

**The Sabbath as Creation and Redemption: A Zambian
Contextual Reading**

By

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Abbreviations

General

ANE	Ancient Near East(ern)
ATR	African Traditional Religion
BSAC	British South African Company
CCZ	Council of Churches in Zambia
DRE	Damascus Road Encounter
EFZ	Evangelical Fellowship of Zambia
JEDP	Jahwist, Elohist, Deuteronomist, Priestly sources
ICOZ	Independent Churches of Zambia
MoFNP	Ministry of Finance and National Planning
MoLNR	Ministry of Lands and Natural Resources
NT	New Testament
OT	Old Testament
SDA	Seventh Day Adventists
ZCCB	Zambia Conference of Catholic Bishops
ZDHS	Zambia Demographic Health Survey

Dates

BCE	Before Common Era
CE	Common Era

Literary

cf.	–	compare
e.g.	–	for example
et al.	–	and others
i.e.	–	in other words
p(p).	–	page(s)
sic	–	quoted as it is in the original
v(v).	–	verse(s)

Primary and Secondary Sources

- BDB Brown, Francis, Samuel Rolles Driver, and Charles Augustus Briggs. 1977. *Enhanced Brown-Driver-Briggs Hebrew and English Lexicon*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.
- BHS *Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia: with Werkgroep Informatica, Vrije Universiteit Morphology; Bible. O.T. Hebrew. Werkgroep Informatica, Vrije Universiteit*, 2006. Logos Bible Study version.
- DCH *Dictionary of Classical Hebrew*. 1998–2011. Vols. I–VIII. Edited by David J. A. Clines. Sheffield, England: Sheffield Phoenix Press.
- HALOT Koehler, Ludwig, Walter Baumgartner, M. E. J. Richardson, and Johann Jakob Stamm. 1994–2000. *The Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament*. Leiden: E.J. Brill. Logos Bible Study version.
- LALHB *The Lexham Analytical Lexicon of the Hebrew Bible*. 2017. Logos Bible Study version.
- LXX *Septuaginta: With Morphology*. Electronic ed. Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 1979. Logos Bible Study version.
- SP Samaritan Pentateuch, based on August Freiherr von Gall, ed. 1918. *Der Hebräische Pentateuch Der Samaritaner*. Gießen: Verlag von Alfred Töpelmann.

Deutero-Canonical Books

- | | |
|----------------------|----------|
| The Book of Jubilees | Jubil |
| 1–2 Maccabees | 1–2 Macc |

Canonical Books

Old Testament

- | | |
|-----------|------|
| Genesis | Gen |
| Exodus | Exod |
| Leviticus | Lev |
| Numbers | Num |

Deuteronomy	Deut
Joshua	Josh
Judges	Judg
Ruth	Ruth
1–2 Samuel	1–2 Sam
1–2 Kings	1–2 Kgs
1–2 Chronicles	1–2 Chr
Ezra	Ezra
Nehemiah	Neh
Esther	Esth
Job	Job
Psalms	Ps
Proverbs	Prov
Ecclesiastes	Eccl
Song of Songs	Song
Isaiah	Isa
Jeremiah	Jer
Lamentations	Lam
Ezekiel	Ezek
Daniel	Dan
Hosea	Hos
Joel	Joel
Amos	Amos
Obadiah	Obad
Jonah	Jonah
Micah	Mic
Nahum	Nah
Habakkuk	Hab
Zephaniah	Zeph
Haggai	Hag
Zechariah	Zech

Malachi	Mal
New Testament	
Matthew	Matt
Mark	Mark
Luke	Luke
John	John
Acts	Acts
Romans	Rom
1–2 Corinthians	1–2 Cor
Galatians	Gal
Ephesians	Eph
Philippians	Phil
Colossians	Col
1–2 Thessalonians	1–2 Thess
1–2 Timothy	1–2 Tim
Titus	Titus
Philemon	Phlm
Hebrews	Heb
James	Jas
1–2 Peter	1–2 Pet
1–2–3 John	1–2–3 John
Jude	Jude
Revelation	Rev

Abstract

This thesis discusses how pastors and church leaders in Zambia may use theologies of creation and redemption to create a contextual understanding of the Sabbath. Having conducted the literature review on the Sabbath, it was discovered that the Sabbath is a highly contested issue, especially with some Sabbath debates predominantly focusing on its validity for Christianity. Such contestations are pivoted on the relationship of the old covenant to the new, the nature and role of the biblical law, interpretation of the Decalogue, Christ's attitude and teaching about the Sabbath, and how the church has historically related the subject of the Sabbath. Yet it is widely accepted that the Sabbath in Decalogue encapsulation was motivated by creation and redemption, the two central concepts in the redemptive history climaxed in Christ Jesus. Also, it was discovered that some pastors and church leaders in Zambian Christianity discuss the Sabbath largely in terms of day of worship.

Sabbath passages like Gen 2:1-3, Exod 20:8-11, Deut 5:12-15, Lev 23:1-3, and Isa 56:1-8 were examined to determine what the Hebrew Bible (OT) teaches about the Sabbath. It was discovered that the OT understands the Sabbath to be eternally binding on humanity and affected socioreligious relationships.

Then, secondary sources on the Sabbath were examined and diverse views informed the Sabbath perspectives in the light of the person and work of Christ. The study discovered that there are diverse Sabbath positions, which sustain the creation and redemptive aspects of the Sabbath. Also, it discovered that Christ did not abrogate the Sabbath, but fulfilled it to be become an everyday life experience for humanity. An analysis of how the church attempts to implement the cause for creation and redemption was done.

Since creation and redemptive theologies remain central to the Sabbath, the study attempted to investigate their implications at family and community socioreligious relations in Zambian context. Recommendations were made in the light of identified gaps requiring further explorations to supplement the discoveries of this study.

CHAPTER 1: Introduction

1.1 Introduction

Much of the discussion on the Sabbath in Christian circles in Zambia is motivated by the Sabbath/Sunday debate (Simpson (2003); Ntenga (2016); Mbewe [2020]), which ignores salient matters of investigating how the biblical teaching of the Sabbath may inform socioreligious relations in the Zambian context. Such motivation has potential to produce an argumentative theoretical Sabbath appreciation detached from practical living. Yet the biblical Sabbath was deliberate and intentional on addressing relationally the social and religious dimensions of family and community life. This study focuses on the more important links of the Sabbath with creation and redemption. It aims to root the biblical truth of the Sabbath to practical Christian life, learning from how both the ancient (biblical) Hebrew community and the Christological teaching and ministry on the Sabbath endeavoured to root the biblical Sabbath teaching to cultural and practical life reflection. If Christianity must meaningfully “communicate with the African cultural heritage,” it should then “find an expression within the cultural context” (Mokhoathi 2017).

Biblically, the Sabbath was a central aspect to the community life of Israel. It formed a part to the Decalogue, which may be understood as Israel’s “constitution” and “community policy” (Meyers 2005, 162-165) that was motivated by God’s activity of creation (Exod 20:8-11) and redemption (Deut 5:12-15). The Sabbath’s significance may be ascertained from its objectified expressions: (i) a day to remember (Exod 20:8); (ii) a day to observe (Deut 5:12); (iii) a day occasioning cultic sacrifices and offerings (Ezek 46:12); (iv) a day from which time was reckoned (Lev 23:15-16); (v) a day characterised with the notion of holiness (Exod 20:8; Deut 5:12; Jer 17:22), and; (vi) a day on which guards’ shifts were reshuffled (2 Kgs 11:5). In summary, the Sabbath was “indelibly etched in the psyche of Israel” (Haynes 2015, 1).

Characteristically, the Sabbath identified with prohibition of work in connection with God’s activities of creation, redemption of Israel, sign of covenant, and sacred time. As noted by Bosman (1997a, 1157-1162), the following are implicit theological bearings of the Sabbath: (i) theocentric and creation emphasis (Exod 20); (ii) social justice and

redemption (Deut 5); (iii) covenant *status confessions* – weekly reminder of covenant (Exod 31); (iv) basis for reckoning Jewish festal times (Lev 23), and; (v) Isaianic growing theological importance (Isa 56; 58). The Sabbath observance among the Israelites commemorated God as creator and redeemer “in the past and in the experience of the presence of God in the rest on the seventh day as a sign of the covenant in the present... [its enjoyment was] mirrored in the freeing of Israelite debtors and slaves during the Sabbath year and the Jubilee (Lev. 25:10; Deut. 15:1-11)” (Bosman 1997a, 1159). Finally, the Sabbath principle is applied to the Covenant Code regulating the master-slave relations (Exod 21:2-11), agronomy and social justice (Exod 23:10-12), and cultic and pilgrimage festivities (Exod 23:14-19; Lev 23:1-3). Thus, the Sabbath tied socioeconomic and religious dimensions to Israel’s covenantal life and worldview.

While it is acknowledged, but not always seen to be central to Christian tradition, the dominant motivation questions around the Sabbath are principally theological and practical; and to some extent, ethical. Moltmann (1985, 196-197) holds the concept of God’s Sabbath (rest) as the diadem of creation; conversely, creation is a festival to which God invites his creature to participate through praises, and that creation celebrates redemption of the world on the Sabbath. Approaches to Sabbath debates are principally exegetical, biblical theology, and ecclesiastical history; and secondarily, theological areas of creation ordinance, covenant, relationship between Old and New Testaments, ethical implications, and the Law (Carson 1982b, 13-19). Christ becomes central to Christian inquiry of the Sabbath, which has yielded three main positions: Sabbath-abrogation, Sabbath-transference, and Sabbath-permanence (Bacchiocchi 2000, 9-13).

1.2 Sabbath and Zambian Contextuality

Some pastors and Christian leaders in Zambia have attempted to extend the Sabbath inquiry to pastoral-theological bordering on the applicability of the Decalogues to Christianity. Out of this has emerged two camps respectively persuaded by Sabbath-permanence and Sabbath-transference (Kabwe 2008, 1-2). On the one hand, the SDAs adhere to Sabbath-permanence and observe their Sabbath on Saturday (Seventh-Day Adventist 2016). On the other hand, Christians who hold to Sabbath-transference to

Sunday argue for Sabbath perpetuity (Kayombo 2008, 3-7) inspired by the Puritan traditional observance of the Lord's Day (Mwalimu 2008, 8-11). Additionally, the transference camp highlights the rewards of Sabbath observance (Mwetwa 2008, 17-19) and the practical ways in which the Sabbath may be observed (Chishimba 2008, 12-16).

Consequently, the Sabbath has become a point of contestation between Sabbatarians (Sabbath-permanence) and the Lord's Day (Sabbath-transference). The Sabbatarians accuse the Lord's Day camp of violating the fourth commandment, which act renders them be followers of the Devil and, therefore, not genuinely children of God (Simpson 2003, 147) while the Lord's Day camp rebuts, as per Nthenga (2016) and Mbewe [2020], as follows:

- (i) God does not have a calendar that he follows;
- (ii) Sabbath does not point to a day but rest;
- (iii) Observance of the Sabbath on Saturday is a Jewish practice; and,
- (iv) Insisting on Sabbath observance misrepresents Jesus' attitude to Sabbath. Additionally, insistence on worshipping on Saturday by the SDAs is erroneous and misrepresents the biblical facts.

Obviously, the Sabbath discussion in Zambia pays no attention to its connection with creation and redemption and how that connection may affect socioreligious relations. The fourth commandment in its Decalogue contexts of creation and redemption motivations may suggest the socioreligious concerns for family and community equalisation.

1.3 Problem Statement

A Zambian contextual rehash of Sabbath inquiry extended to perpetuity versus transference, Puritan motivation for observance, practical observance, benefits of its observance, and Sabbath/Sunday debates has not addressed the basic tenets of the Sabbath reflected in its creation and redemptive aspects. The two aspects may have socioreligious implications that affect family and community relations. This study undertakes contextual investigation of the Sabbath's socioreligious relations based on theologies of creation and redemption. Christian Sabbath discussions concentrate on

the questions of the implications of God's rest in the creation narrative and of Sabbath/Sunday. Yet the Sabbath institution also connotes socioreligious relations implied in the concept of rest on Sabbath day, which is motivated by creation (Exod 20:8-11) and redemption (Deut 5:12-15). The head of the household was commanded to rest on the Sabbath, together with the rest of his family members, aliens, and animals. This may indicate God's intention to use the Sabbath to limit exploitation of the weak in society by the powerful.

This study, therefore, aims to probe how pastors and Christian leaders in Zambia should use themes like creation and redemption to create a Zambian contextual understanding of the Sabbath. First, it explores how the Sabbath has been understood within the OT by launching an inquiry into how biblical texts on the Sabbath like Gen 2:1-3, Exod 20:8-11; Deut 5:12-16, Lev 23:1-3, and Isa 56:1-8 add to our understanding of the theology of the Sabbath. Then, the study investigates how the Biblical themes of creation and redemption give added meaning to the theology of the Sabbath. Further, it explores the contributions that Jesus' ministry and his emphasis on healing make to our understanding of the Sabbath. Lastly, the study seeks to establish the key elements that Pastors and Christian teachers should emphasise in their congregations to enable ordinary people to grasp the essential elements of the Christian celebration of the Sabbath.

Providing essential context is crucial before presenting the hypothesis, given the nature of the research topic.

1.4 Context for the Study

Zambia is located "between 8- and 18-degrees south latitude and between 20- and 35-degrees east longitude" (ZDHS 2015, 1). Her neighbouring countries are: Democratic Republic of Congo, Tanzania, Malawi, Mozambique, Zimbabwe, Botswana, Namibia, and Angola. Zambia's national life conglomerates the political, socioeconomic, and religio-cultural dimensions. Practically, these dimensions are 'product-mix' often syncretising traditional beliefs and customs with modernity and western religious philosophy vis-à-vis globalisation.

Until the Bantu migrations from the thirteenth century CE onwards that witnessed the indigenous tribes' migration into the region from Luba-Lunda kingdoms and from southern Africa due to Mfecane, the land was originally occupied by the Khoisan people (Taylor 2006). At that time, people "had diverse ethnic backgrounds and spoke different languages; there would have been very little interaction between them, except at edges of their respective areas" (Sardanis 2019, 12). In addition to Bantu migrations, colonialism and trade led to the migration of minority groups of foreign descent (Taylor 2006). The nation now celebrates a multi-ethnic heritage of seventy-two indigenous tribes coexisting with other minority ethnicities of foreign descent. As such, it could be concluded that colonialism birthed and shaped the sociopolitical trajectory of modern Zambia and Zambians (Sardanis 2019, 13).

Politically, Zambia is shaped by tribal histories, British colonialism, socialist philosophy, and multiparty democracy (McKenna 2011, 187-188). The precolonial era retained centralised governance in traditional royal politics under the kingship and chieftainship systems. Colonialism was only introduced through the concession that King Lewanika of the Lozi Kingdom (Barotseland) signed with John Cecil Rhodes of the BSAC between 1890 and 1891 (Taylor 2006). Cecil Rhodes' ambitions to connect Africa through BSAC brought more whites to settle in Northern Rhodesia and necessitated the formation of colonial government that was discriminatory against black (indigenous) people. Such discrimination necessitated the emergence of independence movement that brought colonial government to an end as Northern Rhodesia attained independence on October 24, 1964, under the founding president Dr Kenneth David Kaunda. Since independence, Northern Rhodesia assumed a new name and has been known as Zambia. President Kaunda's philosophy inculcated through motto "One Zambia; One Nation" continues to influence the social perception of life.

Socially, the Zambian society is shaped by associations and interrelations facilitated by commemorations and participations in social events and activities. These may be categorised into familial, traditional, national, economic (business), and religious. Family is the basic unit of society as it is conceived not only in terms of nuclear and extended families but also in terms of household and several generations (Simson n.d., 3).

Zambian people generally manifest strong connection to their historical roots as they observe traditional ceremonies and some rituals practised according to their ethnic setting. Ceremonies give a spiritual dimension of their human existence and function to preserve tribal historical heritage connected to natural world (Guhrs n.d., 2) and ancestral veneration that provides “a link between various forces in Bantu cosmology” (Kaoma 2013, 51).

Religiously, Christianity dominates the religious perception of life (Mandryk 2010). The Zambian calendar is marked with national public holidays that fall into socioeconomic and religious categories. Public holidays within the socioeconomic category celebrate national women, youth, labour, political freedom, heroes and unity, and farmers. The religious category comprises of the following days: Easter period, national prayer day, and Christmas. The national prayer day for reconciliation occasions an event when “bars, pubs, and restaurants are closed” (Loryman 2018). Zambians perceive Sunday church attendance as a tool to associating oneself with church community (Mildnerová 2015, 9). Nevertheless, over the years, the influence of modernity and certain elements of postmodernity has witnessed various religious dynamics, as Christianity – without discounting other religions – interrelates with culture. The pre-Christian Zambian epoch experienced a traditional religion that “was undergirded by spirituality that saw God in nature and celebrated the role and importance of one’s ancestors” (Taylor 2006). Such spirituality serves as the lens through which many indigenous Zambians perceive their religious life. It endures through traditional beliefs and customs within a worldview that integrates land, community, and the spiritual world, expressed in ceremonies and rituals.

Thus, the coming of Christianity introduced an interaction between Christianity and the indigenous religion that resulted in a syncretised religious notion. For instance, it is acknowledged from as early as the colonial times that African anti-witchcraft “cultic and prophet movements drew on traditional religious and cultural beliefs, offering hope to sorely pressed and poverty (sic) stricken populace” (McKenna 2011, 68). McKenna suggests that African anti-witchcraft movements, specifically cultic and prophet movements, derive from traditional religious and cultural beliefs. These movements

appear to provide hope to a population facing significant challenges, including poverty. Particularly, Christianity has

brought a different notion of religion, more formal and institutionalized, and thus changed the nature of the average Zambian's relationship with his creator and with families and [neighbours]. For many, spirituality – religion – therefore became something that was practiced at church. The missionaries created adherents, whereas in the past, religion was far more pervasive (Taylor 2006, 26).

It is on this point where it is necessary to briefly describe the historical roots of Christianity in Zambia.

Four epochs aid the historical narration of the history of Christianity in Africa. These are: (i) the insertion of the gospel in North Africa (first to third centuries); (ii) Iberian Catholicism (sixteenth to eighteenth century); (iii) slavery and slave trade abolition and evangelical revival (nineteenth century), and; (iv) World Wars and postcolonial (twentieth century) (Kalu 2007, 23-29). The history of Christianity in Zambia may be rooted in the third epoch and attributed directly to David Livingstone's Zambezi expeditions and his death (1857-1873) (Livingstone 2015), which sparked the impetus for mission establishments around Zambia (Kaluba 2014). Christianity would soon be acceptable to indigenous people because of the typical African virtues that characterised it, such as "sharing, love for one's neighbor, respect for authority and promise of everlasting life, the latter that replaced the African belief of reuniting with ancestral spirits" (Kaluba 2017). Consequently, mission stations were established through the London Missionary Society, Paris Evangelical Society, the Presbyterians, Primitive Methodists, and Roman Catholic Church and, later, New Apostolic Church, United Church, Seventh-Day Adventists, Pentecostal Assemblies of God, Reformed Church, Jehovah's Witnesses, Full Gospel Church of God, Christian Brethren, Anglican, Baptists, Church of Christ, Church of God, Evangelical Church, among others. Despite the typical identification of some Christian virtues with African ones, the early missionaries faced cultural and language barriers. This resulted into introduction of learning vernacular languages and Bible translation and provision to indigenous people

services such as education, healthcare, social welfare, agricultural skills (Project Gutenberg n.d.).

The early missionary efforts culminated into establishment of mainline churches that predominantly characterised Christianity until the Pentecostal/charismatic wave of the 1970s. The wave changed the dynamic face of Christianity by riding on the attempts by African Independent Church movement to Africanise “Christianity within the Zambian context” while its definition lies largely in its appropriation of “notions of salvation within the framework of their inherently religious and anthropocentric cosmology” (Sakupapa 2016, 762). It could, thus, be said that Christianity in Zambia is an integration of Christian expressions (denominations) with traditional heritage. Christianity in Zambia has historically responded to political, socioeconomic, and religious matters through ecumenical platforms provided by church mother bodies namely CCZ, EFZ, and ZCCB (Komakoma 2003) and more recently ICOZ.

The introduction of Christianity has aided majority Zambians to realise the importance of belonging to church community whose social integration to life climaxes in church gatherings (Mildnerová 2015, 9).

1.5 Hypothesis

The Sabbath encompasses socioreligious relations as motivated by creation and redemption. This means the Sabbath may have been intended to contextually influence both theological and practical life anchored in the fact that creation exists because of God and anticipates God's redemption. If that were true, the task of interpreting the celebration of the Sabbath in terms of the theologies of creation and redemption would be a useful tool for developing a contextualised presentation of the Sabbath for ordinary Zambian Christians.

Central to this thesis investigation are the terms "Sabbath" and "contextual." Consequently, it is imperative to provide definitions for these terms.

1.6 Definition of Terms

1.6.1 Sabbath

The Christian interpretation of the Sabbath relies on its influential role in the biblical and extrabiblical Israelite communities. The term “sabbath” is derived from the Hebrew שַׁבָּת (*šabbāt*) whose verb form שָׁבַת (*šābat*) means “to rest, cease, observe rest on the Sabbath day” (HALOT 1994-2000, 1407). Central to Sabbath is its conception as the “day of rest” associated with the seventh day (DCH 2011, 8:258). Its etymological studies based on extrabiblical and extra-Israelite approaches prove inconclusive (Bosman 1997a, 1157) thereby necessitating the biblical focus when defining the terminology.

The Bible uses the word “Sabbath” in three senses. In the first sense, the term is used of the seventh day of the weekly cycle that is “set aside as a holy day of rest” (Spoelstra 2014). Examples of biblical texts that express the first sense include Gen 1-2 and Exod 20:8-11. Secondly, Sabbath is used as a generic word for some OT festivals. Examples include “the Day of Atonement (Lev 16:31), the Festival of Trumpets (Lev 23:24) and the Feast of Booths (Lev 23:39)” (Ryken 2000c, 747). Thirdly, Sabbath is used as a provision extended to land to observe rest during the seventh year referred to as the sabbatical year (Young and Bruce 1996, 1032). An example of biblical text that expresses this sense is Lev 25:1–7. This study shall give preference to the first sense.

1.6.2 Zambian Contextual Framework

The Zambian context can be comprehended within the broader African framework. Despite Christianity in Africa benefiting significantly from global Northern Christian scholarship, there is a recognised need for Bible readership and interpretation addressing authentic African concerns. It is observed that contextual scholarship in the North often leans towards economic considerations, neglecting or failing to address crucial African aspects, such as cultural, economic, political, social, and religious situations, which form the backbone of meaningful interpretation. This kind of interpretation should resonate with and be understood by its intended African audience (Magesa 1997, 26). Consequently, Africans exhibit elements of a dichotomised and uninternalized Christian characterisation, fading into worldliness when confronted with

unspiritual choices (Mburu 2019, 3). In my evaluation, addressing the identified dichotomy and uninternalized Christian characterisation in the African context involves advocating for a contextual reading approach. This approach offers a platform for the meaningful internalisation of Scripture, acknowledging the specific cultural, economic, political, social, and religious dimensions that constitute the backbone of interpretation in this context. Such a contextual reading approach aligns with the call for Bible readership and interpretation that directly engages with real and felt African issues, as emphasised in the wider African context discussed earlier. This shift from an externally imposed interpretation, often economic-oriented and detached from the intricate fabric of African realities, to a contextually grounded approach is crucial for fostering a more authentic and resonant connection between African individuals and their Christian faith.

A contextual reading approach involves a dual task of recognising the message of the Bible and connecting “its message to contemporary needs and aspirations of people in their context” (Magesa 1997, 30). This task may leverage the internationally recognised critical tools from the North to interpret the Bible primarily for an African socio-cultural context. Contextual biblical studies aim to present biblical passages in the context of an “African experience and culture” (Adamo 2005, 17). This involves a process of contextualisation, guided by the aim of “making concepts or ideas relevant in a given situation [expressing] the never-changing Word of God in ever-changing modes for relevance” (Kato 1985, 23). Contextualization, in general, entails identifying ways to effectively transmit the message of the Bible in language, metaphors, concepts, and imageries understood by the interpretive context. It is tailored objectively to assist the Christian community in that interpretive context to appreciate how they can live out the Christian faith relevantly in their cultural setting (Grenz, Guretzki, and Nordling 1999, 29-30). In this undertaking, the contextual reading of the Bible is of paramount importance.

The people of Africa continue to engage in an ongoing conversation on the manner of communicating contextual Christianity that is well expressed in the African cultural media (Mugambi 2002, 87). In such conversation, the Bible plays a major role as its usage in the African context encompassed in disciplines of biblical studies and exegesis, commentaries, biblical theology, African theology formulation and

development, homiletics, ecclesiastical life – in both Mainline and African Indigenous Churches (AICs) – and other theological endeavours (Mbiti 1986, 46-59). Yet the endeavour to express and communicate the Christian faith through African cultural media has faced the challenge of syncretism that makes inroads into the African Christian faith due to contextualisation that ignores consideration of the adiaphora (Mokhoathi 2017).

In the light of the above, this study defines the “Zambian contextual framework” to imply reading a passage or theme from a literary context and from a modern socio-religious view. In relation to the research topic, the thesis will deal with the Sabbath first in its biblical context (OT and NT). Secondly, it shall explore the broader Christian theological context. Finally, it shall consider the Sabbath in the context of the church in Zambia.

1.7 Delimitation

This study examines selected OT texts, correlating them with NT Sabbath perspectives in connection to Christ’s teachings and ministry on the Sabbath. It contextualises findings within the broader Christian tradition, subsequently honing in on the understanding of the Sabbath in the Zambian Christian context.

1.8 Purpose and Significance of the Research

This study investigates how the biblical understanding of the Sabbath in terms of creation and redemption would facilitate the pastor and Christian leader’s task in teaching about the celebration of the Sabbath. Additionally, it seeks to appreciate how a theology of the Sabbath, with its focus on the idea of Sabbath-rest as informed by creation and redemption, has influenced the religious life of ancient Hebrew community, and could do the same for ordinary Zambian Christians. The Sabbath afforded “rest” interruptions for the community and thereby enabled them to have time for reflection on individual worshiper’s relations to God and to fellow humanity.

1.9 Research Design and Methodology

1.9.1 Research Design

This study investigates the following main question: – How should pastors and Christian leaders in Zambia use themes like creation and redemption to create a Zambian

contextual understanding of the Sabbath? Once this problem is resolved, further subsidiary questions are raised which are as follows:

- a) How has the Sabbath been understood within the Hebrew Bible (OT)?
- b) How do biblical texts on the Sabbath like Gen 2:1-3, Exod 20:8-11; Deut 5:12-16, Lev 23:1-3, and Isa 56:1-8 add to our understanding of the theology of the Sabbath?
- c) What are the trending perspectives on the Sabbath? How do the Biblical themes of creation and redemption give added meaning to the theology of the Sabbath?
- d) What does the ministry of Jesus add to our understanding of the Sabbath? How does Jesus' emphasis on healing contribute to our understanding of Sabbath?
- e) What are the key elements that Pastors and Christian teachers should emphasise in their congregations in order to enable ordinary people to grasp the essential elements of the Christian celebration of the Sabbath?

The subsidiary questions require that the Sabbath be, firstly, investigated in the Hebrew Bible by employing exegetical analyses of key OT highlighted texts on the Sabbath. Then the NT analysis of some of the important secondary theological literature related to the theme of the Sabbath as creation and redemption shall be considered. Finally, there is need to develop the implications of a contextual understanding of the Sabbath for pastors and Christian leaders when teaching their congregations in Zambia.

1.9.2 Research Methodology

This study falls within the discipline of Biblical studies and will primarily take the form of review of literature approach. This study employs a hybrid methodology of exegetical analysis and etic-emic-derived etic approach. Application to the Zambian context of the exegetical findings utilise the emic-etic approach based on Berry (1989, 721-735) while the exegetical analysis of texts of interest to this study employs standard exegetical analysis of the Hebrew text (Smith 2008). An OT exegete is today faced with methodological possibilities of "(i) a source critical analysis; (ii) a synchronic analysis; and (iii) the integration of a synchronical and diachronical text reading" (Groenewald 2007, 1017-1031). This study adopts the approach that combines the diachronic and synchronic reading of text where the former pays special interest to the historical-

cultural context, and not to the text behind text. Procedurally, the standard exegesis requires an OT exegete to follow exegetical steps of textual criticism and comparison, translation of reconstructed text, grammatical data, lexical data, genre and form, structure or outline, historical context, literary context, biblical context, theology, and application (Stuart 2009). The application shall utilise the etic-emic-derived etic approach. Emanating from linguistic cross-cultural anthropology and psychology, the etic-emic approach has been recognised to be a necessary tool for applying biblical truth (Cserhàti 2008, 313-322).

This study reduces these steps to three:

Step 1 employs literary tools of historical, textual comparison, translation, grammatical-, lexical-, and genre-analysis to investigate the Sabbath in OT sources.

Step 2 employs the biblical context and theology to develop a theology of the Sabbath as informed by creation and redemption.

Step 3 employs the application step to consider the family and community socioreligious relations in terms of faith in Zambia. In this case, the application stage begins in the emic research of the biblical world out of which it draws the Sabbath etic category that should be imposed on the Zambian context. The study, thereafter, compares that biblical etic with the emic category of the Zambian context to ascertain comparability that enhances appropriate application.

Since texts such as Gen 2:1-3, Exod 20:8-11, Deut 5:12-15, Lev 23:1-3, and Isa 56:1-8 are key to conceptualising the Sabbath, the study undertakes an exegetical analysis of the texts by: (1) *producing this researcher's own translation* based on the BHS, with comparisons to SP, LXX and Qumran biblical scrolls and the supplementary English versions such as the NASB95, ESV, NIV, and CSB; (2) *providing their literary exegetical analysis* with attention to literary, textual, lexical, and grammatical meaning of the text; and, (3) *comparing* the text's understandings of the topics. Then, the study develops a theology of the Sabbath using encyclopaedic and journal sources and especially the standard theological studies of the OT. Thereafter, the study considers ways in which the Sunday/Sabbath celebration informs Christian thinking in Zambia today in terms of faith and community.

1.10 Thesis Overview

To give an overview of the thesis, Chapter Two exegetically analyses key texts on the Sabbath. Chapter Three presents the perspectives on the Sabbath.

Chapter Four explores the theme of Sabbath as connected to redemption.

Chapter Five interfaces the exegetical findings with Sabbath perspectives to draw ways in which the biblical understanding of the Sabbath informs socioreligious relations. It proposes a starting point from which to teach about the Sabbath in relation to Zambian Christian socioreligious situation.

Finally, Chapter Six summarises the research findings before proposing what must be emphasised about the Sabbath to create a contextual understanding of the Sabbath in Zambia today.

1.11 Conclusion

After stating the research problem and significant perspectives on the Sabbath, including the definition of terms in relation to contextuality, hypothesis, purpose, and significance, design, and methodology, this study proposes the following approach. Initially, it investigates the question of Sabbath in the biblical context to appreciate its connection to theologies of creation and redemption (chapter 2). Subsequently, the study seeks to establish how these two noted theologies may contextually inform Christian appreciation of the Sabbath. The study commences its examination of the two noted theologies with an appreciation of Sabbath perspectives (chapter 3), followed by Sabbath as redemption (chapter 4). In light of theologies of creation and redemption, the study explores the applicability of the Sabbath to socioreligious relations in Zambia at family and community levels. Finally, the study presents research findings and recommendations.

CHAPTER 2: The Sabbath in the Old Testament and Early Judaism

2.1 Introduction

This chapter aims to investigate how the Sabbath has been understood in the Hebrew Bible using selected passages like Gen 2:1-3; Exod 20:8-11; Deut 5:12-15; Lev 23:1-3; and Isa 56:1-8. The object is to examine some theological implications raised in the light of the meaning of the selected passages in connection with creation and redemption. Regarding the study on the Sabbath, two main sources utilised are: biblical and extra-biblical origin. The extra-biblical origin premises on the speculative primitive 'moon cult' (Hirsch, Jacobs, and Greenstone n.d.) whose scholarship largely remains inconclusive (Hasel 1992, 849-850) for truly clarifying the Israelite understanding of the Sabbath. This study prefers a biblical perspective and employs exegetical approach to primarily investigate the biblical data.

2.2 Sabbath in Creation Narrative (Gen 2:1-3)

2.2.1 Translation (Own Translation)

¹Thus were completed the heavens and the earth and all their inhabitants. ²And God finished on the seventh¹ day his work (of creation) that he had made; and on the seventh day he rested² from all his work that he made. ³And God blessed

¹ SP & LXX: *sixth*. The reading harmonises with the narrative in chapter 1 since creation was done over a six-day period, and because nothing was created on the seventh day, as per chapter 2. *Seventh* is, however, preferred in this study for two reasons. Firstly, God's work of creation in six days is associated with God's blessing of the seventh day. Secondly, sixth may be a later edition to harmonise with narrative in chapter 1.

² שבת may be translated as "to cease" or "to rest" (DCH 2011, 8:255-256). "To rest" best fits the context. It is common for many English translations (e.g., NASB95, ESV, NIV, CSB) to render the term as "rest." Nevertheless, one should bear in mind that the "rest" that the text has in mind connotes an idea "to stop" or "to cease from activity."

and consecrated the seventh day because on it, God rested from all his work that he created to make.

2.2.2 Historical-Cultural Setting

Critical scholarship utilises two approaches to study Genesis (and generally the Pentateuch or Torah): historical-critical and traditional criticism. The former holds to the view of multiple authorship in four categorical JEDP sources stretching the Israelite monarchical period (Speiser 1964, 11), while the latter sustains the Mosaic authorship (Steinmann 2019, 3-9). Adoption of either affects how the historical-cultural setting may be understood. Notably, current scholarship is generally abandoning the historical-critical as a primary method for understanding the Bible (Arnold 2003, 622-630). This study holds to the Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch with later editorial touches for improved readability.

