

The Sabbath Commandment in Deuteronomy 5:12–15¹

By Ekkehardt Mueller

The Sabbath commandment in Exodus 20:8–11 is important to Judaism and fairly well known in Christianity, especially in Adventism. Apart from Scripture, people have printed it in catechisms and different types of literature. It occurs in paintings and is engraved in plates of stone or metal. The study of the Sabbath commandment seems to be a growing interest even among non-Adventist scholars and theologians who may not intend to keep the biblical Sabbath.² However, most lay Christians are unfamiliar with the repetition of the Sabbath commandment in Deuteronomy 5:12–15.

A comparison of the Sabbath commandment in Exodus 20:8–11 with the same commandment in Deuteronomy 5:12–15 is intriguing. On one hand, the similarities between the Decalogue in Exodus 20 and the one in Deuteronomy 5 are impressive. On the other hand, there are a number of differences that may puzzle the reader and raise serious questions. One conservative Christian scholar argues that a real change occurred between the Sabbath commandment in Exodus and the one in Deuteronomy—“the Sabbath now speaks of redemption, not of creation,” thereby giving “justification for the observance by the Christian of Sunday rather than Saturday.”³ In this short article we will discuss similarities and differences between Exodus 20:8–11 and Deuteronomy 5:12–15, take a very brief look at both passages individually, and then focus more extensively on the Sabbath commandment as found in Deuteronomy.

Similarities and Differences Between Exodus 20:8–11 and Deuteronomy 5:12–15

The following list contains the Sabbath commandments of Exodus 20 and Deuteronomy 5 in a rather literal translation. Such a display allows for an easy comparison. Similarities appearing in exactly the same places are underlined. Those found in different places within the two passages are printed in bold.

Exodus 20

⁸ **Remember** the Sabbath day to keep it holy.

⁹ Six days you shall labor and do all your work,

¹⁰ but the seventh day is a Sabbath of Yahweh your God; you shall not do any work, you and your son and your daughter, your male and your female servant and your cattle and your sojourner within your gates.

¹¹ For in six days Yahweh made the heavens and the earth, the sea and all that is in them, and rested on the seventh day; therefore Yahweh blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy.

Deuteronomy 5

¹² Observe the Sabbath day to keep it holy, as Yahweh your God commanded you.

¹³ Six days you shall labor and do all your work,

¹⁴ but the seventh day is a Sabbath of Yahweh your God; you shall not do any work, you and your son and your daughter and your male servant and your female servant and your ox and your donkey and any of your cattle and your sojourner within your gates, so that your male servant and your female servant may **rest** as well as you.

¹⁵ **You shall remember that** you were a slave in the land of Egypt, and Yahweh your God brought you out of there by a mighty hand and by an outstretched arm; **therefore Yahweh** your God commanded you to do [observe] the Sabbath day.

This list shows that there is a high degree of correspondence in the first three verses of both lists. Yet, even in this section the Sabbath commandment in Deuteronomy is longer than the one in Exodus.

1. While Exodus 20:8 starts with “remember,” Deuteronomy 5:12 begins with “observe.” The word “remember” is also found in Deuteronomy, however, in 5:15 only. Although two different verbs are used—“remember” and “observe”— the concept is the same.⁴ Both verses—Exodus 20:8 and Deuteronomy 5:12—emphasize that the Sabbath should be kept holy. “The Sabbath belongs to the Lord, and it must be used for God’s purposes, not ours (Isa 58:13). It is God’s day (Exod 16:12, 25; 31:15).”⁵ Deuteronomy 5:12 adds a phrase that is not found in Exodus: “as Yahweh your God commanded you.” Thus the first verse of the Sabbath commandment in Deuteronomy contains a homiletical expansion. It reminds the hearers and readers of the ultimate source of authority.
2. Exodus 20:9 and Deuteronomy 5:13 are identical.
3. The third verse in both lists is again quite similar. Deuteronomy inserts “and” before “male servant,” adds “your ox and your donkey” and the word “any” (literally “all”) before “your cattle,” and elaborates on the male servant and female servant at the end of this verse. The term “to rest,” found here in Deuteronomy, is also in the last verse of the Exodus passage. While in Exodus 20:11 God rested, in Deuteronomy 5:14 humans rest.

