, 2008, p. 1).

“At the end of the account of the creation of the world with which the book of Genesis begins, we read: On the seventh day God finished his work which he had made (or done); and he rested (Heb. *šābat*) on the seventh day from all his work which he had made (Gen. 2:2). The story of the Old Testament sabbath therefore begins with the sabbath or repose of God after his work of creation...

So what Gen. 2:2.f. implies, when read in the light of this commentary supplied by Exodus, is that at the creation God commanded man to imitate his Maker by ‘doing work’ for six days- and ‘resting’ on the seventh. Since man had been ‘made in the image of God’ (Gen. 1:2.6f.), imitation of his Maker was no inappropriate vocation.” (Roger T. Beckwith and Wilfrid Stott, *This is the Day*, London, Marshal, Morgan and Scott, 1978, pp. 2-3).

“But did this example begin to operate thousands of years after Creation, or did God intend for human beings to follow His example from the beginning? Jesus succinctly answered the question by declaring that “the sabbath was made for humankind . . .” (Mk 2:27).” (Roy Gane, “*Sabbath and the New Covenant*,” in *Journal of the Adventist Theological Society*, 10/1-2 (1999), pp. 312-313).

The verb *šābat* in the creation account

In the creative story the name which denote God’s day of rest is “seventh day” and in only two verses (Genesis 2:2-3) is used three times. In these verses the name “Sabbath” is lacking and for some people this is an indication that the seventh day began at creation, while Sabbath in Israel time.

This theory distinguish between “Seventh day” and “Sabbath” and separate them in two different days. It claims that the first had its origin in Eden and now “cannot be known by any people or persons”, the second in the time of Israel. The seventh is the day that God originally blessed and sanctified, while the Sabbath – according to this view – the day that God imposed to Israel and only to them. Is it so? Does the Scripture make such distinction? The impression that immediately arises is that this is a device to eliminate the Sabbath as divine institution.

“Seventh day” is the unequivocal definition to indicate the day of God’s rest mentioned in the creative story, but nothing suggests that “Seventh day” and “Sabbath” are different and separate days and that the Sabbath originated later. The absence of the term “Sabbath” in these verses of Genesis 2:1-3 does not makes it different from the “seventh day” nor is it a proof that it arose later. The immediate proof that there is no difference gives Moses, who wrote all, the creative account as the account of the manna, the enunciation of the Decalogue and other texts, and uses both terms interchangeably as equivalent. One of this says, “The seventh day is a Sabbath to the LORD your God” (Exodus 20:10), another in the same

line confirms, “The seventh day is a Sabbath of solemn rest” (Exodus 31: 15). The “seventh day” is therefore equivalent to the “Sabbath,” and other texts reports like, Exodus 16:26, 29 and 20: 11. The silence of a single text of Genesis cannot be a conclusive proof because five texts prove the equivalence of the two terms and these are exactly the texts who put the Sabbath in connection with Israel.

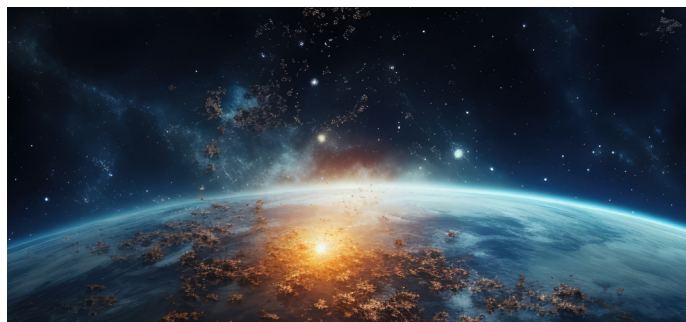
That such claim is unwarranted is evident also from another consideration. What does not appear in the English language and in others Bible translations, is almost present in the original. In the Hebrew creation account to indicate God’s action during the seventh day, the Bible uses properly the verb *šābat*, which means “rested” (Genesis 2:3). We find it in the sentence, “because on it God rested” [in Hebrew *šābat*]. If we consider that in Hebrew “to rest” and “Shabbat” are not two different words as in English or other modern languages. The verb “to rest”, “to cease”, “to desist” in Hebrew is *šābat* and the noun of the seventh day, Sabbath, is Shabbat, and both terms come exactly from the same root *šbt*. To assert therefore that Genesis 2:1-3 does not mentions the concept of Sabbath and that it only appears at the Mosaic time, is a very weak and questionable argument.

Some authors have noted the presence of the verb *šābat* in Genesis 2:3 and they focus it clearly in their considerations.

“Note that the noun “Sabbath” in Ex. 20 corresponds to the verb “rested” in Gen 2. Here the parallel is thematic in nature... *The web of words that binds Gen 2:1-3 to Ex. 20:8-11 is not slavish, but it is very tightly woven.*” (Frank W. Hardy, *The Sabbath in Genesis 2:1-3*, 2006, pp. 4, 6).

Showing the Sabbatical relation existing between Genesis 2:1-3 and Exodus 20:8-11, the some author adds,

“There are a number of verbal parallels between Gen 2:1-3 and Ex. 20:8-11. These include 15 examples from Gen 2 where words or phrases occur that are cognate with something in the other passage, and 14 from Ex. 20. The word translated “do” in Gen 2:2, 2; Ex. 20:9,



10 (cāšā) is translated “make” in Ex. 20:11. Similarly, the verbs translated “rest” in Gen 2:2, 2 (wayyishbōt, šābat) are built on the same root as the noun “Sabbath” in Ex. 20:8, 9, 11 (šābbat). These are verbal parallels.” (Frank W. Hardy, *The Sabbath in Genesis 2:1-3*, 2006, p. 1).

Like him, other two writers affirm:

“In Genesis 2:2-3 there is a threefold reference to the ‘seventh day’ but no mention is made of the Sabbath. To some, this absence indicate that the Sabbath as an institution originated not at creation but later at the time of Moses. It is true that the name ‘Sabbath’ does not occur in the passage, but the cognate verbal form šābat (to cease, to stop, to rest) is used and the latter, as noted by U. Cassuto, «contain an allusion to the name ‘the Sabbath day’»”. (Samuele Bacchiocchi, *Divine Rest for human Restlessness*, Rome, The Pontifical Gregorian University Press, 1980, p. 34, parentheses and quotation marks in the text).

