

Is the Sabbath Commandment Quoted in the New Testament?

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Introduction

The Greek word *sabbaton* (or *sabbata*) in its various forms occurs some 68 times in the New Testament. It is translated both "Sabbath" (40 times from a Greek singular, 19 times from a Greek plural) and "week" (3 times from a Greek singular, 6 times from a Greek plural). But these references to the Sabbath do not quote what the commandment says. They merely remind us that there is such a commandment. In this paper we raise the question whether there are actual quotations from the Sabbath commandment in the New Testament. There are, but perhaps not in the way one might expect.

Command and Explanation Clauses

The fourth commandment is the longest of the ten, with 55 words in the Hebrew original.¹ Like all of the first five commandments, it has two main parts – a command and an explanation.² The first five commandments, with a total of 146 words, are about equally divided between command and explanation (47.3%). The last five, with a total of 24 words, are much shorter and lack explanation clauses.³ When taken together, 40.6% of the words in the ten commandments as a whole consists of explanatory material. Surely this fact should tell us something about God. See tables 1 and 2 (below).

¹ This word count ignores methegs. If the term "metheg" is unfamiliar to you, this note is irrelevant. Skip it. If you know what methegs are and counting them does matter, there are 13 methegs in the fourth commandment, which reduces the word count by 13. Of course there are methegs in other commandments as well, so their lengths relative to each other remain largely intact either way. For those who are interested, the number of methegs in the various commandments is as follows: 1 (3), 2 (6), 3 (7), 4 (13), 5 (3), 6 (0), 7 (0), 8 (0), 9 (1), 10 (1).

² There are a number of ways to divide up the commandments, but in my view Exod 20:3 is the command clause of the first commandment, while vs. 2 is the corresponding explanation clause. Thus the sequence of clauses in vss. 2-3 is explanation first, then command. In commandments 2-5 (vss. 4-12) the sequence is command first, then explanation.

³ The explanations resume where they left off, at commandment #6, in Matt 5.

Table 1
Summary of Word Counts in Exod 20:2-12

Commandment	Command Clause	Explanation Clause	Total
1	7	9	16
2	21	22	43
3	7	10	17
4	29	26	55
5	5	10	15
Totals	69	77	146

Table 2
Summary of Word Counts in Exod 20:13-17

Commandment	Command Clause	Explanation Clause	Total
6	2	N/A	2
7	2	N/A	2
8	2	N/A	2
9	5	N/A	5
10	13	N/A	13
Totals	24	N/A	24

If our concept of the fourth commandment is that its sole function is to command us to "Remember the Sabbath day . . .," we won't find that in the New Testament – not in so many words, although as I hope to show later in the paper there is a close approximation of something just this concise.

The wording of the Sabbath commandment appears seven times in the Old Testament, five times in the New Testament. The New Testament does indeed quote the commandment – directly, extensively, and more than once. But these quotations do not come from the command clause; they come from the explanation clause. As such, we must know how to look for them. They are there, but we might not see them if we are looking for something else. The command clause is the part that says, "Remember the Sabbath day . . ." (vss. 8-10), but the explanation clause is also part of the commandment. It says, "For in six days . . ." (vs. 11).

Hebrews 4:4

In Heb 4:4 ("And on the seventh day God rested from all his work") we have a direct reference back to, well, back to what? Does this verse refer to the Sabbath commandment itself or to the creation story on which it is based? Below I compare the Greek translation of Gen 2:2, Exod 20:11, and Heb 4:4, asking the reader's indulgence in omitting the reference normally placed at the end of such lines of text. The lines are too wide to format in the normal way.

Text Exhibit
Greek Text of Gen 2:2; Exod 20:11; and Heb 4:4

καὶ κατέπαυσεν τῇ ἡμέρᾳ τῇ ἑβδόμῃ ἀπὸ πάντων τῶν ἔργων αὐτοῦ ὧν ἐποίησεν
καὶ κατέπαυσεν τῇ ἡμέρᾳ τῇ ἑβδόμῃ
καὶ κατέπαυσεν ὁ θεὸς ἐν τῇ ἡμέρᾳ τῇ ἑβδόμῃ ἀπὸ πάντων τῶν ἔργων αὐτοῦ

In the above text exhibit notice that Heb 4:4 (the third line) inserts *ho theos en* ("God on"), making the subject of *katepausen* ("He rested") explicit, in contrast to both Gen 2:2 (the first line) and Exod 20:11 (the second line). In Heb 4:4 the words *apo pantōn tōn ergōn autou* ("from all His work") are a clear reflection of Gen 2:2. The author of Hebrews does not complete the line by adding *hōn epoiēsen* ("which He had done"), but this is a small difference. Exod 20:11, on the other hand, lacks the entire second half of the sentence, as it appears in Gen 2:2 (*apo pantōn tōn ergōn autou hōn epoiēsen*, "from all His work which He had done"). From this comparison it should be clear that the base line for Heb 4:4 is Genesis rather than Exodus – the creation story rather than the Sabbath commandment.

