Appendix II

The Sign of the Sabbath

*Historical Basis in Genesis, Established As a Sign in Exodus*

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

Ye shall keep the Sabbath therefore; for it is holy unto you. Everyone that defileth it shall surely be put to death: for whosoever doeth any work therein, that soul shall be cut off from among his people.

Six days may work be done; but in the seventh is the Sabbath of rest, holy to the Lord: whosoever doeth any work in the Sabbath day, he shall surely be put to death.

Wherefore the children of Israel shall keep the Sabbath, to observe the Sabbath throughout their generations, for a perpetual covenant.

It is a sign between me and the children of Israel forever: for in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, and on the seventh day he rested, and was refreshed” (Ex. 31:13-17).

The Sabbath was given to Israel as *a sign,* and the Sabbath was to be observed by the Jewish people “throughout their generations, for a perpetual covenant,” with “death” being the Divine penalty for defiling the Sabbath.

When giving the Sabbath to Israel (*cf.* Ex. 20:11) or referring to the Sabbath rest awaiting the people of God in the Book of Hebrews (Heb. 4:4-9), in each instance, *for a very good reason,* God called attention to that which had occurred in Genesis chapters one and two.

*There is a latter work of restoration, followed by rest, which is based on a former work of restoration, followed by rest; and the Sabbath was given to the Jewish people to keep this thought ever before them throughout their generations.*

That is, though *the sign of the Sabbath* concerned a present work and future rest, it was *based* on a past work and rest. God worked six days to restore a ruined creation in the opening chapter of Genesis; and on the sixth day, along with the completion of His work of restoration, He brought man into existence to rule over the restored material creation (Gen. 1:26-28). Then God rested on the seventh day.

But *a ruin* ensued once again. Man, an entirely new creation in the universe, fell; and, as a result, the restored material creation was brought under a curse (Gen. 3:17), leaving God with two ruined creations: *man,* and *the material creation.*

With that in mind, how did God, in the Genesis account, set about to restore these two ruined creations? The answer is not only clearly revealed but it is also very simple.

According to Scripture, God set about to restore the subsequent ruined creations *in exactly the same manner which He had used to restore the former ruined creation in the opening chapter of Genesis.* God set about to restore the two subsequent ruined creations over a six-day period (in keeping with Gen. 1:2b-25); and, in keeping with Gen. 2:2, 3, following His restorative work, God would then rest on the seventh day.

*The latter restoration MUST occur in complete keeping with the former restoration. A Divinely-designed pattern had been set in the former restoration — a pattern set perfect in the beginning, which, accordingly, COULD NEVER CHANGE.*

Thus, the latter restoration *MUST occur over a six-day period.*  And this six-day period of restorative work *MUST, as the former, be followed by a day of rest.*

*From a Biblical standpoint, it is NOT POSSIBLE for the matter to occur in any other manner.* And the Sabbath, following six days of work, was given to Israel to keep the thought ever before the Jewish people that, in accord with the opening verses of Genesis, God was going to once again rest for one day following six days of work to effect the restoration of that which is presently in a ruined state (both man and the material creation).

The Sabbath was a “sign,” and *a sign* in Scripture, having to do with the Jewish people (Matt. 12:38-40; I Cor. 1:22), points to something beyond itself. This “sign,” the Sabbath, points to *a seventh-day rest which God will enter into with His people (“the people of God” in Heb. 4:9) following six previous days of restorative work.*

Each day in the former restoration and rest was twenty-four hours in length, but each day in the latter restoration and rest is revealed to be one thousand years in length (II Peter 1:16-18; 3:3-8; *cf.* Matt. 16:28-17:5). *Based on the pattern set forth in Genesis chapters one and two*, *God is going to work for six thousand years during the present restoration and then rest the seventh one-thousand-year period.*

(God has given the Sabbath to Israel in this manner, extending “throughout their generations,” as “a sign,” “for a perpetual covenant.” And *no conditions* are attached to this covenant.

God made the covenant with the Jewish people, not only with the generation during Moses’ day but with *all generations, before that day and after that day*; *and God will keep His covenant with His people.*

*ALL* things portended by the sign of the Sabbath will, because of God’s unconditional covenant, *ultimately be realized by the Jewish people.*)

Scripture begins by laying the foundational basis for this septenary arrangement of time in the opening verses (Gen. 1:1-2:3). Then, accordingly, this is something seen or alluded to throughout Scripture (Ex. 31:13-17; Num. 19:12; Hosea 5:15-6:2; Jonah 1:17; Matt. 17:1; Luke 24:21; John 1:29, 35, 43; 2:1; 5:9; 9:14; 11:6, 7; Heb. 4:1, 4, 9). And the matter is then brought to a conclusion in Revelation chapter twenty, where the 1,000-year Messianic Era is mentioned six times (vv. 2-7), immediately prior to the eternal ages which are seen to follow (chs. 21, 22).

Scripture deals with “time,” 7,000 years of time — time extending *from* the restoration of the earth and the creation of man *to* the end of the Messianic Kingdom. Scripture has very little to say about that which occurred prior to these 7,000 years, and it also has very little to say about that which will occur following these 7,000 years. Scripture is built on this septenary arrangement of time, which is based on the opening two chapters of Genesis; and *this is an evident fact which must be recognized if one would correctly understand God’s redemptive plans and purposes which He has revealed in His Word.*