The Israelites, whom Moses led, were redeemed from slavery in Egypt, a land whose religious concept was permeated with polytheism (idolatry). It was a land where deities competed for their worshippers' allegiance. The book of Genesis (and the entire Torah) orients Israel, and the wider readership, toward biblical monotheism rooted in God and creation. Although the ANE cultures were marred with theogony and theomachy, the concept of creation was widely noted among ancient Egyptian, Sumerian, Canaanite, and Akkadian worldviews (Arnold and Beyer 2002, 13-70). One of the exceptions is that ANE worldviews conceived deities to have had a beginning as their existence emanated from a participation of a plurality of deities, usually involved in war and a victorious deity becoming the creator.

ANE cosmologies compare with the biblical creation account firstly on literary features such as creation being formless and void (chaos), creation by word, light, firmament, celestial bodies marking seasons/festivities, animals, sea, sea creatures, breath of life, dust/clay, imago Dei, and seventh-day rest (Matthews, Chavalas, and Walton 2000, 28-30). Additionally, they compare on the structuring of the cosmos, role and position of deity, role and position of humanity, awareness of creator deity that brings order out of disorder, theomachy, perception of cosmos as temple, function of creation, among others (Walton 2003, 161-166). In contrast, the biblical creation cannot sustain concepts

of theomachy and theogony as Yahweh has no beginning and knows no competitor. It is evident that the biblical account of creation is a complex endeavour that connects diverse creation thematic lines. This study streamlines the creation themes by ascertaining how creation connects to the Sabbath concept.

A practical motivation of creation narrative is to clarify the beginning of the heavens and the earth. Such clarification provides the original audience with a rationale for monotheistic religion, which in turn regulated and moulded their holistic relationships – to God, fellow humans, and the world (nature). Additionally, the biblical creation narrative addressed the threat of paganism: “[A] politically redeemed Israel needed a creation narrative because they were in need of spiritual redemption. They not only needed political redemption under Pharaoh; they needed to be cleansed from their pagan contamination” (Waltke with Yu 2007, 176). Lastly, the biblical creation narrative provided a basis for understanding God as the originator of the world and life, the justification of the righteous demands of God’s Law, and the characterisation of God as the Redeemer (Ross 1985, 27-28).

2.2.3 Outline of Gen 2:1-3

- A. Creation summary (v. 1)
- B. The seventh day (vv. 2-3a)
 - i. God completed creation (v. 2a)
 - ii. God rested from work (v. 2b)
 - iii. God blessed and consecrated (v. 3a)
- C. Rationale for the seventh day (v. 3b)

2.2.4 Literary Analysis

Gen 2:1-3 concludes the historical creation narrative and emphasises the relation of the seventh day to the six days of God’s activities of creation. The text forms the basis for the creation concept that is linked to legal texts (Exod 20:8-11; Deut 5:12-14) and inspires humanity to worship God (Mangum, Custis, and Widder 2012). Whereas days 1-3 make special note of God’s creation of function, and days 4-6 of functionaries, day 7 focuses on the day itself.

A. Creation Summary (v. 1)

With the use of imperfect Pual וְיִכָּלְמוּ ('thus were completed'), this verse bridges what has gone before with creation's climax (Joüon and Muraoka 2003, 392), implying that the seventh day should be understood in the light of the entire creation narrative. The verb כָּלַךְ (*to finish*) conveys idea of accomplishment or destruction (BDB 1977, 477-478). Context favours the former. In this case, creation does not bring itself to completion. Rather, God does.

B. The Seventh Day (vv. 2-3a)

i. God Completed Creation (v. 2a)

The scope of creation extends to heavens and earth and their אֲבָרָה (inhabitants). Interpretation of אֲבָרָה offers various options like: (i) celestial beings surrounding God; (ii) stars, or; (iii) the totality of the individual functionaries denoted in the domains of heavens and earth (HALOT 1994-2000, 995). Apparently, the term appears in this literary context as a zeugma that may be completed by referring to Neh 9:6 (Gesenius and Tregelles 2003, 699). As such, this verse intentionally arrests any temptation for God's people to commit idolatry by worshiping any creature.

ii. God Rested from Work (v. 2b)

The wayyiqtol וַיִּשְׁבֹּת (And he rested) expresses God's action on the seventh day, a posture repeated in v.3. Overall, שָׁבַת appears in the Hebrew Bible about 71 times. Of special note is its association with God's refreshment in Exod 31:17. Its semantic range in the Qal connotes cessation and desisting from labour (BDB 1977, 991). It clarifies that God's activity of creation was perfectly completed. Yet this completion of creation is extended in other texts that associate creation to cultic worship, creation sustainability, and Sabbath institution. God's rest associates with cultic elements of communal human Sabbath rest based on expressions תִּשְׁבֹּתָ (you shall rest) and שְׁבֹתָ (rest or day of rest), which provides for distinction between creation and cultic sabbath (Cassuto 1989, 63).

The creation Sabbath implies that "there can be no *creatio continua*" (Westermann 1990, 41) because God's completion of creation ensues the process of "procreation and self-perpetuation" (Hamilton 1990, 149). Scholars like Westermann have associated the cultic sabbath with the cognate שָׁבַת and consequently argued that v. 2b provides the

new context for the Sabbath motif (Westermann 1990, 41). This argument is strengthened by the connections the verb shares with the substantive *שָׁבַת* (HALOT 1994-2000, 1407).

iii. God Blessed and Consecrated (v. 3a)

This verse expresses God's positive disposition to the seventh day through his *וַיְבָרֶךְ* (and he blessed) and *וַיְקַדְּשֵׁהוּ* (and he consecrated); both activities that are "illustrious, that by a special law it may be distinguished from the rest" (Calvin and King 2010, 105). The *שָׁבַת* (consecration) of the seventh day encompasses God's whole work of creation because creation gets its summation on this day. Thus, the seventh day "establishes an order for humanity that organizes time into the everyday and the holy [that] comprises not only an anticipation of the Israelite Sabbath, but beyond that a gift of the Creator (he blesses it) to humanity" (Westermann 2004, 12).

C. Rationale for the Seventh Day (v. 3b)

The distinction of the seventh day is hereby provided with the purpose; God rested from all his work. Yet the expression *יּוֹם הַשְּׁבִיעִי* (lit. day the seventh) attributes to the appositional case (Jouön and Muraoka 2003, 481-482) in which case *יוֹם* benefits its definiteness from *הַשְּׁבִיעִי*.

Whereas v. 2 expresses God's activity of creation by *עָשָׂה* (to make), v. 3 uses *בָּרָא* (to create) that appears seven times in the first two chapters (Gen. 1:2, 21, 27 (3x); 2:3, 4). The biblical author may have intended for the audience to appreciate the relationship between the two terms. One way in which their relationship may be understood in syntactical subordination (Ewald 1891, 71-74) of *עָשָׂה* to *בָּרָא*, which provides insight into understanding how all of God's work of creation in the past six days is specially related to the seventh day. It is noted that the seventh day is "the Lord's Day, through which all the creativity of the preceding days achieves fulfilment" (Sarna 1989, 14).

2.2.5 Theological Implications

2.2.5.1 Sabbath in Creation

Due to the cultic Sabbath proximity to the creation Sabbath, it is argued that the origin of the Sabbath is rooted in the creation origin of all humanity (Haynes 2015, 67), leading to

perception of creation ordinance. Challenges to this perception are crucial Sabbath nuances that are absent in the creation narrative, for example, the noun שַׁבָּת (sabbath), the reference to 'evening and morning,' and the commandment to observe the Sabbath (Cole 2003, 5-12). For, Gen 2 "does not speak about a religious, cultic feast day or any institution at all. There is no direct command that the seventh day should be kept in any way" (Dressler 1982, 28). The anti-creation ordinance argument reduces Sabbath anthropomorphic terminologies like וַיָּנוּחַ (Exod 20:11) and וַיְנַפְּשׁוּ (Exod 31:17) to the duty of humanity that allows no overlap to God's activities. Additionally, cultic institution and observance of Sabbath are restricted to the Israelites while God's act of blessing and sanctifying the day is interpreted in eschatological terms (Dressler 1982, 29). In my opinion, what is lacking in the anti-creation ordinance argument is an exploration of the relation of Sinaitic sabbath encapsulation to creation and its implications. It is my view that an exploration of the relation of Sinaitic Sabbath to creation may support a creation ordinance. For instance, it can be argued that the cultic Sabbath's embeddedness in creation and its institution at Sinai (Cassuto 1989, 63-64) based on the cognate verb שָׁבַת and creation vocabulary (Sarna 1989, 14) theologically intend "to fortify God's covenant with creation" (Waltke 2001, 78).

However, one should take precaution not to read back into the creation narrative the cultic Sabbath as the narrative "speaks, rather, of a rest that existed before man and still exists without man's perceiving it" (von Rad 1961, 60). Yet one should maintain an intertextual relationship in which Gen 2:1-3 and Exod 20:8-11 complement each other. The creation narrative, therefore, embeds a creation Sabbath that is noted as a mystery meant for the good of humanity that is unfolded through an establishment of God's community and the tabernacle (von Rad 1961, 60). To this may be linked creation narrative comparison with ANE mythologies. Brown (1989) proposes an intriguing perspective on the creation narrative, suggesting a connection with Babylonian mythology. According to Brown, the similarities between the Israelite creation narrative and Babylonian myths indicate a possible adaptation of Babylonian mythology into Israelite society (Brown 1989, 12-14). However, it is essential to critically examine the supporting evidence provided by Brown. While the parallels are noted, the analysis

lacks a comprehensive exploration of the cultural and religious contexts that might explain shared motifs between the two traditions already highlighted above.

Notably, the Sabbath provides a paradigm and model for sacred time because it functionally: (i) commemorates creation and God's cessation from creative activity; (ii) aids connection of humanity with God as it provides repose and release from temporal concerns, and; (iii) prefigures the anticipated Messianic Age (Karesh and Hurvitz 2006, 441). It celebrates creation in connection with themes such as dominion and multiplicity, Imago Dei, equality of humanity vis-à-vis gender, marriage, Eden as earth's first sanctuary, creation care, and the Sabbath reverberate the creation narrative with implications for community (Davidson 2015, 127-128). Thus, creation climaxes not in creation of man, but in God's establishment of the "sabbath communion with creation as whole" (Osborn 2000, 431) in which all creatures share their intimacy and interdependence with humanity as well as common dependence on God the creator. Such association between creation and Sabbath may be affirmed by attribution of Exodus tradition Sabbath commandment to creation narrative, the creation language usage, and the commandment's motivation (Gregor 2015, 131-134). In the light of these observations, it is imperative to note some observations regarding the Sabbath debate.

Firstly, the theological debate regarding the Sabbath in creation obviously relates to contestation between isolative versus inclusive biblical theology. Notably,

Discussions of biblical theology often focus on whether the adjective in this phrase means that we study the theology found in the Bible or that we develop a theology that does justice to the Bible. We maintain that the adjective implies something more fundamental: it suggests that the theologian operates as a Christian who assumes that, for all their diversity, the books of the Bible are ultimately one book. The special challenge of the sort of biblical theology we pursue here, then, is to do full justice to all the data of Scripture (Moo and Moo 2018).

While Moo and Moo present a compelling perspective on the unifying nature of the Bible, it is crucial to scrutinise the practical implications of this approach, particularly in the context of creation care. The assertion that the theologian should do full justice to all

the data of Scripture prompts a critical examination of how responsible creation stewardship is addressed across the diverse biblical texts. Further exploration is needed to understand how this unified view of Scripture informs specific theological approaches to Sabbath in creation, potentially shedding light on the integration of creation care within a holistic biblical theology. That said, the creation is closely connected with the Sabbath realities that regulated Israel's social, cultural, religious, and national order, as noted by Fretheim:

Certain of these realities are evident already in Genesis 1–2. For example, the luminaries are created with worship life in view ("times and seasons"; 1:14-18), and the day of rest is certainly linked in some way with later sabbatical practices (2:1-3) (Fretheim 2005).

2.2.5.2 Relation of Sabbath to God's Rest

The notion of God's rest emerges from God's activity of creation that rectified the problematic earth condition of being "formless and void" and continues in the present while humanity was busy executing the cultural mandate – of subduing, exercising authority, multiplying, and filling the earth (Haynes and Krüger 2017). Haynes and Krüger (2017) argue that God's rest on the seventh day continues in the present since it is not closed by the creation refrain "And there was morning and evening the ...nth day." As such, God's rest remains intrinsic to his purpose of overseeing an ordered functional creation. God's rest on the seventh day allows him to perform activity of blessing and blessing, the acts by God states his relationship to the day and transfers it into divine sphere. Consequently, the seventh day belongs to God. God's rest is tied to not only Israel but human history as shaped by ANE-Israel ideas of a deity taking rest in the absence of conflict and its association with temple structures.³ In my evaluation, the argument put forth by Haynes and Krüger presents an intriguing perspective on the ongoing significance of God's rest. However, a more explicit exploration of the

³ To clarify their point, Haynes and Krüger compare some texts in the creation narrative with their counterparts in tabernacle construction (Gen 1:31//Exod 39:43; Gen 2:1//Exod 39:32; Gen 2:2//Exod 40:33; Gen 2:3//39:43). Such comparison builds on the concept of rest associated with temple structure (e.g., 2 Sam 7:1; 1 Kgs 5:4; 2 Chr 6:41; Ps 132:7-8, 13-14).

theological implications of this ongoing rest in the present would enhance the depth of their argument. A more detailed analysis of how this concept of God's rest influences contemporary theological perspectives on the relation of the Sabbath to God's rest extended to cosmic temple would further strengthen their argument in the broader context of theological discourse.

Some sources discuss the interpretation of the Sabbath rest from a creation perspective, particularly emphasising Sabbath rest is not solely for humans but also involves the establishment of the cosmos as a temple. Walton (2003) is highlighted as a notable figure in this interpretation, with a key emphasis on the disruption of the rest of the supreme deity due to the rebellion of lesser deities. According to Walton (2003, 161), God organises the cosmos to serve as his temple, where he can find rest within the established order and equilibrium. Concepts embedded in the cosmic temple include the rest because of conflict, creation, temple dwelling of the deity, stability, orderliness, and the rest of deities creating humanity to work for them (Gentry 2008, 57-58). In evaluating these sources, it appears that they contribute to a nuanced understanding of the Sabbath rest, linking it to broader cosmic and theological concepts. The incorporation of perspectives from both Walton and Gentry adds depth to the interpretation, offering insights into the cosmic temple as a framework for understanding the motif of God's rest as motivation for Sabbath rest.

Arnold (2009, 49-50) explores the motif of God's rest in relation to creation, particularly focusing on the seventh day as the culmination of the six-day creation process that prohibits worship of nature. Von Rad (1961, 60-61) distinguishes God's rest on the seventh day from the later cultic institution established at Sinai, which, despite being intended for the benefit of humanity, is not the same as the original rest. Waltke (2001, 78) suggests a correlation between the rest at creation and the subsequent Sabbath obligation at Sinai, connecting God's initial rest with the theological concept of a temporal shrine. This shrine is viewed as the space in which God's people find rest from their labours. In evaluating the sources, it is evident that the authors engage with the theological implications of God's rest, drawing connections between the creation narrative and the later establishment of Sabbath practices at Sinai. The incorporation of

perspectives from Arnold, von Rad, and Waltke contributes to a multifaceted understanding of the relationship between God's rest, creation, and the subsequent Sabbath religious obligations. God's rest in the creation context does not focus on mere Sabbath rest, but as tied to God's involvement with his creation gleaned from redemptive history working out through humanity's execution of the cultural mandate.

Waltke with Yu (2007, 187) connect God's involvement with creation to God's activities of creation and their connection to the seventh day that hold symbolic significance for both creation and redemption; absence of evening in this context as a symbol for oppression and death. In evaluating this statement, the authors emphasise a symbolic interpretation of God's creative activities and their association with the absence of evening on the seventh day. The use of symbolic biblical interpretation may be a daunting task. To thoroughly assess the validity and significance of this interpretation, it would be necessary to consider the broader context of the scholarly work by Waltke with Yu, including their methodology, the cultural and historical context they engage with, and the reception of their ideas within the academic community. This is beyond the scope of this study.

Theologically, God's rest embodies a combination of celebrating God as both Creator and Redeemer, serving as a preview of entering the ideal state of creation – an objective aligned with redemption (Barker 2003, 698). The Sabbath, within its covenantal context, is seen as facilitating Israel's experience of an eschatological life, inviting them to partake in the final salvific rest by observing the Sabbath, which serves as a reminder that humanity's purpose goes beyond mere material pursuits, extending to the times set apart for quiet, reflection, meditation, and worship (Waltke 2007, 187). In evaluating the sources, they apparently offer a comprehensive theological perspective on the Sabbath, intertwining themes of creation, redemption, covenant, and cultural mandate. The integration of insights from Barker and Waltke with Yu contributes to a holistic understanding of the multifaceted significance of God's rest in the biblical narrative. Therefore, God's Sabbath-rest is meant to go beyond debates to inform humanity's practical living as modelled on God.

2.2.5.3 Sabbath: Worship and Benevolence

Demonstrably, the Sabbath has been appropriated for worship on thematic lines of Adam's situation in Eden, creation sanctity, Sabbath's placement in Decalogue, the Levitical Sabbath laws, and the heavenly hope (McGraw 2009, 218-226) as well as on the Decalogue imperative "to remember" (Merrill 2000, 26-36). Thus, the Sabbath has been utilised to address festal concept of worship during the Rabbinic traditions of the NT era (Instone-Brewer 2011, 1-114), conceptualisation of day of worship (Feldman et al. n.d.), Bible-based evangelical worship (McConnell 2005, 331-346), and motivation for recovery of Puritan spirituality (Haykin 2010, 38-45).

Theological dimensions of the Sabbath and worship, encompass themes such as the reminder of God's complete creation, the confession of God as the Lord of creation, the celebration and reckoning of time, the safeguarding of the welfare of both humanity and animals, the signalling of Israel's covenant relationship with God, the commemoration of Israel's redemption from Egyptian servitude, and the anticipation of eschatological realisation in the church (Waltke with Yu 2007, 71-73). The integration of creation and redemption into the eschatological Sabbath principle is highlighted, emphasising that God's preparations at creation have lasting benefits for humanity's eschatological future (von Rad 1961, 60-61). Theological reflections on God's rest extend to both Israel and the church, with Mathews (1996) emphasising these benefits, while the continuity or cessation of the Sabbath is a debated topic, as noted by Westermann (2004) and Calvin and King (2010, 107). In my evaluation, the authors provide clear overview of the various theological aspects and capture the richness of theological themes related to the Sabbath and worship. The mention of ongoing debates on Sabbath continuity or cessation adds a layer of complexity to the discussion, and the reference to further development in chapter three implies a structured and progressive exploration of the topic.

2.3 Sabbath in Decalogue of Exodus Tradition (Exod 20:8-11)

2.3.1 Translation (Own Translation)

⁸ Remember⁴ the sabbath day, to keep it holy. ⁹ Six days you shall labour and do all your work. ¹⁰ However, the seventh-day is a sabbath to Yahweh your God. You shall not do all your work nor your son or your daughter or your servant or your maidservant or your animal or your alien within your gates. ¹¹ For in six days Yahweh made the heavens and the earth, the sea and everything in them and rested⁵ on the seventh day. Therefore, Yahweh blessed the Sabbath day and has consecrated it.

2.3.2 Historical Setting

The Decalogue contains covenantal obligations that Israelites were to fulfil. The Decalogue and other Mosaic laws collectively give out the divine expectation regarding “proper worship, human relationships, suitable restitution, and social justice” (Mangum 2020). In ANE, worship notably allowed people to fulfil obligations of multiple deities; reciprocally, the people were expected to be prayerful, pious, ethical, and morally upright (Walton 2006, 135-161).

The fourth commandment of the Decalogue, focusing on the Sabbath, links to Israel’s covenant at Mount Sinai, emphasising God’s redemption from slavery. The literary context reveals God’s self-revelation through sustaining, redeeming, and shaping Israel. Mooney (2008) contends that understanding Exodus slavery enhances comprehension of Israel’s liberation and legislation, crucial in the history of redemption. The commandment directs the head of the household to exercise authority distinct from oppressive models, aligning with the cultural shaping of Israel’s perception of time and

⁴ SP: *keep*, so rendered probably to harmonise the text with Deut 5:12.

⁵ God’s rest conceptualised by שבת in Gen 2:2-3 is in Exod 20:11 replaced with נוח which basically means to “have rest, repose” (DCH 2011, 5:637). Such replacement may suggest deliberate intention by the author of Exodus to root sabbath-rest into the creation concept of God’s rest.

ethics. Dempster (2008) asserts that the commandments root ethical behaviour in salvation from oppression and characterise God's redemptive nature.

The Sabbath, strategically placed in the biblical narrative, serves as the source from which subsequent revelations spring and unfold, as noted by Block (2010, 453). It is part of the Decalogue that intricately weaves religious and social behaviour within the covenant context, with transgressions regarded as sins against God and violations of group norms (Meyers 2005, 164). Regarding this, Mooney (2008) emphasises the Decalogue's character, rooted in God's redemptive act, addressing community welfare within a patricentric framework. It is covenant-oriented rather than purely legal, displaying apodictic rather than casuistic qualities, intended to introduce God's nature and instil responsible socioreligious relations. This conceptually contrasts with ANE perceptions of slavery, highlighting the need for respecting both God and individual dignity within the community.

2.3.3 Outline of Exod 20:8-11

The Sabbath commandment features the command to remember, demarcation of time for work and rest, and the rationale (Dozeman 2009), which could be outlined as follows:

- A. Command (vv. 8-9)
- B. Focus (v. 10)
- C. Motivation (v. 11)

2.3.4 Literary Analysis

In the wider context of Exodus, the Sabbath binds Israel's religious and social life that anchors the construction of the tabernacle to signify the covenant, covenant renewal, and the sanctuary (Exod 31:12-17; 34:21; 35:1-3). In the Decalogue, the sabbath commandment serves as a bridge between theocentric (Commandments 1-3) and communal-centric (Commandments 5-10) categories. In this case, the Sabbath commandment has a double focus; on God and humanity (Frey 2011, 137). Such placement of the sabbath commandment within the Decalogue may aid appreciation of how the commandment unifies the creator with creation.

A. Command (vv. 8-9)

The two verses are syntactically controlled by זָכוֹר (to remember), which functions as an imperatival verb. The command זָכוֹר is directed at יוֹם הַשַּׁבָּת (the Sabbath day). The Sabbath observer must actively engage his mental faculties, saturating his psyche with the commandment. זָכוֹר expresses deliberate intensification of the manner of Sabbath observance, somewhat corresponding to participial aspect of “remembering.” As to the temporal extent, it portrays the sense of an injunctive future, anticipating the full application of the fourth commandment once Israel settles in the promised land. This means its validity would not only apply while Israel is in the wilderness but also during her settlement in the promised land.

To keep the Sabbath קָדַשׁ (holy) informs the manner of keeping the sabbath i.e., purity. קָדַשׁ connotes the idea of separation and is always defined, from the scriptural viewpoint, in connection with either God’s presence or consecration of the sanctuary; its full definition depends on the ethical dimension (Hartley 2003, 420). Its usage in this context echoes God’s activity at creation of consecrating the seventh day. As such, קָדַשׁ conditions the description of Israel as a holy nation based on their obedience to Yahweh’s Sabbath commandment and other laws (Exod. 19:6). Apparently, the concept of holiness is significant to the immediate context. Holiness is associated with consecration of people in preparation to meet with God (Exod. 19:10, 14, 22). Then, it is used to demarcate the mountain from which God issues the Decalogue as holy (Exod 19:23). The applicatory sense of the commandment, therefore, connotes setting the Sabbath day apart from the rest. This would require mental and ethical processes in keeping with it because Yahweh had already sanctified this day at creation.

The command is then motivated by the requirement for an Israelite to work and do all his labours in שֵׁשֶׁת יָמִים (six days). Since the expression שֵׁשֶׁת יָמִים is in accusative form, it must be understood in the sense of the time during which work should be done (Joüon and Muraoka 2003, 429).

B. Focus (v. 10)

The Sabbath is hereby equated with יוֹם הַשְּׁבִיעִי (the seventh day). In this expression, the noun יוֹם benefits its definiteness from the adjective (van der Merwe et al. 1999,

232). Such expression opens options of perceiving Sabbath-observance in principle rather than literal. Context favours the principle-perception, especially that שָׁבַת is equally indefinite. In this equation, rest in the cultic Sabbath context is closely associated with God's נֹחַ (rest) at creation. It conveys not only completion of work of creation but more importantly becomes “an expression of engagement as the deity takes his place at the helm to maintain an ordered, secure, and stable cosmos” (Walton 2006, 157). Sabbath-rest associated with God's rest may be intended to inculcate in the worshiper's mind the rationale for submitting to Yahweh's authority.

The focus on the Sabbath now presents the intensified prohibition לֹא-תַעֲשֶׂה (no work must be done) on this day. The grammatical construction of imperfect with negation implies the validity of the prohibition in the present. V. 10 is characterised with a combination of positive and negative aspects, which allows for “considerable freedom – people can live their lives as long as they remember to desist from certain behaviors that violate stability of the community” (Meyers 2005, 165). As such, the Sabbath commandment regulates the worshiper's authority vertically and horizontally. Vertically, the worshiper submits to Yahweh by refraining from labour. Horizontally, the worshiper is restrained from exploiting those of his household by depriving them rest from labour. Such injunction provides a window for understanding that the Sabbath was also purposed to limit the oppression by the powerful in society.

C. Motivation (v. 11)

The motivation supplied by the text provides the rationale for Sabbath observance. An Israelite must adhere to the principle of six-day work and seventh-day rest because it characterises God's pattern of creation. The Sabbath commandment depicts the creation narrative based on shared creation vocabulary such as עָשָׂה, מְלָאכָה, קָדַשׁ, שָׁבַת, עֵשָׂה, יוֹם הַשְּׁבִיעִי, הַשְּׁמַיִם וְאֶת-הָאָרֶץ, אֱלֹהִים, בָּרַךְ. This may indicate that the Sabbath commandment appropriates the creation for its utilisation in a community context. In this way, the welfare of creation may intentionally be maintained through the Sabbath.

By alluding to Yahweh's blessing of the creation seventh day, the biblical author artfully establishes that God's rest intentionally informs the Sabbath in Sinaitic context. Interestingly, God's rest is herein described by נֹחַ (nuah) rather than שָׁבַת (šābāt). In the

Qal, נון expresses the idea of taking a break from activities to refresh oneself (LALHB 2017). It is demonstrated that the Pentateuchal usage of נון expresses ideas connected to creation, land, and promises (Barker 2003, 687-689). By using the word נון, creation becomes the paradigm through the Sabbath should be observed. This gives the protological sense of rest on notion of settling in the land as well as eschatological rest that commensurate with new creation. "Rest," as connected with God's promises (cf. Josh 21:44-45), provides the theological appropriation that maintains a tri-dimension scope extending to creation, land, and promises.

2.3.5 Theological Implications

2.3.5.1 Sabbath and Morality in Community

The Sabbath commandment, integral to the Decalogue, is recognised for its connection to morality. Collins (1992) highlights the Decalogue's pivotal role in shaping Israel's cultic practices, modelling Hittite suzerain treaties, summarising criminal law, centralising biblical tradition, and analysing individual commandments. The study underscores the Sabbath's value within moral theology due to its centrality in the covenant. Morality in the biblical tradition is consciously tied to covenant obligations, with the Decalogue at its core. The Sabbath's authority stems from its theophanic origin and relation to other laws, echoing through Leviticus, Psalms, the Prophets, Jesus' sermon on the Mount, Pauline writings, and the General Letters of the NT (Beal 2016). In my evaluation, the authors effectively encapsulate the significance of the Sabbath commandment within the context of the Decalogue and its broader implications in shaping morality. Collins and Beal provide a coherent overview of the relationship between the Sabbath, the Decalogue, and moral theology. The reference to various biblical texts and traditions reinforces the ubiquity of the Sabbath's influence.

The Decalogue holds theological influence in both Old and New Testaments, redefining the terms "law" and "covenant" while preserving its Jewish heritage (Marshall 2003, 179-181). Marshall asserts the Decalogue's principles originate in a religious rather than cultural context, making them universally relevant (Marshall 2003, 174-175). The author contends the Decalogue is instrumental in addressing religious and non-religious matters like business, legal systems, and morality (Marshall 2003, 171). In my

evaluation, the author succinctly captures the theological influence of the Decalogue, its redefinition of key terms, and its universal relevance in addressing various aspects of life. However, a more comprehensive evaluation would require a closer examination engaging with perspectives prevailing in the context in which these ideas are situated; a matter that the next chapter deals with.

2.3.5.2 Sabbath As Celebration of Creation and Covenant

The Sabbath, commemorating God's creation, serves as motivation for human work, promotes animal welfare, signifies Israel's redemption, and offers recuperation for both humanity and animals (Block 2010, 459-460). It safeguards against the exploitation of the vulnerable, allowing reflection on the implications of divine governance. Janzen (2000) interprets the Sabbath as a celebratory call to imitate God, fostering eschatological awareness. The Sabbath, rooted in creation, dynamically applies to diverse cultural circumstances throughout redemptive history. Shead (2000) concludes that the Sabbath blessings are fulfilled in Jesus, the Lord of Sabbath, marking the climax of its application in biblical narrative. In my evaluation, the multifaceted aspects of the Sabbath as discussed by Block, Janzen, and Shead provide a concise overview of the theological, ethical, and eschatological dimensions associated with the Sabbath. However, a more thorough evaluation would involve further scrutiny of these Sabbath debates.

The Sabbath, beyond celebrating creation, symbolises God's covenant with Israel, influencing the understanding of salvation. Gentry (2008) emphasises that Israel's exodus shapes biblical language of salvation in the Old and New Testaments. Redemption, embodied in rest, forms the theological foundation of the Sabbath. However, tension arises in relating the OT concept of salvation to the NT, particularly concerning the distinction between Israel and the church, and people of the old and new covenants. In evaluation, Gentry succinctly addresses the tension between the OT and NT concepts of salvation, emphasising the distinctions between Israel and the church. Gentry's thesis vis-à-vis redemption (salvation) has implications for the Christian understanding of salvation coming to the world through Israel's covenantal heritage.

2.3.5.3 Sabbath-Rest as Extending Beyond Physical Rest

The quest for a theology of the Sabbath delves into the idea of God's rest based on שבת (Gen 2:2-3) and נוח (Exod 20:11). The term שבת, linked to cessation and rest, shares connections with the substantive שַׁבַּת (Sabbath). The Sabbath commandment models God's cessation, and the shift to נוח implies a rest characterised by serene repose, promoting inner and outer tranquillity (Oswalt 1997a, 58). Sabbath-rest impacts both the spiritual and physical well-being of humanity and creation. נוח is notably linked to God's promise of a place of rest, influencing covenant life and its spiritual (Isa 32:18) and socioeconomic (Ruth 3:1) dimensions. Oswalt observes the evolution of the concept into an eschatological anticipation rooted in the exilic experience, emphasising the rest's significance in the presence of God rather than land inheritance (Oswalt 1997b, 1132-1136). This concept extends from the Davidic kingship to the postexilic period, building on God's promise to Abraham for rest and freedom from bondage (Josh 1:13). In my evaluation, the sources encapsulate the multifaceted exploration of the Sabbath's theological dimensions, integrating insights from שבת and נוח. They highlight the nuanced shift from שבת to נוח, emphasising the concept of rest in its spiritual, socioeconomic, and eschatological dimensions. That said, the authorial substitution of נוח for שבת in Exod 20:11 does not imply disconnection of Sabbath in Exodus from the one in the creation narrative. Rather, it contextualises God's rest now that the Sabbath attains the covenantal status. This study contends that the appropriation of this rest lies in both physical and spiritual domains whose full meaning may be appropriated in the spiritual outworking of God's redemptive work.

In conclusion, the Sabbath commandment in Exodus tradition encourages Sabbath observance by looking back to creation, emphasising equalisation and rest for people of all walks of life. The theological dimension extends beyond physical rest to encompass spiritual and socioeconomic relations, impacting practical life in Israelite family and community settings. Ethically, the Sabbath sustains covenantal ideals and informs the morality of the ancient covenanted community by maintaining the dignity of creation. The study proposes an investigation into whether the Sabbath can motivate contemporary family and community relations in Zambia, raising questions about the

authority of the Mosaic covenant in the new covenant dispensation, which will be explored further in chapter three.

2.4 Sabbath in Deuteronomic Contextualisation (Deut 5:12-15)

2.4.1 Translation (Own Translation)

¹²You shall continue observing the Sabbath day, to keep it holy, just as Yahweh your God commanded you. ¹³Six days you shall labour and do all your work. ¹⁴However, the seventh-day is a Sabbath to Yahweh your God. You shall not do any work on it: you, your son or daughter, your servant or maidservant, your ox or donkey or any domestic animal, or your alien that is within your gates so that your servant and maidservant shall rest like you do. ¹⁵You shall remember that you were a slave in the land of Egypt. And Yahweh your God brought you out from there with a strong hand and an outstretched arm. Therefore, Yahweh your God has commanded you to keep the Sabbath day.

2.4.2 Literary Context

Moses addresses a new generation of Israelites when they were on the verge of inheriting the promised land. Contained in this address is the Sabbath command, which reappears in the Decalogue. The Sabbath commandment is comparatively extensively elaborated and provides some details regarding its observance. The elaboration can be ascertained from its explicitness in relation to commandment, the targeted group, focus on the commandment – the Sabbath day, and the scope of its intended beneficiaries. Characteristically, its expansion introduces new content that necessitates modification of the outline to that was earlier given in 2.2.3 above.