"Heaven(s)," "Earth," and "Sea(s)"

We have briefly discussed a passage that does not quote the Sabbath commandment. How can we recognize other passages that do quote it? What would a quotation drawn from the fourth commandment look like? I suggest that whenever the words "heaven(s)," "earth," and "sea(s)" appear together in one verse, in the context of God's creatorship, that is a reference to the fourth commandment. This is not a random assortment of vocabulary. These three words come to the heart of what the commandment is about.

Thus, the three terms "heaven(s)," "earth," "sea(s)" are our first and best clue when searching for quotations of the Sabbath commandment. But we can't rely on these terms exclusively. They can't be our only clue. Otherwise we would be unable to account for Rev 12:12 and 21:1, which have the three main terms, but no connection with the idea of creation and therefore no connection with the commandment. There is another clue we can use along with this one and we introduce that a bit further on.

The three main terms

It might seem that the creation story itself would combine all three terms, but nowhere in Gen 1 or 2 do we find such a verse. So it is not just that Exod 20:11 brings the terms "heaven(s)," "earth," and "sea(s)" together in one place, but that it is the first passage of Scripture to do so.

Seven verses previously, Exod 20:4 speaks of making "an idol in the form of anything in heaven above or on the earth beneath or in the waters [*bammáyim*] below," but, while the Hebrew words *máyim* ("waters," vs. 4) and *yāmîm* ("sea," vs. 11) are similar in meaning, they are distinct words, so a reference to the one cannot be accepted as a reference to the other.

Separately, there are over 200 passages in the Bible which refer in some way to "(the) heaven(s) and (the) earth," but that formula omits the third term, "sea(s)." The first place in the Bible where the three terms "heaven(s)," "earth," and "sea(s)" occur together is Exod 20:11.

A fourth term

I said earlier that, within the context of God's creatorship, the three terms mentioned above are one clue and that there is another. The other clue is a fourth term. After the reference to "heavens," "earth," and "sea" (אֶת־הַשָּׁמַיִם וְאֶת־הָאָרֶץ אֶת־הַיָּם) *ʾet-haššāmáyim w^{et}-hāʾāreš ʾet-hayyām*) in Exod 20:11, the text adds, "and all that is in them" (וְאֶת־כָּל־אֲשֶׁר־בָּם) *w^{et}-kol-ʾšer-bām*). This fourth term, or tag element, does not carry over with complete consistency into the twelve later passages discussed here. It is always there is one form or another, but sometimes the wording is free. Nevertheless, finding this tag in connection with the three main terms from Exod 20:11, in the context of creation, is like finding a thumbprint. This combination of textual identifiers is reliable evidence that a passage is referring back to the Sabbath commandment.

Among the seven Old Testament examples the fourth term ranges from Amos 9:6 (עַל־פְּנֵי הָאָרֶץ, *ʿal-p^{ne} hāʾāreš*, "over the face of the land") which is not especially close to what we find in Exod 20:11, at one extreme, to Ps 146:6 where the Hebrew of the fourth term of the earlier passage is reproduced exactly. For the full text of all seven Old Testament passages in question, see Appendix.

Among the five New Testament passages also the fourth term assumes a variety of forms. In Rev 14:7 (καὶ πηγὰς ὑδάτων, *kai pēgas hudatōn*, "and the springs of water") there is a weak approximation of the tag. In Rev 5:13 (καὶ τὰ ἐν αὐτοῖς πάντα, *kai ta en autois panta*, "and all that is in them") and 10:6 (καὶ τὰ ἐν αὐτῇ, *kai ta en autē*, "and all that is in it") there is a strong approximation. In Acts 4:24 and 14:15 the Greek text of Exod 20:11 is reproduced exactly, with every letter and accent in place. Here the exactness of the quotation extends not only to the fourth term but to the three which precede it, encompassing the entire clause. Thus, in Exod 20:11; Acts 4:24; and Acts 14:15 we have τὸν οὐρανὸν καὶ τὴν γῆν καὶ τὴν θάλασσαν καὶ πάντα τὰ ἐν αὐτοῖς, *ton ouranon kai tēn gēn kai tēn thalassan kai panta ta en autois*, "the heaven and the earth and the sea and all [that is] in them" (literal gloss). Although slightly different from each other in English translation, Acts 4:24 and 14:15 are identical in Greek.⁴ For the full text of all five New Testament passages, see Appendix.

Discussion

Ironically, the passage with the closest rhetorical connection to the commandment does not have the closest verbal connection. The fourth term in (Rev 14:7) (καὶ πηγὰς ὑδάτων, *kai pēgas hudatōn*, "and the springs of water") does not reproduce the Greek wording of Exod 20:11 LXX precisely, but does make clear that the earlier passage was in view by showing that a fourth term is expected following the words, τὸν οὐρανὸν καὶ τὴν γῆν καὶ θάλασσαν, *ton ouranon kai tēn gēn kai thalassan*, "the heavens and the earth, and sea" (Rev 14:7, literal gloss).

⁴ But the Greek is not identical to the Hebrew. The word "and" is present in Greek translation before the third term ("sea"), but not in the Hebrew original. The comparison here is among representatives of the Greek form of the text – with "and" (*kai*).