So far we have mainly encountered expansions of the Exodus text in Deuteronomy. However, there is little similarity between the last verses of the two Sabbath passages. A number of words correspond—namely “Yahweh,” “the Sabbath day,” “therefore,” “earth/land,” and “for/that.”⁶ But the theme is quite different. While Exodus focuses on creation, Deuteronomy stresses deliverance, and thus redemption, from Egypt. Theologically, the two concepts are complementary⁷ and point to the rich theological meaning of the Sabbath.⁸ The Sabbath reminds us of creation. The Sabbath is also clearly linked to salvation. Deuteronomy expands its meaning by making it a memorial of redemption.

From some important words and phrases, the following picture emerges:

Term or Phrase	Occurrences in Exod.	Occurrences in Deut.
Sabbath	3	3
Day	6	4
To sanctify/keep holy	2	1
Yahweh	3	4
Yahweh your God	1	4
As Yahweh your God has commanded you	-	2
Six	2	1
Seventh	2	1
You shall/shall not do all your work	2	2
To serve/servant	1	4
your male servant/female servant	1	2
To do	3	3
to do (God)	1	-
to do (humanity)	2	3
The heavens, earth, sea, and all which is in them	1	-

This list points to some of the important differences in both passages. Most of them are due to the expansions in Deuteronomy and the different reasons for Sabbath-keeping provided in both versions. The emphasis on the celebration of creation in Exodus 20:8–11 produces creation-related language (“the heavens, earth, sea, and all which is in them”), highlights the six days of creation and the seventh day of rest more frequently, and uses the verb “to do” not only for humanity but also for God in His creative activity, while the emphasis on the celebration of redemption⁹

in Deuteronomy 5:12–15 stresses servitude and serving as well as liberation from it.¹⁰ Therefore, in the Deuteronomy passage the word family “to serve” is employed more often than in the Exodus passage.

The phrase “as Yahweh your God has commanded you” is found twice in Deuteronomy 5:12–15, but not at all in Exodus 20:8–11. This accounts for the more frequent use of the divine names in the Deuteronomy passage. While Exodus 20:8–11 most often uses one of God’s names, “Yahweh,” Deuteronomy employs only the phrase “Yahweh, your God.” Thus the Exodus passage is more personal in tone; on the other hand, it sounds more universal. The phrase “as Yahweh your God commanded you” encompasses the Sabbath commandment in Deuteronomy 5 and forms an inclusion, pointing back to God giving the Decalogue on Mount Sinai. An inclusion is an envelope structure encircling other material.

While Deuteronomy 5 mentions once the act of keeping the Sabbath holy, Exodus 20 uses the Hebrew word twice. However, in Exodus 20 it is humanity that is once called to keep the day holy and God who makes it holy. The reference to Genesis 2:2–3 requires a repetition of the term in Exodus 20. God’s sanctification of the Sabbath is absent in Deuteronomy 5 because the reference to creation is replaced by the reference to the Exodus experience.

Nevertheless, both commandments share a common outline:

- First precept: Remember/keep the Sabbath holy (Exod 20:8; Deut 5:12)
- Second precept: To work six days (Exod 20:9; Deut 5:13)
- Third precept: Not to work on the seventh day (Exod 20:10; Deut 5:14)
- Reasons: Creation/salvation (Exod 20:11; Deut 5:16)

The major differences between the two forms of the Sabbath commandment are not the call to remember the Sabbath versus the call to observe the Sabbath but the reasons provided for keeping it holy. Even though the reasons are different, the charge to keep the Sabbath remains the same. However, the origin of the Sabbath is not stated in Deuteronomy. The Sabbath is not instituted because of the exodus from Egypt. The Sabbath is based on creation. But the people are called to obey the commandment because of creation and salvation as experienced in the exodus.¹¹

The Sabbath Commandment of Exodus 20

The Sabbath commandment in Exodus 20 begins and ends with the same three Hebrew words forming again an inclusion.