2.4.3 Outline of Deut 5:12-15

With the Sabbath Commandment in the Deuteronomic contextualisation, Deut 5:12-15 consists of four thematic strophes that may be outlined as follows:

A Command and rationale (v. 12)

B Elaboration of the Command (v. 13-14b)

B' Elaboration of the Rationale (v. 14c-15b)

A' Rationale and Command (v. 15c)

2.4.4 Literary Analysis

The Deuteronomic contextualisation extends the creation motif into redemptive community life that introduces the work-rest cycle and the liberation embedded in the exodus tradition (Biddle 2003). That being the case, this study attributes the differences between the Deuteronomic and Exodus traditional Sabbath commandment to Mosaic endeavour to adapting it to redemptive concept. This redemptive concept is further expanded through sabbatical years and three annual pilgrimage festivals (Harman 2001).

A. Command and Rationale (v. 12)

The biblical author employed an infinitive absolute (שְׁמֹר) to inculcate the command and rationale of the Sabbath commandment. Hebrew infinitives, akin to *-ing* verbal nouns in English, represent actions treated as nouns. They are utilised in contexts where syntax necessitates a noun. As usual, the infinitive absolute, in this verse, stands alone as an unattached verbal noun.

The infinitive absolute in Hebrew can serve two main functions: it can substitute for a regular verb, representing various verb forms such as perfect, imperfect, or imperative, with person, number, and tense inferred from context. For instance, the infinitive absolute stands in for the second person imperative זָכֹר (to remember) in Exod 20:8 above. Additionally, it can stand in place of a noun when discussing abstract verbal ideas. For example, the infinitive absolute is employed in Isa 1:17: "learn doing good (הִיטֵב לַמַּדּוּ)." In this Isaianic case, the infinitive absolute, expressed in the Hiphil, is used as the subject instead of a noun to convey the action of "doing-good."

In Deut 5:12, the infinitive absolute שְׁמֹר functions as sentence predicator (Andersen and Forbes 2012, 363, 367). It expresses an injunctive future rather than the imperative (Joüon and Muraoka 2006, 399) and controls the literary context of the fourth commandment (Putnam 2002, 37). Thus, all clauses in verses 12-13 are asyndetic and expand the idea of שְׁמֹר (Patton and Putnam 2019, 95).

An Israelite is commanded to continually observe (שמור) the Sabbath by sanctifying (קדש) it. To keep holy in the Hebrew understanding denotes the action to withdraw an object from common usage by dedicating it to accomplish divine purposes (Tigay 1996, 68). In this case, an Israelite demonstrates loyalty to Yahweh by desisting from labour to rest on the sabbath day. This day of rest is then dedicated to God and accomplishing only the purposes that are divinely sanctioned.

The verse adds the formula כַּאֲשֶׁר צִוְּךָ יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ (as Yahweh your God commanded you) to indicate that the Deuteronomic version does not claim to be the original source. Rather, it depends on another source. This study assumes the Decalogue in Exodus tradition to be the primary source for the Deuteronomic one.

B. Elaboration of the Command (v. 13-14b)

The elaboration of the commandment is embedded in the call to work six days. Some scholars like Craigie (1976) consider this elaboration as an aspect of the command. In this sense, the Sabbath commandment may contain double obligation of rest and work. As already noted, the “rest” of vv. 12 and 13 attributes to the main command. Thus, this study understands the six-day work duration as part of the Sabbath commandment. Essentially, the commandment connects with productivity enhanced through work for six days.

Verse 14 contains a stative proposition attributing the seventh-day to be Yahweh’s own possession. The Sabbath focuses on the specific day that is described as לַיהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ (belonging to Yahweh your God), in which case, the command entails an appositional list of people expected to obey the Sabbath command. The listing should be understood in terms of distinction rather than combination since the ו (waw) conjunction in this context appears in the disjunctive sentence (Davidson 1902, 201-202). The list includes the household head, his son or daughter, his servant or maidservant, his ox or donkey or any domestic animal, or his alien who is within his gates. The inclusion of the גֵּר (alien) is interesting as Israel left Egypt with multitude other nationalities (Exod 12:38). Aliens were vulnerable since they depended on the Israelite masters for their survival as they did not own land (Tigay 1996, 12-13). Although it cannot be stated with specificity whether the stranger in question refers to the proselyte or resident alien (one who left

his home country to dwell within the master's land), Yahweh still provides in the fourth commandment protection from exploitation for the alien.

Inasmuch as the Sabbath belongs to Yahweh, it is meant to benefit distinguished categories of his creation. Specifically, the command halts performance of any work on the Sabbath. Of those expected not to work (*to work*) include “you, your son or daughter, your servant or maidservant, your ox or donkey or any domestic animal, or your alien that is within your gates” (v, 14b).

The word *עבד* connotes the semantic range of a business undertakings or journey, skilled labour, and occupational work (HALOT 1994-2000, 586). The question of specifically what works are prohibited remains unresolved in the Deuteronomic context because the text itself does not prescribe them. Context favours the occupational works which may, nevertheless, overlap into business undertaking and skill. Elsewhere, the biblically prescribed prohibited works include cooking (Exod 16:23-29; Num 15:32), taking a journey out of one's dwelling (Exod 16:29), lighting fire (Exod 35:3), buying and selling (Neh 10:31), and carrying loads (Jer 17:22). This may indicate that the concept of prohibited works kept evolving as biblical communities attempted to apply the commandment to their circumstances. Sometime later, early Judaism would be faced with the question of prohibited works which compels the rabbis to expand and extend them in the Sabbath tractate of the Mishna.

B' Elaboration of the Rationale (v. 14c-15b)

V. 14c contains a purpose clause providing the rationale for the command: “so that your servant and maidservant shall rest like you do.” The emphasis *למען ינוח עבדך וַאֲמִתָּךְ כְּמִנְּךָ* (so that your slave and maid-slave may rest like you do) indicates Yahweh's predisposition to protect the weakest in society. The slaves were the most vulnerable, so God emphasises their need to rest. The Sabbath-rest released the slaves from the yoke of slavery at least one day in a week. This is further elaborated in v. 15a where the objective is given vis-à-vis slavery in Egypt. The household head must not only remember his slavery experience in Egypt, but also recall Yahweh's redemptive grace that he wrought by means of his “strong hand and an outstretched arm.”

Commented [CT1]: Interestingly, this is a sub-unit, with the infinitive construct beginning, it is a purpose clause, hence I considered it as YHWH providing the rationale or basis for the command. It thus ought to stand alone as sub-unit within v. 14, but rather flows into v. 15a-b as further elaboration of the rationale for the commandment concerning the Shabbat.

A' Rationale and Command (v. 15c)

V. 15c proposes a recollection of Yahweh's command. זָכַר (to remember) suggests the reason for remembering the Sabbath. The call to recall Israel's slavery in Egypt appears in about four other instances in the book of Deuteronomy (Deut 15:15; 16:12; 24:18, 22). An Israelite is obligated to recollect; to never forget that at one point he was a slave. That recollection involves reckoning of time (Andersen and Forbes 2012, 199); Israel must remember their servitude, which provided the platform for their experience of Yahweh's redemption. On this point, the Deuteronomic motivation seemingly differs from the one in Exodus. Whereas the Exodus tradition explains the origin of Sabbath and imitatio Dei on the work-rest paradigm, the Deuteronomic one extends that motivation to redemption that affects social and religious relations. Thus, the statement is commonly characterised with its usage to back or motivate laws that accomplish humanitarian purposes and to promote humanitarian concern.

2.4.5 Theological Implications

2.4.5.1 Sabbath Motivation Differences in Exodus and Deuteronomic Versions

The comparison of the Sabbath commandment in Deuteronomic and Exodus traditions sparks diachronic and synchronic perspectives. Ausloos (2013) argues that the differences stem from their interdependence or reliance on another source. Ausloos suggests resolving these variations through the concepts of "actualisation" and "re-enactment," drawing from the verb זָכַר in both versions to signify the re-enactment of the Sabbath in creation and historical liberation. This actualisation of creation Sabbath ideals, perpetuated through re-enactment, aligns with Jesus' non-abolishment of the Sabbath. Ausloos places the composition of these texts during the Exile. While Ausloos' attribution may find support, points regarding Mosaic authorship and scripture's final form extend beyond this study's scope.

The synchronic perspective on differences in the Sabbath commandment includes various attributions: (i) Moses reciting from memory, not reading from tablets (Block 2010, 458); (ii) paraenetic expansions adapting the commandment to new settings (Marshall 2003, 172); (iii) complementarian function of creation and redemption motivations (Currid 2006, 139); (iv) Exodus rooting Sabbath in creation, while Deuteronomy emphasises creation's aim as redemption (Tigay 1996, 69); (v) authorial

difference with Yahweh speaking in Exodus and Moses writing in Deuteronomy (Baker 2005, 14); (vi) influence of ANE treaty practices during covenant renewal (Harman 1997, 514); (vii) shifting theological emphasis from creation to redemption (Merrill 1994, 152); (viii) acceptance and extension of Exodus motivation (Hamilton 2011, 313-315), and; (ix) viewing the Sabbath commandment as the Decalogue's climax (Mueller 2003, 141-149).

In my analysis of sources on the synchronic perspective, the authors reflect diverse interpretative lenses applied to the textual variations. Block's insight into Moses' reciting from memory suggests a potential oral tradition influencing the commandment's formulation, adding an oral dimension to its transmission. Marshall's idea of paraenetic expansions aligns with the dynamic adaptation of religious laws to evolving societal contexts, emphasising practical applicability. Currid's complementarian function implies a harmonious interplay of creation and redemption motivations, indicating a unified theological framework. Tigay's distinction between Exodus and Deuteronomy accentuates different theological emphases, with Exodus emphasising Sabbath rooted in creation and Deuteronomy highlighting creation's aim as redemption. Baker's authorial difference raises questions about the collaborative nature of biblical composition, intertwining divine and human agency. Harman's exploration of ANE treaty practices offers a cultural context, suggesting the influence of covenant renewal on the Sabbath commandment's formulation. Merrill's observation of a shifting theological emphasis reflects evolving perspectives on creation and redemption within biblical traditions. Hamilton's concept of accepting and extending Exodus motivation underscores the dynamic nature of scriptural interpretation and application. Mueller's view of the Sabbath commandment as the Decalogue's climax implies its thematic and theological centrality. Overall, these attributions contribute to a rich and comprehensive understanding of the complexities surrounding the Sabbath commandment, showcasing the diversity of perspectives within biblical scholarship. This study ties the diversity of perspectives to emphasising the Sabbath's thematic and theological centrality within biblical traditions.

Common to both diachronic and synchronic perspectives is the notion of protological Sabbath connecting to the present. Therefore, the attribution of the differences to contextualisation offers the best explanation. Contextualisation happens as the older version (Sabbath in Exodus tradition) is re-enacted in the new (Sabbath in Deuteronomic contextualisation). Additionally, it must be observed that no two Sabbath texts in biblical data appear to be consistent because biblical authors were constantly applying the Sabbath commandment to their dynamic situations and circumstances. Thus, the Sabbath commandment becomes a special paradigm for addressing issues of holiness within community setting as the additional content within the Deuteronomic version shows awareness of the existence of the one in the Exodus tradition (Klingbeil 2010, 491-509).

2.4.5.2 Omission of Wife in the Sabbath Commandment: An Indication of Sexism?

It must be stated from the onset that the assertion that the Sabbath Commandment excludes wife is inaccurate. Omission does not mean exclusion. In the literary context of the Sabbath commandment, a comparison of categories beneficiaries according to sex reveals that two females are mentioned (“your daughter” and “your maidservant”) as against three males (“you,” “your son,” and “your servant”). In other words, females are mentioned three times versus four times that males are mentioned. This has attracted some sexism misogyny because the “wife” is not mentioned. This raises the question, why is the wife not mentioned? The text does not tell us.

However, the Sabbath commandment, notably excluding the wife among beneficiaries, is often linked to historical sexism in the androcentric ANE culture, especially in contemporary feminism in general. Feminist perspectives now scrutinise biblical treatment of women, attributing gender-based and environmental exploitation to androcentrism within Classical, Jewish, and Christian traditions. While some advocate for embracing earth-based spiritualities to counter exploitation (e.g., Adams 1993, 1-3), this study challenges that, asserting a need to avoid reading current exploitations into biblical data. The study emphasises studying biblical texts in their original context for accurate interpretation because the biblical evidence contradicts the feminist viewpoints.

The Sabbath commandment, as detailed in Christensen (2001, 120), serves as a constraint against exploitative practices by societal power structures. Notably, labour in ANE cultures was relegated to women and slaves, reserving leisure for males. Investigating women's rights in early Jewish society, Leissner (2001, 140-177) explores naming rituals and acknowledges the limitations of relying on extrabiblical sources. The author reveals how circumcision confirmed male membership, contrasting with females who achieved it through purity rituals at marriage. Recognition in the community for women depended on their father in childhood and husband in adulthood, highlighting a gender disparity in acknowledgment, emphasising the multifaceted dynamics shaping women's status in the societies under examination (Leissner 2001, 144-149, 156-157). In my evaluation of sources, the provision of an overview of the Sabbath commandment's role in mitigating exploitative practices within societal power structures by Christensen (2001) and the investigation into women's rights in early Jewish society by Leissner (2001, 140-177), open a new exciting window through which the Sabbath commandment may be analysed for sociological benefit. The contrast between male membership confirmation through circumcision and female confirmation through purity rituals at marriage reveals significant gender dynamics which is beyond the scope of this study. The recognition of women in the community being tied to their father in childhood and husband in adulthood highlights a noteworthy gender disparity. Leissner's study on the omission of women reflects the challenges in understanding contemporary research questions in ancient Hebraic communities. However, it may suffice to say that the Bible recognises women (even slave women) equally with men. As sons are mentioned, daughters are also mentioned, for example the daughters of Zelophehad, (Num 27:1-7). God replied Moses's inquiry by emphatically saying the daughter's Zelophehad "are right," (v. 7). This was way ahead of what occurred in contemporaneous cultures and the Bible should be given credit for presenting women as equal with men despite rampant sociological and religious challenges in our contemporary society that are bent on exploitation.

The Sabbath, addressing contemporary sociological and religious challenges, is examined by Carpenter using Barthian theology to combat exploitation, particularly of women and children (Carpenter 2018, 77-94). This approach, contrary to Adams,

underscores the Bible's reliability in addressing modern issues. Sabbath observance, as per Christensen (2001, 88), offers a chance for grace to reshape human identity. Carpenter advocates for global adherence to biblical principles to achieve this transformation. In the context of today's society disregarding past Sabbath laws, the study proposes communal Sabbath observance to protect workers' rights, inspired by Carpenter's insights (Carpenter 2018, 91). This investigation seeks to apply these principles to alleviate exploitation in the Zambian context.

In conclusion, one's biblical perception of marriage, namely that the two shall become one flesh (see Gen 2:24; Matt 19:5; Mark 10:7-8; 1 Cor 6:16; Eph 5:31), makes it possible for us to think that in the biblical author's view the mention of the man includes the mention of his wife as well (cf. Gen 1:27). The omission of wife in the Sabbath commandment is not sexist; it reflects customary representation through the father/husband figure. Both genders are equal positionally, supported by the biblical definition of man as male and female (Gen 1:27). The commandment instead focuses on providing refreshment for all, transcending socioeconomic distinctions.

2.4.5.3 Sabbath Obligation and the Christian Tradition

Craigie (1976, 157-158) asserts that the Exodus Sabbath is rooted in the first creation, while the Deuteronomic version emphasises God's creation of Israel through redemptive liberation from Egyptian slavery. This connects creation doctrine to believers' new position in Christ (2 Cor 5:17), drawing parallels between Israel's redemption and the Sabbath to the Lord's Day. In evaluating the author, Craigie's assertion offers a valuable insight into the theological underpinnings of the Sabbath in the contexts of Exodus and Deuteronomy. By linking the Sabbath's origin to the first creation and highlighting its connection to God's redemptive mission in liberating Israel from slavery, Craigie establishes a profound theological framework. The parallel drawn between Israel's historical redemption and the believers' new position in Christ (2 Cor 5:17), along with the comparison between the Sabbath and the Lord's Day, adds depth to the understanding of the Sabbath's significance in both OT and NT contexts. Just exactly how themes may be appropriated for the Christian faith today is a matter of inquiry. My

response would entail consideration of the Sabbath obligation in connection with creation and redemption.

Yet Ryken et al. (2000a) highlight the law's pivotal role in the Bible's redemptive-historical narrative, linking it positively to the OT, Jesus, and the NT. The covenant's law is revered in Psalms, denounced wrongdoing by prophets, and remained relevant in Jesus and the apostles' ministries. Whereas the OT believers were promised to find life when they fulfilled the law (cf. Lev 18:5), the NT explicitly demonstrates that one cannot be saved by fulfilling the law's requirements by one's own effort. That said, tension arises regarding the law's abrogation versus validity, a theme explored by Fernando (2012). Fernando (2012) emphasises interpreting the Sabbath considering Christ's teaching, emphasising "rest" as a key concept that challenges legalism. He acknowledges the transfer of Sabbath to the Lord's Day, urging its use for family bonding and worship. While observing the Sabbath is vital, Fernando advises balancing it with human needs, allowing flexibility in the face of urgent necessities (Fernando 2012, 188). In my evaluation of sources, Ryken et al.'s analysis effectively underscores the law's integral role in the Bible's redemptive-historical narrative, drawing meaningful connections between the OT, Jesus, and the NT. The recognition of the covenant's law in Psalms and its denunciation of wrongdoing by prophets enhances their argument. The exploration of tension surrounding the law's abrogation versus validity, as introduced by Fernando, emphasises an interpretation of the Sabbath considering Christ's teaching. Particularly the concept of "rest" challenging legalism, provides a nuanced perspective. Acknowledging the shift of the Sabbath to the Lord's Day and advocating its use for family bonding and worship contributes valuable insights. The emphasis on balancing Sabbath observance with human needs, allowing flexibility in urgent situations, showcases a practical and compassionate approach. Overall, the authors present a well-rounded exploration of the law's significance and its evolving interpretation within the Christian context.

Acknowledging the complexities surrounding the Sabbath obligation, I conclude that the validation of the Sabbath subsists in its connection to creation, redemption, and the

concept of Sabbath/Sunday obligation. I propose that this understanding is illuminated in the context of the person and Sabbath ministry of Christ.

2.5 Sabbath in Festivalian Worship (Lev 23:1-3)

2.5.1 Translation (Own Translation)

¹And Yahweh spoke to Moses, saying: ²“Speak to the children of Israel and say to them: ‘These are the appointed times of festivity that you shall proclaim as *holy assembly*.⁶ These are my appointed times of festivity. ³Six days shall work be done, but on the seventh-day is a Sabbath of solemn rest, a *holy assembly*. All work shall not be done as it is a Sabbath to Yahweh in all your dwellings.’”

2.5.2 Literary Context

Leviticus 23, situated in the Holiness Code (Lev 17-26), emphasises holiness through adherence to Yahweh’s character (Lev 19:2). It contributes to the sanctification of time, detailing Israel’s annual appointed times and aligning with other significant calendars in the Pentateuch (Exod 23:12-19; 34:18-26; Num 28-29; Deut 16:1-17) and Ezekiel’s postexilic temple (Ezek 45:17-46:15).

The term מועד (mō’ēd) controls the whole calendar and encompasses meanings like tent of meeting, festival, appointed times, meeting point, and meeting (HALOT 1994-2000, 557-558). Strategically employed in the Pentateuch, it marks seasons (Gen. 1:14), denotes appointed times in narratives, refers to the sanctuary as the tent of meeting, and in the present context, signifies festivals. The festal calendar, aiming at the laity’s involvement in God’s worship during these events, underscores its objective (Hess 2008, 781).

The Sabbath, denoted by the superlative שַׁבַּת שְׁבוּתוֹן (sabbath of solemn rest – vv. 3, 24, 32, 39) and מִמָּחֳרַת הַשַּׁבָּת (on the day following the sabbath (week) – vv. 11b, 15b, 16a)

⁶ SP reads *holy readings* (also in verse 3). This reading may have been arrived at to emphasise the main religious activity of reading from the scroll during the festival.

holds a prime position in the calendar, shaping the understanding of festivals. This suggests the Sabbath's profound influence on ancient Israel's time reckoning.

2.5.3 Outline of Lev 23:1-3

- A. The Introduction (v. 1)
- B. The Festivals (v. 2)
- C. The Sabbath (v. 3)

2.5.4 Literary Analysis

The Sabbath with its sabbatical principle informs the Israelite festal calendar (Wenham 1979, 301), which is marked by elements pointing to its continuity or permanence (vv. 14, 21, 31, 41), appointments with God (vv. 2, 4, 37, 44), holy assemblage (vv. 2, 4, 7, 8, 21, 24, 27, 35, 37), and cessation from work (vv. 7, 8, 21, 25, 28, 30-31, 36) (Wenham 1979, 300). Thus, the Sabbath influences the understanding of the Levitical festivals (Hess 2008, 782-783).

A. The Introduction (v. 1)

Essentially, v. 2 is also part of the introduction; v. 1 contains the introductory formula **וַיְדַבֵּר יְהוָה אֶל־מֹשֶׁה לֵאמֹר** (And Yahweh spoke to Moses, saying), which appears frequently in Leviticus, about thirty-three times. Its prime contexts include Yahweh's address to Moses with Aaron (Lev 11:1; 14:33; 15:1), Moses and place (Lev 25:1), and Moses and event of the death of Aaron's two sons (Lev 16:1). Given its ubiquity, the formula functions to assure the reader that the narrative contained in the book of Leviticus is God's very words of instruction. The authority of Leviticus is thus drawn from Yahweh rather than Moses. Since the words that follow are coming from Yahweh through Moses, the words have a binding authority within the community of God's people.

B. The Festivals (v. 2)

The text explains the festivals by two terminologies, **מוֹעֵד** (appointed times) and **מִקְרָאֵי קֹדֶשׁ** (sacred assembly). Apparently, the entire verse gives prominence to the concept of **מוֹעֵד** (Driver 1892, 266-267). The **מוֹעֵד** was a familiar concept among the ANE cultures and was instrumental for corporate religious worship (Matthews, Chavalas, and Walton 2000, 137-138). The festivals are Yahweh's appointed times of meeting that occasion

celebration. The festival would constitute the *מִקְרָאֵי קֹדֶשׁ*, (sacred assembly). The basic meaning of *מִקְרָא* is a “calling or summoning.” During these occasions, Israelites were summoned to constitute a holy assembly that portrayed national character. Festivals promoted renewal of allegiance to Yahweh and national unity (Rooker 2000, 281).

C. The Sabbath (v. 3)

The festal calendar assumes the Sabbath’s embeddedness in creation as explicated in Gen 2:1-3; Exod 20:8-11 and conceptualises it to be the preeminent of all (Kiuchi 2007, 421); it offers an Israelite community a weekly rather than annual renewal, and influences other festivals whose observance entailed abstention from work (Kiuchi 2007, 283). The enlisting of the Sabbath among the *מוֹעֵד* is meant to contextualise it for corporate cultic worship but from the rest by its egalitarian character that afforded all labourers rest from labour on this specific day of weekly cycle (Milgrom 2004, 275).

The Sabbath is described herein as the *שַׁבָּת שַׁבָּתוֹן* (*šabbāt šabbātôn*). Interpretation of *שַׁבָּתוֹן* (*šabbātôn*) proposes three senses: (i) expansion of Sabbath; (ii) diminutive of Sabbath, and; (iii) special celebration (HALOT 1994-2000, 1412-1413). This study adopts the concept of special celebration as it fits well with the immediate context. The Sabbath becomes a special day of celebration for national worship, the very event that extends Yahweh’s authority even to secular affairs.

2.5.5 Theological Implications

2.5.5.1 The Sabbath and the Festal Calendar

The Sabbath holds a pivotal position in the festal calendar, coinciding with three significant events in Christ’s redemptive ministry, such as Passover with Good Friday. The NT is rich in festal language, motivating believers for holiness and encouraging rejoicing in the Lord for spiritual and material benefits (Wenham 1979, 306). Certain festivals in Israel, rooted in agriculture, linked Yahweh’s covenant to land blessings and humanity. These celebrations, aligning with creation rhythms and emphasising care for the poor, positioned the weekly Sabbath as a festal pathway into the cycle of God’s creative and redemptive love (Armerding 2003, 312, 313). Specifically, the Sabbath’s role in the festal calendar (Lev 23) is emphasised, with each festival commemorating specific acts of God’s redemption. The festivity nature of the weekly Sabbath leads to

the Sabbath Year (Lev 25:1-7), climaxing in the Jubilee Year (Lev 25:8-55), wherein slaves are freed and debts cancelled – a forward-looking anticipation of the acceptable time of freedom (Swaan 2016).

In my evaluation of sources, the authors integrate various theological perspectives on the Sabbath within the festal calendar, emphasising its pivotal role in Christ's redemptive events. Wenham's reference to the NT's festal language connects spiritual and material benefits, framing the Sabbath as a source of motivation for holiness and rejoicing. Armerding's exploration of festivals rooted in agriculture, tied to Yahweh's covenant, highlights their alignment with creation rhythms and emphasis on care for the poor, positioning the weekly Sabbath as part of God's creative and redemptive love. Swaan's discussion of the Sabbatical Year and Jubilee Year further contextualises the Sabbath within a broader redemptive narrative, anticipating a time of freedom.

2.5.5.2 The Sabbath as $\tau\upsilon\mu$

The theological implication of the Sabbath involves its concept as $\tau\upsilon\mu$, with Bosman (1997b, 871-872) noting its spatial use for the tent of meeting and temporal use for appointed times. Temporally, it encompasses non-cultic and cultic usages, with the former tied to natural life events and the latter associated with biblical Jewish festivals. Bosman underscores its theological influence in shaping festal purposes, the Jewish religious cycle, and Christian festal life. $\tau\upsilon\mu$ fulfils roles in commemorating God's redemptive acts, maintaining the Israelite covenantal community, reestablishment through care for the orphan and widow, and emphasising the importance of the priesthood in corporate cultic worship at the temple. Bosman asserts that the Sabbath, retaining its household status, extends to cultic worship in a corporate setting, influencing both Postbiblical and NT Jewish religious cycles and the formation of Christian religious festivals. In this researcher's evaluation, Bosman's exploration of the Sabbath as $\tau\upsilon\mu$ is thorough, examining its spatial and temporal dimensions. Distinguishing non-cultic and cultic usages, tied to natural events and Jewish festivals, enriches the theological understanding. Bosman highlights $\tau\upsilon\mu$'s pervasive influence, shaping festal purposes, the Jewish religious cycle, and Christian festal life. This connects to commemorating God's redemptive acts, maintaining the Israelite

community, and emphasising the priesthood in cultic worship. He contends that the Sabbath extends influence to corporate cultic worship, impacting Postbiblical and NT Jewish cycles and Christian festivals. While offering valuable insights, Bosman's work warrants further scrutiny because the author does not demonstrate the way the מועד concept influenced the formation of Christian festivity and corporate worship.

The Sabbath plays a crucial role in time reckoning in Jewish and Christian contexts, particularly with the syntactical and semantic controversy surrounding the interpretation of מִמָּחֳרַת הַשַּׁבָּת (on the day following the Sabbath) in Lev 23:11, 15, 16. This phrase has led to a division among Jewish people into Sabbatarian and Festivalian positions. Milgrom (2001, 2056-2063) suggests that the controversy arises from a mistranslation and proposes understanding it as referring to the sabbath-week instead of a day. Milgrom's argument centres on the Qumran calendar, emphasising the Sabbath's instrumental role in time reckoning for both the weekly cycle and annual festivities, influencing Jewish socioreligious life. In evaluation, Milgrom adeptly conveys the information on the Sabbath's pivotal role in time reckoning, particularly the controversy surrounding the interpretation of מִמָּחֳרַת הַשַּׁבָּת in Lev 23:11, 15, 16 as the author interprets the phrase as referring to the sabbath-week instead of a day. Thus, Milgrom underscores the Sabbath's instrumental role in time-reckoning for weekly cycle and annual festivities.

Chilton (2002) highlights the festal benefits of the Sabbath, together with other Jewish festivals, offering contemporary wisdom for both secular and Christian circles grappling with temporal imbalances in the aftermath of industrialisation. By examining Judaic life and its festal concept, Chilton suggests that the NT Gospel's eternal perspective on time can address contemporary temporal disorientation. While primarily addressing a Western audience, the festal calendar's universal insights provide wisdom for resolving temporal imbalances. Additionally, Hartley (1992, 390) notes the Sabbath as typifying the messianic finished work, relevant to the Christian community even though its observance is not commanded, culminating in the final sabbath rest according to Rooker (2000, 292).

In evaluation, Chilton's perspective on the festal benefits of the Sabbath, presenting it as a source of contemporary wisdom for addressing temporal imbalances in both secular and Christian contexts post-industrialisation. Chilton's exploration of Judaic life and its festal concept suggests that the NT Gospel's eternal perspective on time can provide solutions to contemporary temporal disorientation. The acknowledgment of the universal insights from the festal calendar adds depth to the argument, emphasising its relevance beyond a Western audience. Hartley and Rooker contribute to a nuanced understanding of the Sabbath's significance, linking it to the messianic finished work and its enduring relevance in the Christian community.

In conclusion, the festal calendar expands the Sabbath to encompass corporate worship during God's appointed times, contributing to the reckoning of time and just treatment of creation. Emphasising the Sabbath's relationship to corporate worship and its theological utility, the text encourages further engagement with the Sabbath for contemporary relevance.

2.6 Sabbath and Yahweh's Salvation (Isa 56:1-8)

2.6.1 Translation (Own Translation)

¹Thus said Yahweh, "Keep justice and do righteousness because my salvation is at hand and my righteousness about to be revealed. ²Happy is the person who shall do this and the son of man who holds it fast, who keeps the Sabbath from profaning it and keeps his hand from doing all evil. ³Let not the foreigner who joins himself to Yahweh say, 'Yahweh will definitely separate me from his people.' And let not the eunuch say, 'Behold, I am but a dry tree.'" ⁴For thus said Yahweh to the eunuchs who shall keep my Sabbaths, choose the things that delight me and hold fast to my covenant: ⁵"I will give them in my house and within my walls a monument and my good name that is better than sons and daughters. My eternal name shall I give to him and shall not be cut off. ⁶And sons of foreign nationality who join

themselves to Yahweh to serve him and to love the name of Yahweh and to become his servants; everyone who keeps the Sabbath from profaning it and holds fast to my covenant.⁷ And these I shall bring to my holy hill and make them joyful in my house of prayer; their burnt offerings and their sacrifices will be accepted on my altar. For my house shall be called the house of prayer for all the people.”⁸ The Lord Yahweh, who gathers the scattered of Israel, declares: “I shall gather those that are still scattered to those that are gathered already.”

2.6.2 Literary Unit

The passage (Isa 56:1-8) concerning postexilic deliverance under Cyrus exhibits an eschatological dimension, prompting theological scrutiny of its diachronic development and potential redactional layering. Childs (2001, 432-455) defends the unity of Isaianic corpus. The arguments for unity draw on shared terms with chapter 55 (Smith 2009; Paul 2012b), God's salvific invitation to all (Watts 2000, 820-822), and echoing themes found in Torah. The use of temple language supports the idea that during the postexilic period, individuals of various nationalities could align with God through covenant and worship at the centralised temple (Isa 56:1-8).

The Sabbath theme in Isaiah plays a pivotal role, structuring the prophecy's introduction (chapter 1), righteousness test (chapter 58), and conclusion (chapter 66). Motyer (1996) emphasises its central role, portraying the Lord's worldwide people as Sabbath-people, called to righteous living until the Lord's righteousness is revealed (Motyer 1996, 461).

Isa 56:1-8 reinstates the Sabbath's centrality in Yahweh's worship, shifting from a prior negative portrayal to a positive one (Isa 1:13). The Sabbath becomes one of the external proofs of a covenantal relationship with God (Isa 56:1-8). Isaiah later employs it as a test for righteousness, indicting the Jews for their sins (Isa 58:1-14). In the conclusion, the Sabbath symbolises universal observance under God's reign in the renewed heaven and earth (Isa 66:18-24). The Sabbath serves as a thematic thread

emphasising righteousness, challenging Jewish exclusivism in relating to other nationalities.

2.6.3 Outline of Isa 56:1-8

Due to its structure, Isa 56:1-8 is variously described as “a promise of salvation, an exhortation containing a prophetic Torah, or a prophetic oracle that introduces a new cultic norm” (De Hoop 2008, 671). This study extends the thematic line of a promised redemption, which is outlined as follows:

- A Redemption and Human Responsibility (vv. 1-2)
- B Apprehension about Ethnic Impediment to Divine Redemption (v. 3a-b)
- C Apprehension about Disability Impediment to Redemption (v. 3c-d)
- C' Divine Veto of Disability Impediment to Redemption (vv. 4-5)
- B' Divine Veto of Ethnic Impediment to Redemption (vv. 6-7)
- A' Redemption and the Divine Prerogative (v. 8)

2.6.4 Literary Analysis

A Redemption and Human Responsibility (vv. 1-2)

The introductory formula *יְהוָה אָמַר* (Thus said Yahweh) roots the origin of this prophetic words in Yahweh whose word never fails but comes to fulfilment (Isa 44:26). Since Isaiah has consistently used this formula in the previous chapters (e.g., Isa 43:14; 44:6, 24; 45:1, 14; 48:17; 49:5, 8, 28; 50:1; 52:3), its usage here is noted to point to the unity of the book of Isaiah with new message than the disjunctive break that introduces new literary work of another author (Childs 2001, 453).