In two additional passages (Rev 12:12; 21:1) the tag element is missing and the context is not related to creation, although the three main terms from Exod 20:11 are all present. So I do not consider Rev 12:12 or 21:1 to be references to the commandment, even though most of the words we might expect to find in such references (three out of four terms) are present.

By contrast, in two cases (Neh 9:6; Rev 10:6) a tag element is added, not once but three times. Thus, in these two verses the form of the clause is term 1 + tag 1 + term 2 + tag 2 + term 3 + tag 3, rather than term 1 + term 2 + term 3 + tag, as in the other examples.

The Passages

For ease of exposition I now give an overview of the seven Old Testament passages mentioned above. (See table 3.) Words in the English column that provide a link to the commandment are bolded and Hebrew and Greek parallels, for those words only, are given in transliterated form.

Table 3
Seven Old Testament Passages

Ref	English (NIV)	Hebrew (Quoted)	Greek (Quoted)
Neh 9:6	You alone are the LORD. You made the heavens , even the highest heavens, and all their starry host, the earth and all that is on it, the seas and all that is in them. You give life to everything, and the multitudes of heaven worship you.	ʔet-haššāmáyim šʿmê haššāmáyim w ^e kol- š ^e bāʾām hāʾāreš w ^e kol- ʾāšer ʿaléyhā hayyammîm w ^e kol-ʾāšer bāhem	ton ouranon kai ton ouranon tou ouranou kai pasan tēn stasin autōn tēn gēn kai panta hosa estin en autē tas thalassas kai panta ta en autais
Ps 69:34	Let heaven and earth praise him, the seas and all that move in them,	šāmáyim wāʾāreš yammîm w ^e kol-rōmēs bām	hoi ouranoi kai hē gē thalassa kai panta ta herponta en autois
Ps 96:11	Let the heavens rejoice, let the earth be glad; let the sea resound, and all that is in it;	haššāmáyim . . . hāʾāreš . . . hayyām ūm ^e lōʾô	hoi ouranoi . . . hē gē . . . hē thalassa kai to plērōma autēs
Ps 135:6	The LORD does whatever pleases him, in the heavens and on the earth, in the seas and all their depths.	baššāmáyim ūbāʾāreš bayyammîm w ^e kol- t ^e hômôt	en tō ouranō kai en tē gē en tais thalassais kai en pasais tais abussois
Ps 146:6	the Maker of heaven and earth, the sea, and everything in them-- the LORD, who remains faithful forever.	šāmáyim wāʾāreš ʔet- hayyām w ^e et-kol-ʾāšer- bām	ton ouranon kai tēn gēn tēn thalassan kai panta ta en autois
Amos 9:6	he who builds his lofty palace in the heavens and sets its foundation on the earth , who calls for the waters of the sea and pours them out over the face of the land-- the LORD is his name.	baššāmáyim . . . ʿal-ʾēreš . . . l ^e mê-hayyām . . . ʿal- p ^e nê hāʾāreš	eπi tēs gēs themeliōn . . . to hudōr tēs thalassēs . . . eπi prosōpon tēs gēs
Hag 2:6	"This is what the LORD Almighty says: 'In a little while I will once more shake the heavens and the earth, the sea and the dry land. '"	ʔet-haššāmáyim w ^e et- hāʾāreš w ^e et-hayyām w ^e et-heḥārābā	ton ouranon kai tēn gēn kai tēn thalassan kai tēn xēran

In table 3 notice that the fourth element, or tag (comparable to "and all that is in them," Exod 20:11), changes from verse to verse. Thus, in addition to (a) "and all their starry host," (b) "and all that is on it," (c) "and all that is in them" (Neh 9:6); "and all that move in them" (Ps 69:34); "and all that is in it" (Ps 96:11); "and all that is in them" (Ps 146:6), we also find "and all their depths" (Ps 135:6); "over the face of the land" (Amos 9:6); and "the dry land" (Hag 2:6). As mentioned earlier, the tag element in Neh 9:6 appears three times rather than once.

The five main New Testament examples appear in table 4 (below), with two related but questionable examples in table 5 (below).

Table 4
Five New Testament Passages

Ref	English (NIV)	Greek (Quoted)
Acts 4:24	When they heard this, they raised their voices together in prayer to God. "Sovereign Lord," they said, "you made the heaven and the earth and the sea, and everything in them. "	ton ouranon kai tēn gēn kai tēn thalassan kai panta ta en autois
Acts 14:15	"Men, why are you doing this? We too are only men, human like you. We are bringing you good news, telling you to turn from these worthless things to the living God, who made heaven and earth and sea and everything in them. "	ton ouranon kai tēn gēn kai tēn thalassan kai panta ta en autois
Rev 5:13	Then I heard every creature in heaven and on earth and under the earth and on the sea, and all that is in them , singing: "To him who sits on the throne and to the Lamb be praise and honor and glory and power, for ever and ever!"	en tō autanō kai epi tēs gēs . . . kai epi tēs thalassēs kai ta en autois panta
Rev 10:6	And he swore by him who lives for ever and ever, who created the heavens and all that is in them, the earth and all that is in it, and the sea and all that is in it , and said, "There will be no more delay!"	ton ouranon kai ta en autō kai tēn gēn kai ta en autē kai tēn thalassan kai ta en autē
Rev 14:7	He said in a loud voice, "Fear God and give him glory, because the hour of his judgment has come. Worship him who made the heavens, the earth, the sea and the springs of water. "	ton ouranon kai tēn gēn kai thalassan kai pēgas hudatōn