- Remember *the day of the Sabbath to keep it holy.* (Exod 20:8)
- Therefore Yahweh blessed *the day of the Sabbath and made it holy.* (Exod 20:11)

Exodus 20 contains a special emphasis on the holiness of the Sabbath. This holiness and the divine blessing of the day are associated with a historical act, the six-day creation. The commandment can be outlined as follows:

- The holiness of the Sabbath: command (Exod 20:8)
- Work on six days: command (Exod 20:9)
- No work on the seventh day: command (Exod 20:10)
- The holiness of the Sabbath: God’s example in creation and his blessing (Exod 20:11)

Exodus 20:11 is important in that it makes a statement about the origin of the Sabbath and offers a reason for its observance—namely God’s creative activity. God created the earth and life on it and instituted the Sabbath right in the beginning of this world’s history. Verse 11 discusses what the Lord was doing during the creation week. Four areas related to creation are mentioned: heaven, earth, sea, and all that is in them. However, with regard to the

seventh day three activities of God are stressed: He rested, blessed the Sabbath, and made it holy. They are found in the same order in Genesis 2:2–3.¹²

The Exodus rationale for keeping the Sabbath is the call to imitate the practice of God the Creator—to interrupt work, rest, reflect, and participate in its holiness and blessedness.¹³ Miller also suggests that the Sabbath commandment in Exodus reflects a cosmological theology and is not as much determined by experience as is the one in Deuteronomy.¹⁴ Novak stresses the universalistic view of the Sabbath in the Exodus version of the Decalogue. It is not for Israel or the Jews only. “It implies that the experience of all people of the creativity of God not only *is* but *ought to be* the same as that of the Jews.”¹⁵

The Sabbath Commandment of Deuteronomy 5

The Sabbath commandment in Deuteronomy 5 also contains an inclusion, but it is somewhat different. Instead of the three Hebrew words found in the beginning and at the end of the Exodus passage, only two correspond directly in Deuteronomy: “the Sabbath day.”¹⁶ The infinitive “to keep it holy” is replaced by the Hebrew word translated “to keep.” However, we also find at the beginning and end of the passage a phrase that does not occur in Exodus:

Observe *the day of the Sabbath* to keep it holy
as *Yahweh your God commanded you* (Deut 5:12)
... therefore *Yahweh your God commanded you*
to keep *the day of the Sabbath*. (Deut 5:15)

Deuteronomy 5 stresses that the keeping of the Sabbath is commanded by “the LORD your God.” In addition there is a strong emphasis on God’s redemptive activity, which—like creation in Exodus 20—is a historical act. The Sabbath commandment of Deuteronomy 5 can be outlined in the following way:

Observance of the Sabbath: commanded by Yahweh your God (Deut 5:12)
Work on six days: command (Deut 5:13)
No work on the seventh day: command (Deut 5:14)
Observance of the Sabbath: commanded by Yahweh your God who has led you out of slavery (Deut :15)

While in Exodus the remembrance of the Sabbath is associated with creation, in Deuteronomy God’s people are called to keep Sabbath as they remember their liberation. It is more experience-oriented. In both cases, the element of remembering and looking back at the great things the Lord has done is present. God acts in human history. His mighty acts are remembered when keeping the Sabbath. But the act of remembering also has a prospective outlook—that is, remembering in order to obey.

Deuteronomy’s Sabbath Commandment in Its Context

After having observed the basic similarities but also the differences between the two Sabbath commandments, how do we explain these differences?