The new message concerns the call for the people of the covenant to observe *מִשְׁפָּט* (justice) and to practise *צְדָקָה* (righteousness). As noted by Tushima (2011, 19-25), the terms “justice” and “righteousness” (cf. Gen 18:19; Deut 32:4; 33:21; 2 Sam 8:15; 1 Kgs 10:9; Job 37:23; Ps 72:2; 103:6; Prov 21:3; 58:2-7) underly the OT concept of justice

that embodies integrity, rectitude, and equity, akin to modern notions of social justice. Justice stems from Yahweh's character and covenant with Israel, manifested in his acts of deliverance and preservation. The author highlights justice to be relational, grounded in Yahweh's covenant with Abraham and the Exodus event, shaping Israel's ethical framework and obligations. In evaluation, Tushima demonstrates that justice integrates the person and character of Yahweh to covenantal living on the socioreligious context. This is consistent with the Isaianic oracle under consideration.

Noted for multiple layers of senses, *הַצְדִּיקָה* in this context refers to living by the precepts of "legal justice and right" (Fishbane 2002, 462). The call is motivated by the theological rationale of the impending *יְשׁוּעָה* ([God's] salvation) and *צְדִיקָה* ([God's] righteousness). Interestingly, the text employs the dual sense of righteousness as it applies to humanity and divinity. From the humanity side, the term may portray the sense of loyalty to upholding the norms of the covenant community life. From the divinity side, the term portrays God's act that identifies with his moral character and predisposition to fulfil his covenantal obligation by performing one mighty act that will physically rescue the Jews from the shackles of Babylonian captivity. The present text emphasises the divine side more than the human.

The conjunction *כִּי* (because, for) is noted to be key for understanding the relationship between the call to observe justice and to do righteousness and the rationale of God's salvation and righteousness that is about to be revealed; which in this context raises the issue as to whether Isaiah teaches salvation by works (Grogan 1986, 314-316). Two contrasting observations are drawn. One interprets salvation as conditioned on acting justly toward others (Paul 2012b, 447). Another discourages the conditioning of salvation on human activity (effort). It interprets the promise of salvation as cause for acting justly (Childs 2001, 456). The immediate and wider context fits with the latter. The promise of salvation serves as the motivation for doing right. Salvation is not contingent on personal righteousness, as no one is truly righteous (1 Kgs 8:46; Isa 64:6). Isaiah urges Israelites to align their lives with God's character as salvation approaches (Smith 2009, 529).

v. 2 emphasizes that the אֲשֶׁר־יָ (happy, blessed) is the אֲנוֹשׁ (human being) who does אֵת (this). Syntactically, it is not immediately clear whether אֵת refers to what has gone before (v. 1a) or what comes after (v. 2b). The problem may be resolved by retaining the parallelism obtaining in the text that sees v. 2 to be an exegetical expansion of v. 1. It appears, then, that the use of waw (וְ) with respect to keeping one's hand from evil is paratactic not hypotactic. In this case, it may be argued that restraint from is not subordinated to (not limited to) sabbath observance. Both are referring to the righteous living required in verse 1, just like the person who fears the Lord eschews evil (Job 28:28; Prov 3:7; 14:16; 16:6). However, it cannot be disputed that the marks of justice and righteousness, vis-à-vis divine redemption, entails keeping the שַׁבָּת (Sabbath) from its profanation and refraining one's hand from doing evil. The person's attitude (inner being) and habit (outward disposition) are perpetually characterised with adherence to Sabbath and right living.

Comparison of v. 2 with v. 6 on the point of Sabbath indicates that v. 2 concerns observing the Sabbath and abstaining from wrongdoing, while v. 6 implies that Sabbath observance signifies commitment to the covenant (Goldingay 2012, 318). If this is accepted, then Isaiah maintains the role of the Sabbath as covenant sign between God and his people (cf. Exod 31:12-17) as extended not only to Jews but to everyone who chooses to align himself with Yahweh. This view finds support in the usage of generic phraseology אָדָם בֶּן־אָדָם (son of man) in reference to "everyone."

B Apprehension about Ethnic Impediment to Divine Redemption (v. 3a-b)

This section introduces concepts that justified exclusion of certain people from accessing God's house (cf. Deut 23:1-8). Of special concern are the foreigner and eunuchs. These two kinds of people are fearful that Yahweh might not accept them. The prophet pronounces the message of hope to them. God's relationship shall no longer be based on nationalistic exclusivism or human disability whose cause may be natural or man-made.

Admittedly, the Deuteronomic injunctions created a tension in the understanding of the eunuchs and foreigners' membership into God's congregation. For instance, foreigners were permitted to make themselves even more impure by eating certain prohibited or

unclean food for Israelites (Deut 14:21). Additionally, foreigners were deprived of the liberties of the sabbatical year (Deut 15:3). Given such, a foreigner might fear Yahweh would not accept him. However, Isaiah encourages the foreigner not to despair because one's acceptance before Yahweh will now be based on one's decision *הִנְלֵךְ אֶל־יְהוָה* (to join oneself to Yahweh).

C Apprehension about Disability Impediment to Redemption (v. 3c-d)

Additionally, the Deuteronomic injunction deprived the eunuch membership in the assembly of God's people without stating the reason (Deut 23:1). However, eunuchs were important in Neo-Assyrian and Babylonian governments and were often castrated in order to alleviate their interference with the heirs to the throne since they were entrusted with care and supervision of royal harem (Matthews, Chavalas, and Walton 2000, 635). Castration prevented them from having offspring; their memory within community faded the moment they died. Lest a eunuch feel worthless and cry that "he is but a dry tree," God would still accept him regardless of disability impediment.

C' Divine Veto of Disability Impediment to Redemption (vv. 4-5)

Yahweh's acceptance of the eunuch is conditioned on *יִשְׁמְרוּ אֶת־שַׁבְּתוֹתַי* (to keep [God's] Sabbaths – v. 4), choosing the will of God and covenantal loyalty. Such requirement goes with the promise; although their memory would not be found within the community, especially that they have no offspring to maintain their name, Yahweh will surely give them *יָד וְשֵׁם* (a monument [literally, "hand"] and name) within his house. The monument and name that God promises them would supersede the memorial that sons and daughters would humanly offer; God's gift will perpetually stay (v. 5).

B' Divine Veto of Ethnic Impediment to Redemption (vv. 6-7)

The foreigner has sixfold marks: allegiance, service, love, servanthood, Sabbath-keeping, and covenantal faithfulness to Yahweh. Although *שָׂרַת* in its basic definition means "to attend to the service of God" (HALOT 1994-2000, 1662), its literary proximity with Yahweh's house in this Isaianic oracle (v. 7) alludes to priestly and Levitical cultus service. If such understanding is accepted, then the multinational priesthood and priestly service at God's sanctuary would be inevitable. Grogan identifies sixfold marks highlighted above to portray a kind of godliness that serves as an antithesis to Pharisaic

legalism (Gorgan 1986, 316). The expression וְהֵבִיאֹתִים (And these I will bring) anticipates the futuristic work that Yahweh will perform, of bringing together the Jews and other nations (Isa 65:1; 66:20-21). Although the expression בַּיִת־תְּפִלָּה (*house of prayer* – v. 7) is an hapax legomenon (Paul 2012a, 299), the context makes it clear that the phrase “house of prayer” refers to the temple. Thus, the temple becomes a house of prayer where God accepts the sacrifices and prayers of all his people from all ethnicities.

A’ Redemption and the Divine Prerogative (v. 8)

The expression הַלֹּהֵךְ אָדַנְךָ יְהוָה (The Lord Yahweh declares) looks back to v. 1 and, this time, confirms what has been proclaimed despite its strangeness: “Not only is there no ground for supposing that Gentiles who love Jehovah will be excluded from the congregation; but it is really Jehovah’s intention to gather some out of the heathen, and add them to the assembled *diaspora* of Israel” (Keil and Delitzsch 1996, 539, emphasis original). In this declaration, Yahweh promises to אָקְרַבְךָ (*gather*) those that are yet to יִקְרְבוּ (be gathered). He will do so because some intended beneficiaries of his salvation are still נִדְחֵי (scattered) around the outskirts of Israel. Employing the language of gathering the scattered, the action of Yahweh herein alludes to his person and task of shepherding. In fact, Yahweh, the great shepherd, shall gather his people through his omnipotence.

2.6.5 Theological Implications

2.6.5.1 Exclusivism Challenged

It has been observed that the Isaianic oracle of 56:1-8 redefined the social boundaries by offering “an alternative viewpoint to the nationalist and exclusivist views of Ezra and Nehemiah as to who can be a member of the Judean community” (Hammock 2000, 46). In the postexilic Ezra-Nehemiah community, Jewish relations with other ethnicities faced redefinition, particularly in matters of community membership. Influenced by a setting emphasising ethnic purity for socialisation and procreation, individuals of mixed races, foreigners, and eunuchs were excluded. This exclusion possibly stemmed from interpreting the Torah considering the Babylonian captivity.

Ezra-Nehemiah's exclusivism aligns with Pentateuchal restrictions. Scholars compare Isaiah's inclusivism (Isa 56:1-8) with Pentateuchal texts on foreigners and eunuchs (Lev 21:16-23; Deut 23:1-8), suggesting a contradiction or abrogation (De Hoop 2008, 681) while Childs (2001, 458) views it as an imitation of priestly Torah pronouncement. The Isaianic oracle connects to the Anointed Servant rather than to "Cyrus and the return" (Motyer 1996, 23), thereby promising an eschatological salvation to Zion and an emphasis on the enduring principles of justice and righteousness (Smith 2009, 526-527). In evaluation, the comparison of Isaiah's inclusivism with Pentateuchal texts introduces scholarly debates, with De Hoop suggesting a contradiction or abrogation. Childs sees it as an imitation of priestly Torah pronouncement, and Motyer connects it to the Anointed Servant. The reference to eschatological salvation and emphasis on enduring principles in Isaiah align with scholarly viewpoints. However, Isa 56:1-6 does not contradict or abrogate the Pentateuch; it addresses different issues. It focuses on the enduring legacy of eunuchs and foreigners joining Yahweh through justice and righteousness, whose external marks are Sabbath observance and restraint from evil.

Wright and Chan (2012, 99-119) propose that Isaiah's oracle (56:1-6) focuses on *Totenpflege* (care for the dead), akin to Absalom's case (2 Sam. 18:18). They assert the promise to eunuchs involves Yahweh's "gift of a funerary stele," utilising imperial ideology to shift stigma by replacing the palace with the temple. Yahweh rewards devoted eunuchs observing the Sabbath and choosing to please Him. In my evaluation, Wright and Chan's perspective offers a unique interpretation of Isaiah's oracle (56:1-6), connecting it to *Totenpflege*, is an innovative approach to altering social perceptions about the eunuchs. Their assertion that Yahweh rewards devout eunuchs aligns with the overall thematic analysis. The authors contribute to recovery of sociological implications that the Isaianic text offers vis-à-vis death and legacy of the just and righteous Sabbath-observer.

2.6.5.2 Yahweh the Shepherd of All Nations

Yahweh's promise to eunuchs and foreigners is rooted in his shepherding role, emphasising the Sabbath's theological significance within temple-centric worship. Amidst potential nationalism and exclusivism, Yahweh pledges to gather scattered

individuals, providing an inclusive community. Foreigners and eunuchs qualify for cultus worship by aligning with Yahweh through Sabbath-keeping, covenant adherence, and ethical conduct. Isaiah envisions an open community where Jewish and Gentile relationships thrive within a covenant context, primarily demonstrated through Sabbath observance. The texts serve a dual purpose; critiquing leaders who exclude based on ethnicity or incapacitation and offering comfort to those discriminated against, assuring them of God's acceptance based on covenant adherence, Sabbath-keeping, and ethical conduct. As such, the oracle aims to transform social boundaries, creating an open community as promised by God. This transformation is supported eschatologically, emphasising the ongoing relevance of Isaianic principles in covenant relationships, just social interactions, and worship/service to God in the context of the inaugurated future kingdom through Christ (cf. Dan 7:13-14) (Smith 2009, 537). Smith's analysis provides a comprehensive perspective, underlining the continued applicability of the Isaianic principles.

In conclusion, the Isaianic oracle of 56:1-8 neither contradicts the Pentateuch nor invalidates the Sabbath. Rather it extends the Sabbath to religio-social dimension of life whose sociological boundaries are redefined to include the foreigners and those deemed unfit to stand in God's assemblage. Women, eunuchs, among others would be included based on strict adherence to "doing God's will, to doing right and justice, to keeping the covenant and Sabbath" (Watts 2000, 822).

2.7 The Sabbath in Early Judaism

The OT Sabbath is bridged to the NT through Early Judaism leading to the life and times of Jesus the Messiah (Christ). Thus, this section briefly explores relevant sources for Sabbath in early Judaism to appreciate how the postbiblical community of rabbinic era appreciated the Sabbath.

The Sabbath, originating in the Pentateuch, persisted through pre-monarchical, monarchical, and postexilic periods, gaining prominence in defining Jewish election during the postexilic era. The Pentateuch's influential role in Sabbath codification is evident in postbiblical literature, reflecting a resolute observance (Hirsch, Jacobs, Greenstone n.d.). Nevertheless, contrasts emerge between biblical data and Jewish

Sabbath interpretation. Early Judaism departs from the biblical community, shifting from Torah centrality to halakha, and from national religious unity to sectarianism (for example, Sadducees, Pharisees, Qumran communities). These shifts are attributed to political upheavals in the postexilic period, marked by Persian, Hellenistic, and Roman dominions, prompting a redefinition of religious heritage and the Sabbath concept (Rowland 1982, 44-47).

The study of early Judaism turns to apocryphal, pseudepigraphic, and Qumran scrolls as primary sources for Sabbath understanding. Secondary insights come from rabbinical writings and Philo. Though the provenance and dating of Jubilees and Maccabees are speculative, both exhibit priestly fervour aiming to restore Sabbath adherence. Jubilees⁷ emphasises strict earthly Sabbath observance driven by heavenly and patriarchal motivations (Jubil 2:17, 18, 21, 28-31, 25-27), suggesting authority for enforcing stringent Sabbath observance derives from these sources.

The Hasmonean era emphasised the Sabbath's centrality in Jewish life, defining covenantal loyalty in terms of Sabbath observance despite enemy attacks (1 Macc 1:30; 2:29-43; 9:43-53). Deaths of Sabbath observers led to Sabbath regulation modification (1 Macc 2:41). The books of Maccabees manifest a nuanced Sabbath understanding, with the Hasmoneans adding to biblical teachings based on ancestral Sabbath law and traditions. Inherited strict Sabbath laws were reinterpreted to permit defensive wars (1 Macc 2:42-43; 9:43-53), reflecting a tension in Sabbath observance during the Hasmonean period (Borchardt 2015, 159-181).

The Qumran sources, particularly the Damascus Document's 4Q270 and 4Q271, exhibit similarities with rabbinical law, notably on Sabbath regulations related to Deut 5:12 (Martinèz and Tigchelaar 1999, 566-571). Based on the composite edition of the three Sabbath laws in 4Q264a, 4Q421, and 4Q421a, Noam and Qimron (2009, 55-96) argue for a historical connection between the Qumran scrolls and rabbinic Sabbath regulations, citing commonalities in burning fire, reading the scroll, and musical

⁷ The base text for Books of Jubilees and Maccabees in this section are from Robert Henry Charles, ed. *Pseudepigrapha of the Old Testament* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1913).

instrument usage on the Sabbath. However, Hidary (2015, 68-92) disputes this, criticising their methodology. Hidary contends that the Qumran Sabbath laws should be understood within the context of Second Temple Judaism, promoting singing, restricting fire use for cooking but allowing it for lighting, and emphasising the study of Scriptures. In evaluation, the analysis of Qumran Sabbath sources, especially the Damascus Document, and their alleged connection to rabbinic law is a contentious subject. Suffice to say, this matter attracts an ongoing scholarly debate and varying interpretations of the relationship between Qumran and rabbinic Sabbath traditions. Yet the centrality of the Sabbath to Qumran community and rabbinic tradition remains indisputable. This study assumes the Sabbath concepts from Qumran and rabbinic traditions to characterise the Jewish understanding of early Judaism connected to Sabbath debates of the Messiah's life and times.

In his study of Second Temple Judaism Collins (2012, 455-474) attempts to dissect the general sectarian perspective from the one of the Qumran. The general sectarian viewpoint emphasises the centrality of the Torah, while the Qumran perspective, influenced by stories within the Torah, especially in Genesis and Exodus, emphasises ancestral law, adapting customs and traditions. This ancestral law becomes a standard for Jewish life, leading to the Maccabean revolt against Antiochus IV Epiphanes' threat to abrogate it. However, the hoped-for national unity post-revolt turns divisive due to factors like urbanisation and disappointment with the native dynasty. The adaptation of the Torah into ancestral law transforms its meaning, shifting from prescriptive to symbolic and metonymic interpretations, influencing the Jewish way of life (Collins 2012, 462). As the author notes, such transformation may find a precedence in biblical writings such as Nehemiah (Neh 10:31) who prohibited business purchases even when the Torah did not sanction it (Collins 2012, 460-461). In evaluation, Collins' argument highlights the centrality of the Torah in the sectarian perspective and the emphasis on ancestral law in the Qumran perspective. The mention of the Maccabean revolt and subsequent divisive outcomes provides context for understanding the complexities of Jewish identity during this period. The interpretation of the Torah's transformation into ancestral law, with symbolic and metonymic implications, paves the way for

understanding halakhic emphasis in rabbinic traditions that provide the context for appreciating the Sabbath debates that Jews had with Christ in the Gospels.

The Talmudic discussions on the Mishnaic Sabbath tractate extensively elaborate on the regulations and thirty-nine prohibited classes of work (*melakhot*), outlined in the Mishnah, also informed the Sabbath debates of Christ's time. The Talmud codifies Sabbath tractate (Neusner 2010) that in a nutshell enumerates specific activities considered forms of work and thus forbidden on the Sabbath. It engages in detailed legal analyses while exploring scenarios, exceptions, and hypothetical situations. It clarifies, interprets, and applies Mishnaic rules, incorporating insights from various rabbis and scholars. These discussions not only delve into legal intricacies but also incorporate ethical and theological considerations, providing a comprehensive and dynamic legal commentary on Sabbath observance. Yet the Mishnaic codification was no solution as its interpretation portrayed two schools of thought: Shammai and Hillel (Instone-Brewer 2011, 82).

Added to this conversation is Philo, in the Diaspora, who universalises the Sabbath, interpreting it mystically and figuratively (Yonge and Philo 1995, 262). For Philo, Sabbath observance is beneficial to both body and soul:

as to their body, by a rest from their continual and incessant labours; and as to their soul, by forming most excellent conceptions respecting God as the Creator of the universe and the careful protector of all the things and beings which and whom he has made. And he made the whole universe in one week. It is plain, therefore, from these things that the man who honours the seventh day will himself find honour (Yonge and Philo 1995, 593).

In summary, early Judaism navigated the tension between maintaining the biblical prescriptive nature of the Sabbath and applying it to complex life situations. Diverse schools of thought and traditions emerged to address the gaps in biblical guidance. The symbolic aspect of the Sabbath, anticipating ultimate liberty, became central. Despite diversities, the true meaning of the Sabbath, neither strictly prescriptive nor symbolic, awaits the Messiah's manifestation. Nevertheless,

The Shabbat's principle of rest and holiness for all creation thereby provides a basis for conceiving the need and reality of the replenishment of creation as an inherent element of creation and human life within creation itself and as a basis for ensuring socio-economic justice for Israelite and Judean life within creation. Such an agenda has implications for the contemporary world as well (Sweeney 2016, 80).

Sweeney emphasises the Sabbath's significance in promoting rest, holiness, and socio-economic justice within the Israelite and Judean context. The Sabbath serves as a foundational element for the replenishment of creation, asserting its inherent connection to human life and socio-economic considerations. The mention of contemporary relevance implies the enduring ethical and societal implications of Sabbath principles.

The Sabbath in early Judaism profoundly shaped the Jewish community's worldview, influencing aspects like humanitarian benevolence, family life, community engagement, and worship (Eisenberg 2004). Its observance drew motivation from biblical, extrabiblical, and postbiblical sources, permeating Jewish culture with developed traditions and customs (Hirsch, Jacobs, and Greenstone n.d.). Historically, the Sabbath served both political and theological purposes (Augustyn et al. n.d.). However, during the life of the Messiah on earth, the Sabbath became a point of contention due to legalistic interpretations from sectarian and rabbinical teachings.

2.8 Conclusion

This chapter delves into the theological significance of passages like Gen 2:1-3, Exod 20:8-11; Deut 5:12-16, Lev 23:1-3, and Isa 58:1-8 concerning the Sabbath. It unveils the Sabbath's theological implications for contemporary relevance, tied to creation, God's rest, imitatio Dei in worship, festal appointments, time reckoning, benevolence to humanity and creation, morality formation, and redemptive history. The Sabbath's multifaceted dimensions encompass protological, present, and eschatological elements. Its present application guides societal living, corporate worship, festal celebration, the prevention of exploitation, and shaping ethno-sociological relationships. Anticipating Christ's return is crucial, as the true Sabbath awaits eschatological realisation and full restoration.

The Sabbath, integral to biblical discussions, intertwines theologies of creation and redemption, forming a framework connecting God with humanity and the complex world. Hilton (1999, 62-76) emphasises the Sabbath's purpose rooted in creation and redemption. The Exodus Sabbath reflects the creation motif, while Deuteronomic emphasises redemption. In a covenant context, the Sabbath shapes theocentric life, influencing pre- and post-exilic Hebrew Bible narratives. Successive generations adapt the Sabbath practically to changing circumstances, regulating relationships with God, fellow humans, and creation, making it both theoretical and applicable to real-life situations.

The Sabbath, with its socio-economic implications, facilitated human equalisation during observance and extended to sabbatical and jubilee years, protecting the weak from exploitation. Yet, the intertestamental pursuit for Sabbath recovery resulted in legalism, distorting its meaning. The Hebrew Bible ties the Sabbath to creation and redemption, with tensions resolved in Christ's teaching. Biblical, theological, and sociological aspects create a foundation for exploring the Sabbath in Christian tradition. Such a premising motivates this study to examine how creation and redemption theologies contribute to understanding the Sabbath in addressing contemporary sociological issues, anticipating the question of the Sabbath's validity for today's church amidst trending perspectives. The study now progresses to investigating various perspectives on the Sabbath.

CHAPTER 3: Perspectives on the Sabbath

3.1 Introduction

The Sabbath is a subject of extensive Christian scholarly discourse, with debates on its eschatological significance and perpetuity. Advocates argue that the Sabbath symbolises an eschatological principle, transcending utility to point towards eternal issues (Vos 2003, 140-141). The perpetual nature of the Sabbath as operating in both old and new covenant redemptive eras (Barcellos 2006, 26-50) is a contentious topic (Longman 2001, 163-183), with Calvin and King (2010, 106-107) contending that God's rest rule ended with Christ, while others argue for its continuous relevance across old and new covenant eras (Westermann 1990; Yonge and Philo 1995). This debate connects the Sabbath to questions about the relationship between old and new covenants, the validity of the Decalogue, the normativity of Sabbath in Christian life, and ethical considerations of Sabbath/Sunday practices.

This chapter aims to explore Sabbath perspectives in scholarship and assess the place of its creation aspect in Christian tradition. If valid, it proposes reintegrating the creation aspect into Sabbath discourse. The study begins by examining creation-rest and Christian tradition perspectives, delving into issues from creation and ethical standpoints, and addressing theological debates arising from the Sabbath discussion.

3.2 Sabbath: Creation and 'Rest' Perspectives

In Shead's analysis (2000, 745-749), the Sabbath's promise of "rest" in connection to creation reverberates legislatively and theologically throughout the Bible. Despite the absence of the term "Sabbath" in the creation narrative, Shead links the "seventh day" and "God's cessation (rest)" to the manna narrative and the Sabbath commandment in the Exodus tradition. The author asserts that the Sabbath commandment was initially for Jews, emphasising imitation of God, with the goal of rest encompassing life, productivity, and harmony with God. In the Deuteronomic context, Shead argues that the Sabbath mandate, shared in creation and Israel's redemption, was modified and restricted to the redeemed. Prophetic views tie Sabbath to land and solidarity with God, aligning with the Isaianic vision of a universally celebrated Sabbath. Christ's lordship over the Sabbath suggests fulfilment of Sabbath blessings through him. Theological

arguments propose the Sabbath, once a sign of the covenant, remains relevant for regulating life, aligning with salvation history and maintaining the original goal of creation perfection, even if the fourth commandment is no longer a binding directive but retains its intent.

In evaluating the author, Shead's analysis skilfully explores the multifaceted implications of the Sabbath within biblical narratives. How the author links the "seventh day" and "God's cessation (rest)" to the manna narrative and the Exodus tradition showcases insightful interpretative skills. The author's assertion regarding the initial limitation of the Sabbath commandment to Jews, emphasising imitation of God, is a thought-provoking perspective. The nuanced argument in the Deuteronomic context, proposing a modification and restriction of the Sabbath mandate to the redeemed, adds depth to the discussion. The alignment of prophetic views with the Isaianic vision and the suggestion of Christ's lordship over the Sabbath as a fulfilment of blessings contribute to a comprehensive theological framework. Shead's stance on the Sabbath's ongoing relevance, despite the shift from a binding commandment to a retained intent, reflects a coherent theological perspective, integrating salvation history and the original goal of creation perfection. Overall, Shead's analysis presents a well-supported and intricate exploration of the Sabbath's significance across biblical contexts. The author succeeds in pointing out that the notion of "rest" is significant to the Sabbath as it has implications for believers today not only in terms of creation but also redemption. Against Shead, this researcher argues that the Sabbath was not restricted to Jewish community since Jesus connected it with creation and generic humanity (cf. Mark 2:23-28).

The Sabbath, according to Block (2010, 459-460), embodies creation ideals, celebrating God's creative work and motivating humanity's labour, welfare of animals, and recuperation. Block emphasises the Sabbath commandment's extension to children and slaves to prevent household exploitation. While Block does not explicitly address the Sabbath's validity, the author's focus on sociological concerns suggests its relevance today. Fairbain (1975, 130) sees the Sabbath influencing Christian worship through the concept of "rest," shaping how the special duties of the day of God are observed and fulfilled. In evaluation, both perspectives highlight the Sabbath's role in promoting ethical treatment, societal well-being, and religious worship. Block's examination of the

Sabbath's significance (2010, 459-460) adeptly emphasises its embodiment of creation ideals, aligning with the commemoration of God's creative work and its impact on human labour, animal welfare, and recuperation. The highlighting of the Sabbath commandment's extension to children and slaves to prevent exploitation within households showcases Block's attention to sociological concerns. Fairbairn's perspective on the Sabbath's influence on Christian worship, connected to the concept of "rest," provides an additional layer, enriching the overall understanding of the Sabbath's multifaceted significance. However, their contributions to the discussion require further investigation under the Christian traditional perspective.

3.3 Sabbath: A Christian Traditional Perspectives

Christians engage in debates over the Sabbath's ties to creation, covenant, law, and ethics, particularly the Sabbath/Sunday question. Some isolate theological themes, but it is advised to consider the close connection between the canon and covenant for understanding biblical regulation of faith and practice (Horton 2011, 152). Central to Christian perspectives is the inquiry into the relevance of the law for contemporary believers, influencing various viewpoints on this matter as follows:

3.3.1 Seventh-Day View

According to this view, Saturday is the Sabbath day that originates in creation and cannot be annulled; humanity is, therefore, obligated to morally observe the Sabbath encapsulated in the Decalogue (MacCarty 2011, 9-92). The author also argues that the perpetuity of Sabbath has been attested to by Isaiah's prophecy of new heavens and new earth. MacCarty interprets Jesus' Sabbath healing ministry as reforming and enriching the Sabbath rather than making it obsolete. This view downplays the significance of the NT narratives regarding the "first day of the week" in compelling the transfer of the day of worship and refutes the reference of the "Lord's Day" (Rev 1:10) to Sunday. For the Seventh-Day View, the Sabbath observance is still valid (Heb 4:9, 10) and ought to be observed on Saturday, especially that the early church also observed it on this day.

3.3.2 Sabbath-Transfer View

This view, represented by Beckwith and Stott (1978) and Pipa (2011, 119-171), equally holds to perpetuity and creation origin of the Sabbath, but differs from the Seventh-Day View on significant points. Rather than insist on the literal day, the Sabbath-transfer view holds that the commandment teaches the principle of weekly seventh day rather than Saturday. Its arguments are based on the convictions that the creation account and the law are foundational to the Sabbath. This view holds to the unity and validity of Decalogue for NT believers because Jesus fulfilled the law not in the sense of abrogating its applicability. According to this view, Jesus' resurrection on Sunday made the early NT believers to realise the transfer of day of worship from Saturday to Sunday. Since Christ is the substance of creation and exodus, the Sabbath is observed and celebrated on Sunday on which Jesus rose from the dead. For this view, the Lord's Day (Rev 1:10) is significant and refers to Sunday.

3.3.3 Lutheran View

This view inquires of Luther's understanding of the Sabbath from the ecclesiastical history viewpoint (Arand 2011, 216-261). According to this view, the Decalogue on which the institution of the Sabbath is based is not binding on NT believers because the law was exclusively given to Israel. Additionally, rest and worship, being necessary to humanity, should not be tied to a particular day. For the Lutheran view, the sanctity of Sunday should be understood not in terms of Sabbath but of the centrality and sanctifying role of the Word of God (gospel) that is proclaimed on this day. This view interprets the Sabbath commandment to be legalistic based on: (i) Jesus' confrontation of Pharisaic legalism; (ii) the Pauline claim of Christ as the fulfilment of the law (Rom 10:4), and; (iii) the challenge on the Colossian legalism (Col 2:16-23). Therefore, the Sabbath rest and sanctity – since actual rest is superior to its timing and that God sanctifies all things – must be conceptualised in terms of delighting in God's works of creation. Creation in this case is understood on the aspects of its renewal and refreshing.

3.3.4 Abrogation View

This view, represented by Lincoln (1982a, 343-405), argues that the Sabbath was abrogated through Christ's fulfilment of the law because the Sabbath was exclusively instituted for the people of Israel. Although based on creation narrative thereby signifying God's redemption for humanity, the Sabbath is not a creation ordinance. Rather, the Sabbath was instituted to express compassion and social concerns of the Israelite society. Jesus' attitude to the Sabbath as revealed in the Gospels produces a completely new framework and perspective from which to understand the Sabbath as the law continued until the time of John the Baptist, and after which ensued the kingdom authority that frees Christians from the law. Sunday or any other day may, therefore, signify corporate worship. Regular rest for Christians should be liberalised, not confined to Sunday.

3.3.5 Fulfilment View

This view, represented by Blomberg (2011, 305-358), follows a hermeneutical understanding of the Sabbath commandment premised supremely on the interpretation of Jesus and the apostles. It primarily focuses on the NT and proceeds to the history of the church. This means the fulfilment view is not interested in the OT teaching about the Sabbath. It argues: (i) the Decalogue is not binding on NT believer; (ii) the Sabbath must be filtered through Christ and the love commandment, and; (iii) Christ has inaugurated the Sabbath in the present (cf. Heb 4), thereby rendering the OT Sabbath laws obsolete. This inauguration changes everything and necessitates discontinuity between Old and New Testaments. Based on Christ's introduction of the principle of doing good (Mark 3:4), the early NT believers exercised their liberty to transfer the Sabbath from Saturday to Sunday yet not in its full OT essence. Since the NT does not demand Sabbath legislation, the church can freely choose any appropriate times (days) for corporate worship and outreaches.

3.3.6 Ceremonial View

This view, represented by Morrison (n.d.), is based on the characterisation of Christ's responses to the Pharisees regarding the question of the Sabbath. According to this view, Christ responded to the Pharisees on categories of ceremonial and moral laws.

Commented [CT2]: What I say here applies to all your application sections, right from the beginning of the work.

These sections are not really engaging any evaluation whatsoever. More often than not they only repeat what the author(s) you are supposedly assessing have stated.

In assessing a work, two approaches could be adopted: internal and external assessment. The former is an assessment of the work on its own terms, i.e., assessment is done in consideration of its internal logic, coherence, and consistency, especially, with respects to its stated research problem and purpose. In the latter case, the assess is based on the comparison of the work being assessed with extant literature on the theme as well as in view of the canons of the discipline. Neither of these approaches are employed in any of your assessment/evaluation sections. You may wish to revise these sections to reflect true evaluation or remove them completely from the sections in which they occur because they are merely repeating summaries of the ideas of the authors already presented in the paragraphs immediately preceding the supposed evaluation paragraphs.

Christ's responses tied the Sabbath to ceremonial law and its rituals. Therefore, the Sabbath commandment is obsolete since it is ceremonial in nature. In other words, this view posits that Christ's responses explicitly linked the Sabbath to the realm of ceremonial law and its associated rituals. As a result, Morrison's view concludes that the Sabbath commandment is rendered obsolete due to its perceived ceremonial nature. Notably, the Ceremonial View appears to prioritise the understanding of the Sabbath through the lens of Christ's teachings, particularly in response to Pharisaic inquiries, shaping the view that the Sabbath's ceremonial nature diminishes its contemporary relevance.

3.3.7 Christian Libertarian View

This view feeds on Libertarianism, with understanding that an individual's private life must not be intruded upon by some kind of paternalism that restricts freedom. Therefore, the commandments ought not to coercively influence an individual's life. Relating this understanding to the Decalogue, the Christian Libertarian view argues that the resurrection of Jesus had "abrogated the first four commandments (the "first table") and had restricted it to the Old Testament" (Green 1999-2000, 525-558). Consequently, "a certain inner attitude should prevail on the Sabbath over outward observance" (Bolin 2013, 143).

3.3.8 Summary

The various views on the Sabbath, considering the provided information, reveals distinct perspectives within Christian tradition. The literal Sabbath perspective emphasises a religious sense, restricting its scope primarily to religious observance. Those advocating Sabbath abrogation question its validity, particularly considering broader theological considerations like creation, creation ordinance, and ethical reflections on Sabbath/Sunday practices.