Considering the presence of the verb šābat in Hebrew is sufficiently clear that there is no diversity between “seventh day” and Sabbath and that there are god reasons to believe that since creation the name of the day of rest was Sabbath. Underlining this consonant identity, an Italian Bible note on Genesis 2:3 reports.

“The seventh day, called Sabbath, is connected to the idea of rest (see Exodus 20; 8-11). The word Sabbath and the verb to rest have the same consonants in Hebrew.” (*Parola del Signore*. La Bibbia in lingua corrente, Torino, LDC, ABU, 1985, note on Genesis 2:3).

In similar way, commenting Genesis 2:2, other authors observe.

“Genesis 2:2, 3 in which God rests from creation ... is the basis for the Sabbath... The word translated as «rest» in English, is actually the conjugated word from which we get the English word Sabbath, which actually means to «cease doing»”. (Curiousdannii, in *Biblical Hermeneutics Beta*).

“The Hebrew word shabbat and shabbata (from which the English sabbath is translated) is applied in its verb form, shabath, in Genesis chapter 2:

“And on the seventh day God ended his work which he had made; and he shabath on the sh’biy... and God blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it...” Genesis 2:2, 3.

Since Hebrew does not contain any vowels in the original consonantal roots, all these words are exactly the same: s-b-t or shin-bettav triad” (Gary Hullquist, *Sabbath Diagnosis*, Brushton, New York, Teach Service, Inc., 2004, p. 10, emphasis and brackets in the original).

Other reflection on the presence of the verb šābat in Genesis 2:3 is the following,

“The noun תבש is absent from Gen 2:1-3, but the verb תבש in vss. 2-3 is clearly cognate to it. The noun תבש is also absent in Exod 23:12 and 3 1: 17,’ yet few interpreters would argue that “the seventh day” in these texts refers to anything other than the weekly Sabbath. There is no reason why the case should be any different with the interpretation of Gen 2: 1-3” (Ross Cole, *The Sabbath and Genesis 2:1-3*, Avondale College ResearchOnline@Avondale 2003, pp. 6-7).

After the Bible, even the Jewish historian Josephus Flavius (ca. 37-100 A. D.) testifies that the origin of the Sabbath observance dates back to creation and that since then the seventh day was not lost because the Jews continue without interruption in the same practice.

“... Moses says, that in just six days the world and all that is therein was made; and that the seventh day was a rest, and a release from the labour of such operations; whence it is that we celebrate a rest from our labours on that day, and call it the Sabbath, which word denotes rest in the Hebrew tongue.” (Josephus, *Antiquities of the Jews*, Book 1, Ch. 1, section 1; Works translated by William Whinston, emphasis in the original).

Being the seventh day of the creative story identical with the Sabbath, among nations and individuals there is no problem or uncertainty for its real knowledge or identification. “Sabbath” is the term used tenth of times in the Bible to denote the day of rest, the blessed and holy day (Exodus 16:23, 29; Exodus 20:8-11; Leviticus 23:5...), and in various languages, even after centuries and millennia, today we can recognize it because its variations in the name are very limited. With certainty, we can assert therefore that since the beginning until now if there is a day of secure identification this is exactly the Sabbath, the seventh day that the Lord blessed at the beginning!

Edenic promise of rest

Taking up the thread of the discourse, we note that in Genesis 2:1-3 the section reports about God’s rest and his blessing of the seventh day, but gives no prescription or commandment. Sabbath opponents have noted it and immediately used as argument against the Edenic origin of the Sabbath and against its general character for all humanity. One of them, insisting on this aspect, writes:

“In the chapter now before us, there is no command given to man whatever; but simply the record that, ‘God rested on the seventh day.’ ... There is no command-

ment given to man here. We are simply told that God enjoyed his rest, because all was done, so far as the mere creation was concerned. There was nothing more to be done, and, therefore, the One who had, during six days, been working, ceased to work, and enjoyed his rest. All was complete; all was very good; all was just as he himself had made it; and he rested in it. "The morning stars sang together; and all the sons of God shouted for joy." (Charles Henry Mackintosh, *Notes on the Book of Genesis*, 1878, comments on Genesis chap. 2, w. p.).

Why so much emphasis on "command"? Is command the only way to communicate the will of God? Does the biblical message support the conclusion that because there is no command the Lord did not give the Sabbath to Adam or it is not a blessing for all? As in previous objections, here also is evident the intention to undermine the validity of the Sabbath for Christians, but the biblical message does not support such unwarranted conclusion. Let us consider the following.

Not always are needed commands and orders to transmit the will of God! In some cases, the Lord has used other ways to communicate His design. Everyone knows that the Lord has used also explanations, examples, parables, symbols, allegories. In some cases even promises (Genesis 3:15; 12:2-3, 7; 15:1), because in them the will of God can be equally included. In this sense, the Scripture, without a command, mentions a promise, "the promise of entering his rest" (Hebrew 4:1 ESV, emphasis added). Such promise existed already since creation, when "God rested on the seventh day from all his works." (Hebrew 4:4; cf 4:1, 3). Being so, there can be only one conclusion: if promise to enter God's rest existed since Adam, since then should exist Sabbath keeping.

Practically in chapter 4: 1, the author of the Hebrews' letter mentions the existence of the promise to enter in God's rest and in 4: 4 adds that the origin of the promise goes back to the time when the seventh day was established. If in that days there was already the promise to enter God's rest, there should be the weekly Sabbath

observance, therefore it goes back in the same days of Adam, not in the time of Israel.

It is certain that it was God's intention to create man according to his "image" and "likeness" and it is equally certain that "God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him" (Genesis 1:27; cf. 9:6). Why, created him according to His likeness? Because it was the wish of God that man should be able to understand and imitates his Creator. What does this imply in our present case? Imply that if he had to imitate Him, he had to follow the pattern that the Creator was giving him and rest on the Sabbath as his Creator.