We have noticed that the Sabbath commandment in Deuteronomy 5 contains the phrases “as Yahweh your God commanded you” and “therefore Yahweh your God commanded you.” These phrases differ only with regard to the first word. However, such phrases are not limited to the Sabbath commandment. “As Yahweh your God commanded you” is repeated in the next commandment: “Honor your father and your mother, as Yahweh your God has commanded you” (Deut 5:16). It is found again in Deuteronomy 5:33—outside of the Decalogue but still in the same context. Whereas the singular was used within the Ten Commandments, now the plural is found: “as Yahweh your [plural] God has commanded you [plural].” A similar formula occurs in Deuteronomy 5:33; 6:1, 17, 20, and 25. The plural may indicate that in Deuteronomy we have a “sermon” addressed to the people.

Moses is speaking to Israel. He reiterates the Ten Commandments as well as other laws and admonitions. While reciting the Decalogue he inserts the words “as/therefore Yahweh your God has commanded you,” thus emphasizing that the Ten Commandments are of divine origin and are authoritative. Exodus 20:1 states, “Then God spoke all these words, saying. . .” Deuteronomy is different:

The LORD spoke to you face to face at the mountain from the midst of the fire, while I was standing between the LORD and you at that time, to declare to you the word of the LORD; for you were afraid because of the fire and did not go up the mountain. He said . . . (Deut 5:4–5).

Obviously, in Exodus we find the Ten Commandments as proclaimed by the Lord,¹⁷ whereas in Deuteronomy the Decalogue is affirmed by Moses.

While Moses repeats the Ten Commandments, he apparently comments on them in several places. These comments are minor and do not alter the meaning or authority of God’s law. In the Sabbath commandments of Exodus and Deuteronomy, only the reasons for keeping the seventh day differ. The command to keep the Sabbath remains intact. In Deuteronomy 18:15, which points to Jesus as *the* prophet, God calls Moses a prophet. As the people of Israel were obliged to obey what Moses told them in the name of the Lord, so people are called to obey the prophet like Moses—Jesus¹⁸—who proclaimed His law in the Sermon on the Mount and who through His life exemplified how He related to God’s law, fully supporting the Decalogue.¹⁹ In other words, Moses’ comments on the Decalogue were made under inspiration, as were Jesus’ centuries later. Moses acted as a prophet. His comments provide additional insights into the will and character of God, although on a literal level they were not part of the Decalogue, proclaimed by God on Sinai. In Deuteronomy, Moses may have expressed the special significance of the Ten Commandments for Israel, whereas through the reference to creation the Decalogue in Exodus is more universal.²⁰

Deuteronomy 5:22 refers back to the Sinai experience, declaring that there a theophany occurred, there God spoke to Israel, and there the Decalogue was written on tablets of stone. The phrase “and he added no more” stresses that the Decalogue was limited in content. No other commandments were part of it. It “highlights the special ‘canonical’ authority of the Decalogue.”²¹ “These words” are the Ten Commandments as found in Exodus 20, which were repeated in a slightly modified way in Deuteronomy 5. It is important that we do not stretch this verse beyond what it is trying to say. Obviously, the Decalogue as found in Exodus 20 was written on tablets of stone, but the repetition by Moses in Deuteronomy 5 is still in agreement with the version proclaimed by the Lord Himself.²²

A close look at verse 22 reveals “the strict chronological order of events is not the main concern of the narrative.”²³ The tablets of stone that existed when Moses reiterated the Decalogue were the ones written by God after the incident with the golden calf (Exod 34:1)—these were the second set, created after the first was broken by Moses (Exod 32:19); there are not the first set as Deuteronomy 5:22 seems to indicate. However, the wording on these tablets must have been identical to the wording in Exodus 20.