The Lutheran viewpoint, rooted in ecclesiastical history, acknowledges the Sabbath's religious significance but may lean towards a less rigid interpretation. The concept of Sabbath fulfilment posits that the Sabbath finds its true meaning in Christ, while the Sabbath transfer perspective suggests a shift from Saturday to Sunday as the day of rest.

Christian libertarians may argue for flexibility, emphasising personal freedom in Sabbath observance, while the ceremonial perspective might see the Sabbath as part of ceremonial law with diminished relevance.

Overall, these varied views underscore the complex theological considerations surrounding the Sabbath, encompassing creation, law, new covenant implications, and ecclesiastical history. The study aims to determine if any of these theological lines provide a solid basis for Sabbath abrogation, emphasising the need for a comprehensive exploration of these aspects in light of Christ's ministry and the Apostles' teachings.

3.4 Sabbath and Creation

In contrast to the notion that the Sabbath is detached from creation, Barth contends that the Sabbath has its origins in the act of creation itself. According to Barth (1958, 217), creation represents both the source and the means to establish the covenant, characterised by grace and redemption to be fulfilled in Christ (Barth 1958, 222; Barth 1975, 390-391). Barth sees the Sabbath as the medium through which God adopts human time, aligning it with his own purpose of redemption. This adoption of time is categorised by Barth into minor and major periods, symbolised by the sabbatical and Jubilee years, and the institution of the Sabbath, respectively (Barth 1960, 456, 458). According to Barth (1961, 49), the Sabbath commandment retains normative and authoritative validity for Christianity, applicable to both the old and new people of God.

Barth's Sabbatarianism emphasises the theological connection between historical creation and God's redemptive grace, objectified through the covenant's promise, expectation, and prophecy (Barth 1956, 9-10; Barth 1958, 231-232). The Sabbath commandment, in Barth's view, objectively limits human activity, providing moments of interruption for reflection on God's person and work, encouraging active participation in God's salvation. Furthermore, Barth suggests that this theological reflection should inspire the church's collective observance of the Sabbath during corporate worship (Barth 1961, 69). Noteworthy in the Barthian Sabbatarianism is a theological reflection that focuses on historical creation linked with God's redemptive grace (Barth 1956, 9-

10) and is objectified through the promise, expectation, and prophecy of the covenant. (Barth 1958, 231-232).

In evaluation, Barth's Sabbatarian perspective elucidate the Sabbath's connections to historical creation and God's redemptive grace. It highlights the Sabbath's origin in creation and its role in God's adoption of human time for redemption. Additionally, Barth's categorisation of time into minor and major periods, symbolised by the sabbatical and Jubilee years, emphasises the ongoing normative validity of the Sabbath commandment for both old and new covenant communities. However, I critique Barth's Sabbatarian perspective for conflating the Sabbath with Sunday worship. Additionally, ambiguity arises regarding the Sabbath's status as a creation ordinance and its perpetual binding nature, warranting further exploration.

3.5 Sabbath as Creation Ordinance

The debated question of whether the Sabbath constitutes a creation ordinance is crucial for understanding differing views on its continuity. This study, in alignment with Cole, contends that the Sabbath's status as a creation ordinance serves as a pivotal point distinguishing Sabbath cessation and non-cessation perspectives (Cole 2003, 5-12). Emphasising the historicity of the creation narrative, the argument of this study rejects interpretations, such as Brown's (Brown 1989, 12-14), that diminish its historicity. Brown's suggestion of a mythological interpretation is dismissed, given the abundant biblical evidence supporting the creation narrative's authenticity. In evaluation, Cole offers a decisive distinguishing factor distinguishing between cessation and non-cessation Sabbath perspectives. Brown's suggestion undermines the historical authenticity of the creation narrative. I advocate for acknowledging the God of the OT as actively involved in history, contributing to a comprehensive understanding of the Sabbath's role in continuity debates.

The doctrine of creation, deeply embedded in the Bible, finds continuity between the Old and New Testaments, with the NT reaffirming the OT theocentric perspective (Osborn 2000). The OT's theocentric emphasis reaches its pinnacle in the establishment of the Sabbath communion with creation rather than merely the creation of man (Osborn 2000, 431). This theocentric nature transforms into a Christocentric one in the NT, providing a

theological rationale for treating creation as a central Christian doctrine (Osborn 2000, 434). Themes encompassed in the doctrine include dominion, Imago Dei, gender equality, marriage, Eden as the earth's first sanctuary, creation care, and the Sabbath (Davidson 2015, 127-128). In evaluation, the authors present the interconnectedness of the doctrine of creation across both Testaments, emphasising the continuity and reaffirmation of the theocentric perspective in both. The shift from theocentric to Christocentric in the NT, as articulated by Osborn, adds depth to the theological understanding, providing a rationale for the centrality of creation as a Christian doctrine. Themes embedded in the doctrine, as outlined by Davidson, encompass various aspects, ranging from dominion to Sabbath, offering a comprehensive overview. This researcher advocates for such coherence considering the diverse themes that the doctrine of creation entails. This opens a window for the connection of the Sabbath to creation.

Scholars like Gregor (2015, 131-134) assert a connection between the Sabbath and creation based on grammatical syntax, highlighting the verbal form *שבת* in the creation seventh-day paragraph, linking to the language in the fourth commandment of the Exodus Decalogue. This implies the motivation for the Sabbath commandment looks back to creation. While critics counter Gregor's argument, Cole (2003) builds an exegetical case for the Sabbath as a creation ordinance in its anticipated Sinaitic codification by analysing the Piel stem *שָׁבַת* (*he consecrated/set apart*) in Gen 2:3 in comparison with the Hiphil stem *הִקְדַּשְׁתִּיךָ* "*I set you apart*" (Jer 1:5). In my opinion, Cole's fallacy lies in his attempt to compare two texts whose thematic contexts are unrelated. Nevertheless, Cole's emphasis on the theological connection of creation Sabbath in addressing idolatry in Exod 31:12-17 may still hold, stressing the need to connect creation to practical life within the historical-redemptive narrative that encompasses social, cultural, and national order (Fretheim 2005). Overall, the authors adequately capture the central idea that the verbal form *שבת* in the creation narrative influences the language of the fourth commandment in Exodus, suggesting a connection between the Sabbath commandment and creation. Arguing for or against the Sabbath as creation ordinance cannot be settled by exegesis that isolates the creation narrative from the rest of the Bible.

Thus, it is necessary to develop a comprehensive biblical theology that recognises the unity of the diverse books of the Bible (Moo and Moo 2018). According to Moo and Moo, the Sabbath-rest, intended for all of creation, including Israelites, foreigners, animals, and the land, extends to the Jubilee, ensuring periodic equality and preventing injustice erosion. The authors highlight the seriousness with which biblical writers treated Sabbath-rest through OT prophetic emphasis, Christ's ministry controversies, and typological use in Hebrews. Moltmann sees creation and Sabbath as inseparable, advocating a paradigm shift from anthropocentrism to adopting the Sabbath as "God's crown of creation" to address ecological crises (Moltmann 1985, 278). In evaluation, Moo and Moo note how the Sabbath connects God's creation to societal life, emphasising its centrality in addressing contemporary crises. They assert the Sabbath-rest's universal application to all creation and creation care. Extended to the Jubilee ensuring periodic equality and preventing injustice erosion, the authors highlight the biblical writers' serious treatment of Sabbath-rest, citing OT prophetic emphasis, Christ's ministry controversies, and typological usage in Hebrews. This study extends Moo and Moo primarily in connection with human socioreligious relations. Moltmann's perspective on the inseparability of creation and Sabbath advocates a paradigm shift motivating the need to address ecological crises. This study focuses not on ecological crises, but on deducing the creation balance that benefits socioreligious relations.

In conclusion, the concept of a creation ordinance supports the Sabbath's connection to creation. Drawing on Barthian theology, the motivation for creation care, and the link between the creation narrative and the Sabbath in the Exodus tradition, there are merits to perceiving the Sabbath as a creation ordinance. This necessitates the need for ethical reflection on the Sabbath, particularly in the context of the Sabbath/Sunday question.

3.6 Question of Sabbath/Sunday

Obtaining in Sabbath/Sunday debate is tendency to confuse Sunday corporate worship with the Sabbath. This is manifested within some sources that this study in this section engages. This study argues for independent emergence of Sunday from the Sabbath. This does not mean that the Sunday concept cannot benefit from the Sabbath ideals.

The focus of this section is whether the emergence of Sunday has abrogated the Sabbath.

Andrews (1873) critiques Sabbath-transfer theology, asserting its erroneous nature. Affirming the Sabbath as a creation ordinance binding on humanity across historical epochs, the author utilises a biblical and secular history approach (Andrews 1873, 3-5, 293). Andrews introduces arbitrary categories of ceremonial and moral attributes of the Sabbath. Ceremonial elements, linked to the earthly temple and sacrifices, ceased with Babylonian destruction and Christ's death (Andrews 1873, 84). The moral category, tied to the Decalogue, ensures Sabbath perpetuity (Andrews 1873, 84). Andrews contends Christ's resurrection did not alter the Sabbath, and early Christians observed it (Andrews 1873, 84). Despite acknowledging Sunday texts, he interprets them differently (Andrews 1873, 97, 100-102). He attributes Sunday's prevalence to Romanist influence, anti-Jewish tendencies, medieval theology, continental Reformers' failure, and controversies among English Episcopalians and Presbyterians.

In evaluation, Andrews adopts a thorough biblical and historical approach, distinguishing between ceremonial and moral aspects of the Sabbath. He argues that ceremonial elements ceased, while moral aspects secure Sabbath perpetuity aligned with the Decalogue. However, his distinction is arbitrary. Further, his categorisation and interpretation of specific biblical texts, particularly regarding Sunday observance, raise questions. The attribution of Sunday prevalence to Romanist influence requires scrutiny, considering complex historical factors. Andrews rightly distinguishes Sunday from Sabbath but misinterprets the Lord's Day, going against historical evidence. While Andrews reduces the Sabbath to a historical observance, this study aims to understand it in light of Christ's person and ministry. My evaluation of Andrews also recognises his historical and biblical analysis, but questions linger regarding his categorisation and interpretation of specific biblical texts. Additionally, the claim of Romanist influence requires scrutiny, considering the complex historical factors influencing Sabbath observance practices. Further exploration could delve into diverse theological and historical perspectives on Sabbath observance within early Christianity and the Reformation.

In his work, Rordorf (1968) challenges the obligation of Christians to observe Sunday as a day of rest, advocating instead for the early church's emphasis on holy communion. Distinguishing between the thematic lines of "day of rest" and "day of worship" in the author's work on the Sabbath/Sunday debate, Rordorf argues that Christian Sunday lacks connection to Jewish Sabbath observance. Drawing on pre- and post-exilic Judaism, Christ's ministry, and early Church practices, the author traces the Sabbath's evolution from a pre-exilic humanitarian emphasis to a post-exilic marker of God's election, ultimately superseded by Christ. Rordorf interprets Christ's ministry as liberating humanity from Sabbath obligations, annulling them through Sabbath healings. Associating the NT "first day of the week" texts with the early church's breaking of bread, the author argues Sunday's centrality originates from the institution of the Lord's Supper, not as a mandated day of rest. Rordorf contends Sunday worship and rest were introduced later during Constantine's legislation, deviating from the early church's original focus on the weekly Eucharist.

In evaluation, Rordorf presents a thought-provoking challenge to the conventional obligation of Christians to observe Sunday as a day of rest. The author's emphasis on the early church's prioritisation of holy communion over a mandated day of rest is noteworthy. Additionally, Rordorf's acumen to distinguish between the "day of rest" and "day of worship" themes in the Sabbath/Sunday debate adds depth to his argument. The author effectively draws on historical elements, including pre- and post-exilic Judaism, Christ's ministry, and early Church practices, to trace the Sabbath's evolution. The interpretation of Christ's ministry as a liberation from Sabbath obligations and the association of Sunday's centrality with the institution of the Lord's Supper are intriguing perspectives. However, Rordorf's elimination of creation and the Mosaic heritage in his discussion of the Sabbath technically deprives the Church today of the Sabbath ideals that God intended to inculcate in his worshipers. I contend for the inclusion of creation and the old (Mosaic) because of their connection to the concept of the biblical Sabbath. Further, the claim that Sunday worship and rest were introduced later during Constantine's legislation requires careful scrutiny. That said, Rordorf's work contributes valuable insights, urging a reconsideration of the traditional understanding of Sunday observance in light of early Christian practices and theological perspectives.

Bacchiocchi (1999) acknowledges Sunday as a holy Sabbath-rest but grapples with increased secularisation. The author notes economic and industrial pressures seeking maximum utilisation, questioning the traditional seven-day week pattern. Examining the motives behind Sunday as a “day of rest and worship,” Bacchiocchi concludes it does not originate with Christ or the apostles. Instead, the author attributes Sunday to Roman bishopric influence driven by anti-Judaism, Roman measures against Jews, Sun-worship, and Christian theologies, leading to the abandonment and transfer of ancient Sabbath observance to Sunday. For Bacchiocchi, the early church:

understood Jesus’ Messianic pronouncements (Mark 2:28; Matt. 12:6; John 5 :17) and His healing activities, not as the super-session of the Sabbath by a new day of worship, but as the true revelation of the meaning of its observance: a time to experience God’s salvation accomplished through Jesus Christ (Bacchiocchi 1999, 52).

Bacchiocchi attributes the origin of Sunday to historical rather than biblical factors, citing the Jewish orientation of the apostolic and Gentile churches, which waned after the Bar Kokhba revolt (132-135 CE). Bacchiocchi highlights the impact of Roman literature on the Roman church, leading to a distancing from Jewish heritage, anti-Sabbatarianism, and Sabbath fast. Additionally, the author credits Patristic theology for the shift from Sabbath to Sunday observance.

In evaluating Bacchiocchi, the author’s acknowledgment of Sunday as a holy Sabbath-rest, coupled with concerns about increased secularisation, offers a nuanced perspective. The examination of economic pressures and the questioning of the traditional seven-day week pattern enrich the discussion. Bacchiocchi’s interpretation of the early church’s understanding of Jesus’ Messianic pronouncements adds depth to the discussion, emphasising a nuanced view of Sabbath observance. However, the author’s historical attribution of Sunday’s origin may warrant further scrutiny and consideration of diverse scholarly perspectives. Significant to this is the reference to κυριακή ἡμέρα (the Lord’s Day) that Bacchiocchi refers to eschatological “Day of the Lord.” Also, the author’s interpretation of Revelation as an eschatological day renders

its message irrelevant to present life. For instance, Bacchiocchi's view is countered by Bauckham (1982d, 232-233) who equally opposes Sabbath-transfer theology, but suggests that κυριακή ἡμέρα refers to Sunday as a day of corporate worship. However, Bacchiocchi still upholds the validity of the Sabbath.

Beckwith and Stott (1978) critique Rordorf's adaptation to secularism, which separates the Sabbath commandment from Sunday, arguing that it robs Sunday of its biblical basis and coherence. They assert a universal, creation-based, and redemptive significance to the Sabbath, maintained through biblical and Patristic history.

Biblically, Beckwith and Stott view the Sabbath as a creation ordinance binding universally, its validity affirmed through Israel's redemption. They argue it shapes postexilic and intertestamental Jewish worship, exposing the messianic mission fulfilled in Christ's resurrection. They highlight the continuity between the Sabbath and the Lord's Day, leading to its transfer to Sunday. While Christ fulfilled Mosaic Sabbath requirements, the authors contend that this did not abolish the Sabbath but transformed it, retaining the Jewish weekly cycle's festivity nature on the first day.

Historically, they note the early church's recognition of the Decalogue's binding nature on Christians, advocating for the Sabbath transfer view. They reject Seventh Day Adventist claims of Sabbath observance since early times. Beckwith and Stott emphasise Sunday's historical significance for corporate gatherings, Eucharist celebrations, worship, and social interactions. They reject Rordorf's view that Sunday's importance was limited to corporate gathering, stressing its broader role.

Regarding Sabbath observance in the early church, Beckwith and Stott describe varied attitudes, ranging from anti-Sabbatarianism to mild acceptance, particularly for Jewish Christians. They reject forcing Sabbath observance on others. The authors conclude that Sunday was historically significant for various aspects of Christian life, unlike Rordorf's limited perspective.

In summary, Beckwith and Stott assert the theological and historical continuity between the Sabbath and Sunday, supporting the transfer theology. They emphasise the universal, creation-based nature of the Sabbath and its ongoing relevance in Christian worship and life.

In evaluation, Beckwith and Stott offer a well-reasoned argument against the separation of the Sabbath commandment from Sunday. They effectively challenge Rordorf's position, asserting that it undermines Sunday's biblical basis and coherence. The authors present a compelling case for the universal, creation-based, and redemptive significance of the Sabbath, drawing on both biblical and Patristic history. Concerning Sabbath observance in the early church, the authors navigate through varied attitudes, addressing the spectrum from anti-Sabbatarianism to mild acceptance, particularly for Jewish Christians. Their rejection of forcing Sabbath observance on others reflects a nuanced understanding of historical practices. While Beckwith and Stott establish the biblical basis for Sunday from church history and theological themes – such as creation, Israel's redemption, Christ's resurrection, and continuity with the OT concept – they do not relate how such connections should practically inform our attitude to the day and our relationships to God, ourselves, and the rest of God's creation. Obviously, Beckwith and Stott are primarily interested in defending the day rather than extending to it socioreligious implications, which informs the object of this this.

Carson, Dressler, Rowland, Turner, de Lacey, Lincoln, and Bauckham reject the idea that Sunday holds a biblical status binding on individuals and the church as suggested by creation ordinance and theologies. Lincoln, particularly, synthesises this perspective, acknowledging the Sabbath's structure in the creation weekly cycle but arguing it analogously points not only to memorial creation but also redemptive purpose, notably God's liberation of his people from Egypt. Lincoln contends that NT discourses like Mark 2:23-28 and Heb 3:7-4:11 do not necessitate Sabbath observance. Instead, the author sees the Sabbath as instituted in the Decalogue, serving as a representative element for the entire OT law. Christ's obedience to the Sabbath law eliminated halakhic elements and introduced a new order fulfilled after his resurrection, leading to the establishment of the Lord's Day, distinct from the Sabbath.

Lincoln argues that the significance of rest extends beyond the Sabbath commandment to encompass the broader relationship between God and Israel, rooted in the Sinai covenant with the Decalogue at its core (Lincoln 1982a, 352). Christ, as the initiator of the new covenant, prioritised fulfilling God's will over adherence to Sabbath traditions. The NT church exhibits diverse attitudes toward Sabbath observance, reflecting varying

perspectives on Mosaic law. Lincoln traces the historical use of the Decalogue by the church, initially for catechetical purposes, later withdrawing it when considered natural law. Sabbatarianism emerged in the medieval church, while early church Patrists rejected it. Lincoln highlights Christians' divided opinions on Sunday's significance, some viewing it as a normative day of worship post-canonical status, while others uphold the canonical status of the Sabbath. The author examines the Reformers, noting their emphasis on Scripture's authority but viewing Sunday as convenient rather than binding.

Lincoln disputes the notion that designating Sunday as normative for worship implies its holiness (Lincoln 1982a, 390). The author criticises Sabbath-transfer theology, emphasising the distinction between ancient Sabbath and Christian Sunday. Lincoln cautions against blurring this distinction, rejecting the idea that both are days of rest for worship and challenging Barthian theology for its absence of exegetical and historical evidence. The author sees Sunday in terms of worship rather than rest or both as stated:

God's concern for the whole person and for all His creatures being able to have regular rest from their work surely instructs us that although the literal Sabbath day of rest has been abrogated and has not been transferred to Sunday, we should share this concern for regular periods of rest both for ourselves and for others in our society. From this perspective this essay is not advocating that Christians should not rest on Sunday. Rather its position suggests that they should take regular rest, that this rest can be any day or extended part of a day, including Sunday, but that there is no biblical or compelling theological reason why it has to be Sunday (Lincoln 1982a, 404).

In evaluation, in Lincoln's rejection of the idea that Sunday holds a biblically binding status, the author presents a comprehensive critique that draws attention to the Sabbath's linkage to the creation cycle but emphasising its analogical pointing to both memorial creation and redemptive purpose, particularly the liberation of God's people from Egypt. Lincoln disputes the necessity of Sabbath observance from certain NT passages and positions the Sabbath within the Decalogue, representative of the entire

OT law. The author also highlights diverse Christian opinions on Sunday, critiquing Sabbath-transfer theology and asserting the distinction between ancient Sabbath and Christian Sunday, cautioning against blurring these lines. However, I would contend that Lincoln does not explain why the writer of the epistle to the Hebrews connected the creation narrative to clarifying the Sabbath in the eschatological context. Lincoln's insistence on the Sabbath abrogation is an overstatement since the biblical evidence may prove contrary. Moreover, there is a difference between fulfilment and abrogation of the Sabbath. This shall be probed further later in this study.

Pipa (1997) conducts a comprehensive examination of the practical observance of Sunday, integrating biblical, doctrinal, devotional, and historical approaches. Emphasising Sunday's institution in the Scriptures, its confession by the Church, and historical connections, Pipa contends that Christians should find joy in the Sabbath. He sees it not only as a remedy for lifeless formalism in worship but also as a regulator of human relations with God and others. Treating the Sabbath as a creation ordinance alongside works and marriage, Pipa traces its transformation through the epochs of creation, God's covenant with Israel, Christ's lordship over the Sabbath, Pauline teachings, and the epistle to the Hebrews. Acknowledging changes to its original elements, Pipa argues for the transference of the Sabbath to Sunday, commemorating Christ's resurrection. He maintains the Sabbath's permanent binding nature on God's people, asserting its perpetually moral obligation based on the principle of a special day devoted to worship. Addressing covenant controversies, Pipa contends that the Sabbath's role as a covenantal sign does not negate its embeddedness and validity in the morally binding Decalogue. Regarding Christ as the "Lord of the Sabbath," Pipa argues that Christ did not annul the Sabbath but affirmed his authority over its validity and interpretation. In Christ's dialogue with the Jews, he established principles of "piety and necessity," reflecting the creation ordinance purposes derived from God's rest. Pipa encourages Christians to practically imitate Christ, constructing a Sabbath philosophy that guides their conduct and relationships for both physical and spiritual well-being.

Pipa (1997) addresses the Pauline Sabbath controversy, interpreting Col 2:16-17 as Paul abrogating the cultic observance of the seventh day while maintaining the moral principle of the Sabbath command. The author asserts that the person and work of

Christ supersede OT ceremonial observances, making every part of ceremonial worship reference the divine original. Pipa argues that Sabbath obligation persists due to its connection to creation and redemption, even though the day has shifted to the first day of the week. Unlike Bacchiocchi, Pipa values Sunday texts (John 20:26, Acts 20:7, 1 Cor 16:1-2, Rev 1:10), viewing them as testament to the NT's emphasis on Sunday. The author asserts the ongoing practice of Sabbath-keeping on the first day of the week for God's people. Pipa attributes the Patrists and early church's anti-Sabbatarian stance to a lack of systematic understanding, suggesting the mediaeval church's legalistic Sunday observance stemmed from this. Lombard's literal-allegorical interpretation of the Sabbath commandment had implications, influencing the adoption of a one-day-in-seven cycle and leading to the church magisterium appointing holy days for religious activities and festivities.

Pipa (1997) observes Aquinas' typological teaching of the Mosaic seventh-day Sabbath and moral teaching of the Christian Sunday Sabbath. The author notes the Continental Reformers' varied views, with Luther and Calvin perceiving the Sabbath as Judaistic, while Beza, Viret, Bullinger related the Lord's Day to the fourth commandment. The English Puritans later clarified and disconnected the Sabbath from the fourth commandment, distinguishing the Lord's Day from the Jewish Sabbath. Pipa, after exploring church history, emphasises Sunday's religious influence on Christians, advocating for public and private worship. Public worship anticipates eschatological rest and future re-creation, while private duties involve spiritual reflection, hospitality, ministry, and creating a delightful Sabbath for children. Successful Sabbath observance, Pipa asserts, necessitates advance planning.

In evaluating the author, Pipa's examination of Sunday's practical observance is thorough, integrating biblical, doctrinal, devotional, and historical approaches. Tracing the Sabbath as a creation ordinance through various epochs, Pipa argues for its transference to Sunday, commemorating Christ's resurrection. The author emphasises the Sabbath's permanent moral obligation based on a special day for worship and addresses covenant controversies, enriching his argument by delving into Aquinas' teaching, Continental Reformers' varied views, and the English Puritans' clarification of the Sabbath. Pipa stresses Sunday's religious influence, endorsing public and private

worship with specific duties, highlighting the need for planning for successful Sabbath observance. However, the author does not state how Sabbath observance may relationally inform social and religious domains of family and community contexts. Additionally, the author confuses Sabbath with Sunday because of biased discussion related to the day. This researcher proposes to see a day, whether Saturday or Sunday as means to inculcating Christ's attitude to Sabbath, whose interpretation translates into everyday experience.

Concerning the Sabbath, Waters asserts that it "does not sit on the periphery of Scriptures but touches the center of the biblical message – the purpose for which God created human beings; the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ; the heavenly hope of God's people" (Waters 2022, 129). The author argues that the Sabbath is central to biblical theology, connecting with the purpose of human creation, the resurrection of Christ, and the heavenly hope of believers. Focused on the biblical concept of Christ as the Last Adam, Waters integrates theologies of creation and redemption. Exploring the Sabbath across various biblical contexts, the author emphasises its normative status for believers under the new covenant. Waters addresses objections related to covenant, law, and Pauline Sabbath texts, asserting that these do not prove the Sabbath's abrogation. The author concludes that the weekly Sabbath must be observed by new covenant believers, rooted in creation, Christ's work, and consummation, ultimately guiding humanity toward eternal worship and anticipation of their heavenly home.

In evaluation, Waters paves way serving the main interest of this study as he passionately positions the Sabbath at the core of biblical teachings, asserting its centrality to the purpose of human creation, Christ's resurrection, and the hope of believers. The author's emphasis on the Sabbath as integral to biblical theology, anchored in the Last Adam concept, demonstrates a thoughtful integration of creation and redemption narratives. Waters' exploration of the Sabbath's normative status for new covenant believers spans various biblical contexts. While addressing objections related to covenant, law, and Pauline Sabbath texts, the author boldly contends against the notion of Sabbath abrogation. Waters' conclusion is theologically consistent with the biblical presentation on the Sabbath, affirming the ongoing observance of the weekly Sabbath by new covenant believers, a practice rooted in creation, Christ's redemptive

work, and the anticipation of an eternal connection with God in worship. However, Waters does not delve into demonstrating how the two theologies may affect the family and community life on socioreligious level. This study extends in Waters a theological discourse encompassing creation and redemption theologies contextualised to the Zambian socioreligious relations.

In conclusion, in the context of the preceding discussion, it can be analysed that the ethical reflection on Sabbath/Sunday tends to oversimplify the Sabbath by reducing it to a mere day concept, often conflated with Sunday due to transfer theology. My argument posits that while the Sabbath and Sunday share some elements, they are conceptually distinct – Biblically, the Sabbath signifies a day of rest, while Sunday represents a day of corporate worship. The claim made in this case contends that there is no biblical basis for Sabbath abrogation and suggests that God intended the Sabbath to be an everyday experience for believers, rooted in Christ's teachings and ministry. The discussion further poses significant theological questions, exploring the origins of the Sabbath, its relation to Israel and creation, interpretations of the law, potential abrogation, and the attitudes of the early church towards the Sabbath, forming the basis for ongoing Sabbath debates.

3.7 Contestations about the Sabbath

This section aims to clarify Sabbath's origin, Jesus' stance, OT/NT law distinction, Christian normativity, and church history.

3.7.1 Sabbath and Israel

Dressler (1982) contends that the Sabbath's origin lies in Israel rather than creation, as the creation narrative lacks mention of it. According to Dressler, the Sabbath predates the Decalogue, becoming codified and imbued with socioreligious significance at Sinai to address Israelite societal concerns. Dressler rejects extending the Sabbath's validity beyond Israel. In evaluation, Dressler's argument challenging the traditional belief in the Sabbath's origin in creation is noteworthy. By asserting that the creation narrative's omission of the Sabbath indicates its Israelite origin, Dressler introduces a perspective that emphasises the Sabbath's development within a specific historical and cultural context. The author's claim that the Sabbath predates the Decalogue and acquires

socioreligious significance at Sinai underscores the evolving nature of religious practices. However, Dressler's categorical rejection of extending the Sabbath's validity beyond Israel raises questions about the universality of the concept, warranting further examination of theological and historical considerations.

Rowland (1982) builds on Dressler's ideas, highlighting Sabbath observance tensions in post-exilic Jews. The tension arises from a sincere desire to apply expanded Sabbath teachings in Scriptures and intertestamental literature. Rowland acknowledges interpretive complexities in early Judaism, seen as attempts to align God's will with the Hellenistic world. In evaluation, while Rowland's argument is premised in the blurring context of canonical OT teachings on the Sabbath, one may appreciate the interpretive complexities shaping Jesus' conflicts with Jewish authorities. I contend that the Sabbath remains contextually valid in both the OT and intertestamental Jewish communities, evolving until heightened significance during Jesus' era, prompting a deeper exploration of Christ's approach to the law and the Sabbath. During the intertestamental period, the canonical status of the Sabbath was maintained amidst ancestral law, Mishnaic, and rabbinic traditions.

3.7.2 Jesus, OT (Mosaic) Law, and the Sabbath

Christ's attitude to the Sabbath is exemplified in the grainfield discourse recounted by the Synoptic Gospels (Matt 12:1-8; Mark 2:23-28; Luke 6:1-5). The Lukan version not only highlights Christ's awareness of OT Sabbath regulations but also emphasises his authority surpassing even David's. This paves the way for a perspective that seeks to understand the Sabbath's meaning in the context of Christ's person and ministry, beginning with an examination of the Gospel narratives (Pao and Schnabel 2007, 294). This study proposes a perspective on the Sabbath's meaning through analysing the Gospel narratives in Christ's person and ministry.

3.7.2.1 Jesus and the Gospels

Carson (1982a, 57-85) acknowledges that Christ respected the Sabbath within its OT framework but challenged its halakhic interpretation, leading to confrontations. With the Jewish emphasis on Halakha over the OT, Christ used these conflicts to assert his messianic claims, reshaping Sabbath customs. Carson confines Christ's Sabbath

statements in Mark to a Jewish context, arguing the aphoristic nature of the verb ἐγένετο (Mark 2:27) dismisses a creation ordinance defence. Also, the author asserts that Christ, rather than abolishing the Sabbath in John 5:17-18, engages in a Christological and eschatological discourse, linking the Sabbath with God's creation to elucidate Christ's messianic mission (Carson 1991, 248-249).

Carson (1982a) posits that Christ saw the law as prophetic of his person and ministry, challenging Sabbatarian defences that classify laws into moral, ceremonial, and civil categories. The author rejects linking humanity's need for rest to the Mosaic Sabbath as "moral" law, emphasising that useful laws in the OT do not share this categorisation. Carson disputes the idea that Jesus endorsed perpetual Sabbath observance based on Matt 24:29, citing Jesus' ambivalence toward the law and its continuity until John. Christ's question about doing good or harm on the Sabbath focuses on legitimate Sabbath activities, tied to his messianic mission. Carson sees the Sabbath as a shadow in early Christian views, emphasising its eschatological connection, and interprets Johannine Sabbath texts through a replacement motif, implying the Sabbath's cessation replaced by Christ himself.

In Carson (1982a), Christ's question on doing good or harm on the Sabbath is specific to legitimate Sabbath activities, responding to accusations. Carson asserts Christ's primary Sabbath concern is his messianic mission, evident in his Nazareth sermon heralding eschatological Jubilee. The healing of a crippled woman on the Sabbath exemplifies this (Luke 13:10-17). The author argues early Christians viewed the Sabbath as a shadow tied to eschatology, and Johannine Sabbath texts align with a replacement motif, suggesting the Sabbath's cessation replaced by Christ himself.

In evaluation, Carson's arguments showcase a comprehensive exploration of Christ's relationship with the Sabbath. Carson adeptly recognises Jesus' respect for the Sabbath within its OT framework, emphasising the confrontations arising from his challenge to its halakhic interpretation. The author also disputes a creation ordinance defence but highlights a Christological and eschatological discourse in John 5:17-18. Carson's rejection of Sabbatarian classifications and his emphasis on the Sabbath as a shadow in early Christian thought demonstrate a nuanced understanding. My evaluation

reflects Carson's meticulous examination, providing a robust foundation for understanding the complexities of Christ's interactions with the Sabbath. However, the Carson's argument falters as it neglects the temporal aspect of Sabbath-rest tied to eschatology. Carson's restriction of ἄνθρωπος (*man, humanity*) to Jews is criticised, with a counterargument emphasising that Christ, in context, asserts authority over the Sabbath rather than developing a principle, as noted by Watts (2007, 140). The interpretation of ἄνθρωπος and ἐγένετο (*to be created/established*) should not be limited to Jews or aphorism, as Sabbath-rest in the Decalogue context extends beyond observant Jews to include slaves, animals, and vegetation, rooted in the order of creation. This critique underscores the importance of understanding Christ's lordship and its impact on the Sabbath's meaning (Edwards J. R. 2002, 93).