It is equally certain that the Lord is not tired (Isaiah 40:28; Psalm 147:8) and for Himself does not need any rest. If He does not need any rest, the seventh day or Sabbath that he established at creation cannot be for Him but exclusively for man. Because this was the exactly testimony of the Lord when He said, "the Sabbath was made for man" (Mark 2:27, emphasis supplied). Connecting Jesus sentence with the teaching of Hebrew 4:1-4 there can be no other conclusion; he made the Sabbath for the benefit of man, beginning from Adam, as ancestor of humanity, and following with patriarchs, Israel and every one of us.

The Lord created the woman in order to be a fit help for Adam (Genesis 2:18) and established the marriage, so that there was the possibility to "multiply and fill the earth" (1:28). How he did to create woman is known and is evident that as "he made" the woman, without waiting long time, He "brought her to the man" (2:22). Would have made sense to create the woman that Adam needed even in paradise and then establish marriage only centuries later? In the same way, has it sense that God rested at creation but would give seventh day rest only to Israel after more than twentyfour centuries?

Moreover, if Adam needed rest in Eden, when he was innocent and holy, how much necessary was to him the physical and spiritual rest of the weekly Sabbath after he fell into sin! His disobedience changed much in him, he became weak and vulnerable and his life and work hard and wearisome (Genesis 3:17-19). In his fallen condition, he needed rest and relief more than before! To establish rest and do not give to man in such a condition, it does not reflect the dealing of the Lord who did everything "very good" (Genesis 1:31). All these biblical considerations guide to one conclusion that the Lord established the Sabbath at creation and in that time he entrusted it to man.

Here are a number of reflections that confirm what already said on the Edenic origin of the Sabbath:



“The Sabbath in Gen 2 is a gift to mankind, as is marriage.” (Frank W. Hardy, *The Sabbath in Genesis 2:1-3*, p. 1).

“Neither antinomianism nor dispensationalism may remove the obligation of the Christian today to observe the creation ordinance of the Sabbath. The absence of any explicit command concerning Sabbath observance prior to Moses does not relegate the Sabbath principle to temporary legislation of the law epoch. The creation-character of God’s Sabbath-blessing must be remembered. From the very beginning, God set a distinctive blessing on the Sabbath . . . God blessed man through the Sabbath by delivering him from slavery to work.” (O. Palmer Robertson, *The Christ of the Covenants*, Phillipsburg, NJ, Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Co., 1980, pp. 68-69 as quoted in Roy Gane, *Sabbath and the New Covenant*).

“Secular sources may be silent on this topic, but Scripture is unambiguous about the origin of the Sabbath. It presents the seventh-day Sabbath as a lasting gift of God from Creation to all mankind. Its beginning is linked to the climax of Creation week (see Gen. 2:1-3; Ex. 20:11; 31:17).” (Gerhard Hasel, “*God’s perpetual gift to man*,” in *Ministry*, September 1982).

“If the Sabbath was made for man, it must have been because man needed it; not, certainly, as a mere temporary provision for special purposes, but as a permanent blessing. Who shall take from us one of God’s first gifts to His creatures—a gift bestowed with a special regard to their physical and spiritual wants, and consecrated by His own example?” (James Hastings, *The Great Texts of the Bible: St Mark*, New York, Charles Scribners Sons, 1910).

All this confirms that the seventh day Sabbath is a creation institution as the following authors also recognize:

“... God forthwith appointed the day to be observed in some fashion by man-kind, whom he had just created... So what Gen. 2.: 2.f. implies, when read in the light of this commentary supplied by Exodus, is that at the creation God commanded man to imitate his Maker

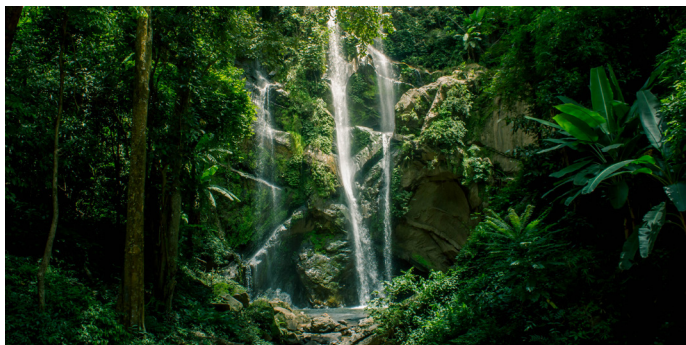
by ‘doing work’ for six days and ‘resting’ on the seventh. Since man had been ‘made in the image of God’ (Gen. 1: 2.6f.), imitation of his Maker was no inappropriate vocation. Man’s work was to rule the animal creation and tend the vegetable creation (Gen. 1: 2.6, 2.8; 2: 15). And after his work, there followed rest”. (Roger T. Beckwith, Wilfrid Stott, *This is the Day. The Biblical Doctrine of the Christian Sunday in its Jewish and Early Church Setting*, London, Marshal, Morgan and Scott, 1978, pp. 2-3).

“Some people, however, teach that sabbath-keeping started only at the time of Moses and the giving of the law. They think that although God provided the model of a sabbath day at creation, the people were not told to observe it. This viewpoint is based on the absence of any mention of the sabbath between Genesis 2 and Exodus 16, but it does not explain the powerful statement of Genesis 2 that God very specifically blessed the seventh day and sanctified (or hallowed) it. These words can only refer to something truly momentous that God did for the obedience and benefit of the human race, and communicated to Adam and Eve, because God himself lives above time and days. The words mean that God gave to the human race a distinctive, special place to one day out of every seven, which was to be elevated above all other days, and reserved for spiritual pursuits.” (Peter Masters, “*Remember the Lord’s Day (1)*,” in *Herald of Grace*, October 2015).

Weekly and spiritual rest are strictly connected

A research on the term “rest”, frequently used in the Old Testament, shows that this word is used in a very broad sense and can have different meaning to be established from case to case. As first we note the word “rest” or the verb “to rest” in relation to the day of rest established since Eden (Genesis 2:3; Exodus 16:23; 20:11; 31:15; 35:2).