By leaving out a reference to the other commandments, which were not part of the Decalogue, and by postponing them till later, as well as by mentioning the Decalogue’s inscription on tablets of stone immediately after their recitation, Moses stresses the uniqueness of the Ten Commandments and singles them out among the other laws. But this means that Deuteronomy 5:22 contains a historical gap, yet without being untruthful. In many parts of Scripture summaries of events are employed that do not point to every little detail.²⁴ However, this also means that the text cannot be pressed to denote that the precise wording of Deuteronomy 5:6–21 must have been the text contained on the tablets of stone or that there is a contradiction between Deuteronomy 5:22 and Exodus 24:12 and 31:18, which are based on Exodus 20. A literalistic interpretation of the text deprives it of its theological intention.

Therefore, we have to turn to the question of the effects Moses’ additions and amplifications have on the Decalogue. We have already noted that the phrase “as/therefore Yahweh your God commanded you” stresses the divine origin of the Decalogue as well as of the Sabbath. Since this phrase is repeated in the fifth commandment, it ties together the commandments to keep the Sabbath and honor one’s parents. In both of them the relational aspect is strongly emphasized. Furthermore, the so-called first tablet of the law—commandments focusing on humanity’s relationship with God—and the so-called second tablet of the law—commandments stressing interpersonal

relations—are linked. Miller speaks about a bridge function of the Sabbath commandment.²⁵ This concept is enhanced by the specific emphasis on male and female servants, twice found in verse 14 and elaborated upon in verse 15, when Israel’s slavery and liberation are narrated.

“As Yahweh commanded” (vv. 12, 15, 16) communicates awareness that this listing of the Decalogue is a “second delivery” in the dramatic staging of Deuteronomy, a quotation of something already heard in the past. As a “source citation formula” (cf. 4:23; 6:17; 13:6 [ET 5]; 20:17), it signals to the reader that an earlier text is being used. Fittingly, this phrase appears only in the commandments concerning Sabbath and parents, the two that positively “command” (rather than forbid) behaviors. Moreover, since these two commandments are the only ones whose motivations differ from those of Exod 20, “as Yahweh commanded” may stress that the imperatives themselves have been transmitted unchanged, even if the motivations have been expanded.²⁶

In Deuteronomy 5:15 “the land of Egypt” appears. The same expression is found in Deuteronomy 5:6, the first commandment.²⁷ In addition, the verb “to bring out,” the divine name “Yahweh your God,” and the term “slave” occur in both verses. Therefore in Deuteronomy the Sabbath commandment is in a special way connected to the first commandment. By keeping the Sabbath we accept Yahweh Elohim as the only God and Lord and reject all other gods and idols. At the same time we enjoy liberation and salvation.

But there are not only connections to the first and the fifth commandments. Deuteronomy 5:14 contains the addition “your ox and your donkey.” Instead of talking about animals in general only, Moses seems to mention ox and donkey deliberately. Ox and donkey are found in the same order and with the same Hebrew words in Deuteronomy 5:21, the tenth commandment. Thus, the Sabbath commandment and the commandment not to covet are associated. Whoever has found rest in the Lord on the Sabbath day, has also found rest from coveting and craving for material goods, especially those that belong to neighbors.

Deuteronomy also groups together the commandments in vv. 17–20 with “and.” Joining these last commandments together with conjunctions forms them into a cohesive block and creates a concentric pattern of longer and shorter textual units that places the Sabbath commandment at the center of the pattern.²⁸ Verses 6–11 describe one’s duties to Yahweh and vv. 16–21 deal with relationships among humans. By dealing with both these topics simultaneously, the Deuteronomic Sabbath commandment forms a bridge between these two sections.²⁹