3.7.2.2 Jesus and OT Law

The misconception of Jesus abrogating the law, especially the Sabbath within the OT, is addressed by Carson. The author challenges normativity through the Johannine replacement motif, suggesting that Jesus replaced the Sabbath with himself. Carson emphasises the fulfilment of the law as actualising what it points to – Christ. In the Matthean sermon on the mount, Jesus' fulfilment of the law is understood in relation to the OT law, eliminating views conflicting with the NT's perspective on the law. Carson rejects using Matthew's reference to argue for Sabbath validity, asserting Jesus' role in introducing the eschatological aeon through his death, resurrection, and exaltation (Carson 1982a). In my evaluation, Carson's insightful incorporation of the Johannine replacement motif, suggesting that Jesus replaced the Sabbath with himself, is a thought-provoking perspective. Carson's emphasis on the fulfilment of the law actualising in Christ aligns with a holistic understanding. The evaluation of Jesus' fulfilment in the Matthean sermon on the mount in relation to the OT law demonstrates Carson's commitment to eliminating conflicting views and harmonising perspectives within the NT. Carson's rejection of using Matthew's reference to support Sabbath validity is justified, given his emphasis on Jesus' pivotal role in introducing the eschatological aeon through significant events like his death, resurrection, and exaltation. However, Carson has not elucidated his point in the wider context of Matt 5 but cites limited space. So, the author simply provides suggestions. Since Carson

provides suggestions rather than interpretation, there is need to seek further elucidation on the subject matter.

Dunn (2013) critiques the traditional Christian interpretation dismissing the validity of the law, asserting that it inaccurately portrays the Judaism of Jesus' time as legalistic. He proposes an alternative perspective, viewing Jesus as a faithful Jew whose worldview was shaped by Judaism. According to Dunn, Jesus engaged with the law, disputing halakhic elements and addressing various legal aspects, including the Sabbath. Dunn uses the Matthean antitheses to illustrate Jesus' interpretation, arguing that it does not abrogate the law but radicalises it through the motivation of love. Dunn contends that this interpretation influenced the apostolic understanding of the law in the NT. To support the Sabbath's continuity, Dunn cites Paul's addresses to churches in Rome and Galatia, suggesting it would be futile for Paul to discuss the Sabbath if it had been abrogated. In evaluation, Dunn's critique of the traditional Christian interpretation is thought-provoking, challenging the dismissal of the law's validity by highlighting its potential misrepresentation of Judaism in Jesus' time. Although, his proposal to view Jesus as a faithful Jew aligns with a more nuanced understanding of the cultural and religious context, the Gospels presentations of Christ betray him. The Gospels narratives presents Jesus as one who authoritatively taught the law. Such description makes Jesus to stand out among the rabbis of his time. The exploration of Jesus engaging with the law and disputing halakhic elements, including the Sabbath, is valuable. Dunn's use of the Matthean antitheses to emphasise Jesus' interpretation, which he argues does not abrogate the law but radicalises it through love, contributes a fresh perspective. The author's claim that this interpretation influenced the apostolic understanding of the law in the NT adds depth. Dunn's support for Sabbath continuity through Paul's addresses to churches further strengthens his argument, emphasising the relevance of Sabbath discussions in the early Christian context. Therefore, the author presents a strong case for validity of the law including the Sabbath.

Moo (1992) argues that Christ's fulfilment of the law does not entail abrogation but aligns with its prophetic aspect. Jesus, as the Lord of Sabbath, asserts authority over it without abolishing it, emphasising love's role in interpreting the law. Moo contends that Jesus, by fulfilling the law (Luke 16:16; Matt 5:17-20), validates its continuity while

revealing the eschatological will of God. The author's perspective underscores that Christ's attitude toward the law is rooted in benevolence and humanitarian concerns, challenging the notion of abrogation. Moo's nuanced analysis illuminates the intricate relationship between Jesus, the law, and its enduring significance. In evaluation, Moo's perspective provides a valuable contribution, emphasising that Christ's fulfilment of the law does not involve abrogation but rather aligns with a prophetic dimension. Moo's recognition of Jesus as the Lord of Sabbath, asserting authority without abolishing it, adds depth to understanding the nuanced relationship between Jesus and the law. Moo's emphasis on love as a crucial element in interpreting the law brings a compassionate dimension to Christ's attitude. By asserting that Jesus' fulfilment validates the law's continuity while revealing God's eschatological will, Moo offers a thoughtful perspective that challenges the prevalent notion of abrogation. The author's nuanced analysis sheds light on the intricate dynamics between Jesus, the law, and its enduring significance. In the light of Moo, the Sabbath, together with the entire OT law, was validated by Jesus. The validation that Jesus provides underwent transformation such that Jesus has become the authority of its interpretation.

3.7.2.3 Jesus and Unity of OT Law

While Carson (1982b) rejects categorising the OT law into moral, ceremonial, and civil aspects, Grudem (2018) maintains this classification, placing the Sabbath under the ceremonial category due to its ties with Jewish sacrifices and festivals. Grudem argues that the Sabbath ended with the Mosaic covenant, asserting its irrelevance in the NT, only serving as a source for contemporary wisdom in corporate worship and Christian liberty. Geisler (2010) similarly contends that the OT law, exclusive to Israel, is not universally binding. Geisler argues that Jesus abolished the law, emphasising that NT laws are distinct. Consequently, Geisler deems the OT law irrelevant for Christian ethical reflection. Obviously, the main issue regarding the law concerns its interpretation and application to Christian context.

Wright (2004) counters the dismissal of OT law by scholars like Grudem and Geisler, advocating for its relevance in Christian living. He suggests applying the law by understanding its dynamic, motivations, and theological foundations from the

perspective of OT Israel. Wright emphasises three crucial points – God, Israel, and land – as the foundation for theological, social, and economic aspects, aiding the application of OT ethics in contemporary life. The theological angle clarifies Yahweh's identity, the social angle connects redemption with Israel's social dimension, and the economic angle informs about land use. Wright sees the *torâ* as more than law, encompassing guidance and instruction, with continuity through the new covenant, emphasising the ongoing relationship between God and His people.

In evaluation, some polarities on the OT law observed in Carson, Grudem, Geisler, and Wright indicate how diversely the law has been interpreted. The contrasting views on the categorisation and relevance of the OT law offers a comprehensive understanding. Carson's rejection of the moral, ceremonial, and civil classification aligns with a nuanced perspective, challenging simplistic divisions. Grudem's stance, categorising the Sabbath as ceremonial and deeming it irrelevant in the NT, reflects a clear position but may oversimplify the law's complexities. Geisler's assertion of Jesus abolishing the law and deeming it irrelevant raises questions about the continuity of ethical principles. Grudem and Geisler's arguments fall short of realisation that the new covenant, inaugurated by Christ, maintains the laws as written on the hearts of men (Heb 8:10; cf. Rom 2:14-15). In contrast, Wright provides a compelling argument, emphasising the contextual application of the law, which adds depth to understanding its theological, social, and economic dimensions in contemporary Christian living. As such, it is necessary to clarify the nature of the law.

Nelson (2006, 4-17) outlines five Christian interpretive options for the OT law: (i) all law applying (Christian Judaism); (ii) only moral and civil law apply (theonomy); (iii) only moral law applies (moral nomianism); (iv) only the laws Jesus taught apply (new covenant theology), and; (v) no law (antinomianism). The author advocates a conciliatory approach, aligning with Christ and apostolic understanding, maintaining the law's status but interpreting it in line with its purpose. Christians, according to Nelson, do not earn salvation through the law, but fulfil its requirements by yielding to the Spirit, placing them under the law of Christ. In evaluation, Nelson's comprehensive overview of Christian interpretive options for the OT law offers a valuable resource for understanding diverse perspectives. The author's proposed conciliatory approach,

emphasising alignment with Christ and apostolic understanding, demonstrates a nuanced stance that recognises the law's significance while emphasising its interpretation in line with its intended purpose. Nelson's rejection of earning salvation through the law and emphasis on fulfilling its requirements through yielding to the Spirit aligns with a grace-centred perspective, placing Christians under the law of Christ. This study recognises the author's effort to navigate complex theological positions and promote a balanced view that integrates scriptural principles with contextual understanding.

Wellum (n.d.) reflects on reconciling the biblical law, emphasising two crucial elements: understanding it in terms of God as Creator and Lord, and recognising its covenantal context for God's people. Wellum explores five biblical senses: the law as God Himself, His ultimate moral obligation, the Scriptures (תורה), the Mosaic covenant, and the law of Christ. Wellum underscores the Mosaic covenant's connection to preceding covenants and contends that while Christians are not under it, the moral demands expressed through the Mosaic Law persist in the new covenant. The author concludes that the Mosaic Law as a covenant package has ended, yet its moral demands endure in the context of the new covenant. In evaluation, Wellum's reflection on reconciling the biblical law is a thoughtful exploration of its multifaceted nature. The emphasis on understanding the law in terms of God as Creator and Lord, along with its covenantal context, provides a solid theological foundation. The identification of five biblical senses, including the law as God Himself and His ultimate moral obligation, contributes depth to the analysis. Wellum's recognition of the Mosaic covenant's connection to preceding covenants offers a nuanced perspective on biblical continuity. While acknowledging Christians are not under the Mosaic covenant, he astutely argues for the enduring moral demands in the context of the new covenant, providing a balanced theological conclusion. The point of OT law being valid since creation may be deduced also from Kaiser who argues: "It must not be thought that the Decalogue was inaugurated and promulgated at Sinai for the first time. All the Ten Commandments had been part of the law previously written on hearts instead of stone, for all ten appear, in one way or another, in Genesis" (Kaiser 1983, 82).

Averbeck argues that the OT law must be understood “on its own terms” (Averbeck 2022, 283). In this vein, there is need to hear what the Bible says about the OT law. Having examined the OT law in its redemptive setting, Averbeck concludes:

The whole law is Scripture to us: authoritative, useful, and effective for us today (2 Tim 3:15-17) like the rest of the Bible. The question is not *whether* this or that part of the law applies to us but *how* it applies. The how often becomes clear when we look closely at what the New Testament Scriptures do with the various units and dimensions of the Mosaic law (Averbeck 2022, 81, emphasis original).

Averbeck (2022) integrates the creation, Noahic, and the redemptive covenants – Abrahamic, Mosaic, Davidic, and new covenant – arguing that their inherent qualities of “permanent promise and ongoing obligation” (Averbeck 2022, 56-58) interconnect. The author contends that these covenants, transformed by Messiah’s work, the Holy Spirit’s advent, and the new covenant community, do not nullify OT law but extend it. Averbeck clarifies that the biggest misconception lies in reconciling the redemptive covenants as a unit, demonstrating their integration through the new covenant. Averbeck asserts that the church follows the “law of Christ,” not the Mosaic law directly, emphasising the ongoing relevance and integration of the OT law into practical life under the new covenant (Jer 31:31-34). In evaluation, Averbeck’s argument urges a careful examination of what the Bible says about it and concludes that the entire law is authoritative, useful, and effective for today, echoing 2 Tim 3:15-17. Averbeck’s integration of the creation, Noahic, and redemptive covenants highlights their interconnected qualities. The author skilfully argues that these covenants, transformed by Messiah’s work, the Holy Spirit’s advent, and the new covenant community, extend rather than nullify the OT law. I contend that Averbeck astutely addresses the misconception of reconciling redemptive covenants, emphasising their integration through the new covenant, and affirming the ongoing relevance of the OT law in practical life under this covenant.

In summary, the Bible perceives the law as a cohesive entity. The law, rather than being annulled, has found fulfilment in Christ, leading to its transformation for Christian adoption. It is essential to examine how the NT interprets and applies the law in the

context of Christ. Therefore, understanding the relevance and legitimacy of the Sabbath should be grounded in Christ's fulfilment of the law. The idea that the OT law is separate from the NT law lacks support and is not sustainable.

3.7.2.4 Jesus and the Sabbath

Schreiner (2010) contends that Jesus' positive view of Sabbath observance does not justify its continuity under the new covenant, linking it to the old covenant's symbolism for Israel's redemption, typifying our redemption in Christ. He acknowledges the Sabbath as a shadow pointing to Christ and the eschatological rest for God's people (Col 2:16-17). Conversely, Edwards B. H. (2002) argues for the universal applicability of the Sabbath and the Decalogue to all humanity, seeing Christianity and the law as harmonious. Edwards emphasises that Christ fulfils rather than abolishes the law, advocating for the Sabbath's validity due to God's singular set of laws. Despite supporting the Sabbath, Edwards acknowledges pastoral challenges in its application to Sunday. In evaluation, Schreiner's argument emphasises the discontinuity of the Sabbath under the new covenant, associating it with the old covenant's symbolism for Israel's redemption, which finds its fulfilment in Christ. He recognises the Sabbath as a shadow pointing to Christ and the eschatological rest (Col 2:16-17). In contrast, Edwards B. H. advocates for the universal applicability of the Sabbath and the Decalogue, asserting harmony between Christianity and the law. Edwards underscores that Christ fulfils rather than abolishes the law, supporting the Sabbath's validity based on God's singular set of laws. Despite the endorsement of the Sabbath, Edwards acknowledges practical challenges in applying it to Sunday.

Schreiner's interpretation of the "shadow of things" is deemed unsatisfactory, as Christ overshadows not only the Sabbath but the entire OT. This is substantiated by the NT's use of $\sigma\kappa\iota\alpha$ about various OT laws, the earthly tabernacle, and the entire OT law (Col 2:16-18; Heb 8:5; 10:1). According to Beale (2007, 862) and Marshall (2003, 179-180), these shadows exemplify the NT's typological perspective on the OT, suggesting that the eschatological realisation of the Sabbath does not imply its abrogation but rather a redirection of laws from Israel to a faith group rooted in Jewish heritage with a distinct understanding of law and covenant. This reorientation, according to Oswalt (2003, 858),

aligns with the concept that the law regulates holy living arising from a genuine experience of God's grace, countering the Pharisaic perversion attacked by Jesus and Paul. In evaluation, I contend that although Schreiner's interpretation is critical, it falls short as Christ overshadows not just the Sabbath but the entire OT. I conclude that the eschatological realisation of the Sabbath implies a redirection of laws from Israel to a faith group with a different understanding of law and covenant, aligning with Oswalt's concept that the law regulates holy living rooted in a genuine experience of God's grace, contradicting the Pharisaic perversion criticised by Jesus and Paul.

In the ongoing law debate, this study's conclusion asserts the unity and ongoing validity of the OT law, emphasising its role in regulating God's creation. While contextualising the law within Jesus' transformed interpretation in the NT, the argument maintains its continued relevance. Christ, as the standard for interpreting the law, did not abrogate it but transformed it into the law of Christ, making it binding on Christians. The study suggests a royal grant perspective rather than a suzerain treaty (Horton 2011, 151), highlighting that Christians observe the law and Sabbath not for acceptance or righteousness but as ethical norms aligned with Christian principles.

3.7.3 Church and the Sabbath

Having explored the biblical perspective, this study progresses to investigate whether the church at any point introduced Sabbatarianism or abrogated it. This investigation commences in historical exploration of the earliest (NT) church.

In Turner's analysis of the Lukan corpus (1982, 99-137), he asserts that leaders in the Book of Acts were aware of the evolving relationship between the old Mosaic Law and Jesus' teachings through the Spirit. While the new covenant transcends the old, Turner notes ambiguity on how it influences the church's stance on the Mosaic Law. Turner observes that Jesus, central to redemption, displayed a nuanced approach to the law, combining affirmation and abrogation. Particularly, Jesus prioritised the Sabbath for his messianic mission rather than adhering strictly to its sanctity. Turner suggests the early church maintained Sabbath continuity due to conservatism, social pressure, missionary policy, fear of sanctions, or theological conviction, but clearly, Sunday meetings marked a departure from Sabbath observance. In evaluation, Turner explores the complex

dynamics between the old Mosaic Law and Jesus' teachings in the Book of Acts. The assertion that church leaders were cognisant of the evolving relationship between the old and new covenants adds depth to the understanding of theological awareness during that period. Turner's identification of ambiguity in the church's stance on the Mosaic Law reflects the intricacies of theological interpretation. Turner's consideration of factors influencing Sabbath continuity in the early church demonstrates a holistic perspective, though further exploration of the evidence supporting these factors could strengthen the argument. Overall, Turner's analysis contributes significantly to unravelling the theological intricacies within the Lukan corpus and the early church. Against Turner, I contend that Jesus' subjugation of the Sabbath to messianic mission does not border on the sanctity of the Sabbath. It borders on the humanitarian ideals as informed by Christ's authority over the Sabbath (Luke 6:1-5).

Bacchiocchi (2000) counters Turner's perspective, asserting that Sunday did not abrogate the Sabbath, emphasising continuity between Judaism and Christianity in Luke and Matthew, as well as a nuanced interpretation of continuity and discontinuity in Hebrews. According to Bacchiocchi, Lukan continuity stems from the ecclesiastical identity of the early church as an old Jewish community sharing prayer times and worship places. Matthean continuity, in Bacchiocchi's view, arises from Jesus' mission to fulfil rather than abolish the law. Bacchiocchi distinguishes Hebraic discontinuity in the abolition of ceremonial elements while highlighting continuity in the redemptive ministry through Jesus and the Sabbath. Bacchiocchi supports Sabbath observance in the early church, citing Christ's actions, Paul's synagogue attendance, and the Nazarenes. The author advocates for Sabbath observance in a manner prescribed by Christ – focused on good deeds and benevolence. Regarding Paul's stance on the Sabbath (Col 2:16-18; Rom 14:5; Gal 4:10), Bacchiocchi argues that Paul critiques the soteriological understanding rather than the moral aspects of the law, emphasising the law as a guide to Christian conduct. Bacchiocchi interprets texts challenging Sabbath observance as critiques of ascetic and cultic practices, not a repudiation of the Sabbath commandment itself (2000, 73). In evaluation, Bacchiocchi presents an alternative perspective on the relationship between Sunday and the Sabbath. By underscoring continuity between Judaism and Christianity in Luke and Matthew, and employing a

nuanced interpretation of continuity and discontinuity in Hebrews, Bacchiocchi challenges the idea of Sunday abrogating the Sabbath. His argument hinges on the ecclesiastical identity of the early church as an old Jewish community, sharing prayer times and worship places. The differentiation of Matthean continuity, rooted in Jesus' mission to fulfil rather than abolish the law, and Hebraic discontinuity, focusing on the elimination of ceremonial elements while maintaining continuity in the redemptive ministry through Jesus and the Sabbath, adds depth to the discourse. Bacchiocchi's support for Sabbath observance in the early church, backed by references to Christ's actions, Paul's synagogue attendance, and the practices of the Nazarenes, strengthens his position. The emphasis on Sabbath observance as prescribed by Christ, centred on benevolence and good deeds, provides a practical dimension to his argument. Regarding Paul's stance on the Sabbath, Bacchiocchi skilfully distinguishes between the soteriological and moral aspects of the law, asserting that Paul critiques the former while upholding the law as a guide to Christian conduct. Furthermore, his interpretation of texts challenging Sabbath observance as criticisms of ascetic and cultic practices, rather than repudiations of the Sabbath commandment itself, demonstrates a nuanced understanding of the biblical context. However, I criticise Bacchiocchi's flawed distinction of the law into soteriological and moral aspects. The law is a unit. Further, Bacchiocchi's weakness lies in minimising the theological significance of Sunday texts, reducing them to asceticism and cultism, neglecting Pauline teachings that contribute to the transformed NT view of the Sabbath. Bacchiocchi erroneously equates Sunday with the Sabbath, overlooking their independent development. The emphasis should shift from a specific day to how Sabbath ideals can sustain creation through God's redemptive mission. Bacchiocchi's interpretation of Paul's Sabbath tradition warrants further scrutiny.

De Lacey (1982) contends that the DRE led Paul to recognise Jesus as the focal point of God's saving work for both Jews and Gentiles, superseding the law and the Mosaic covenant. Paul's view of the law, including the Decalogue, is interpreted as providing God's ethical standards and Sinaitic covenantal arrangements. Regarding the Sabbath commandment, Paul avoids dogmatism and rejects imposing Sabbath observance as a duty on fellow believers. In evaluation, De Lacey provides a lens through which to

understand Paul's theological shift. The recognition of Jesus as the central figure in God's saving work, surpassing the law and the Mosaic covenant, is welcome. The dual interpretation of the law, serving as both God's ethical standards and Sinaitic covenantal arrangements, reflects a nuanced understanding. Paul's stance on the Sabbath commandment, avoiding dogmatism and rejecting obligatory Sabbath observance, underscores a flexible approach in dealing with matters of religious practice within the early Christian community. As such, this study infers that the Pauline tradition's neutrality to Sabbath obligation perceives Christ's fulfilment in the Sabbath not as a day but an everyday experience.

Lincoln (1982b) recognises the Sabbath's importance for Christian time-reckoning and its eschatological Sabbath-rest rooted in Genesis and Jewish literature. The Sabbath, seen as the goal of human history and the framework from creation to consummation, is elucidated through Jewish apocalypse and rabbinic literature. Lincoln argues that Christ's fulfilment transformed the Sabbath-rest concept, with the NT writers perceiving it as salvation-rest in Christ, not physical rest. Consequently, there is no basis for endorsing Sunday as a day of physical rest. In evaluation, Lincoln's acknowledgment of the Sabbath's significance for Christian time-reckoning and its eschatological Sabbath-rest, grounded in Genesis and Jewish literature, reflects a thorough understanding of its historical and theological underpinnings. The examination of the Sabbath as both the goal of human history and a framework from creation to consummation demonstrates a nuanced interpretation. Lincoln's argument that Christ's fulfilment transformed the Sabbath-rest concept aligns with a theological evolution, emphasising salvation-rest in Christ rather than mere physical rest. The rejection of Sunday as a day of physical rest is logically derived from this transformed perspective. Against Lincoln, I contend that it is not entirely correct to infer that NT writers perceived the Sabbath in terms of salvation because the NT contains texts (e.g., Rom 14:5-6; Gal 4:9-10; Col 2:16-17) meant to address Sabbath misconceptions. Of course, Lincoln clearly distinguishes Sunday from Sabbath but fails to account for the dual sense of the Sabbath presupposed in the literary structure of the creation seventh-day paragraph. The creation narrative uses the language of days despite the debate whether those days are to be understood as literal or symbolic. The literal creation seventh-day forms the background to the eschatological

discussion of Sabbath-rest in the epistle to the Hebrews as well as Jesus' justification for his Sabbath healing ministry in the gospel of John. As noted, the creation seventh-day is significant for linking the Sabbath with creation (Hiebert 1996, 132-136). As such, this study perceives the evolutionary aspect of the Sabbath-rest to subsist in everyday experience benefiting humanity, and creation at large.

In summary, the discussion on church and the Sabbath finds no explicit biblical evidence for the dissolution of the physical aspect in its eschatological realisation. The church, influenced by Lukan, Matthean, and Pauline traditions, viewed the Sabbath through the lens of Christ and apostolic teaching, recognising it as non-burdensome and without insistence on a specific day concept.

3.7.4 Sabbath and the New Covenant

Another Sabbath contestation hinges on the new covenant's relation to the old. Eichrodt (1961-1967, 36) describes the old covenant as "the concept in which Israelite thought gave definitive expression to the binding of the people to God and by means of which they established firmly from the start the particularity of their knowledge of him was the covenant." What can be noted from Eichrodt is that a covenant generally binds people to their God based on prescribed terms. Theologically, a covenant defines God's relationship with his creatures in the manner that connotes God's lordship that extends to his control, authority, and presence in creation (Frame 2013, 17, 20). There are different covenants, of which the new covenant under the Lordship of Christ Jesus – the Lord of the Sabbath – is the pinnacle (Frame 2013, 79-80). In evaluation, the different redemptive covenants bring about complexities concerning their relation to the pinnacle one i.e., the new covenant. In the interest of this study, the focus shall be a brief exploration of the relation of the new (Messianic) to the old (Mosaic) covenant.

Alexander (2012) underscores the foundational aspects of the old covenant, rooted in the literary context of Exod 19-24. The old covenant, marked by divine initiation, Israel's privileged status, and conditioned on obedience, incorporated the Decalogue and Covenant Code. The Sabbath played a central role as a sign of Israel's covenant with God. However, Israel's disobedience led to the inauguration of the new covenant by Christ, ratified through his death, burial, and resurrection. Christ's attitude toward the

law, evident in Sabbath confrontations, emphasises a profound regard for its intention. According to Alexander, the new covenant displaces strict Sabbath observance, replaced by the Lord's Day, achieving what the Sinai (old) covenant failed through Jesus Christ's death, resurrection, and ascension (2012, 223). In evaluation, Alexander convincingly elucidates the incorporation of the Decalogue and Covenant Code, with the Sabbath as a central sign. The linkage between Israel's disobedience and the inauguration of the new covenant by Christ is aptly articulated, underscoring the transformative role of Christ's death, burial, and resurrection. Christ's attitude toward the law, especially in Sabbath confrontations, is insightful, highlighting a profound respect for its intention. Although the proposition that the new covenant supersedes strict Sabbath observance with the Lord's Day is well-supported, aligning with Alexander's broader theme of fulfilment through Jesus Christ's death, resurrection, and ascension, this study differs from Alexander, on the view of Sunday, the Lord's Day. It argues that did not displace the Sabbath as the two are distinct, in which case, the Sabbath predates Sunday.

Waltke with Yu (2007, 420-245) contend that the Sabbath's ratification in the old covenant at Sinai merely codified existing commandments, as Sabbath practice dates back to creation. Rooted in creation, the Sabbath serves to commemorate sacred time, symbolise the order of redemption, signify the covenant with Israel, remind of God's completed work, confess God's lordship, express the church's realised eschatology, and celebrate the significance of time. While the authors believe Sabbath observance is not mandatory today, they recognise its enduring rationale, acknowledging an intrinsic human inclination to set apart a day for worship and reflection. In evaluation, Waltke with Yu present the Sabbath's origins, asserting that its ratification at Sinai merely codified pre-existing commandments, tracing its practice back to creation. Their emphasis on the Sabbath's rootedness in creation, serving multiple purposes, including commemorating sacred time and expressing the church's realised eschatology, is well-founded. Despite their stance that Sabbath observance is not obligatory today, the acknowledgment of its enduring rationale reflects a nuanced understanding of human inclination towards setting aside a day for worship and reflection. In the light of Waltke with Yu, it is evident that the Sabbath does not originate with the old covenant. The old

covenant rather ratifies the Sabbath. However, the question of the relation of old covenant to the new remains.

Nelson succinctly explains the relationship between the two covenants:

Under the new covenant, there is still a sanctuary, still a priesthood, still the shedding of blood: but the sanctuary is now in heaven (Heb. 8:1–2; 9:11, 24), the priesthood is eternal (5:1–10, 7:1–28), and the blood is effective (Acts 13:38–39, Heb. 9:1–10:18). The writer to the Hebrews likens the relationship between the old covenant and the new to that between a shadow and reality (10:1): there is a correspondence, but one is much better than the other (8:6) (Nelson 2006, 14).

In evaluation, Nelson presents a concise but impactful analysis of the new covenant. The author highlights the continued elements of a sanctuary, priesthood, and bloodshed, while emphasising their transformed nature. Drawing a parallel between the old and new covenants as a shadow and reality, Nelson skilfully conveys the idea of a correspondence but underscores the superiority of the new covenant. The citation of relevant biblical passages (Heb. 8:1–2; 9:11, 24; 5:1–10; 7:1–28; Acts 13:38–39; Heb. 9:1–10:18) adds strength to the evaluation, providing a solid foundation for understanding the nuanced relationship between the two covenants.

In conclusion, the new covenant does not abolish the Sabbath as the regulating law persists (cf. Kaiser 1983, 89). The superior new covenant enhances understanding, as Jesus Christ, the reality to which the law points, has arrived. There is a blend of continuity and discontinuity between the old and new covenants. The Sabbath, within the covenant, serves for humanity's restoration, recognising God's lordship and His generosity in work. Arguing that the Sabbath predates the Sinaitic codification, the old covenant ratifies it as a sign. There is no indication of Sabbath discontinuation in the new covenant, where the law remains valid.

3.7.5 Sabbath in Church History

Bauckham (1982b) explores the Sabbath in connection to the Decalogue, highlighting second-century Christian writers' interpretation of the Sabbath as rest from sin, not physical work. Bauckham emphasises the centrality of Sunday in these writers'

observance due to its association with the Lord's resurrection. The author notes the inheritance of both eschatological and literal Sabbath perspectives in the early church, suggesting their resistance to the Jewish Sabbath. Bauckham underscores the open debate on the Sabbath in the second century. In evaluation, Bauckham's analysis suggests a need for further investigation into the complex interplay between eschatological and literal Sabbath views during this period. My contention is that the early church inherited both the eschatological and literal Sabbath. If that were not the case, it would be futile for the Patrists to address the influence of the Jewish Sabbath in the church. In fact, both the Sabbath and the Decalogue were key issues that the Patrists contended with on aspect of normativity. However, notable in Bauckham is the thesis that during the second century CE, the Sabbath debate remained open. Further inquiry is therefore in order.

Since an exploration of the Sabbath is connected to the Decalogue, an examination of how the Decalogue was understood during the Patrists period should be done.

Regarding the Decalogue, Irenaeus (1885, 477-478) argues that the natural precepts of the law that are common both to Jews and Christians were never abrogated by Christ, but "extended and fulfilled" in him. Tertullian (1885b, 77-78) considers the Decalogue relevant to addressing the ethical matter of adultery. Clement (1885, 511-515) approached the exposition of the Decalogue by numerology rooted in Gnostic concept, but justifying it for the trouble of humanity and the need for rest. Clement adds that the Mosaic Sabbath prepares us for true rest on the Primal Day (Sunday) that illumines us with wisdom and knowledge. However, Clement is so absorbed in the Pythagorean use of numbers relating to the creation days to which the author notes creation of man on the sixth day as he attributes to the seventh-day crisis and disease. Regarding Sunday, the author calls for its festal celebration as the day the Lord has made.

Ignatius, however, confines the Sabbath to Judaism (Lightfoot and Harmer 1891, 145, 154). Pseudo-Barnabas gives an allegorical reinterpretation of the Sabbath that God makes and whose inauguration is an eschatological eighth day, which suggests a disconnection with Jewish Sabbath because the Sabbath for Christians will be realised in the age to come (cited in Bauckham 1982b, 283-284). In his dialogue with Trypho, Justin Martyr (1885, 200) argues that the true Sabbath is perpetually kept rather than

idleness for one day in a week. Justin is oriented on the spiritual interpretation of the Sabbath, rest from sin. Clement interprets the Sabbath-rest in terms of the Gnostic concept of levels of glory in the heavenly realms:

“Rest in the holy hill of God,” in the Church far on high, in which are gathered the philosophers of God, “who are Israelites indeed, who are pure in heart, in whom there is no guile;” who do not remain in the seventh seat, the place of rest, but are promoted, through the active beneficence of the divine likeness, to the heritage of beneficence which is the eighth grade; devoting themselves to the pure vision of insatiable contemplation (Clement 1885, 505).

Justin Martyr (1885, 184-185) also attests to Christians who gathered on Sundays for fellowship. It is evident that their meetings encompassed the view of Sunday as the day of worship given the liturgical explanation. Yet there were debates on the Sabbath/Sunday. The accusation levelled against Christians who worship on Sunday goes back to the time of Tertullian. Rather than argue from the biblical evidence, Tertullian (1885a, 123) chose to retort to the charge: “You who reproach us with the sun and Sunday should consider your proximity to us. We are not far off from your Saturn and your days of rest.” Sunday only becomes the day of rest during the fourth century CE as noted by Eusebius (1890, 544-545).

Given their attitude to the Sabbath, the development of the concept of Sunday as the day of rest in the fourth century CE was motivated by the emperor Constantine’s Milan Edict in 321 CE. To this concept can be added Bauckham’s interpretation of Eusebius:

(1) True Sabbath rest is contemplation of divine things. (2) Men will share this rest of God in the world to come. (3) Devotion of the whole of life to the contemplation of divine things is an image (εἰκὼν) of the eschatological rest. (4) The Mosaic Sabbath was a shadow (σκιὰ) of the eschatological rest. (5) The Christian Sunday is an image (εἰκὼν) of the eschatological rest (Bauckham 1982b, 284).

Great minds like Augustine of Hippo, Peter Lombard and Thomas Aquinas shaped the mediaeval Sabbath thought. Augustine (1887) utilised the pre-figured, eschatological Sabbath-rest to persuade readers to look forward to the eternal city of God rather than

the earthly, declining city of Rome. For the author, the great Sabbath shall be enjoyed in the eternal city of God. Augustine's Sabbath interpretation also overlaps into its psychological appreciation. Aquinas (n.d.) understood the Sabbath to compose of the moral and ceremonial aspects; moral in its extension to setting apart time for God, and ceremonial in its extension to fixing time. This understanding may have made the OT Sabbath analogical to Sunday.

The Reformers' emphasis on the return to NT may explain their view on the Sabbath. Fairbain (1975, 447-459) explores the mind of the magisterial Reformers to English Puritanism on the Sabbath. Luther held that Christians are not religiously obligated to observe the day or rest. Calvin emphasised the ceremonial aspect of the Sabbath commandment that is fulfilled in Christ; its requirement of rest was related to the need to free workers and family members for worship and humanitarian incidental use. Other Reformers like Zwingli, Bucer, among others, were sympathetic to Sabbatarianism. Peter Martyr's distinction between perpetual and temporary elements of the Sabbath gave rise to the new Sabbatarian view articulated by English Puritanism. Later, the Decalogue was holistically moral, the notion that led to the emergence of the Seventh-Day Sabbatarianism. Thus, the Reformers understood the Sabbath to have been instituted at creation; what they did not agree with was its perpetual normativity. However, the Reformers entertained its principle of dedicating a day for worship of God but could not reconcile the morality and ceremonial aspects. As noted by Needham (2016, 179), Puritanism has historically been identified with Sabbatarianism that understood Sunday as essentially identified with the OT Sabbath. Since then, the Sabbath has been debated on aspects of cessation and non-cessation. The non-cessation breaks into two camps – the seventh day and first day views.

In evaluating the sources of the Mediaeval period of theology, I conclude that they did not compose theology of Sabbatarianism. Rather, church history evidence indicates an inherited Sabbath conversation that the church has historically attempted to clarify, especially through Puritanism. Additionally, it may be argued that Sabbath continues to influence the concept of Christian corporate worship. Finally, the use of Sunday is largely shaped by the biblical principles of the Sabbath as connected to creation and the Decalogue.

