

DISCOVERIES

By Mark Finley

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A Centuries Old Remedy for Stress

In early 1991, the Cosmic Background Explorer (COBE) satellite began sending back information to Earth that caused a sensation in scientific circles. The data it sent back tends to prove that the universe did indeed have a BEGINNING. This is important, because some people's picture of the universe leaves no room for God. They can't believe there's a personal Creator behind it all. When people take God out of the picture, they simply say the universe has always been there—it's eternal. That's their starting point.

The basic question of origins doesn't leave many alternatives: You start with *God* or you start with *matter*—either of which has always been there. But the COBE project shows that the universe *hasn't* always been there. It *had* to have a beginning, which narrows down the alternatives to one. That's what caused the big stir. As one Berkeley astronomer put it: "What we have found is evidence of the birth of the universe. . . . It's like looking at God." This recent scientific data does point in the direction of a Creator God.

In the Bible's last book, Revelation, God is on center stage as Creator of the universe. John was caught up in vision to an amazing scene in heaven's throne room. What he saw was so dazzling as to be almost beyond description—something you'd only see in your wildest dreams. For instance, **Revelation 4:8** says four living creatures declared ceaselessly, "Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, who was and is and is to come!" It was a scene of joyful worship. Then the twenty-four elders fell down before God and declared: "You are worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honor and power; for You CREATED all things, and by Your will they exist and were created." **Revelation 4:11**.

The Lord is indeed an awesome, glorious God *because* He's the Creator. The very basis of all worship is simply this: We did not evolve—God created us! God shines all through the Book of Revelation as the Creator of the universe. **Revelation 10:6** speaks of "Him who lives forever and ever, who created heaven and the things that are in it, the earth and the things that are in it, and the sea and the things that are in it." **Revelation 14:7** urges us to "Fear God and give glory to Him, for the hour of His judgment has come; and worship Him who made heaven and earth, the sea and springs of water."

Revelation does not picture God as some vague shadowy essence or an abstract symbol. He's the all-powerful Creator, the Father of all humanity. And therefore WE are more than skin and bones—more than a biological accident. We are His creation! But people have lost sight of that today. People have been cut off from this Creator God. He has shrunk in size and power. He's no longer worthy of our heart-felt praise and worship. He's worthy only of a quick nod heavenward. The Darwinian theory of evolution came along, and suddenly God no longer seemed necessary. Yet God calls us to worship Him as the Creator (Revelation 14:7). How do we do that? How do we worship the Creator of heaven and earth? Has He left an eternal symbol of His creative power, a SIGN of true worship in an age of evolution?

Let's return to our *origin* so we can understand our *destiny*. Let's return to the book of *beginnings*, Genesis, so we can understand the book of *endings*, Revelation. God created the world in six literal days. After He created Adam and Eve on the sixth day, **Genesis 2:1** says, "Thus the heavens and the earth, and all the host of them, were finished." It didn't take millions or billions of years! "For He spoke, and it was done; He commanded, and it stood fast." **Psalm 33:9**.

But the Genesis account of creation doesn't end there. **Genesis 2:2** continues: "On the seventh day God ended His work which He had done, and He rested on the seventh day from all His work which He had done." God rested! Why? Not because He was weary, for Isaiah 40:28 tells us God never gets weary. The Creator of the universe permitted Himself the satisfaction of enjoying His completed creation. And then, pleased with His accomplishments over Earth's first six days, God did something especially significant. **Genesis 2:3** tells us: "Then God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it, because in it He rested from all His work which God had created and made."

God sanctified the seventh day, setting it apart as a holy, special time to remind us of our beginnings—our roots! As long as we set aside the seventh day to worship our Creator, we'll never lose sight of who we are, where we came from, or what our eternal destiny may be. God knew it was essential for mankind, even in Eden, to set aside the seventh day as a day of rest and worship. At the end of each week, Adam and Eve celebrated the *birthday of the world* with their Creator.

The Fourth Commandment, **Exodus 20:8-11**, repeats the Sabbath truth God had taught in Eden. "Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days shalt thou labor, and do all thy work: but the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God: in it thou shalt not do any work, . . . 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."

Had men and women always remembered God's memorial of creation, the problems so prevalent today—lack of meaning in life, identity crises, loss of self-esteem—would never have arisen. There'd be no evolutionists, no skeptics, no agnostics! The Sabbath was never intended to be confined to Israel. God gave the Sabbath to *Adam and Eve* two thousand years before there was a Jew! God didn't restrict such a blessing to one race only. Nowhere does the Bible call the Sabbath "The Sabbath of the Jews." In **Mark 2:27** Jesus made it clear that "The Sabbath was made for MAN," meaning all mankind.

More than a memorial of creation, the Sabbath is a weekly reminder of the our relationship with God, an acknowledgment of God's divinity: "Hallow My Sabbaths, and they will be a SIGN between Me and you, that you may know that *I am the Lord your God*." **Ezekiel 20:20**. And the creative power used in sanctifying—making holy—the Sabbath is the same power God uses today in sanctifying sinful men and women, thus our Creator is also our Savior: "Moreover I also gave them My Sabbaths, to be a SIGN between them and Me, that they might know that I am the LORD who *sanctifies* them." **Ezekiel 20:12**.

But which day is the Sabbath? How can we be certain which day is the seventh? **Luke 23:54-24:1** mentions three consecutive days: (1) the Preparation Day, or Good Friday; (2) the first day of the week, or Easter Sunday; and (3) the day in between, or Saturday, which the Bible calls the Sabbath. There's no doubt which day was the Sabbath in Jesus' time.