Conclusion

The Sabbath commandment in Deuteronomy agrees completely with the one in Exodus 20 that the Sabbath should be kept holy and that after six days of labor humanity should rest on the specific seventh day, the Sabbath. There are some differences with regard to the reasons given. Moses, in repeating the Sabbath commandment, has—under inspiration—made some unprecedented expansions that linked the Sabbath commandment to the rest of the Ten Commandments, to the effect that the Decalogue culminates in the Sabbath commandment. This has been recognized by scholars: “Deuteronomy is more explicit than Exodus regarding the Sabbath commandment.”³⁰ “Deuteronomy’s distinctive formulation of the Ten Commandments increases the importance of the Sabbath.” The Sabbath commandment “is at the center of the [structural] pattern. The Sabbath commandment is given a central, mediating position.”³¹

What all this means is that the Sabbath is given preeminence in Deuteronomy. . . . The two principle commandments—sole worship of the Lord as God and sanctifying the seventh day—not surprisingly point us to the two chief features of the book of Deuteronomy: its radical claim for the exclusive worship of the Lord and its humanitarian sensibilities. . . . Along with the prophets, the command to keep the Sabbath is the primary biblical impetus for social justice in the human community.³²

While the social justice aspect of the Sabbath must be underlined, Weinfeld points out that the Sabbath still has a “theocentric nature.”³³ Therefore, it is no wonder that in the book of Revelation the moral law and especially the

Sabbath are found center-stage during the last conflict on earth. The Ten Commandments are indirectly and more directly referred to in Revelation 11:19, 12:17, and 14:12. In Revelation 14:7 keeping the biblical Sabbath is part of the specific end-time proclamation of the three angels' messages, God's final call to humanity to return to Him.³⁴

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¹ This is a revised version of an article published in the *Journal of the Adventist Theological Society* 14/2 (2003), 141-148.

² See, e.g., Carl E. Braaten and Christopher R. Seitz, eds., *I Am the Lord Your God: Christian Reflections on the Ten Commandments* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2005); Walter Brueggemann, *Sabbath as Resistance: Saying No to the Culture of Now* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 2014); Richard H. Lowery, *Sabbath and Jubilee* (St. Louis, MO: Chalice, 2000); Mark F. Rooker, *The Ten Commandments: Ethics for the Twenty-First Century*, NAC Studies in Bible & Theology (Nashville, TN: Broadman and Holman, 2010); Roger E. Van Harn, ed., *The Ten Commandments for Jews, Christians, and Others* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2007); Norman Wirzba, *Living the Sabbath: Discovering the Rhythms of Rest and Delight* (Grand Rapids, MI: Brazos, 2006).

³ Eugene H. Merrill, *Deuteronomy*, The New American Commentary (Nashville, TN: Broadman and Holman, 1994), 152. If Merrill's arguments were true, the Sabbath should not be associated with creation in the New Testament. However, it is. See Ekkehardt Mueller, "Creation in the New Testament," *Journal of the Adventist Theological Society*, 15/1 (2004): 47-62. One also wonders about the permanence of any biblical command, if differences in motivational clauses, not in the commands themselves, supposedly mean a change in practice (cf. Exod 20:12, Deut 5:26, and Matt 15:4; or Exod 20:13 and Matt 5:21-22). Such an approach may lead to pure relativism.

⁴ See Rooker, 76-78. This is challenged by Moshe Weinfeld, *Deuteronomy 1-11*, The Anchor Bible (New York: Doubleday, 1991), 303, who distinguishes between "observance of the law" in Deuteronomy and "historical remembrance" in Exodus. Merrill, 150, however, opts for the two terms to be synonymous but suggests that "šāmar [Deut 5:12] implies more of an active participation."

⁵ Rooker, 80.

⁶ "Earth" and "land" are translations of the same Hebrew word. However, in Exodus the entire earth is addressed, whereas in Deuteronomy the term is limited to the land of Egypt. The English words "for" and "that" are also translations of the same Hebrew term.

⁷ Cf., P. C. Craigie, *The Book of Deuteronomy*, New International Commentary on the Old Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1976), 157.

⁸ Cf., Duane L. Christensen, *Deuteronomy 1-11*, Word Biblical Commentary 6A (Dallas, TX: Word, 1991), 118.