3.8 Conclusion

In this exploration of Sabbath perspectives, the study reveals the Sabbath as a platform for reconstructing human life. Debates around the Sabbath focus on the day concept, with theological themes such as creation, creation ordinance, covenant, law, and eschatology contributing to varied perspectives like literal Sabbath, Sabbath-transfer, abrogation, fulfilment, ceremonial, and Christian Libertarian. The fallacy is debunked, asserting the Sabbath predates the old covenant and has pre-Sinaitic validity. The law's origin in God's character challenges the notion of its cessation. The Sabbath, rooted in creation, should be perceived beyond a day, promoting creation ideals for human and environmental dignity. Christ's fulfilment transforms the Sabbath, making it a continual creation experience rather than a specific day, aligning with the writer to the Hebrews' eschatological perspective (Ellingworth 1993; Howe 2009). This nuanced understanding shifts the Sabbath conversation toward creation, anticipating the redemptive dimension in the subsequent chapter.

CHAPTER 4: The Sabbath as Redemption

4.1 Introduction

The theological reflections on creation suggest that creation itself anticipates redemption, with the Sabbath playing a crucial role in this anticipation. The peak of creation is not merely the formation of man, but the establishment of a “Sabbath communion with creation” (Osborn 2000, 431), connecting God to his creation in anticipation of redemption (Barth 1960, 456-458). This theological perspective is supported by the extension of the Sabbath concept to include weekly Sabbath, sabbatical year, and Jubilee, all pointing towards redemption. This chapter aims to explore the redemptive implications of the Sabbath, focusing on Christ’s atoning work. It suggests that understanding redemption, whether in a physical or spiritual sense, has social implications, particularly when rooted in the social life of God’s people, such as the redemption of Israel from slavery in Egypt.

The chapter acknowledges the interpretative challenge of the OT, arguing against a purely literal interpretation that neglects the redemptive history of Christ’s suffering, death, and resurrection (Merkle 2010, 14-25). Instead, it advocates for a broader understanding, whether literal or symbolic, emphasising the spiritual meaning and sociological implications for contemporary culture. In essence, the investigation seeks to intertwine the theme of redemption with the Sabbath, asserting that the Christian concept of redemption inherits elements from the OT, influencing contemporary society’s understanding and practice.

4.2 Redemption in the OT

The OT’s redemption concept, according to Lau (2016), is driven by a dual paradigm: the backward (past) redemption recalls Yahweh freeing Israel from Egyptian slavery (Exod 6:6; 32:11; Neh 1:10; Ps 77:15) while forward (futuristic) redemption anticipates liberation from the Babylonian exile (Jer 16:14-15; 23:7-8). Lau identifies redemption as having both protological and eschatological aspects, encompassing physical and spiritual dimensions (Isa 44:21-28; 59:20; Ps 130:7, 8). The eschatological use of redemption in the Prophets points to a future beyond the return from exile (Isa 62:12; Hos 13:14-16; Jer 31:11; 50:33; Zech 10:6-8), foreseeing the coming of the Messiah.

Concisely, Lau views redemption as holistic, capturing both historical and future redemptive dimensions in a comprehensive interpretation of the OT's theological framework. In evaluation, Lau's perspective on the OT redemption concept is insightful and well-supported. The author highlights the dual nature of redemption, emphasising the backward paradigm tied to Israel's liberation from Egyptian slavery and the forward paradigm anticipating freedom from the Babylonian exile. The inclusion of specific biblical references strengthens the argument. Lau's recognition of redemption's protological and eschatological dimensions, covering both physical and spiritual aspects, demonstrates a nuanced understanding of the concept. The acknowledgment of eschatological usage in the Prophets, pointing to a future beyond exile and the arrival of the Messiah, adds depth to Lau's interpretation of redemption.

Shogren (1992, 650-657) observes that the spiritual sense of redemption affected the physical life in community on a sociological dimension, which builds on the sociolegal foundation that encompasses objects of redemption such as the dedication of firstborns (Exod 13:15), owner and goring ox (Exod 21:29-30), land and its produce (Lev 25:13-17), house (vv. 29-32), servitude (vv. 39-43), cultic precepts (Lev 27:9-13), and the blood redeemer concept (Judg 8:18-21; 2 Sam 3:27; 13:28-29). In evaluation, Shogren's observation underscores the profound impact of the spiritual dimension of redemption on the sociological aspects of community life. By linking spiritual redemption to various sociolegal foundations, such as the dedication of firstborns, regulations concerning property and animals, land use, housing, servitude, and cultic practices, Shogren illuminates the comprehensive nature of redemption. The inclusion of specific biblical references, such as Exod 13:15, Exod 21:29-30, Lev 25:13-17, Lev 27:9-13, and instances like Judg 8:18-21; 2 Sam 3:27; 13:28-29, adds credibility to the argument. Shogren effectively demonstrates how the spiritual and sociological dimensions of redemption are intricately intertwined, contributing to a holistic understanding of its implications on communal life.

Christian theology employs biblical root words from daily activities in biblical communities to elucidate redemption in Christ. In biblical times, redemption held commercial and cultic aspects, representing a tangible cost for anticipated redemption.

Litwak (2014) notes the socioeconomic integration of redemption, involving redemptive price, rescue from predicaments, and reclaiming property or kin. For Litwak, redemption's religious facet focuses on God freeing from bondage, death, evil, and trouble. In this context, redemption aligns with the atonement process through Christ, involving deliverance, comprehensive salvation, substitutionary satisfaction for sin, and eschatological liberation from sin's bondage. In evaluation, Litwak's exploration offers a nuanced understanding of redemption, emphasising its integration into both socioeconomic and religious dimensions. The acknowledgment of a redemptive price, rescue from predicaments, and the reclamation of property or kin underscores the multifaceted nature of redemption in daily life. Litwak's focus on the religious facet highlights God's role in freeing individuals from various forms of adversity, aligning the concept with the atonement process through Christ. The inclusion of elements like deliverance, comprehensive salvation, substitutionary satisfaction for sin, and eschatological liberation enriches the discussion, providing a holistic perspective on redemption in the context of Christian theology.

The Christian perspective, as outlined by Morris (1955, 57-59), primarily views redemption in the context of humanity's predicament, with Christ's death serving as the redemption price and resulting in liberation from sin. This aligns with the OT's depiction of bondage, payment, and human intervention (Ryken et al. 2000b, 658). Additionally, NT terms like ἀγοράζω (1 Cor 6:19-20) and ἐξαγοράζω (Gal 3:13; 4:5) connect with commercial transactions and sacral manumission, emphasising a new status as God's possession. Brown (1975, 267-268) notes that this pertains not only to freedom but extends to the ethical dimension of the Christian community. In evaluation, Morris' emphasis on humanity's predicament, Christ's death as the redemption price, and liberation from sin aligns seamlessly with the OT's depiction of bondage, payment, and human intervention. The incorporation of NT terms like ἀγοράζω and ἐξαγοράζω adds depth, connecting redemption to commercial transactions and sacral manumission. The insight from Brown (1975) on the extension of redemption to the ethical dimension of the Christian community enriches the discussion, providing a comprehensive understanding of the concept.

Both the LXX and the NT utilise the category of λύτρον to convey the theme of redemption. Morris (1955) highlights that λύτρον serves as the foundation for NT concepts and language, broadly influenced by three Hebrew words (גאל, פדה, and כפר) that inform the concept behind the terminology and its derivatives. The usage reflects a tradition influencing the appreciation and translation in the LXX, which is hereby explored etymologically.

4.2.1 The Concept of גאל (g'el)

The Hebrew term גאל(g'el) in the Bible is rich in its semantic range, embodying various meanings such as redemption, acting as a kinsman-redeemer, and avenging. With over 103 occurrences, it plays a pivotal role in legal, salvific, cultic, and religio-theological contexts.

Stamm (1997a, 289-292) presents its role in the legal sanctions where it is instrumental in maintaining socioeconomic stability by regulating situations where individuals may need to sell property or themselves into slavery, ensuring fairness and preventing exploitation (Lev. 25:25, 29-34; Lev 25:48-49). In the salvific dimension, the narrative of Boaz and Ruth illustrates redemption as a liberating force from dire circumstances, with Boaz serving as a typification of Yahweh's redemptive act, mirroring Israel's liberation from oppressive conditions (Ruth 4:1-11; cf. Lev 25; Exod 6:6; Ps 72:13-14; Isa 49:26; 63:9). Cultically, גאל involves the redemption of objects consecrated to Yahweh through payment, encompassing both firstborn animals and humans, thereby connecting religious practices to the concept of redemption (Lev 27:11-13; Num 3:44-49). In the religio-theological sphere, the term signifies individual and corporate deliverance within the covenant, establishing a link between the past redemption from Egyptian slavery and the anticipated future redemption from the Babylonian Exile (cf. Isa 51:10-11). Overall, גאל weaves through diverse biblical contexts, contributing to the multifaceted tapestry of legal, salvific, cultic, and religio-theological dimensions within the Hebrew Bible.

In evaluation, Stamm's elucidation of the term's multifaceted meaning, encompassing legal, salvific, cultic, and religio-theological dimensions, adds depth to the discussion. The integration of specific biblical references enhances credibility, showing how גאל

regulates socioeconomic stability, illustrated through instances in Leviticus. The use of the Boaz and Ruth narrative effectively exemplifies the salvific aspect, portraying redemption as primarily a liberation from plight. The comparison of Boaz to Yahweh's redemptive act enriches the understanding, linking the concept to broader biblical themes. The inclusion of cultic aspects involving the redemption of objects dedicated to Yahweh further reinforces the comprehensive exploration. Finally, the religio-theological dimension is well-articulated, connecting individual and corporate deliverance within the covenant, culminating in a thoughtful linkage of past and future redemptive paradigms. As such, Stamm's perspective on redemption highlights its multifaceted role in regulating the community. It encompasses property repossession, socioeconomic equalisation, maintaining liberation from Egyptian slavery, facilitating religious participation through cultic worship, and fostering community awareness of Yahweh's ownership, rendering the concept comprehensive.

4.2.2 The Concept of פדה (*pādā*)

The term פדה (*pādā*) in the OT predominantly signifies the cultic aspect, aligned with legal requirements for the community. Occurring approximately 59 times, it denotes redemption through purchasing or ransoming, involving a transfer of ownership through the payment of a purchase price. Coker (1980, 716) emphasises its role in transfer of ownership while Hubbard (1997, 789-794) emphasises its role in shaping cultic instructions, marriage laws, and maintaining Yahweh as the subject of Israel's redemption from Egyptian slavery. The concept is illustrated in Yahweh's ownership through the redemptive mission to free Israel (Exod 4:22, 23; 12:29; 13:12; Deut 5:15) and the dedication of firstborns to God (Exod 13:11-16; 34:19-20). Failure to incorporate פדה results in criticisms of Christian theology for its perceived bias towards salvation over a holistic human situation (Coker 1980, 716). Evaluating the authors, the scrutiny of פדה (*pādā*) in the OT is thorough and well-supported. Coker's focus on its pivotal role in the transfer of ownership enhances the understanding of this concept, shedding light on its legal implications. Hubbard's broader perspective further amplifies its significance, revealing its impact on various aspects such as cultic instructions, marriage laws, and highlighting Yahweh's central role in Israel's redemption. The critique of Christian theology for potentially overlooking the holistic implications of פדה introduces a thought-

provoking perspective, encouraging a more nuanced exploration of its multifaceted contributions within the biblical framework. This comprehensive analysis contributes to a richer comprehension of כִּפּוּר's diverse applications and theological implications in the OT context.

4.2.3 The Concept of כִּפּוּר (*kōpher*)

The term כִּפּוּר means to “make atonement” (DCH 1998, 4:456), denoting a ransom to escape punishment. Theologically, it implies covering to avert punishment (HALOT 1994-2000, 495), and cleansing through atonement, and providing a ransom (Maass 1997, 633). In the OT, it informs the concept of atonement, aiming to restore individual and communal relationships disrupted by sin and highlighting human limitations, prompting the need for a ransom. In evaluation, the term's theological implications and application elucidate its role in restoring relationships disrupted by sin. Its highlight of human limitations is well-articulated.

4.2.4 Evaluation

In the OT, redemption is fundamentally grounded in the social dynamics of the Israelite community, encompassing both human and divine dimensions. Humanly, kin were expected to intervene and rescue relatives from predicaments. Divine redemption was anticipated from Yahweh to liberate the Israelites from oppressive forces. This indicates that redemption influences sociological aspects within households and communities. In essence, the OT perceives redemption as a comprehensive and interconnected concept, intertwining both human and divine actions for the well-being of the community and individuals alike.

4.3 Redemption in Christian Theology

As earlier alluded to, Christians rely on the NT use of λύτρον and its derivatives to construct theology of redemption, which may be understood from two perspectives: substitutionary and covenant. Substitutionary perspective emphasises the Christological accomplishment of the concept of λύτρον and its derivatives restricted to sin (cf. Coker 1980, 716). In this case, the NT concept spiritualises the redemption monetary price replaced with Christ's blood, and conversely relies on material replaced with moral/spiritual (Stott 2006, 207). Implicitly, NT development of redemption theology

motivates holiness of God's community under the Christ's lordship paradigm. Christ through his redemptive work claims "proprietary rights over his purchase. Thus, Jesus' lordship over both the church and Christian is attributed to his having bought us with his own blood" (Stott 2006, 211). In evaluating Stott, the author spiritualises the redemption monetary price, replaced with Christ's blood. Stott's insight on Jesus' lordship and proprietary rights over the redeemed community adds depth to redemption theology. However, Stott does not explore its sociological implications given his substitutionary perspective.

The covenant perspective interprets redemption within the OT covenantal framework, emphasising the significance of land and people's liberties. Brown (1978, 191-192) elucidates the divine and humanitarian aspects of this approach, portraying redemption as God's act demonstrating His relationship with humanity, particularly in Israel. This perspective maintains ecological and humanitarian balance within God's community, translating divine redemption into the physical world through significant institutions like the sabbatical and Jubilee years.

Examining both perspectives, it is evident they acknowledge the sociological basis of redemption. This study favours a complementary utilisation approach, recognising their interdependence as:

Redemption in the OT Mosaic code is primarily moral in nature, enforced by legal procedures and sanctions. Its aim is to govern human relationships that fall into certain categories. But as is so often the case in the Bible, spiritual meanings are rooted in physical and moral ones, and the redemption of a firstborn child understood as belonging to God already shades from moral into spiritual meanings (Ryken et al. 2000b, 698-699).

In evaluation, the acknowledgment of redemption's aim to govern specific human relationships brings to bare its recognition of spiritual meanings rooted in physical and moral contexts, aligning with a common biblical pattern. The example of the redemption of a firstborn child transitioning from moral to spiritual meanings effectively illustrates this principle. Overall, this study contends that biblical redemption impacts both spiritual

and physical aspects. It notes a tendency in Christian discourse to limit redemption to its spiritual meaning, possibly influenced by the interpretation of λύτρον in Mark 10:45.

4.4 Redemption and Social Relations: Revisiting Mark 10:45

Λύτρον appears only twice in the NT (Matt 20:28; Mark 10:45). In the interest of the research topic, it is observed that the Markan text (Mark 2:23-28) has been utilised to debate the Sabbath and its relation to Christianity (e.g., Rordorf 1968; Carson 1982). The Markan traditional context may also be primary basis for articulating redemption in Christian theology.

In Mark 10:45, Christ highlights the motives for discipleship, emphasising self-giving service and modelling his death for humanity. He addresses disciples' misguided motives, setting higher moral standards for ministry. Christ's impending death is seen as a means of liberating humanity, linking the moral and spiritual aspects of redemption using λύτρον. Unfortunately, the text's moral dimension is often overlooked. The study proposes a recovery of the sociological aspect of redemption that emanates from moral dimension, acknowledging interpretive challenges but prioritising the text's meaning over critical issues and affirming its authenticity within the Markan context.

Scholars debate the interpretation of the Markan text, considering concepts like ransom, sacrifice, and allusions to the Isaianic Suffering Servant (Büchsel and Otto 1964, 343). Links with the "Isaianic new-exodus schema" (Watts 2007, 204, 206) are noted, suggesting Christ Jesus brings about redemption akin to Israel's return from exile. The author contends that Jesus' statement in verse 10 connects salvation and eschatological inauguration through his sacrifice as an ὀψιχ (guilt offering). Evaluating the author's perspective, Watts' discussion on an OT text without explicit redemption language is deemed problematic, with some scholars, like Brown (1978, 196), objecting to linking Isaianic theology to redemption. Contrasts between Isa 53 and the Markan text, including the use of "servant" versus "son of man" and "guilt offering" versus "ransom," challenge the Isaianic attribution to redemption (Brown 1978, 196). Generally, the comprehensive scholarly debate over the Markan text addressing concepts of ransom, sacrifice, and Isaianic Suffering Servant allusions recognises links with the "Isaianic new-exodus schema." This adds depth to the discussion, suggesting a

redemptive connection to Israel's return from exile. Watts' argument, highlighting Jesus' statement in Isa 53:10 as connecting salvation and eschatological inauguration through his sacrifice as an $\alpha\psi\chi$ (guilt offering), is well-supported. The author's discussion on the absence of explicit redemption language in the OT text is deemed problematic, considering objections from scholars like Brown. However, contrasts between Isa 53 and the Markan text are effectively presented, emphasising differences in terminology and challenging the Isaianic attribution to redemption. This study supports the view that delinks the Mark text from the Isaianic one. Attempts to link the Markan text with specific Isaianic text are unsustainable. Consequently, the study proposes an etymological approach to understanding $\lambda\acute{\upsilon}\tau\rho\nu$. The terminology must be understood in the traditional concept inherited from the OT through the LXX.

The analysis adopted herein acknowledges that $\lambda\acute{\upsilon}\tau\rho\nu$ aligns with the OT concept of redemption (Spicq and Ernst 1994, 423-449). It critiques Christian discussions for often interpreting $\lambda\acute{\upsilon}\tau\rho\nu$ solely in the context of Christ's redemptive work on the cross, neglecting its sociological implications. The Markan text, in connecting redemption to morality, serves as a foundation for socioreligious relations. The argument contends that relying solely on the atonement (salvific) concept is insufficient for interpreting Mark 10:45, emphasising the moral aspect of redemption driven by soteriological orientation. It suggests applying the restricted soteriological aspect to the derivatives of $\lambda\acute{\upsilon}\tau\rho\nu$ in the apostolic interpretation of Christ's finished work on the cross.

This study suggests interpreting Mark 10:45 not primarily in soteriological terms but rooted in the sociological dimension of community. Jesus emphasises the character defining his followers, providing a ministry model where moral character plays a significant role:

This model of ministry cannot come from the secular order, but only from the unique way of Jesus, which defies the logic of this world and its fascination with dominance, control, yields, results, and outcomes. The key to the model both incarnated and commanded by Jesus is in the verbs "to serve" and "to give" (Edwards J. R. 2002, 326).

In evaluation, Edwards emphasises Jesus' unique approach that challenges the worldly logic of dominance and control, underscoring the essence of Jesus' model that places emphasis on selfless service and giving as central components. Jesus' approach, contrasting it with prevailing worldly values and emphasising the transformative power embedded in the verbs that define his ministry. Jesus, through his acts of mercy, healing, teaching, and challenging societal norms, exemplifies a selfless ministry.

France (2002, 421) contends that these actions, including his offering as a ransom, showcase a social dimension to Jesus' ministry. The use of λύτρον in Mark retains the OT sociological foundation of redemption. Watts (2007, 206) emphasises that Christ's mission statement, characterised by self-giving cruciform love, becomes a new Torah for his followers, challenging worldly leadership norms. The Markan text underscores Jesus' messianic work, emphasising his sacrificial service for the well-being of humanity. This aligns with the sociological underpinning of redemption in the OT (Büchsel and Otto 1964, 342). In evaluation, France's perspective provides a valuable insight into the social dimension of Jesus' ministry, highlighting the significance of his actions, including offering himself as a ransom. The acknowledgment of λύτρον in Mark maintaining the OT sociological foundation of redemption strengthens the argument for a holistic understanding of Jesus' mission. Watts' emphasis on Christ's mission statement as a new Torah, challenging worldly leadership norms with self-giving cruciform love brings recognition of the Markan text underscoring Jesus' messianic work and sacrificial service aligning with the sociological underpinning of redemption in the OT.

In summary, the utilisation of the term redemption in the Gospel of Mark encompassed both moral and spiritual dimensions. As Christ employed the term λύτρον to address both moral and spiritual aspects, the promotion of redemption should actively extend to cultural contexts. Therefore, some followers of Christ strive to connect redemption to practical life in community or society by employing cultural engagement models.

4.5 Redemption and Cultural Engagement Models

Redemption, centred on Christ's atoning work, involves salvific elements. It is exclusively Christocentric, but intersects with practical community life through cultural engagement models.

4.5.1 Religious Pluralism Model

Dupuis (1997) presents a pioneering model advocating salvation in other religions, particularly from the Roman Catholic perspective on themes lines of biblical data (especially, Genesis); Catholic theology of Logos *spermatikos* and ecclesiastical axiom *Extra ecclesiam nulla salus* (there is no existence of salvation outside the church), and; some ecclesiastical resolutions prior to and after the Vatican II. In other words, the exploration encompasses biblical data, Catholic theology, and ecclesiastical resolutions, delving into covenant, revelation, God, Jesus Christ, salvation, the reign of God (kingdom), and the role of the church in Christian theology. The historical shifts in Christian thought about other religions are highlighted, progressing from an emphasis on the church to Christ, God, salvation, and the kingdom. In the second part, Dupuis argues for a universalist view promoting an inclusivist perspective on salvation, endorsing religious pluralism. The author asserts one cosmic covenant in the Bible and sees God's revelation scattered in other religions, subtly challenging the uniqueness of Christ. Dupuis contends for the complementarity of other religions with Christianity, suggesting multiple paths to salvation and proposing a role for the church in signifying the sacramental and God's kingdom, emphasising dialogue for evangelisation and missions rather than exclusive salvation. In evaluation, Dupuis introduces a model advocating salvation within other religions. The author delves into various theological aspects such as covenant, revelation, God, Jesus Christ, salvation, the reign of God (kingdom), and the role of the church. It traces the historical shifts in Christian perspectives on other religions, evolving from an emphasis on the church to Christ, God, salvation, and the kingdom. The author posits a single cosmic covenant and suggests God's revelation is present in other religions, subtly challenging the uniqueness of Christ. The author envisions a role for the church in symbolising the sacramental and God's kingdom, emphasising dialogue for evangelisation and missions over exclusive salvation. Although insightful, Dupuis' work is deficient as it attempts to

delink Christ from the church and God's reign. Of course, delinking the church may be entertained depending on how one defines the church since there are two definitions of "church" in Christian circles; one includes OT believers while the other limits it to those Christ redeemed (Grudem 2020, 1047). Even then, Dupuis is mistaken on cosmic atonement and historical redemption as the author's theological conclusions overly rely on the ecclesiastical-historical survey rather than the biblical theology that is soundly informed by redemptive history.

The biblical theology of redemptive history, rooted in the OT, rejects religious pluralism, as seen in God's prohibition against adopting other religious practices (Exod 20:3-4; Deut 4:1-8). The Israelite religious orientation was exclusive. Contrary to Dupuis, biblical evidence highlights God's redemptive activity within the Israelite community, realised through Christ in the church. Tidball (2000) supports this, emphasising the fulfilment of God's plan in Christ. Biblical theology precludes the idea of other religions, including the Christian church, as instruments of God's salvation.

Sparks (2008a) critiques religious pluralism, asserting that God's redemptive activity in the Israelite community outside of Christ contradicts Christ's exclusive roles as the "agent of creation and new creation" and "cosmic redeemer" (Sparks 2008a, 13). The author highlights salvation's historical initiation in eternity through Christ and its accomplishment by the same Christ. Sparks (2008b, 48-61) refutes religious pluralism's fallacies, particularly the misconception of God overlooking times of ignorance. The author argues that Paul's reference to "times of ignorance" does not imply God's leniency or other religions as instruments of salvation but signifies the finality of God's redemptive activity in Christ, establishing a new era focused on Christ as the exclusive path to salvation. In evaluation, Sparks (2008a) critically evaluates religious pluralism, contending that the notion of God's redemptive activity in the Israelite community outside of Christ conflicts with Christ's exclusive dual role. Firstly, Christ, as the Son of God, plays a pivotal role in both the initial act of creation (John 1:1-3), as described in the Book of Genesis, and in the ongoing process of affording the opportunity for humanity to be spiritually reconciled with God and for spiritual renewal or "new creation" (2 Cor 5:17). Secondly, Christ's role as the redeemer not only of individual souls but

also of the entire cosmos is anchored on his sacrificial death on the cross that serves as how the broken relationship between humanity and God is restored, as well as how the entire created order is reconciled to God (Col 1:19-20).

The author emphasises the historical commencement of salvation in eternity through Christ and its fulfilment by the same Christ. In Sparks' analysis (2008b), the author exposes fallacies in religious pluralism, particularly challenging the misunderstanding of God overlooking times of ignorance. Paul's mention of "times of ignorance" does not suggest God's leniency or other religions as instruments of salvation but signifies the culmination of God's redemptive activity in Christ, ushering in a new era where Christ is the exclusive path to salvation. In this vein, this study rejects Dupuis' provision for religious inclusivist model because it is practically and theoretically unsustainable in the biblical theology tradition.

4.5.2 The Transformationalist Model

The transformationalist model posits that the church plays a pivotal role in facilitating God's redemptive transformation in creation. Guided by the Kuyperian statement "There is not a square inch in the whole domain of our human existence over which Christ, who is Sovereign over all, does not cry: 'Mine!'" (Christian Reformed Church 2016, 38), emphasising Christ's lordship over every aspect of human existence, this model sees the cultural mandate as ongoing and executed by humanity through the gospel. Christ's lordship, linked to the kingdom, informs Christian education and vocations. The aim is to foster cultural transformation in anticipation of God's imminent ultimate redemptive activity through Christ (Christian Reformed Church 2016, 38-45). In evaluation, the Transformationalist model underscores Christ's lordship over every facet of human existence. The emphasis on the ongoing cultural mandate, carried out by humanity through the gospel, is rooted in the understanding of Christ's lordship and its connection to the kingdom. This perspective shapes Christian education and vocational pursuits, with the overarching goal of facilitating cultural transformation. The ultimate purpose is to prepare for God's imminent redemptive activity through Christ. The transformist model reflects a holistic approach, integrating theological principles with practical efforts to influence cultural change.

The Transformationalist Model, focusing on the holistic impact of redemption in Christ, actively engages in creation restoration through art, science, and socioeconomic development. This approach views redemption as influencing the entire creation, not just personal salvation (Nixon 2014). The author's evaluation supports the transformist perspective, emphasising Christ's lordship over all creation and acknowledging the importance of holistic ministry in addressing physical, social, economic, and psychological needs, aligning with the conviction that Christ redeems not only souls but the entire created order (Yoakum 2021, 120). In evaluation, the Transformationalist Model actively engages in creation restoration. This approach views redemption as influencing the entire creation, not just personal salvation. It emphasises Christ's lordship over all creation and acknowledging the importance of holistic ministry in addressing physical, social, economic, and psychological needs, aligning with the conviction that Christ redeems not only souls but the entire created order.

4.5.3 The Two Kingdoms Model

The Two Kingdom Model interprets redemption by surveying biblical data on creation, covenants, corruption, providence, redemption, and consummation. It distinguishes two domains – man's (common kingdom) and the church's (God's kingdom), introducing a dualistic concept separating the secular and sacred. Christ's rule is confined to the church, which focuses on witnessing the gospel. Internally, the church addresses social issues following Jesus' Sermon on the Mount. The model sees the cultural mandate as expired due to the fall, contending that human efforts for environmental impact or societal transformation lack eschatological fulfilment. The effects of redemption, it asserts, are limited to the church, awaiting full realisation at Christ's return (Jacobs 2020, 314-322). In evaluation, the Two Kingdom Model, as presented by Jacobs, constructs its understanding of redemption by thoroughly examining biblical data on various theological themes. It divides the world into two distinct realms – the common kingdom belonging to humanity and God's kingdom specific to the church. This dualistic approach creates a separation between the secular and sacred. Christ's authority, according to this model, is restricted to the church, emphasising its role in evangelism. The model allows for internal engagement with social issues, guided by Jesus' Sermon on the Mount. This model has serious implications about the scope of Christ's Lordship

with its tendency to restrict Christ to the church domain. additionally, it considers the cultural mandate as no longer in effect due to the fall, asserting that human efforts for environmental and societal transformation lack eschatological fulfilment. The effects of redemption, in the Two Kingdoms view, are confined to the church, awaiting complete realisation upon Christ's return.

4.5.4 Evaluation

In evaluating the three models, religious pluralism is deemed inconsistent with biblical theology and should be discarded. The dialogue between the Transformationalist and Two Kingdoms models is crucial. Sole reliance on the Transformationalist model may emphasise only the sociological aspect, while the Two Kingdoms model could neglect addressing social injustices, leading to an overly spiritualised approach. Harmonisation of the two models is suggested for a balanced perspective (cf. Jacobs 2020, 315).

In fostering a constructive dialogue between the Transformist and Two Kingdoms models, it is crucial to first recognise and respect the inherent theological differences that arise from sincere efforts to interpret and apply biblical teachings. Seeking common ground is essential, with a focus on identifying shared principles and underlying truths both models may affirm. To ensure clarity, participants should engage in precise definitions of key concepts like redemption, the church's role, cultural mandate, and eschatology. Deep exploration of biblical passages and theological reflections that underpin each model can provide a foundation for understanding. The practical implications of each model on Christian living, cultural engagement, and the church's mission should be thoroughly examined, considering contemporary challenges. Historical contexts influencing each model's development should be explored, fostering an understanding of the theological emphases that emerged. A collaborative spirit is vital in identifying how elements from both models can complement each other, aiming for a synthesis that maintains theological integrity. Humility is key, acknowledging that theological perspectives can evolve, and openness to the possibility that insights from one model may contribute to the refinement of the other.

In the light of the evaluation, this study proposes the redemptive aspect of the Sabbath to best serve its benevolent interests under the transformist model as shall be noted in the discussion below.

4.6 Case for Sabbath as Redemption

The Decalogue links redemption to Sabbath observance (Deut. 5:15), and Gentry (2010, 26-45) provides a biblical-theological framework highlighting Christ's centrality in redemption. Gentry interprets Daniel's seventy weeks in connection to messianic arrival, divided into sabbaticals and Jubilees, culminating in Jesus Christ as the ultimate Jubilee. The author's approach, rooted in assumed weekly Sabbath reckoning, facilitates understanding redemption through Christ. Dempster (2010, 18-27) traces radical redemption to God's election of Israel, with Christ as the interpretive goal of the OT. Both perspectives align with Christ's recognition of himself in the OT, validating their calls (Luke 24:44-47). In evaluation, redemption is rooted in biblical passages, with Gentry's biblical-theological framework accentuating Christ's central role in redemption, interpreting Daniel's seventy weeks in connection to the messianic arrival. The author employs sabbaticals and Jubilees, culminating in Jesus as the ultimate Jubilee. This approach, hinging on assumed weekly Sabbath reckoning, aids in understanding redemption through Christ. Dempster traces radical redemption to God's election of Israel, making Christ the interpretive goal of the OT. Both perspectives align with Christ's self-recognition in the OT, lending credibility to their assertions.

Further, the Sabbath in creation is linked to God's redemptive grace with Christ at the centre (Barth 1956, 9-10). Carson (1982, 85) notes the Capernaum Sabbath narrative indicating Jesus' messianic authority tied to "God's eschatological purpose of salvation." Bacchiocchi (1986, 153-176) explores the OT Sabbath's contribution to understanding redemption, focusing on themes related to primordial aspects, rest, and liberation. In evaluation, an exploration of the Sabbath's connection to God's redemptive grace, centred on Christ, is well-supported by Barth and Carson. Barth's emphasis on the Sabbath's role in God's redemptive plan, as noted in the primordial creation, aligns with Carson's observation of Jesus' messianic authority in the Capernaum Sabbath narrative, highlighting the connection to "God's eschatological purpose of salvation."

Additionally, Bacchiocchi's (1986) examination of OT Sabbath themes, particularly those related to primordial aspects, rest, and liberation, enriches the understanding of redemption within the Sabbath context. The collective insights contribute to a comprehensive perspective on the Sabbath's significance in God's redemptive work.

Furthermore, Möller (2019) offers a tripartite clarification of the Sabbath, associating it with creation, covenant, and atonement, corresponding to God, Israel, and the church, respectively. According to Möller, the creation Sabbath aligns with God, the covenant Sabbath with Israel, and the atonement Sabbath with the church, where Christ represents our Sabbath. The atonement Sabbath, fulfilling the creation Sabbath, restores the church to the rest that characterised Adam and Eve before the Fall, rendering day-observance unnecessary as the Sabbath-rest transitions from a weekly observance to an everyday experience in the lives of believers. In evaluation, Möller's tripartite asserts that the creation Sabbath aligns with God, the covenant Sabbath with Israel, and the atonement Sabbath with the church, where Christ serves as our Sabbath. By suggesting that the atonement Sabbath fulfils the creation Sabbath, Möller contends that it restores the church to the rest of Adam and Eve before the Fall. This perspective leads the author to argue against the necessity of day-observance, proposing a shift towards an everyday experience of Sabbath-rest in believers' lives. In this case, Möller's approach validates the redemptive aspect of the Sabbath.