Table 5
Two Questionable Examples

Rev 12:12	Therefore rejoice, you heavens and you who dwell in them! But woe to the earth and the sea , because the devil has gone down to you! He is filled with fury, because he knows that his time is short."	hoi ouranoi . . . tēn gēn kai tēn thalassan
Rev 21:1	Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth , for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and there was no longer any sea .	ouranon . . . gēn . . . hē thalassa

In table 4 each example has a tag element ("and everything in them" [Acts 4:24]; "and everything in them" [Acts 14:15]; "and all that is in them" [Rev 5:13]; "and all that is in it" [Rev 10:6]; "and the springs of water" [Rev 14:7]). In table 5, Rev 12:12 and 21:1 do not have the tag and do not have a strong connection with the idea of God's creatorship.

Do Acts 4:24 and 14:15 Refer Back to Exod 20:11 or Ps 146:6?

The similarity between Exod 20:11 and Ps 146:6 is so close that we should ask which passage Acts 4:24 and 14:15 have in view. Could they be references to Ps 146 instead of Exod 20? This is not a difficult question to answer. The wording of Acts 4:24 and 14:15 refers back to Exod 20:11, not Ps 146:6. This becomes clear when we consider the differences between Ps 146:6 and Exod 20:11. These are minimal, I grant, but they enable us to distinguish between the two possible origins for the material in Acts.

One does not need to be able to read the languages involved in order to see where the lines are the same and where they are different. In the Hebrew Ps 146:6 omits the object marker *et* and with it the definite article twice. Thus, in Hebrew we have "heavens and earth" rather than "the heavens and the earth." (The object marker *et* is untranslatable.) In Greek Ps 146:6 omits the word *kai* ("and") before *tēn thalassan* ("the sea"). Thus, in Greek the text reads "the sea" instead of "and the sea." See tables 6 and 7.

Table 6
Comparison of Exod 20:11 and Ps 146:6
(Hebrew, Greek)

Ref	Text
Hebrew	
Exod 20:11	אֶת־הַשָּׁמַיִם וְאֶת־הָאָרֶץ אֶת־הַיָּם וְאֶת־כָּל־אֲשֶׁר־בָּם
Ps 146:6	שָׁמַיִם וְאֶת־הָאָרֶץ אֶת־הַיָּם וְאֶת־כָּל־אֲשֶׁר־בָּם
Greek	
Exod 20:11	τὸν οὐρανὸν καὶ τὴν γῆν καὶ τὴν θάλασσαν καὶ πάντα τὰ ἐν αὐτοῖς
Ps 146:6	τὸν οὐρανὸν καὶ τὴν γῆν τὴν θάλασσαν καὶ πάντα τὰ ἐν αὐτοῖς

Table 7
Comparison of Exod 20:11 With Acts 4:24 and 14:15
(Greek)

Ref	Text
Exod 20:11	τὸν οὐρανὸν καὶ τὴν γῆν καὶ τὴν θάλασσαν καὶ πάντα τὰ ἐν αὐτοῖς
Acts 4:24	τὸν οὐρανὸν καὶ τὴν γῆν καὶ τὴν θάλασσαν καὶ πάντα τὰ ἐν αὐτοῖς
Acts 14:15	τὸν οὐρανὸν καὶ τὴν γῆν καὶ τὴν θάλασσαν καὶ πάντα τὰ ἐν αὐτοῖς

There is a difference between Ps 146:6 on the one hand and both Acts 4:24 and 14:15 on the other. The Hebrew original of Exod 20:11 includes "and" (*w^e*) before the third term ("sea") in the clause we are studying. The Greek translation of Exod 20:11 excludes it. With this fact in view, notice that the Greek translation of Ps 146:6 excludes "and" (*kai*), matching the Hebrew of Exod 20:11, while both Acts 4:24 and 14:15 include "and" (*kai*), thus matching the Greek of Exod 20:11. It might seem that this is a small difference, but it will have interesting implications later on in the discussion. Both have the same passage in view, but Ps 146:6 looks to the Hebrew form of the commandment, while Acts 4:24 and 14:15 look to the Greek.

My point in this section is that the early disciples were consciously and carefully quoting the Sabbath commandment when they praised God for the privilege of suffering reproach for the sake of Jesus (see Acts 4:21-31). And Paul was just as consciously and just as carefully quoting the same commandment when he tried to keep the men of Lystra from sacrificing to him for healing a lame man (see Acts 14:8-18).