As next “rest” may denote “peace” (Joshua 1:15; 22:4; 1 King 8:56; 2 Chronicles 23:25) or “place of peace” (Deuteronomy 12:9; 28:65; Joshua 1:13, 1 Chronicles 22:9; 23:25), as well rest, truce from enemy’s attacks (Deuteronomy 12:10; 25:19; Joshua 11:23; 21:44; 23:1; Judges 3:11, 30, 31; 2 Samuel 7:1...). In some verses “rest” has the meaning of tranquillity and safety (Exodus 33:14; Isaiah 14:3; Lamentation 5:5), residence place for the ark (1 Chronicles 6:31) and “resting place” for God and the ark (1 Chronicles 28:2; 2 Chronicles 6:41; Psalm 132:8, 14; Isaiah



66:1). In some occurrences, it even appears as part of the future inheritance (Isaiah 32:18; Jeremiah 30:10).

In a spiritual meaning “rest” may indicate also peace in time of adversity (Psalm 94:13), blessing (Jeremiah 31:2) and communion with God (Psalm 116:7; Isaiah 14:3; Jeremiah 6:16). Worth to remember is that in the term “rest”, as used in a text of the Psalms, not only denotes the “rest of God” but also the wish that people may “enter” in it; nevertheless, Israel failed and the Lord had to say, “They shall not enter my rest.” (Psalm 95:11).

The rest of God is like an abundant source that forms several streams and physical rest did not exclude the other. So in our experience the weekly Sabbath with physical rest does not exclude the spiritual, because they integrate and complement each other. Israel received and to a certain extent practiced the weekly rest of the seventh day (Exodus 16:30; 20: 8-11), and this was intended to help them to know better the Lord and experience sanctification (19:8; 23:13; Deut. 5:12), so that they could be prepared to enter in God’s spiritual rest. Therefore, among others, the Lord had asked them to observe the seventh day, because He wanted that through weekly communion with Him during every seventh day they could enter into His spiritual rest and so be in harmony and peace with Him. Nevertheless, the generation of the exodus failed in keeping the seventh day Sabbath as they should (Ezekiel 20:12-13, 16, 20-21, 24) and, as consequence, did not reach the experience of spiritual rest (Psalm 95:11).

This shows that the original rest, instituted when the Lord blessed the seventh day, was not a narrow, limited institution. The different kind of rest, peace and quietness should have been like the arteries of the body that receive blood from the heart and transport to the various organs. It was a very big and wonderful blessing that the Lord provided for the people and all kind of rest were included in the “rest of God”, being all part of it. Therefore, the promise of His rest and the invitation to enter in it by faith was for them as it is for us (Hebrew 4:1-2).

The seventh day and the week

The biblical account connecting the seventh day Sabbath with creation, attests the link existing between Sabbath and week, both originating at the beginning. This connection presupposes that week and Sabbath should run parallel in the course of the centuries since the patriarchal time and for later ages. Nevertheless, here we face a problem, the lack of information or testimonies on the Sabbath observance during this period. How to explain

it? There are two answers; one takes in consideration the sources and their information, and the other that evaluates the existence of the week.

According to the first, one reason is in the limited information that we have in the extant sources. Until now, within the limits of our knowledge, the only two books that we have of that period are the books of Genesis and of Job. These are works, which, although written in later time, illustrate the previous period of patriarchal history. Notwithstanding the first book has an extension of 50 chapters and the second of 42, they do not give specific information on Sabbath observance. The obvious question, therefore is, why? Did the patriarchs observe the Sabbath and the author of the two books has not reported it, or did they not observe it and, as consequence, there is no reference?

With god reason, we believe in the first possibility. Genesis is a summary that extends from Adam to Moses for a period of almost twenty-five centuries and it is practically impossible to pretend to have a complete report in such comparatively short book. The book of Job concentrates properly on the experience of this patriarch, not so much in reporting the law and customs of that old time. We know that the two books are very precious and irreplaceable documents but at the same time have to admit that they are not exhaustive and do not pretend to give a complete picture of the life and institutions of the patriarchs’ time. The consequence is that for such long period of almost 25 centuries we have no direct information. However, just for this reason, because there is no evidence in favor or contrary, nobody has the authorization to reach a one-sided negative conclusion. Lack of information is not properly evidence of non-observance. For this reason, it is opportune to consider other aspects that can throw light on the subject.

The second answer takes in consideration the practice of time division in seven days and the existence of the week during the patriarchal time. The Bible attests time division of seven days already in Genesis 7:4, 10; 8:10, 12; 31:23; 50:10, in the time of flood and later. The same results also just before the delivery of the Law, in the first chapters of Exodus 7:25; 12:15, 19; 13:6-7. In Genesis 29: 27, 28 we find two times properly the term “week”, Hebrew *ševu’ah*. With the gift of manna for good forty years, the week was regulated by two particular facts. While on the sixth day Israelites had to collect manna twice as much and prepare it for next day (Exodus 16:5,22-26,29), on the Sabbath manna did not fall, they did not have to go to collect and prepare it and they spent the seventh day as day of rest consecrated to the Lord (Exodus 16:26, 27, 29, 30).

In the experience of manna's collection is interesting to note that the leaders not explained in detail the division of time into weeks so that all could know which the sixth day was during which they had to collect double and could well know the seventh day that they had to observe. If they had not known the week, they had also not known the beginning and end of the week, had no idea about sixth or seventh day. If they had never made distinction of days it would have been necessary a detailed explanation to educate first their mind and distinguish them. The fact that they do not receive so many explanations about the division of time into weeks is a useful element that suggests they already knew the week and practised it. Not only they, as already mentioned, the patriarchs knew already time division in weeks and this should make us reflect on the possibility that they also knew the Sabbath.

As the following quotations show, many authors recognize it openly for various reasons.

