

(9) THE OMEN: The Allegiance Factor

The theory of evolution has contributed significantly to the tragedies of modern civilization. It declares that the human race is just an accident, a product of time and chance. Since we are just accidents in a vast sea of time, with no loving creator God, who continues to care for us: 1. The world staggers under a load of desperate loneliness; 2. With no meaningful personal reason for existence, many lack meaning and purpose in their life; 3. There can be no glorious destiny to which we are moving, and thus the world is devoid of hope; 4. To end their problems increasing numbers are turning to suicide; 5. People have no positive means of coping with nagging guilt, so they turn to drugs, alcohol, sex, or a round of activity to drown the lingering feeling of guilt in their soul; 6. Many feel ultimately accountable to no one, or at best only to the ever changing values of society, and so lawlessness abounds.

At a time when evolutionary theory has swept over the entire globe, God sends an urgent message with the apocalyptic antidote to Darwin's tragic legacy. At its heart is a call for humanity to respect and worship God as the creator (Revelation 14:6,7). The call to worship the creator of heaven, earth and sea is a reference to the fourth or Sabbath commandment, which informs us that God created the world in 6 days and then rested on the seventh (Revelation 14:7; Exodus 20:8-11).

The Biblical Sabbath of Exodus 20:8-11, alluded to in Revelation 14:7, answers life's 4 biggest questions: Where have I come from – origins; Does anybody out there care about me?; Is there a purpose and meaning to life? Is there hope for the future? As such the Sabbath was given to be a blessing or benefit for the whole human race (Genesis 2:1-3; Mark 2:27,28).

The Sabbath is a sign or omen of a number of facts that bring strength and confidence to our lives. Firstly the Sabbath is a sign of creation by God (Exodus 31:16,17). We are not accidents. We can have rest of mind for our roots go back to God. Furthermore the Sabbath reminds us we were created in the image of God with meaning and purpose – to care for our environment (Genesis 1:26). Because all humans have the same father, we are one family and all equal. The Sabbath brings to us the rest of equality when it calls all humans to rest (Deuteronomy 5:12-14).

But the Sabbath is also a sign of belonging to God (Ezekiel 20:20). It calls us to remember that our God is also our Father friend. The most critical element in developing friendships is quality time. God calls us to rest with Him on the Sabbath to deepen our relationship with Him. But as our friend He cares about our every need, and the Sabbath again

reminds us that God is a genuine caring providing father friend. An illustration of this was seen in the story of the Manna that God sent down from heaven for his hungry Israelite friends before they were given the 10 commandments. If the manna was kept overnight it had maggots by morning (Exodus 16:19,20). On the 6th day they were told to collect twice the amount and prepare it for the Sabbath, the next day – henceforth the 6th day was known as the Preparation Day (Exodus 16:5,23). However on the 7th day Sabbath, no manna fell and no maggots were in the manna from the day before (Exodus 16:24). God had worked a miracle on the Sabbath to reveal Himself as their caring, providing friend.

Finally the Sabbath is a sign of restoration by God (Exodus 20:12). He is the God who makes us Holy or "Whole for Himself." Restoration and wholeness result in eternal rest – the rest of a forever hope. The Sabbath reminds us of this eternal rest and points us toward it (Hebrews 4:1,3,4,9-11). No wonder Jesus said, "Come unto me...and I will give you rest" (Matthew 11:28).

The Sabbath is God's omen or sign, which strengthens our allegiance to Him in the final hours of earth's history. It is a sign of: creation – we are not an accident, but came from God's hand; a sign of belonging; and a sign that God restores our lives by His mighty power. With a God like this, who wouldn't want to give Him their allegiance or worship?

How do we keep God's Sabbath? The same way God does. Firstly we have a sacred, joyful rest with God without work (Exodus 20:8-11; Genesis 2:1-3). Secondly we keep the same 7th day Sabbath God keeps, which is the day after Good Friday – the Preparation or 6th day of the week; and the day before the 1st day of the week or Easter Sunday (Luke 23:52-24:1). The Sabbath is Saturday the Seventh day of the week. In fact in over 100 languages the seventh day of the week is still called the Sabbath!

The day after Jesus finished creating the world, He rested. The day after He cried out from the cross – "It is finished," thereby making it possible to "re-create" the lives of men and women who accepted Him, Jesus again rested, this time in the grave. Same creator! Same saviour! Same lawgiver! Same Sabbath rest!

In the end-times, who and how we worship will be the final issue (Revelation 13:4,12; 14:7). God's people who have faith in Jesus, keep the commandments of God (Revelation 12:17; 14:12). Those commandments will be used to judge the state of our hearts (James 2:10-12). God calls the world to worship him as the creator of heaven, earth and sea (Revelation 14:7). We worship God as creator by keeping His 7th day Sabbath, which is why the call to

worship God as creator is a reference to the 4th commandment (Revelation 14:7; Exodus 20:8-11). God's sign or omen of worship, loyalty or allegiance in the end of time is His 7th day Sabbath. Jesus calls us to rest with him every 7th day, Saturday Sabbath as our creator, saviour and forever friend. Won't you accept His invitation today?