Notice that in the one case the Sabbath commandment is used as a vehicle of praise and that in the other case it is used as an argument against idolatry. What connection is there between the Sabbath commandment and the Bible's case against idolatry? Idolatry is the worship of something other than the Creator – something we have made, for example; anything other than the One who made us. True worship is the act of honoring God as the Source of our being. There are many other things to praise Him for, but God's creatorship is the basis for all true worship in every age, just as forgetting His creatorship is the basis for all idolatry. Thus, thoughtful Sabbath keeping is a guarantee against idolatry because it constantly reminds us that God is the One who made "the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that is in them" (Exod 20:11), i.e., both us and everything that surrounds us. For this reason we worship Him.

Themes

One theme that emerges from the present study is the close connection between God's creatorship and praise. I submit that the Sabbath does more than give us time for praise. A right celebration of the seventh-day Sabbath is itself a form of praise. One definition for praise is an "Expression of approval, commendation, or admiration."⁵ The most fundamental thing we do when obeying the fourth commandment as God intended is to express approval for God's creative act of bringing our world into existence. That's praise.

Another theme that emerges is the connection between God's creatorship and judgment. I didn't say creatorship and punishment. Judgment is not the same as punishment. The two overlap, but are separate words and separate concepts.

Say among the nations, "The LORD reigns." The world is firmly established, it cannot be moved; he will judge the peoples with equity. ¹¹ Let the heavens rejoice, let the earth be glad; let the sea resound, and all that is in it; ¹² let the fields be jubilant, and everything in them. Then all the trees of the forest will sing for joy; ¹³ they will sing before the LORD, for he comes, he comes to judge the earth. He will judge the world in righteousness and the peoples in his truth. (Ps 96:10-13)

The above passage deserves to be read carefully. In the Bible judgment means being decisive – bringing things to a head. This could involve reaching a timely decision, caring for people in need instead of letting things slide, bringing people to punishment when they deserve it, rescuing the nation when its people have separated from God. For insight into what the Bible means by judging, there is no better place to start than the book of Judges. The judges were not raised up to punish, but to deliver. They took decisive action on behalf of Israel. In the present case, God judges the whole earth because He made the whole earth.

⁵ <http://www.thefreedictionary.com/praise>.

Discussion

A Scripturally informed memory of who God is offers the best reason anyone could have for worshipping Him. Because our God is the One who created both us and everything else, He merits our worship. This is the reason why praise is always fitting and why any type of idolatry is hopelessly misguided. It is the reason why God's judgments are fair and reasonable. A lot of seemingly different themes come together in the Sabbath commandment.

False worship

By definition, the things that we make cannot have made us. Supposing otherwise would be a paradigm example of circular reasoning. And so the things we make cannot possibly merit our worship. Saying this is not a small or unimportant point in the overall context of what the Bible says to mankind. It is supremely important for us to remember who is God and who is not.

By constantly reminding us that we owe our existence to Yahweh, the Sabbath commandment strikes at the heart of every kind of idolatry. A reminder like this is not something we should brush aside. It is something we should cling to and cherish. We do this by obeying what the commandment tells us to do, in the very way that it tells us to do it. The only day that fulfills the requirement of resting on the seventh day, is the seventh day. The seventh day is not the first day. One is not seven.

True worship

In Rev 14:7 an angel flying in midair makes a distinction between two ways of worshipping God. By endorsing the one he condemns the other. What he says is,

"Fear God and give him glory, because the hour of his judgment has come. Worship him who made the heavens, the earth, the sea and the springs of water." (Rev 14:7, NIV)

No one would deny that Christians of every denomination worship the Creator. They may or may not believe what the creation story says, but they worship the God of the Bible. And yet the first angel of Rev 14 implies that not all worship – even of the one true God – is appropriate or acceptable.

Is there a way of worshipping the God of creation that does not acknowledge His role as Creator? If not, what is the angel trying to say? By contrast, is there a way of worshipping that specifically focuses attention on the fact that Yahweh, and no other, is God by virtue of the fact that He alone created all things? Are these two ways of worshipping different from each other? And why should this matter?

In the beginning God worked for six days creating the world and everything in it, and then set the seventh day apart from the other six, making it holy. At the time when He did this, the only people He could have done it for were Adam and Eve, and we all descend from them. If there is no distinction between Jews and Greeks in Gal 3:26-29, there is certainly no distinction of racial groups in Gen 2:1-3. Adam and Eve were neither Jews nor Greeks, but the parents of all humankind. We all owe our existence to one God through one set of human parents. The human relationship with the Sabbath is not ethnic, but universal.

By keeping the Seventh day holy in obedience to the fourth commandment we show that we worship the God "who made the heavens, the earth, the sea and the springs of water" (Rev 14:7), but not only this. We show that we worship the God of creation for the specific reason that He is the One who did these things. This is the type of worship the angel had in mind when he said what he did in Rev 14:7.

Conclusion

Because God is who He is and because He has set apart a day to be with us, we must set apart that same day to be with Him or show ultimately, by not doing so, that our hearts are not with Him. "For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also" (Matt 6:21). If Jesus is our Treasure, we will want to be with Him – not in a way we decide would be good, but in the very way He indicates.