"The Genesis narratives are silent on whether the patriarchs celebrated the gift of the Sabbath. Since YHWH characterized Abraham as model of the righteousness called for by the Torah (Gen 26:2-5; Deuteronomy 6:24-25) it seems more likely that he observed the seventh day Sabbath than that he did not" (Daniel I. Block, *The Triumph of Grace: Literary and Theological Studies in Deuteronomy and Deuteronomistic Themes*, Eugene, Oregon, Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2017, p. 208).

"Moses' statement, "Tomorrow is a day of total rest, a holy Sabbath to YHWH," and the following explanations (vv. 23-29) apparently does not announce a new institution. Rather Moses here began to explain generally how the divine gift of manna fits into an existing convention and specifically why people could gather double their daily quota of manna on the sixth day (v. 29). Indeed Moses speaks of the Sabbath as having been instituted in the past" (Block, *Ibid.*)

"Like the Manna itself, the Sabbath was a divine gift ... to be observed with gratitude, rather than a burdensome constraint" (Block, *Ibid.*).

"The division of time into seven-day periods is very old. The "seven days" figure appears in the account of creation (Gen 2: 1-3 and returns in that of the flood (7: 4, 10; 8: 10, 12). At the time of Laban and Jacob, among the Syrians of Mesopotamia, is the talk about seven-day wedding parties (29: 27-28... Even funerals were celebrated for seven days (Genesis 50:10; 1 Samuel 31:13)." (René Pache, *Il nuovo dizionario della Bibbia*, Napoli, Edizioni Centro Biblico, 1981, p. 818).

"... the text, Gem. chap. II. ver. 2. as you well note, is so clear for the ancient institution of the Sabbath, and

so fully vindicated by D. Rivet from the exceptions of Gomarus; that I see no reason in the earth why any man should make doubt thereof; especially considering withal, that the very Gentiles, both civil and barbarous, both ancient and of later days, as it were by a universal kind of tradition, retained the distinction of the seven days of the week..." (*The Whole Works of the Most Rev. James Ussher*, vol. XII, Dublin, Hodges, Smith, and Co., 1864, p. 577).

"... it would be very unsafe to infer from the assertion that the Patriarchs did not keep the Sabbath, that therefore they had no day of religious worship. In fact it seems scarcely possible that the division and numbering of the days by seven could have been kept up, as we know it was (Gen 8:10, 12; 29:27), before the giving of the Law, without some religious observance connected with it." (James Beaven, *An Account of the Life and Writings of S. Irenaeus, Bishop of Lyons and Martyr*, London, J. G. F. & J. Rivington, 1841, p. 213. Online edition, p. 185).

It is admitted "the existence of seven day time-periods in the Ancient Near East long before Israel history. In fact there are verses in Genesis and Exodus before the Sinai event that demonstrate such periods; Genesis 7:4, 10; 8: 10, 12; 29: 27,28; 31: 23; 50:1 0; Exodus 7:25; 12:15, 19; 13:6." (Harold H. P. Dressler, "The Sabbath in the Old Testament," in D. A. Carson, *From Sabbath to Lord's Day: A Biblical, Historical, and theological investigation*, Eugene, Oregon, Wipf and Stock Publishers, 1999, p. 37, fn. 31).

"The cycle of seven days ending with the Sabbath. The week, unlike the day and the year, does not exist as a cycle in nature, but was divinely designated, first by God resting on and sanctifying the Sabbath at the close of Creation (Gen 2:1-3), then by the miracle of the manna (Ex 16:15-27), and finally by the 4th commandment on the tables of stone given at Sinai (ch. 20:8-11) ... The week was known by the patriarchs (see Gen 29: 27, 28; cf. chs. 7:10; 8:10, 12), although it may have



been largely forgotten during the period of enslavement in Egypt.” (Siegfried H. Horn, *SDA Bible Dictionary*, Washington, D.C., Review and Herald, 1960, p. 1140, art. “Week”).

“But unlike Exodus, Genesis is not a legal document featuring laws and detailed instructions concerning them. Genesis deals with origins. Since specific mention is not made of any other commandment, the silence regarding the Sabbath precept is not exceptional. Yet there is considerable evidence that the weekly observance of God’s creation Sabbath influenced the life of man at seven day intervals well before the time of Moses.

“For example, the frequent use of the seven-day week (Hebrew shebah) in early portions of the Scriptures implies the existence of the Sabbath as well. The following periods of seven days are mentioned:

- four times in the account of the Flood (Gen. 7:4, 10; 8:10, 12)
- as the duration of Jacob’s nuptial festivities (Gen. 29:27)
- for the duration of mourning at his death (Gen. 50:10), and
- Job’s friends’ period of condolence (Job 2:13).” (Gary Hullquist, *Sabbath Diagnosis: A Diagnostic History and Physical Examination of the Biblical Day of Rest*, Teach Service, Inc., Brushton, New York, 2004, p. 50).

“Days exist because that’s how long it takes the earth to rotate. Months exist because that’s how long it takes the moon to wax and wane. Years exist because that’s how long it takes for the earth to revolve around the sun. But why do weeks exist? They do not correspond to any phenomenon in nature. The answer is: the week exists because of Genesis 2:2, “And on the seventh day God finished his work that he had done, and he rested on the seventh day from all his work that he had done.” The Encyclopedia Britannica (1911, article on “Week”) says, “Those who reject the Mosaic recital will be at a loss, as . . . to assign it [the week] to an origin having much semblance of probability.” In other words, other attempts to explain why we reckon time in weeks are not compelling. The week goes back to the story of creation in the Bible. God worked six days and rested on the seventh. That set the pattern of the week” (John Piper, *Is There a “Lord’s Day”?* 2005).