⁹ See Craigie, 157. David Novak, "The Sabbath Day," in *The Ten Commandments for Jews, Christians, and Others*, ed. R. E. Van Harn (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2007), talks about the "political-historical meaning of the Sabbath" of Deuteronomy and the "ontological meaning" of the Sabbath in Exodus.

¹⁰ S. R. Driver, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Deuteronomy*, The International Critical Commentary (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1895), 85, speaks about a "philanthropic motive."

¹¹ Cf., Rooker, 84.

¹² The term "to rest" is found in Genesis 2:2 and repeated in 2:3. The verb "to rest" in Genesis 2 is different from the verb "to rest" in Exodus 20. In Genesis 2 the verb *shabat* points to the Sabbath, although the noun "Sabbath" is not directly mentioned. Exodus 20 employs the noun "Sabbath" and uses the synonymous verb *nuach* for "to rest."

¹³ See Patrick D. Miller, *The Ten Commandments*, Interpretation: Resources for the Use of Scripture in the Church (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 2009), 125.

¹⁴ Miller, *The Ten Commandments*, 126.

¹⁵ Novak, 75. Miller, *The Ten Commandments*, 124, affirms this observation by stating, "If the Deuteronomic rationale . . . connects the Sabbath to Israel's particular experience, the Exodus rationale connects it to the larger human experience." Telford Work, *Deuteronomy*, Brazos Theological Commentary on the Bible (Grand Rapids, MI: Brazos, 2009), 80, states, "But the Sabbath commandment is no less ceremonial and no less binding than the ones that come before it, and no less political and moral than the ones that follow." Daniel I. Block, *Deuteronomy*, The NIV Application Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2012), 165, points to the Sabbath commandment as "a fundamentally ethical ordinance."

¹⁶ Cf., Christensen, 117.

¹⁷ See Exodus 20:18-23; Deuteronomy 9:10

¹⁸ See John 6:14; Acts 3:17–26.

¹⁹ Markus Bockmuehl, “‘Keeping It Holy’: Old Testament Commandment and New Testament Faith,” in *I Am the Lord Your God: Christian Reflections on the Ten Commandments*, eds. E. Braaten and Christopher R. Seitz (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2005), 115–116, shows that “apart from a famously enigmatic and perhaps ironic aside in John (5:16–18), no Gospel text accepts that Jesus willfully or even inadvertently breaks the Sabbath. Indeed, on several occasions in the Synoptics he cites established views about the Sabbath that appear to meet with the tacit agreement of his Pharisaic opponents . . .” But rest for Jesus does not only mean for a person to rest himself/herself but to provide rest for others. See also Jack R. Lundbom, *Deuteronomy: A Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2013), 281. Michael H. Burer, *Divine Sabbath Work* (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2012), 112–135, discusses two important passages in the Gospels, Luke 13:10–17 and John 5:1–30. He concludes that “Luke pictures Jesus as an eschatological prophet who understands the meaning of the Sabbath better than his contemporaries. It is the most fitting day of all days of the week for an Israelite woman to be healed on, because it is the day that commemorates God’s act of deliverance during the exodus of Israel from Egypt” (p. 138). The passage in Luke 13 thus alludes to Deuteronomy’s Sabbath commandment that he has already mentioned (p. 119). The passage in John 5 with its center in verses 17 and 18 he understands as Jesus working on Sabbath as God the Father works on Sabbath in blessing his people and giving life as well as in judging (p. 138). So his Sabbath healing ministry stresses Jesus’ divinity (p. 135).

²⁰ See, e.g., footnote 4 and the usage of the term “earth/land” in both passages.

²¹ Richard D. Nelson, *Deuteronomy: A Commentary*, The Old Testament Library (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 2002), 84.