Is a whole day too long to spend with Jesus? If so, what will be our attitude toward Him in eternity? Will we love being with Him there after consistently being too busy for Him here? Forever is longer than a day. His command to rest – physically as well as spiritually, for an entire twenty-four hour period, even if it is from sunset Friday evening to sunset Saturday evening – is not onerous if we love Him. On the contrary, spending such time with Jesus will be a source of delight and a wellspring of praise.

I have a theory that we have not kept the Sabbath until we enjoy keeping it. This does not mean enjoying ourselves on that day by doing whatever we like. It means immersing ourselves in God's presence by doing what pleases Him. It might involve spending time in public worship. It might involve getting out into nature with your kids in the afternoon. It might involve taking walks out of doors. It might involve visiting people who can't get out and are lonely. It might involve singing for people in nursing homes. There are different ways to do this. The point is to spend time with Jesus, in the person of those with whom He identifies through the gospel, and to celebrate His creative power in nature.

The New Testament does not tell people to keep the Sabbath, not because it had become unimportant by New Testament times but because they were keeping it already. Notice that even Rev 14:7 does not tell us to keep the Sabbath. Instead it tells us to worship the Creator. The connection between the Sabbath and the One whose work it commemorates is direct, but the wording as to do with worship and with the Creator of all things. Worship, to avoid being idolatrous, must be directed to the One who is the Source of our being. There is a commandment which deals with such issues. Is this commandment quoted in the New Testament? A number of times. It is there to see if we will see it.

Appendix

Text of the Passages Referred to in the Paper

Exod 20:11

Exodus 20:11 ^{WTT} כִּי שֵׁשֶׁת־יָמִים עָשָׂה יְהוָה אֶת־הַשָּׁמַיִם וְאֶת־הָאָרֶץ וְאֶת־כָּל־אֲשֶׁר־בָּם וַיִּנַּח בַּיּוֹם הַשְּׁבִיעִי עַל־כֵּן בֵּרַךְ יְהוָה אֶת־יוֹם הַשַּׁבָּת וַיְקַדְּשֶׁהוּ: ס

^{NIV} **Exodus 20:11** For in six days the LORD made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that is in them, but he rested on the seventh day. Therefore the LORD blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy.

^{BGT} **Exodus 20:11** ἐν γὰρ ἕξ ἡμέραις ἐποίησεν κύριος τὸν οὐρανὸν καὶ τὴν γῆν καὶ τὴν θάλασσαν καὶ πάντα τὰ ἐν αὐτοῖς καὶ κατέπαυσεν τῇ ἡμέρᾳ τῇ ἑβδόμῃ διὰ τοῦτο εὐλόγησεν κύριος τὴν ἡμέραν τὴν ἑβδόμην καὶ ἡγίασεν αὐτήν

Old Testament passages

Nehemiah 9:6 ^{WTT} אַתָּה־הוּא יְהוָה לְבַדְּךָ (אֵת) [אַתָּה] עָשִׂיתָ אֶת־הַשָּׁמַיִם שָׁמַיִם הַשָּׁמַיִם וְכָל־צַבָּאָם הָאָרֶץ וְכָל־אֲשֶׁר עָלֶיהָ הַיַּמִּים וְכָל־אֲשֶׁר בָּהֶם וְאֵת מַחֲיָה אֶת־כָּל־לָם וְצַבֵּא הַשָּׁמַיִם לְךָ מִשְׁתַּחֲוִיִּים:

^{NIV} **Nehemiah 9:6** ¶ You alone are the LORD. You made the heavens, even the highest heavens, and all their starry host, the earth and all that is on it, the seas and all that is in them. You give life to everything, and the multitudes of heaven worship you.

^{BGT} **Nehemiah 9:6** ¶ καὶ εἶπεν Εσδρας σὺ εἶ αὐτὸς κύριος μόνος σὺ ἐποίησας τὸν οὐρανὸν καὶ τὸν οὐρανὸν τοῦ οὐρανοῦ καὶ πάσαν τὴν στάσιν αὐτῶν τὴν γῆν καὶ πάντα ὅσα ἐστὶν ἐν αὐτῇ τὰς θαλάσσας καὶ πάντα τὰ ἐν αὐταῖς καὶ σὺ ζωοποιεῖς τὰ πάντα καὶ σοὶ προσκυνοῦσιν αἱ στρατιαὶ τῶν οὐρανῶν

Psalms 69:35 ^{WTT} יְהַלְלוּהוּ שָׁמַיִם וָאָרֶץ יַמִּים וְכָל־רֹמֵשׁ בָּם:

^{NIV} **Psalms 69:34** Let heaven and earth praise him, the seas and all that move in them,

^{BGT} **Psalms 68:35 [LXX numbering]** αἰνεσάτωσαν αὐτὸν οἱ οὐρανοὶ καὶ ἡ γῆ θάλασσα καὶ πάντα τὰ ἔρποντα ἐν αὐτοῖς

יִשְׂמְחוּ הַשָּׁמַיִם וְתִגַּל הָאָרֶץ יִרְעַם הַיָּם
וּמְלֵאוֹ: ^{WTT} Psalm 96:11