“God rested, that is to say, he ceased to create; and he declares holy the day of rest, that the man might also spend it in holy rest, after working six days. It has been questioned whether the institution of the Sabbath should be brought back to this passage of Genesis, because, it is said, no mention is made of it before Moses. This

doubt, however, is unfounded. Many things established by ancient usages and customs have been preserved and maintained in the Mosaic Law, and it must be admitted that the sanctification of the Sabbath is one of those ancient usages. In effect the precept of the Sabbath, Exodus 20:8, 11 is formulated in terms that already presuppose its existence: “Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy; nowhere is it said what should be omitted, and what is permitted to do on that day, which is a proof that it was known by the previous custom. The text speaks on the sanctification of the Sabbath, Exodus 16, 20, 30, even before the Sabbath law was given and the week already designated by its proper name Schebuch, Genesis 29: 27. Genesis 7: 4, 10, 8, 12 consists of a period of seven days, which must necessarily be remarkable for the distinction of some particular day. To this, we can add that the doctrine concerning the Creator and creation could not have originated in these remote and primitive times other than by revelation. A revelation that there is no reason to suppose that it is different from the one in question in Genesis 1:1; 2:3 and this is what is clearly expressed in Exodus 20:8, 11. We know, moreover, that almost all nations, which certainly did not imitate the Law of Moses, have distinguished and regarded as holy the seventh day, a usage which can have no other origin than the primitive tradition, and which confirms thus the divine institution of the Sabbath” (*Bible D’Allioli*. Nouveau Commentaire Littéral, Critique et Théologique avec rapport aux textes primitifs sur tous les livres des Divines Ecritures par le Docteur Joseph Franz von Allioli, La Genèse, Paris, Louis Vivès, 1868, p. 89, comments on Genesis 2:3).

From our biblical record it turns out that even if for the patriarchal age there is no direct evidence of the observance of the Sabbath, there are still sufficient indications on the existence of the week. Being so the question is, what sense did the division of time in weeks had in patriarchal time if then there was no day of rest and worship? Why was this division of time in weeks justifiable and necessary? Since the history of creation traces back the institution of the Sabbath to its origins, there are good reasons that even its practice began then.

Relevant quotations

There is a wide number of authors who see the need of a better comprehension and write on the origin and meaning of God’s rest; here is a and interesting selection,

“One needs to refer to Genesis 1 and 2 and to Exodus 20:11 to discover biblically that the Sabbath is the seventh day of the weekly time unit established at creation”

(John Templeton Baldwin, "Revelation 14:7: An Angel's Worldview," in *Creation, Catastrophe, and Calvary*, Review and Herald, Hagerstown, 2000, p. 35, n. 4).

"From Genesis 2:2-3, it appears that the Sabbath was observed under all dispensations and even before the promulgation of the law... This day belongs somehow to the natural law and, if the laws were not articulated and declared as such by Moses, nonetheless they existed before him, written in their hearts; and they still exist after the collapse of the Jewish scaffolding, not on tablets of stone but on tablets of the Christians' heart." (Jean Augustin Bost, *Dictionnaire de la Bible*, tome premier et tome second, Paris, Librairie Protestante, 1849, p. 1729, item "Sabbats", Sabbaths).

"For Jews as for Christians, the division of the year and the months into weeks is of divine origin; it goes back to creation. God created the universe in six days, and not only rested on the seventh, but blessed it that it might be celebrated from age to age." (Jean Augustin Bost, *Dictionnaire de la Bible*, Paris, 1849, p. 1848, item "Semaine", week).

"«After six days of creation – what did the universe still lack? Menuha ['rest']. Came the Sabbath, came menuha, and the universe was complete»... "Menuha which we usually render with 'rest' means much more than withdrawal from labor and exertion, more than freedom from toil, strain or activity of any kind. Menuha is not a negative concept, but something real and intrinsically positive ... «What was created on the seventh day? Tranquillity, serenity, peace and repose»... To the biblical mind menuha is the same as happiness and stillness, as peace and harmony" (Abraham Joshua Heschel, *The Sabbath: Its Meaning for Modern Man*, New York, Farrar, Straus and Young, 1952, p. 23).

"It is certainly true that the Sabbath goes back to the first origin of Yahwism, and perhaps to even earlier times... In Israel the weekly Sabbath was certainly of great antiquity..." (Roland De Vaux, *Ancient Israel: Its Life and Instructions*, Gran Rapids, Michigan, Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1997, p. 479).

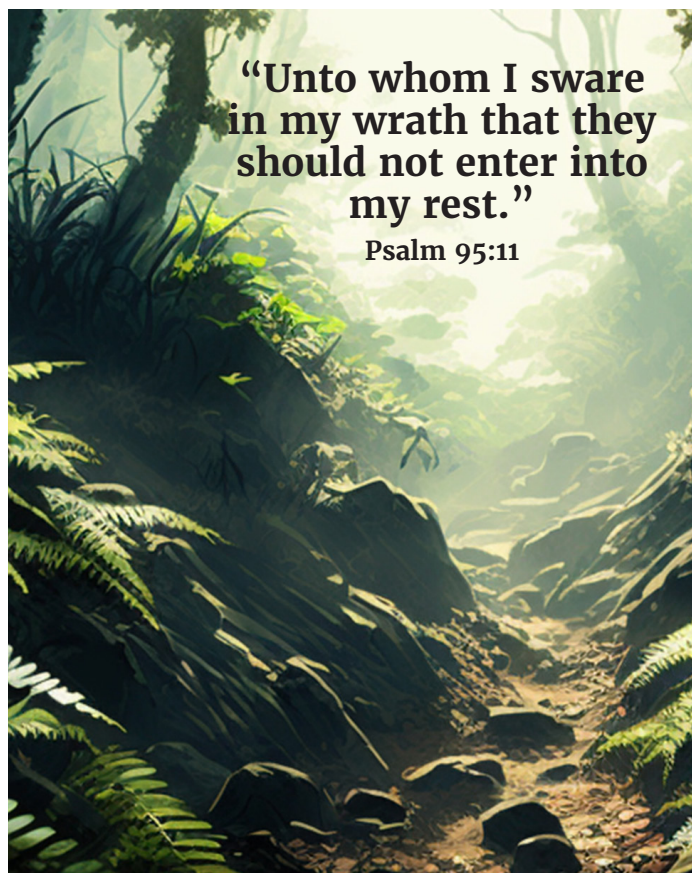
"In Eden, God set up the memorial of His work of creation, in placing His blessing upon the seventh day. The Sabbath was committed to Adam, the father and representative of the whole human family. Its observance was to be an act of grateful acknowledgment, on the part of all who should dwell upon the earth, that God was their Creator and their rightful Sovereign; that they were the work of His hands and the subjects of His authority. Thus the institution was wholly commemorative, and given to all mankind. There was nothing in it shadowy or of restricted application to any people." (Ellen G. White, *Patriarchs*

and Prophets, Mountain View, California, Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1890, 48.1)

"The Lord presents himself as a worker, who accomplishes his work and then rests. Certainly, God was not in any way tired of creating, but he with a trait of infinite goodness wanted to persuade the man to rest of his work, and He shows himself as a worker who works and then rests...