Jesus faithfully kept the Sabbath as "His custom," His habitual practice. **Luke 4:16**. And He expected Christians would *still* be keeping the Sabbath forty years *after* His death, when Jerusalem was destroyed. He said in **Matthew 24:20**: "Pray that your flight may not be in winter or on the Sabbath." And His followers did keep the Sabbath after the resurrection. The Book of Acts records *eighty-four* Sabbath meetings Paul held. For example, **Acts 13:42,44** says not just Jews but Gentiles worshipped with Paul on God's seventh-day Sabbath. **Isaiah 66:22-23** tells us the redeemed will celebrate the Sabbath through all eternity. **Revelation 14:12** describes those prepared to meet Jesus when He comes: "Here are those who KEEP the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus." In **John 14:15** Jesus said, "If you LOVE Me, keep My commandments." And one of those commandments tells us to "remember" the Sabbath day—a sign between God and man forever! We have an appointment with God each week. The rewards of Sabbath-keeping are physical rejuvenation, mental relaxation, and spiritual renewal. It's a priceless, precious gift!

THE BIBLE SAYS

- Revelation 14:6-7** God's final message to mankind is a call to worship the Creator.
- Revelation 4:11** The basis of all worship is the fact that God created us.
- John 1:1-3, 10, 14, Colossians 1:16** Since Jesus was the active Agent in creation, Revelation's final call to worship the Creator is a call to give honor to Jesus.
- Exodus 20:8-11** We worship Him as the Creator by keeping His Sabbath.
- Genesis 2:1-3** The Sabbath was set apart at creation: God *rested* upon the seventh day, *blessed* the seventh day, and *hallowed* it.
- Mark 2:27** Jesus said, "The Sabbath"—given to Adam and Eve 2000 years before the first Jew—"was made for MAN," that is, for all mankind everywhere.
- Ezekiel 20:12 & 20** The Sabbath was established for all mankind as a twofold sign between God and His people: a sign of sanctification and a sign of God's divine Lordship.
- Luke 4:16** Jesus always kept the Sabbath faithfully— "as His custom was."
- Matthew 24:20** Jesus knew Christians would keep the Sabbath in A.D. 70 at the destruction of Jerusalem—nearly 40 years *after* His death and resurrection.
- Acts 13:42, 44** The apostle Paul not only kept the Sabbath himself but also met on that day to worship God with the whole city, Jews and Gentiles alike.
- Acts 16:13** Since there was no established Christian church in Philippi, Paul met privately in a country setting with a group of believers on the Sabbath.
- Revelation 1:10** At the end of the first century, the Lord still had a special day, "the Lord's Day." Revelation 1:10 does not reveal which day is the Lord's Day, but Matthew 12:8, Mark 2:28, Luke 6:5, and Isaiah 58:13 do.
- Matthew 12:8** "The Son of Man is Lord even of the Sabbath day." If the Son of Man is "Lord" of the Sabbath, the Sabbath must be the Lord's day.
- Luke 23:54-56, 24:1** This passage lists three days in succession:
The day Christ died—the Preparation—FRIDAY.
The day Christ rested in the tomb—the Sabbath—SATURDAY.
The day Christ rose again—the first day—SUNDAY.
Therefore the Sabbath is clearly Saturday, the seventh day of the week.
- Hebrews 13:8** Jesus never changes: He's "the same yesterday, today, and forever."
- Malachi 3:6** God never changes: "I am the Lord, I change not."
- Psalms 89:34** God swears never to "alter the word that has gone out of My lips." And the Ten Commandments *did* go out of His lips when He spoke them from Mt. Sinai.
- Isaiah 66:22-23** We shall keep Sabbath each week in the New Earth even as Adam and Eve kept it in the Garden of Eden.

Quick Quiz

Our heavenly Father has *so much* He longs to teach us! Think of each seminar session as one in a series of steps leading upward—a series of “lessons from heaven.” May we learn our lessons well, so we in turn can teach others. God’s Word, the Bible—our Textbook for this seminar—offers **Learning Unlimited!**

#11 - A Centuries Old Remedy for Stress

1. The Bible gives two vital “earmarks” or points of identification for God’s saints in the Last Days, which are that they “_____ the _____ of God and the _____ of Jesus.”

To check your answer, see Revelation 14:12.

2. The Bible teaches that God’s holy seventh-day Sabbath was to be a special “SIGN” between Him and His people, first, “that they might know that I am the Lord that _____ them,” and second, “that ye may know that I am the _____ your _____.”

To check your answer, see Ezekiel 20:12 & 20.

3. When God made the first Sabbath to give to mankind at the end of Creation Week, He did it by performing three divine acts: (1) He _____ on the seventh day, (2) then He _____ the seventh day, and (3) He _____ the seventh day.

To check your answer, see Genesis 2:2-3.

4. How do we know that Jesus, God the Son, is the Creator—and that He made the Sabbath?

To check your answer, see John 1:1-3, 10, 14; Colossians 1:16; Hebrews 1:1-10; Mark 2:27.

5. T We can be sure which day IS the seventh day, because the Bible makes plain that God’s F Sabbath is the day that falls between Friday and Sunday.

To check your answer, see Luke 23:46 to 24:1 and Mark 15:37 to 16:2.

6. In His Sermon on the Mount, Jesus declared we were not even to _____ that He came to _____ the Law, and that not one _____ or one _____ of the Law would pass away, till _____ be fulfilled.

To check your answer, see Matthew 5:17-19.

A Thought for Today

Genesis 2:1-3

Thus the heavens and the earth, and all the host of them, were finished. And on the seventh day God ended His work which He had done, and He rested on the seventh day from all His work which He had done. Then God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it, because in it He rested from all His work which God had created and made.