^{NIV} **Psalm 96:11** Let the heavens rejoice, let the earth be glad; let the sea resound, and all that is in it;

^{BGT} **Psalm 95:11 [LXX numbering]** εὐφραινέσθωσαν οἱ οὐρανοὶ καὶ ἀγαλλιástῳ ἡ γῆ σαλευθήτω ἡ θάλασσα καὶ τὸ πλήρωμα αὐτῆς

כָּל אֲשֶׁר-חָפֵץ יְהוָה עָשָׂה בַשָּׁמַיִם וּבָאָרֶץ
בַּיַּמִּים וּכְלִתְהוֹמוֹת: ^{WTT} Psalm 135:6

^{NIV} **Psalm 135:6** The LORD does whatever pleases him, in the heavens and on the earth, in the seas and all their depths.

^{BGT} **Psalm 134:6 [LXX numbering]** πάντα ὅσα ἠθέλησεν ὁ κύριος ἐποίησεν ἐν τῷ οὐρανῷ καὶ ἐν τῇ γῆ ἐν ταῖς θαλάσσαις καὶ ἐν πάσαις ταῖς ἄβυσσοῖς

שָׁמַיִם וְאָרֶץ אֶת-הַיָּם וְאֶת-כָּל-אֲשֶׁר-בָּם
הַשָּׁמַיִם אֱמַת לְעוֹלָם: ^{WTT} Psalm 146:6

[Nearly identical to the corresponding portion of Exod 20:11 in Hebrew.]

^{NIV} **Psalm 146:6** the Maker of heaven and earth, the sea, and everything in them-- the LORD, who remains faithful forever.

^{BGT} **Psalm 145:6 [LXX numbering]** τὸν ποιήσαντα τὸν οὐρανὸν καὶ τὴν γῆν τὴν θάλασσαν καὶ πάντα τὰ ἐν αὐτοῖς τὸν φυλάσσοντα ἀλήθειαν εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα
[Identical to the corresponding portion of Exod 20:11 in Greek, with one exception. There is no "and" before "the sea."]

כֹּה אָמַר יְהוָה אֱסִימְדוּ שָׁמַיִם מִלְמַעְלָה
וַיַּחְקְרוּ מוֹסְדֵי-אָרֶץ לְמַטָּה גַם-אֲנִי אֶמְאָס בְּכָל-זֶרַע
יִשְׂרָאֵל עַל-כָּל-אֲשֶׁר עָשׂוּ נְאֻם-יְהוָה: ^{WTT} Jeremiah 31:37

^{NIV} **Jeremiah 31:37** This is what the LORD says: "Only if the heavens above can be measured and the foundations of the earth below be searched out will I reject all the descendants of Israel because of all they have done," declares the LORD.

^{BGT} **Jeremiah 38:35 [LXX numbering]** ἐὰν ὑψωθῆ ὁ οὐρανὸς εἰς τὸ μετέωρον φησὶν κύριος καὶ ἐὰν ταπεινωθῆ τὸ ἔδαφος τῆς γῆς κάτω καὶ ἐγὼ οὐκ ἀποδοκιμῶ τὸ γένος Ἰσραὴλ φησὶν κύριος περὶ πάντων ὧν ἐποίησαν

הַבּוֹנֵה בַשָּׁמַיִם (מְעֻלוֹתוֹ) וְאֶגְדָּתוֹ
עַל-אָרֶץ יְסֻדָּהּ הַקְרָא לְמִי-הַיָּם וַיִּשְׁפְּכֵם עַל-פְּנֵי הָאָרֶץ
יְהוָה שְׁמוֹ: ^{WTT} Amos 9:6

^{NIV} **Amos 9:6** he who builds his lofty palace in the heavens and sets its foundation on the earth, who calls for the waters of the sea and pours them out over the face of the land-- the LORD is his name.

^{BGT} **Amos 9:6** ὁ οἰκοδομῶν εἰς τὸν οὐρανὸν ἀνάβασιν αὐτοῦ καὶ τὴν ἐπαγγελίαν αὐτοῦ ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς θεμελιῶν ὁ προσκαλούμενος τὸ ὕδωρ τῆς θαλάσσης καὶ ἐκχέων αὐτὸ ἐπὶ πρόσωπον τῆς γῆς κύριος ὁ θεὸς ὁ παντοκράτωρ ὄνομα αὐτῷ

כִּי כֹה אָמַר יְהוָה יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת עוֹד אֶתְּתֵן מַעַץ
 הֵיא וְאֲנִי מְרַעִישׁ אֶת־הַשָּׁמַיִם וְאֶת־הָאָרֶץ וְאֶת־הַיָּם
 וְאֶת־הַיַּבֵּשׁ:

^{NIV} **Haggai 2:6** "This is what the LORD Almighty says: 'In a little while I will once more shake the heavens and the earth, the sea and the dry land.'