"Sanctifying the seventh day God made man a great grace. On this day, man is all in God, forget about his painful pilgrimage, he rises high, and lives more intensely a... life. The everungrateful man does not intend the great gift of God and profane the day consecrated to the Lord! He profanes it with sin, he profanes it trampling it, and he profanes it making himself a slave of work, while God has freed him at that day. If God sanctified the seventh day, it means that it is a day richer of graces. Whoever lives sanctifying it ... receives abundant blessings from the Lord". (Dain Cohenel, *La Sacra Scrittura*. Psicologia-Commento-Meditazione. La Genesi, Gravina di Puglia, Casa Mariana; Apostolato stampa, 1930, pp. 47-48).

"The Sabbath is rooted in the historical six-day week creation. Any question about the literal, historical, six-day week with a seventh-day Sabbath in the creation record jettisons the foundational biblical record for the Sabbath." (Norman R. Gulley, "Basic Issues between Science and



Scripture: Theological Implications of Alternative Models and the Necessary Basis for the Sabbath in Genesis 1 and 2, in *Journal of the Adventist Theological Society*, 14/1 (Spring 2003), p. 225).

“The word Sabbath is derived from the Hebrew word *shabbat*, meaning to ‘cease’ or ‘desist’ from a previous activity. On day six, Christ judged creation as ‘very good’ (Gen. 1:31), and hence complete (Gen. 2:3). For ‘in six days the Lord made the heavens and the earth, and on the seventh day He abstained from work and rested’ (Ex. 31:17, NIV). Therefore His ‘works were finished from the foundation of the world’ (Heb. 4:3, NKJV). Clearly the work of Creation was finished on the sixth day of creation week, contrary to an ongoing evolutionary process.” (Norman R. Gulley, *Is the Genesis Creation account literal?* in *Ministry*, September 2004)

“Work, rest on the seventh day and the family are the three institutions established by God for in the time of man’s innocence.” (Francesco Sciarelli [Italian Wesleyan Methodist pastor], *L’osservanza del giorno del riposo*, 1882, p. 10).


“After the Lord God had made the heavens and the earth and all things that they contain in six days, we are told that He then, “rested on the seventh day.” (Genesis 2:2). Not only did God rest on the seventh day, but He “declared” the fact, so to speak, for, we read in the next verse that “blessed” and “sanctified” that seventh day of rest.

“Now, for whose benefit could that declaration have been made, but for the ‘man’ that God had created and made as the very last act of the very last day of His creating works? And when God declared a “rest”, it seems clear that He declared it as something that His creation would enjoy and enter into by God’s graciousness to him.” (W. J. Seaton, *The Day of Rest*, 2017).

“The Sabbath was instituted at creation (Gen. 2:2, 3). It belongs, therefore, to the order of things which God established for man at the beginning. It is relevant quite apart from sin and the need of redemption. In this respect it is like the institutions of labour (Gen. 2:15), of marriage (Gen. 2:24, 25), and of fruitfulness (Gen. 1:28). The Sabbath institution was given to man as man, for the good of man as man, and extended to man the assurance and promise that his labour would issue in a Sabbath rest similar to the rest of God himself. The Sabbath is a creation ordinance and does not derive its validity or its necessity or its sanction, in the first instance, from any exigencies arising from sin nor from any of the provisions of redemptive grace. When sin entered, the circumstances under which the Sabbath rest was to be observed were altered, just as in the case of these other institutions. The forces of redemptive grace were now indispensable to their proper discharge. But the entrance of sin did not abrogate the Sabbath institution any more than it abrogated the institutions of labour, marriage, and fruitfulness.” (John Murray, *The Sabbath Institution* | Obligation, Sanctity and Observance, Edinburgh, 1976, pp. 1-2).

“The religious observance of the Sabbath was the first statute or command of God to men. This institution was a sign between God and them to keep them in remembrance of the creation of the world, of the rest that he designed them in Canaan, and of the eternal inheritance of the saints in light. Of this things the Sabbath was a type and a pledge” (*Adam Clarke’s Bible Commentary* in 8 Volumes: Vol. 7, The Book of the Prophet Ezekiel, comment on Ezekiel 20:12).

“The Sabbath is a sign of creative and redeeming power; it points to God as the source of life and knowledge; it recalls man’s primeval glory, and thus witnesses to God’s purpose to recreate us in His own image.” (Ellen G. White, *Education*, Mountain View, California, Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1903, p. 250).



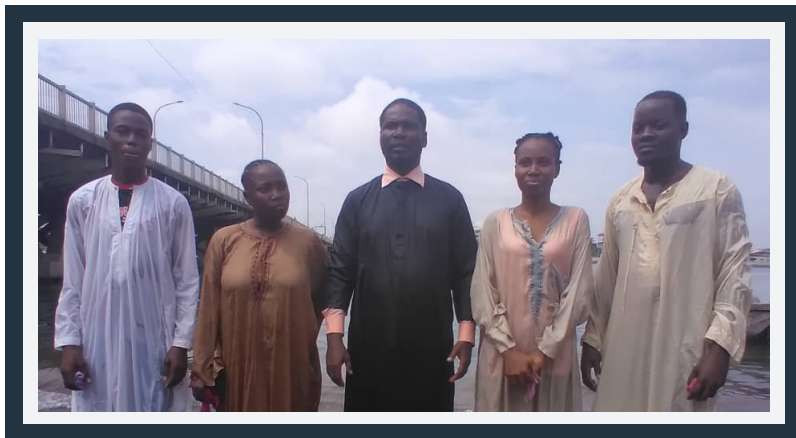
**“Remember
the sabbath day,
to keep it holy.”**