²² C. F. Keil and F. Delitzsch, *Old Testament Commentaries: Genesis to Judges 6:32* (Grand Rapids, MI: Associated Publishers and Authors, n.d.), 471, while commenting on Exodus 20 state, “But instead of this objective ground for the sabbatical festival . . ., when Moses recapitulated the decalogue, he adduced only the subjective aspect of rest or refreshing (Deut. v. 14,15), reminding the people, just as in Ex. xxiii. 12, of their bondage in Egypt and their deliverance from it by the strong arm of Jehovah, and then adding, ‘therefore (that thou mightest remember this deliverance from bondage) Jehovah commanded thee to keep the Sabbath-day.’ This is not in variance with the reason given in the present verse [Ex 20:11], but simply gives prominence to a subjective aspect . . .”

²³ A. D. H. Mayes, *Deuteronomy*, The New Century Bible Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1979), 172.

²⁴ See, e.g., John 20:30–31; 21:25.

²⁵ Miller, *The Ten Commandments*, 127. It “points forward and becomes a part of that group of commandments that have to do with the way one treats the neighbor . . .” (p. 127).

²⁶ Nelson, 82–83.

²⁷ See also, Exodus 20:2.

²⁸ In a footnote Nelson, 82, states, “Long (vv. 6–10), short (v. 11), the long unit on Sabbath (vv. 12–15), short (v.16), long (vv.17–21) . . .”

²⁹ Nelson, 81–82. See also Miller, *The Ten Commandments*, 128–129.

³⁰ Earl S. Kalland, “Deuteronomy,” in *Expositor’s Bible Commentary*, vol. 3, ed. F. E. Gaebelein (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1992), 55.

³¹ Nelson, 81–82; see also Miller, *The Ten Commandments*, 128 and Patrick D. Miller, *Deuteronomy*, Interpretation: A Bible Commentary for Teaching and Preaching (Louisville, KY: John Knox, 1990), 79. In this commentary, pages 81–83, he elaborates on the following points: (1) “*the sabbath is a gift of God* as much as it is a command.” (2) “*As gift, the primary character of the Sabbath is rest.*” (3) “*As rest, the sabbath looks backwards to the exodus redemption.*” (4) “*As rest, the sabbath also looks forward to the promised rest of God.*” (5) “*The sanctifying of the sabbath serves to guard the first and second commandment.*” (6) “*Setting apart one day regularly to the Lord inhibits the human inclination to justify oneself by job or work.*” (7) “*The sabbath is one of the marks of the people of God.*” (8) “*The gifts of the Sabbath are for all.*”

³² Miller, 129. Mark E. Biddle, *Deuteronomy*, Smyth & Helwys Bible Commentary (Macon, GA: Smyth & Helwys, 2003), 111, correctly points to the issue of slavery indirectly contained in the Sabbath commandment and comes to the following conclusion: “Sadly, Israel failed to recognize the irony of a nation of freed slaves continuing to enslave others. Later, the church failed, too, to perceive the cruel disparity between bonds of slavery and freedom in Christ (Gal 3:27–28). Because Israel failed to recognize the implications of the fact that God freed them from slavery, the Decalogue must explicitly state that the Sabbath means rest for slaves as well.” Unfortunately, he misses the point that the church has also failed in keeping the Sabbath, the seventh day instead of Sunday, by focusing on God in worship and reflection and abstaining from labor as the Lord has commanded.

³³ Weinfeld, 306. See also page 304: “. . . the Sabbath belongs to the divine sphere and is not originally a social-humanistic institution . . .”

³⁴ This verse contains the wording of the Sabbath commandment as found in Exodus 20:11 and therefore includes a call to observe the Sabbath and honor God as the Creator. Ellen G. White, *Spiritual Gifts*, Vol. I (Washington: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1945), 164, in a paragraph entitled “The Third Angel’s Message” wrote: “. . . they see the fourth commandment living among the ten holy precepts, while a brighter light shines upon it than upon the other nine, and a halo of glory is all around it.”

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