^{BGT} **Haggai 2:6** διότι τάδε λέγει κύριος παντοκράτωρ ἔτι ἄπαξ ἐγὼ σεισῶ τὸν οὐρανὸν καὶ τὴν γῆν καὶ τὴν θάλασσαν καὶ τὴν ξηράν

New Testament passages

^{NIV} **Acts 4:24** When they heard this, they raised their voices together in prayer to God. "Sovereign Lord," they said, "you made the heaven and the earth and the sea, and everything in them."

^{BGT} **Acts 4:24** οἱ δὲ ἀκούσαντες ὁμοθυμαδὸν ἦραν φωνὴν πρὸς τὸν θεὸν καὶ εἶπαν· δέσποτα, σὺ ὁ ποιήσας τὸν οὐρανὸν καὶ τὴν γῆν καὶ τὴν θάλασσαν καὶ πάντα τὰ ἐν αὐτοῖς,
 [Fully identical to the corresponding portion of Exod 20:11 in Greek.]

^{NIV} **Acts 14:15** "Men, why are you doing this? We too are only men, human like you. We are bringing you good news, telling you to turn from these worthless things to the living God, who made heaven and earth and sea and everything in them."

^{BGT} **Acts 14:15** καὶ λέγοντες· ἄνδρες, τί ταῦτα ποιεῖτε; καὶ ἡμεῖς ὁμοιοπαθεῖς ἐσμεν ὑμῖν ἄνθρωποι εὐαγγελιζόμενοι ὑμᾶς ἀπὸ τούτων τῶν ματαίων ἐπιστρέφειν ἐπὶ θεὸν ζῶντα, ὃς ἐποίησεν τὸν οὐρανὸν καὶ τὴν γῆν καὶ τὴν θάλασσαν καὶ πάντα τὰ ἐν αὐτοῖς·
 [Fully identical to the corresponding portion of Exod 20:11 in Greek.]

^{NIV} **Revelation 5:13** Then I heard every creature in heaven and on earth and under the earth and on the sea, and all that is in them, singing: "To him who sits on the throne and to the Lamb be praise and honor and glory and power, for ever and ever!"

^{BGT} **Revelation 5:13** καὶ πᾶν κτίσμα ὃ ἐν τῷ οὐρανῷ καὶ ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς καὶ ὑποκάτω τῆς γῆς καὶ ἐπὶ τῆς θαλάσσης καὶ τὰ ἐν αὐτοῖς πάντα ἤκουσα λέγοντας· τῷ καθήμενῷ ἐπὶ τῷ θρόνῳ καὶ τῷ ἀρνίῳ ἡ εὐλογία καὶ ἡ τιμὴ καὶ ἡ δόξα καὶ τὸ κράτος εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας τῶν αἰώνων.

^{NIV} **Revelation 10:6** And he swore by him who lives for ever and ever, who created the heavens and all that is in them, the earth and all that is in it, and the sea and all that is in it, and said, "There will be no more delay!"

^{BGT} **Revelation 10:6** καὶ ὤμοσεν ἐν τῷ ζῶντι εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας τῶν αἰώνων, ὃς ἔκτισεν τὸν οὐρανὸν καὶ τὰ ἐν αὐτῷ καὶ τὴν γῆν καὶ τὰ ἐν αὐτῇ καὶ τὴν θάλασσαν καὶ τὰ ἐν αὐτῇ, ὅτι χρόνος οὐκέτι ἔσται,

^{NIV} **Revelation 12:12** Therefore rejoice, you heavens and you who dwell in them! But woe to the earth and the sea, because the devil has gone down to you! He is filled with fury, because he knows that his time is short."

^{BGT} **Revelation 12:12** διὰ τοῦτο εὐφραίνεσθε, [οἱ] οὐρανοὶ καὶ οἱ ἐν αὐτοῖς σκηνοῦντες. οὐαὶ τὴν γῆν καὶ τὴν θάλασσαν, ὅτι κατέβη ὁ διάβολος πρὸς ὑμᾶς ἔχων θυμὸν μέγαν, εἰδὼς ὅτι ὀλίγον καιρὸν ἔχει.

^{NIV} **Revelation 14:7** He said in a loud voice, "Fear God and give him glory, because the hour of his judgment has come. Worship him who made the heavens, the earth, the sea and the springs of water."

^{BGT} **Revelation 14:7** λέγων ἐν φωνῇ μεγάλῃ· φοβήθητε τὸν θεὸν καὶ δότε αὐτῷ δόξαν, ὅτι ἦλθεν ἡ ὥρα τῆς κρίσεως αὐτοῦ, καὶ προσκυνήσατε τῷ ποιήσαντι τὸν οὐρανὸν καὶ τὴν γῆν καὶ θάλασσαν καὶ πηγὰς ὑδάτων.

^{NIV} **Revelation 21:1** ¶ Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and there was no longer any sea.

^{BGT} **Revelation 21:1** ¶ Καὶ εἶδον οὐρανὸν καινὸν καὶ γῆν καινὴν. ὁ γὰρ πρῶτος οὐρανὸς καὶ ἡ πρώτη γῆ ἀπῆλθαν καὶ ἡ θάλασσα οὐκ ἔστιν ἔτι.