Exodus 20:8



AFRICA

BENIN



Baptism of 4 people in Aibatin

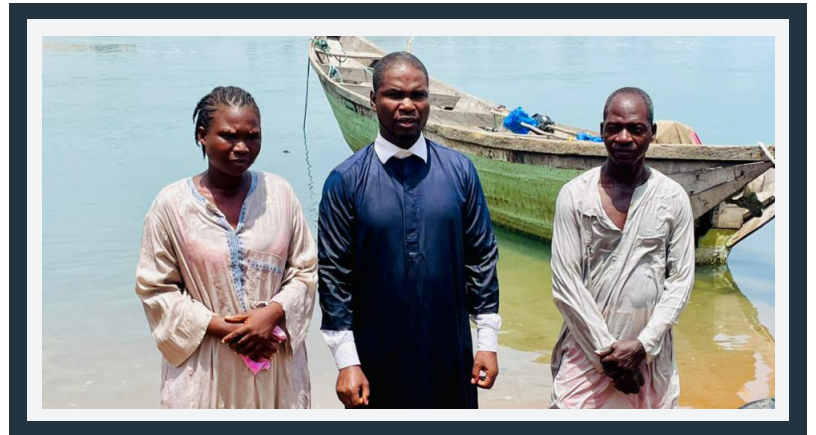




WORLD IN BRIEF

NEWS

GHANA



Baptism of 2 people





WORLD IN BRIEF

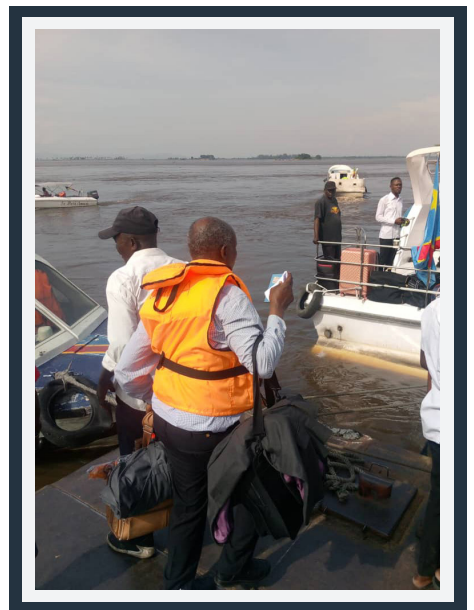
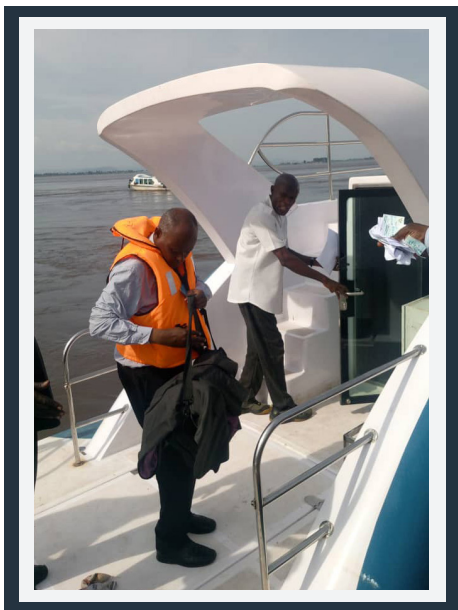
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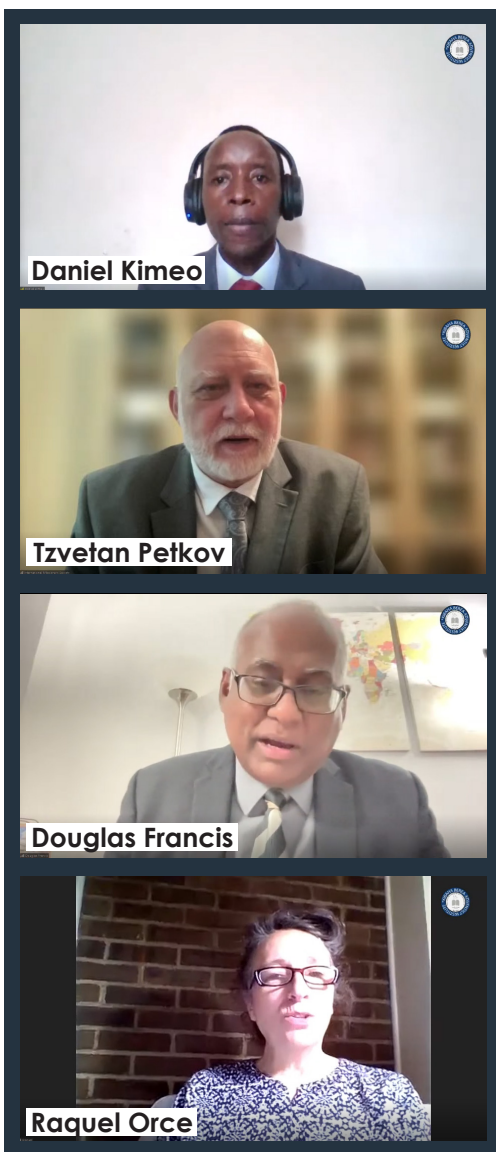


CONGO



The photos show the trip along a river. It is because the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), also known as “Congo-Kinshasa”, and the Republic of the Congo, also known as “Congo Brazzaville”, are separated by the Congo River, the second largest river in Africa with 2,715 miles (4369 km) long. The Congo River is 15 miles (24 km) wide at the point where it is flanked by the capital cities of Brazzaville and Kinshasa.





TANZANIA



On May 9, the graduation of the first class of the Kibaha Berea Adventist Institute was celebrated, which is located in the city of Kibaha in the country of Tanzania.



The Sabbath

Wachman

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