Finally, some scholars have delved into the redemptive dimension of the Sabbath, linking it to sustainable development and social justice activism. Cafferky (2015, 25-47) aligns the Sabbath with UN sustainable development goals, emphasising care in relationships envisioned in the Sabbath shalom. Claassens (2011, 71-80) explores the Sabbath's meaning through the lens of human dignity, addressing violations in labour and rest. Magagula (2020), adopting an Adventist perspective, urges a broader view of the Sabbath, emphasising its redemptive ministry in political, social, and cultural realms, beyond its role in corporate worship. In evaluating the authors, these perspectives collectively highlight the Sabbath's potential to contribute to a redemptive and just social order, emphasising its redemptive impact in sociopolitical and cultural domains, extending beyond mere corporate worship.

In the light of the sources above, this study contends that redemption is intricately connected to the Sabbath, promoting the welfare of humanity. The redemptive aspect of the Sabbath, discussed in relation to the weekly Sabbath, sabbatical year, and jubilee, plays a crucial role in narrating redemptive history. The question arises: How can the Sabbath's role as redemption be explained?

4.7 Sabbath as Redemption

The Sabbath reflects the life of a redeemed community, guided by Sabbath laws anticipating an ideal existence under God's rule (Barker 2003, 705). Redemptive aspects manifest in weekly Sabbath, sabbatical year, and Jubilee.

4.7.1 Weekly Sabbath

Rooted in creation, the Sabbath extends God's redemptive activity to community life, portraying God as the saving presence in Jewish history and the entire creation (Slane 1996, 697). The analogy between the six days of work and the seventh-day rest, related to Egyptian slavery and God's redemption (Shead 2000, 747), suggests a connection between the Sabbath and redemptive history. Creation themes of *imago Dei*, *imitatio Dei*, and the eschatological ideal of man's final rest are embedded in the Sabbath, indicating a theological link to redemption history (Barker 2003, 695-698). The Sabbath's universal implications transform God's cessation from creation work into a paradigm for observance, aligning creation elements with redemption and emphasising the anticipation of God's eschatological rest for all humanity. Barker cautions against reducing the Sabbath to a mere social concern.

In evaluation of the sources, an exploration of the Sabbath's roots in creation by Slane emphasises its role in extending God's redemptive activity to community life, portraying God as the saving presence in Jewish history and the broader creation. Shead's analogy between the six days of work and the seventh-day rest, connected to Egyptian slavery and God's redemption, suggests a tangible link between the Sabbath and redemptive history. Barker further delves into creation themes embedded in the Sabbath, such as *imago Dei* and *imitatio Dei*, indicating a theological connection to redemption history. The Sabbath's universal implications, transforming God's cessation from creation work into a paradigm for observance, align creation elements with

redemption, emphasising the anticipation of God's eschatological rest for all humanity. However, Barker wisely cautions against reducing the Sabbath to a mere social concern, underscoring its multifaceted theological significance.

Barker's exploration of creation themes in the Sabbath, such as *imago Dei*, *imitatio Dei*, and the eschatological ideal of man's final rest, reveals redemptive implications (Barker 2003, 695-698). The Sabbath's sanctioning in the Exodus Decalogue transforms God's cessation from creation work into a paradigm for observance with universal implications, linking creation elements theologically to redemption. The fourth commandment's motivations, including the redemptive anticipation of God's ideal rest, emphasise this connection. Barker warns against reducing the Sabbath solely to a social concern, indicating the multifaceted theological depth of its redemptive significance.

In evaluation, Barker's examination of creation themes within the Sabbath, encompassing concepts like *imago Dei*, *imitatio Dei*, and the eschatological ideal of man's final rest, effectively uncovers redemptive implications. By highlighting the Sabbath's sanctioning in the Exodus Decalogue, Barker demonstrates how God's cessation from creation work serves as a paradigm for observance with universal implications, establishing a theological connection between creation elements and redemption. The motivations behind the fourth commandment, including the redemptive anticipation of God's ideal rest, further underscore this profound linkage. However, Barker does not provide information as to how the Sabbath applies to Christians today apart from outlining its theological reasons.

4.7.2 Sabbatical Year

The Sabbatical Year, shaped by the *גאל* concept in legal and cultic laws (Lev 25, 27), but expanded from fallow law (Exod 23:10-11), safeguards family property, regulates offerings, and addresses socioeconomic issues within the Israelite community, covering land, debt, and slaves. Wright (1992, 857, 860-861) proposes its theological motivation as aligned with the Covenant Code's humanitarian orientation, grounded in theologies of God's lordship, humanitarian ethics, and eschatological hope. Debate surrounds its observance, debt handling, and universal vs. rotational implementation. Sharing the six-working, one-resting principle with the Sabbath, the sabbatical year, emphasising

eschatological hope, is informed by the Sabbath law. In evaluation, Wright acknowledges the integration of the *גאל* concept into both legal and cultic laws, emphasising the multifaceted role of the sabbatical year in safeguarding family property, regulating offerings, and addressing socioeconomic issues within the Israelite community. This connects the Sabbatical Year to the humanitarian orientation of the Covenant Code, underpinned by theologies of God's lordship, humanitarian ethics, and eschatological hope. The acknowledgment of ongoing debates regarding observance, debt handling, and implementation methods adds nuance to the understanding of the Sabbatical Year's complexities. However, the recognition of shared principles with the Sabbath and the emphasis on eschatological hope contribute to sociological orientation of the sabbatical year. Yet the author's discussion gives a theoretical purview of the subject matter that still begs for its application to contemporary life.

4.7.3 Jubilee

The discussion on the Jubilee in Levitical legislation revolves around its regulation of community life, influenced by henotheistic and monotheistic beliefs, impacting socioeconomic relations (Lev 25:8-55). Celebrated every fiftieth year with the sounding of the trumpet on the Day of Atonement (Lev 25:9), the Jubilee is associated with the terminologies *יובל* (*yôḇel*) and *דְּרוֹר* (*dêrôr*) in Exod 19:13 and Lev 25:10, emphasising the unique trumpet sound and liberation (freedom). The Jubilee proclaims liberty, facilitating land return, slave release, debt cancellation, and land fallowing, with its theological underpinning rooted in redemption from Egyptian slavery (Barker 2003, 702-705). The comparative analysis with the sabbatical year raises questions about their relationship, the observance of the Jubilee, and its origin. In evaluation, the Jubilee in Levitical legislation highlights its role in regulating community life, influenced by henotheistic and monotheistic beliefs and impacting socioeconomic relations (Lev 25:8-55). It proclaims liberty, enabling land return, slave release, debt cancellation, and land fallowing, with its theological foundation in redemption from Egyptian slavery. The comparative analysis with the Sabbatical Year prompts questions about their relationship, the observance of the Jubilee, and its origin.

4.7.4 Comparison Between the Sabbatical Year and Jubilee

Comparison of slave laws in the Sabbatical Year and Jubilee, per Baker (1998) and Barker (2003), reveals discrepancies in time, target, purpose, observance, sequence, and Christological emphasis.

4.7.4.1 The Timing of the Sabbatical Year and Jubilee

The hypothesis suggests different legislative periods, with the primitive agrarian focus of the sabbatical law, promoting concern for the poor (Exod 23). Later modifications, like debt remission in Deuteronomy (Deut 15), indicate adaptation in the Jubilee law to address urban concerns in Israelite society.

4.7.4.2 The Targeted Beneficiaries of the Sabbatical Year and Jubilee

The comparison highlights differing target beneficiaries: the sabbatical for landless Hebrews and the Jubilee for the release of any Israelite slave.

4.7.4.3 The Purposes of the Sabbatical Year and Jubilee

The sabbatical and Jubilee may have distinct purposes: protecting the landless for the former and maintaining land distribution, ownership, and proclaiming humanitarian liberty for the latter. The Jubilee prevented bankruptcy, reduced economic gaps, safeguarded property rights, and upheld social justice in Israelite society (Baker 1998, 50).

4.7.4.4 The Observance of the Sabbatical Year and Jubilee

Some scholars question the feasibility of Israel leaving the land fallow for two consecutive years – sabbatical in the forty-ninth and Jubilee in the fiftieth year. Suggestions include the Jubilee occurring in the forty-ninth year or the fiftieth year being an interlocutory spanning forty-nine days to align lunar and solar calendars.

4.7.4.5 The Sequence of the Sabbatical Year and Jubilee

The sequence of legislations is discussed, suggesting the Sabbatical Year was instituted earlier but later became redundant, leading to its repeal and the introduction of the Jubilee law.

4.7.4.6 *The Christological Emphasis of the Sabbatical Year and Jubilee*

Baker suggests that the proclamation of Jubilee liberty is often associated with the Isaianic year of favour and the release of the poor, fulfilled in Christ according to Jesus' Nazareth sermon in Luke 4:16-21. However, the direct connection of the Jubilee paradigm to the Isaianic and Lukan corpuses is questionable. Nevertheless, both texts are seen to resonate with the Jubilee in terms of the social, economic, and political impact of the eschatological era, contributing to the wider prophetic paradigm of the second exodus (Pao and Schnabel 2007, 290).

In evaluation, despite unresolved discrepancies, there is sufficient evidence that the Sabbath principle of historical redemption played a central role in community life by promoting religio-socioeconomic liberty. Through these Sabbath laws, the salvific liberty realised through God's redemptive activity extended to influence socioreligious life within the community.

4.7.5 Theology of Sabbath, Sabbatical Year, and Jubilee

The Sabbath's significance should underscore theological foundations related to God, land, and eschatology (Barker 2003, 705), and rest, liberty, and restoration (Baker 1998, 55-61). While Barker theoretically formulates these themes biblically, Baker applies them practically to contemporary societal issues. The Sabbath's theology, rooted in the weekly Sabbath, sabbatical, and Jubilee, highlights God's redemptive activity fulfilled in Christ. Its fulfilment in Christ addresses essential aspects of creation, including land, eschatological hope, rest, freedom, and restoration, crucial for sustaining family and community in contemporary society.

4.7.5.1 *God is the Creator, Redeemer, and Lord*

In Leviticus, the Sabbath, sabbatical, and Jubilee are framed within the holy times, revealing God as creator, redeemer, and lord. God's act of creating the universe in six days and resting on the seventh day establishes the Sabbath, inviting humanity and creation to participate in God's creation ideals. The fall of humanity leads to God's redemptive covenant, with Israel's redemption shaping the Sabbath laws. The Sabbath becomes a model for God's redemptive activity, emphasising God's lordship over time,

land, Israel, nations, and the universe. Throughout biblical history, God is identified as Creator (Gen 1:1; Isa 43:1; 45:18), Redeemer (Deut 15:15; 24:18), and Lord (Deut 10:17; Ps 8:1), anchoring the entire redemptive narrative and God's relationship with creation.

4.7.5.2 *The Land Belongs to God*

The biblical sanctions regarding the land underscore its ownership by God, gifted to humanity for sustenance and socioeconomic development (Lev 25:2, 23; Ps 24:1). Human interaction with the land must align with God's regulations, fostering environmental and humanitarian ethics. As stewards of God's land, humanity is called to prudently utilise it, promoting both environmental conservation and fair treatment of fellow humans. Acknowledging land ownership by God should humble the powerful, prompting consideration for the weak and vulnerable. Upholding human dignity is paramount when residing on God's land, encouraging equitable treatment in society.

4.7.5.3 *Creation Moves Towards an Eschatological Realisation*

Creation progresses toward fulfilling God's redemptive history with the advent of the promised Messiah, Jesus, encompassing protological (Gen 1:1-2:3), present (Rom 8:19; 2 Cor 5:17), and eschatological dimensions (2 Pet 3:13). The Sabbath laws share this eschatological aspect, guiding social and spiritual practices in anticipation of God's ultimate redemption through Jesus Christ. Jesus announced the fulfilment of the Lord's favour, signifying God's redemption (Luke 4:18-21). In the new heavens and new earth, under God's rule, all things will be restored, fostering equality and harmony for humanity.

4.7.5.4 *The Creation Ideal Anchors on Rest*

The Sabbath, primarily defined as rest, should not be overly spiritualised, as biblical references indicate its benefits for both land and humanity (Exod 20:8-11; Lev 25:1-55). Rest's cause should extend to socioeconomic considerations, environmental care, and humane treatment of labourers. Historical rest for slaves aimed at safeguarding their dignity. This study supports Baker's proposal for theological ecology and labour conditions promoting human welfare. Christological interpretation of true rest (Matt 11:28; Heb 4:3-10) should guide the pursuit of physical rest.

4.7.5.5 *Freedom Is a Foundational Human Need*

Both the sabbatical (Exod 21:1-11; Lev 25:1-7) and Jubilee (Lev 25:22-55) years highlight humanity's need for freedom through God's redemptive activity on Israel. While not abolishing slavery, God instituted slave laws regulating treatment. The sabbatical and Jubilee institutions promoted brotherhood and offered economic relief, freeing bankrupt Israelites. Christ, the Ultimate Jubilee, embodies true freedom, urging the church to advocate social justice, protect the weak, and point humanity to freedom in Christ (Luke 4:18). The church's role in society should include a commitment to social justice.

4.7.5.6 *Restoration Recovers the Dignity of Humanity*

The Jubilee in Israelite society aimed at restoring land and property, addressing economic pressures that led to social inequalities and injustices (Lev 25:23-55). Economic hardships often resulted in exploitation by the rich. The Jubilee sought to mitigate exploitation by promoting restoration and addressing insatiable greed. This restoration serves as a model for addressing exploitation at various levels – domestic, national, regional, and international – upholding human dignity through a quest for restoration guided by Sabbath ideals.

4.8 Conclusion

This chapter delves into the concept of Sabbath as redemption, rooted in the presupposition of redemption within creation and its influence on the eschatological realisation through the promised messiah. The dual sides of redemption, moral and spiritual, manifest in the OT within the practical dimensions of Israel's community life, promoting daily welfare. The Sabbath institution extends these redemptive ideals through its laws, intertwining God, land, and people in a creation context, with freedom and restoration becoming fundamental human needs.

The examination also highlights a disparity in the Christian conversation on redemption, primarily focusing on the spiritual aspect, while neglecting the redemptive potential of the Sabbath. The chapter raises questions about the relationship between the Sabbath and redemption, advocating for a re-evaluation of the Sabbath's redemptive theology perspective to contribute to sustainable development and social justice.

The study explores the timing of redemption events in the book of Daniel, structured around weeks influenced by the Sabbath concept. The Sabbath, through its laws governing the weekly Sabbath, Sabbatical Year, and Jubilee, promotes holistic redemptive ideals for humanitarian and ecological welfare, anticipating and ideally purposed for redemption.

The chapter concludes by emphasising the importance of the church acknowledging the Sabbath's contribution to the theology of redemption, calling for a re-evaluation of the Sabbath's role in addressing socioreligious relations in Zambian family and community settings from creation and redemptive theological viewpoints.

CHAPTER 5: Sabbath and Family and Community Socioreligious Relations in Zambia

5.1 Introduction

This chapter explores the Sabbath evolution in the biblical and postbiblical traditions, spanning from Jewish roots to its influence in the historical and cultural intersections of the Judeo and Greco-Roman traditions. It posits that biblical authors adapted elements of the Sabbath to their unique circumstances, resulting in a complex narrative that should extend to Zambian cultural contexts. Recognising the disparities between biblical and contemporary Zambian cultures, the study aims to first decipher the emic and etic elements of the Sabbath in biblical tradition. Thereafter, it proposes the etic elements that should be adapted to the emic dimension of the Zambian contextual framework.

In cultural anthropology, the term “emic” refers to an insider’s perspective or an approach that seeks to understand and interpret cultural phenomena from within the cultural context of the studied group. It involves examining the internal meanings, values, and perceptions that members of a particular culture attribute to their practices, beliefs, and experiences. Emic insights provide an understanding of how cultural participants themselves view and interpret their world, allowing anthropologists to appreciate the cultural nuances and meanings that may not be immediately apparent from an external, “etic” (outsider’s) perspective. The emic perspective is essential for capturing the depth and richness of a culture from the standpoint of its own members.

The central objective of this chapter is to guide pastors and Christian leaders in emphasising key Sabbath elements in congregations, enabling individuals to grasp the contextual importance of the Christian celebration of the Sabbath within the framework of its creation and redemptive aspects. The study argues that cultural understanding occurs within a cultural setting, defining culture as the focal point of community activities, encompassing daily routines, ceremonies, rituals, festivals, and various aspects of life. It further delineates culture into plurality (subcultures) and singularity (host culture), asserting the importance of understanding Zambian culture in terms of shared aspects across diverse ethnicities. The preference for the latter emphasises a

collectively shared Zambian identity, acknowledging the cultural diversity among ethnic groups in Zambia.

5.2 Religiosity and Spirituality

This chapter asserts that ordinary individuals can understand the essential elements of the Christian Sabbath in the context of its creation and redemptive aspects within Zambian religiosity. Religiosity is described as the outward practice of shared spiritual beliefs and values, while spirituality is framed as being in the right relationship with all that is (Mkandawire, Simooya, and Monde 2019, 79). The study attempts a comparative analysis of Sabbath religiosity and spirituality with Zambian counterparts, aiming to identify key elements for emphasis in the Zambian celebration of the Sabbath.

5.2.1 Sabbath Religiosity and Spirituality

The adaptation of the Sabbath to the Zambian context draws inspiration from the historical evolution of the Sabbath in biblical and postbiblical Judaism. In postbiblical Judaism, the Sabbath became a central embodiment of the Jewish religion, displaying remarkable adaptability and continuity when encountering new cultures and civilisations (Cohen et al. 2022). The adaptability allowed for integration of foreign elements, while continuity preserved the religious heritage. Key elements of Jewish religiosity included henotheism, monotheism, Israel's election, cosmic intimacy with God, creation, redemption centred in the Jewish people, and the law governing various aspects of life (Cohen et al. 2022). In evaluation, the authors' mention of adaptability and continuity provides valuable insights into how the Sabbath evolved in response to encounters with different cultures. The enumeration of key elements of Jewish religiosity, such as henotheism, monotheism, and the centrality of the Jewish people in cosmic intimacy, creation, and redemption, contributes to a comprehensive understanding of central religious role of the Sabbath in postbiblical Judaism. The concept of adaptability and continuity motivates this study to examine how the Sabbath could be contextually adapted to Zambian religiosity and spirituality.

5.2.2 Zambian Religiosity and Spirituality

Mkandawire, Simooya, and Monde (2019, 80-109) characterise Zambian religiosity and spirituality as intricately linked to culture, emphasising the nation's multireligious and

panentheistic nature despite being declared a Christian nation by the Constitution. The religious landscape in Zambia encompasses diverse beliefs, acknowledging spirits, life forces, psychological healing, corporate worship on Saturdays and Sundays, traditional ceremonies, initiation rites, and marriage. This religious diversity is influenced by an interplay of traditional practices, Christianity, foreign religions, and Westernisation. Globalisation intensifies cultural exchange as various worldviews intersect, with at least seven major worldviews identified i.e., theism, deism, naturalism, nihilism, existentialism, monism, idealism (Geisler 1999, 786). The complexity of identifying religion in Zambia is underscored by its experiential shaping of the worldview. Taylor (2006, 25-26) notes the transformative impact of Christianity on pre-existing pantheon dimensions, introducing formalised religion while preserving some pre-Christian practices. The Zambian worldview, described as a blend of modernism, nature-rooted spiritualism, communalism, and optimism, reflects a deep spirituality intertwining God, nature, ancestral spirits, and the visible and spiritual realms without strict delineation (Taylor 2006, 27). In the light of sources above, an interplay between traditional practices, Christianity, foreign religions, and Westernisation shows a nuanced appreciation of the factors shaping religious diversity in Zambia. The Zambian religiosity and spirituality convey an intricate blend of modernism, nature-rooted spiritualism, communalism, and optimism in the Zambian worldview, emphasising the deep spirituality that transcends distinct boundaries between the visible and spiritual realms. Specifically, Taylor's framework reveals an interplay of religions in the Zambian cultural context, showcasing continuities from traditional practices to contemporary Christianity and modern eras.

Overall, Zambian religiosity and spirituality is marked by a blend of traditional beliefs and biblical Christianity, featuring elements like the Supreme God, deities, interconnected spiritual and physical worlds, healing, mediation, and community centrality.

5.1.2.1 The Supreme Being and Other Divinities

Zambian religiosity and spirituality encompass a hierarchy of deities, spirits, and ancestors, all subordinate to the Supreme Being. Although the Supreme Being is distant

find redemption from challenges, crises, and calamities. Consequently, these mediators serve as the crucial link or interface with the spirit world, particularly in connection with the ancestral realm.

5.1.2.5 Community as Central

The centrality of community holds paramount importance for unity and harmony, providing individuals with identity connected to past and future generations. In contrast to individualist cultures, where deriving identity from community may be viewed as oppressive, the African worldview, particularly in Zambia, rejects such a perception. In African communities, an individual is seen as part of an ongoing philosophical process, emphasising the inherent connection between personal identity and community. Maintaining community harmony is considered an ideal and integral aspect of one's identity within the African cultural context where a person is philosophically perceived to be in the process of:

...coming into existence in the reciprocal relatedness of individual and community, where the latter includes not only the deceased but also God. This means that an individual becomes a person only through active participation in the life of the community. It is not membership in the community as such that constitutes the identity. Only common action makes the human person a human person and keeps him from becoming an "unfettered ego" (Bujo 2003, 113-114).

Modernism emphasises individualism over communitarianism, highlighting values of independence, freedom, and uniqueness in the Western worldview. O'Donovan (2000, 11) notes that Western individuals cherish their individuality and resist being bound by traditions or others' opinions. In this cultural context, relating to the community becomes a matter of personal choice. Communal issues are often viewed through societal or global lenses, and solutions are sought through scientific reasoning and individuation. The spiritual or metaphysical domain is often disregarded, as the focus is on technologically and scientifically assertive facts in addressing problems, crises, and calamities.

The Bible attributes societal evils to humanity's choice to succumb to the Serpent's temptation in Eden. God engages with humanity through Christ-centred covenants, with ethical living rooted in God's character as absolute, as revealed in Scripture.

In the light of the above, the task of examining the elements influencing Zambian religiosity and spirituality reveals a tension when a new culture encounters the host culture in a community context. The trajectory a member of the host cultural community takes is contingent on how the external cultural elements (etic) are introduced to the internal cultural framework (emic). It underscores the importance of wisdom in effectively translating the foreign cultural elements into terms understandable and acceptable within the host culture. Reflecting on the historical introduction of Christianity (new culture) to the Zambian/African traditional religious context (host culture) illustrates this point. Successful integration requires a nuanced understanding of both cultures, ensuring a harmonious synthesis that respects the unique aspects of the host culture while incorporating valuable elements from the new culture.

5.2.4 Analysis of Zambian Spirituality and Religiosity

Since the introduction of Christianity to Zambia during the era of Western imperialist colonialism, it has been perceived through the lens of Western culture, deeply intertwined with the cosmology of that culture. This historical context implies that Christianity was initially established on the foundations of imperialist absolutism, devoid of meaningful dialogue with the rich tapestry of African traditional culture. Revisiting the application of biblical truth in Zambia becomes imperative, acknowledging the need for a more culturally effective approach.

In cultural anthropology, the derived etic of a culture is shaped by how the messenger's culture interacts with the host culture. Cultural expressions within a given context can be understood through diffusion, acculturation, and evolution. Diffusion occurs in equal exchanges between cultures, acculturation involves a more powerful culture imposing itself on another, and evolution brings forth new cultural forms over time (White 2022). This concise and clear definition enhances understanding, making it a valuable contribution to discussions on cultural dynamics. Adapting White's perspective, this study asserts that the Zambian cultural context is marked by acculturation, with the

dominant culture of Christianity historically imposed. There is an increasing acknowledgment of the need to adapt biblical truth to integrate with indigenous culture.

Navigating Zambian religiosity poses complexity as traditional religion and Christianity exhibit elements of continuity, yet distinctions arise in the experience of reality, concept of God, and the role of ancestral spirits. Cheyeka (2013) highlights the centrality of African human relationships in shaping the experience of reality, differing from Christian perspectives. Additionally, he contrasts the Bantu God with the Christian Abba God, asserting that the former is anthropocentric and peripheral. Disputing the identification of ancestral spirits as intermediaries, the author contends that aligning them with the Christian concept of Christ as mediator is misguided. Therefore, the author proposes for the need to consider Zambian Traditional Religion in its own right. In evaluation, while Cheyeka suggests considering Zambian Traditional Religion independently, the practical overlap between the two religions exists. Cultural engagement of religious paradigms with biblical perspectives may offer a constructive approach.

Intertwined with religiosity and spirituality in Zambia is a modern paradigm aspiring for socioeconomic emancipation, aiming to transform into a "Prosperous Middle-Income Nation by 2030" (MoFNP 2022, 28). This vision hinges on economic transformation, industrialisation, human development, social protection, environmental sustainability, and good governance (MoFNP 2022, 28-29), reflecting a desire to restore human dignity. However, this vision may overlook inherent aspects of Sabbath ideals crucial for realising Vision 2030. The task of integrating Sabbath principles into Zambian family and community socioreligious relations becomes paramount, even though the Sabbath is foreign to Zambian religiosity. This adaptation from the Bible necessitates a methodological exploration of how to apply Sabbath principles to the Zambian context, beginning with the crucial step of contextualisation. This process becomes essential for harmonising the aspirations of socioeconomic progress with the foundational principles of the Sabbath within the unique cultural and spiritual landscape of Zambia.

5.3 Task of Contextualisation

The task of contextualisation involves linking culture with theological endeavours, giving rise to contextual theologies. Bosch (2011, 433) highlights the epistemological

distinctions, contrasting traditional theology, which is top-down, with contextual theology approached from below. The former uses the Bible and tradition based on philosophy, while the latter grounds them in the social sciences. Moreover, theology engages educated nonbelievers, while contextual theology focuses on the poor or culturally marginalised. Bosch's contextual theological arguments emphasise commitments to the marginalised, the need to theologise life-situations, and the imperative for theology to be practised (Bosch 2011, 434-435). However, he acknowledges ambiguities arising in contextual theologies, including the tension between relativism and absolutism, sacralising sociological factors, potential shifts in authority from the Bible to context, and challenges in balancing theory, practice, and faith (Bosch 2011, 437-441). This comprehensive framework underscores the complexities, challenges, and nuances in the engagement between culture and theology within contextualisation. In evaluation, Bosch's mention of the target audience, with traditional theology engaging educated nonbelievers and contextual theology focusing on the marginalised, captures an emphasis on commitments to the marginalised and the practice of theology in real-life situations. Bosch's ideas are accessible and retain the nuances of the theological and cultural engagement within the context of contextualisation. Cognisant of Bosch, this study prioritises addressing life-situations over exploring ambiguities in contextual theology. It employs a social scientific approach to communicate biblical teachings on the Sabbath in the Zambian context, utilising the emic-etic-derived etic approach from cultural anthropology.

Bevans (2002) identifies various models for contextual theology, including translation, anthropological, praxis, synthetic, transcendental, and counterculture. The translation model focuses on applying the unchanging Bible message to evolving cultural contexts. The anthropological model prioritises understanding and learning from cultural changes. The praxis model seeks social change, emphasising liberation for the oppressed. The synthetic model harmonises these three approaches. The transcendental model philosophically emphasises knowing oneself to understand the external. Lastly, the counterculture model underscores the significance of taking culture seriously, recognising its complexities and unreliability. These diverse models offer nuanced perspectives on contextual theology, accommodating the dynamic interplay between

culture and theological endeavours. In evaluation, Bevans' various models for contextual theology, using terms like "harmonises" and "philosophically emphasises" enhances the precision in conveying the distinct characteristics of each model. The mention of the counterculture model's recognition of culture's complexities effectively captures their nuanced perspectives and relevance in navigating the intricate relationship between culture and theological pursuits. However, Bevans' sociological description of contextualisation could lead to uncertainty, as it relativises approaches, potentially making them absolute authorities. I advocate for the inclusion of biblical data as the interpretive authority for cultural settings. Contextual theology models should not be autonomous authorities but means to appreciate the biblical authority in cultural settings. It is acknowledged that some models diverge from Bevans', emphasising the need to ground contextual theology models in the authority of the Bible (Moreau 2012, 44).

This study aligns with Moreau's evangelical ideals, emphasising understanding and communicating the Bible effectively in the contextualisation process. Moreau's approach, grounded in the centrality of the Bible to revelation and interpretation, stresses the importance of recognising sin, logic, language, and cultural forms in contextualisation models. The author challenges the traditional Evangelical practice of separating the "kernel" from the "husk," asserting that all layers of cultural elements are true revelations and should not be discarded (Moreau 2012, 65). It advocates for understanding contextual models in terms of their congruence with biblical centralism, covering various domains like social, mythic, ethical, artistic, ritual, supernatural, and philosophical/doctrinal aspects of contextualising the Christian faith (Moreau 2018). In evaluation, Moreau's approach emphasises the Bible's centrality and the significance of elements like sin, logic, language, and cultural forms in contextualisation. The author clearly presents an advocacy for understanding contextual models in terms of their congruence with biblical centralism, specifying various domains impacted by contextualising the Christian faith. Essentially, the task of contextualisation aims to anchor biblical truth in culture, extending to actualising faith in Africa.

5.4 From Contextualisation to Christianity in Africa

In the context of contextualisation in Africa, a crucial challenge is defining the proper relationship between Christian identity and Christian cultural identity. Various contextual theology approaches, including early missionary, inculturation, reformist (reconstruction), and Africanisation of Christianity, contribute to this ongoing quest. Central to the task of contextualisation is the amalgamation of Christianity and ATR, leading to the complex issue of syncretism, where ethical and spiritual principles of Christianity coexist with those of ATR. Mokhoathi (2017) highlights the significance of how contextualisation is approached, emphasising the need to move beyond contextual theology towards the practical actualisation of African Christianity, reflecting the complexity of navigating religious identity and cultural integration in the African context.

Turaki (2020, xxviii-xxix) advocates for a comprehensive engagement between the biblical worldview and the underlying mindset of ATR, which permeates foundational beliefs in theology, psychology, philosophy, ethics, morality, rituals, sacrifices, ceremonies, and festivals. Recognising ATR as part of the general revelation associated with creation theologies, Turaki emphasises the importance of centralising the biblical theology approach (Turaki 2020, 232, 433). According to Turaki, this approach unveils God's intervention and dealings with humankind and creation, along with God's redemptive actions throughout human history. The call to integrate ATR beliefs into the broader framework of biblical revelation suggests an inclusive perspective that acknowledges the presence of divine elements in diverse cultural expressions. Turaki's proposition encourages a nuanced understanding of ATR within the context of general revelation, emphasising the role of Jesus Christ in the redemption associated with ATR beliefs. Overall, Turaki advocates for a thoughtful and inclusive engagement that bridges the gap between biblical and traditional African perspectives, recognising shared elements and pointing towards a redemptive narrative that includes both traditions.

Turaki calls for engaging the biblical worldview with "the underlying mind-set and thought-world of African Traditional Religion" (Turaki 2020, xxix) that is often embedded not only in "foundational beliefs in theology, psychology, philosophy, ethics, and

morality, [but also in] African rituals, sacrifices, ceremonies, and festivals” (Turaki 2020, xxviii). As to the question of relationship between ATR beliefs and the Bible, Turaki affirms ATR to be part of the general revelation associated with creation theologies (Turaki 2020, 232) that invite the central role of Jesus Christ for their redemption. This calls for centralising the biblical theology approach in which are revealed “God’s intervention and dealings with humankind and with creation, as well as God’s intervention and redemptive action in human history” (Turaki 2020, 433).

In my evaluation of the author, Turaki’s assertion is commendable on three aspects. To begin with, Turaki’s call for engaging the biblical worldview with the underlying mindset of ATR is grounded in a holistic approach, recognising that ATR is deeply embedded in foundational beliefs across various domains. The incorporation of ATR into the discussion of theology, psychology, philosophy, ethics, and morality, as well as African rituals, sacrifices, ceremonies, and festivals, demonstrates an appreciation for the comprehensive nature of ATR within the African context. Additionally, Turaki’s affirmation of ATR as part of general revelation, specifically associated with creation theologies, highlights the central role of Jesus Christ in the redemption of ATR beliefs. In this way, Turaki suggests a harmonious integration of ATR within a biblical framework. The emphasis on centralising the biblical theology approach reveals an intention to uncover the divine interventions and redemptive actions that permeate both biblical narratives and African traditional perspectives. Finally, Turaki fosters a nuanced understanding that bridges the gap between ATR and biblical beliefs, promoting a comprehensive and inclusive theological discourse that respects the diverse cultural expressions and shared elements between the two traditions.

Consequently, the imperative to bridge the African cultural and religious heritage with the Bible underscores the importance of engaging with African philosophical paradigms. Beyond descriptive and comparative analyses of ATR, this study advocates for active involvement with the African context, recognising and integrating its religious beliefs and worldview into the theological discourse.

As noted by Light (2012, 83-97), African individuals are deeply connected to their traditional heritage, influencing their cognition, emotions, and behaviour. This

connection reflects a worldview where the physical and metaphysical realms intertwine, and community holds central importance. Africans perceive the world as a cohesive unit centred on community welfare. Their lives are guided by religious core beliefs encompassing the Supreme Being, deities, spirits, ancestors, and the interconnection of the physical and spiritual realms. Forces of life and death, along with mediators like kings, chiefs, doctors, prophets, priests, diviners, and witches play crucial roles. This holistic perspective underscores the significance of community in shaping African thought and life. In evaluation, Light's analysis reveals the profound connection of African individuals to their traditional heritage. The African perspective envisions the world as a unified entity centred on communal well-being where the guiding religious principles encompass the interconnectedness of the physical and spiritual dimensions.

In summary, the task of contextualising the biblical worldview with the African perspective is complex. This study focuses on pertinent elements for relevance.

5.5 Etic-Emic-Derived Etic Model

Understanding the complexities of cross-cultural communication necessitates distinguishing between etic and emic categories of culture. The emic perspective involves an internal examination of a specific culture, seeking to comprehend internal factors unique to that culture. Conversely, the etic perspective involves a cross-cultural approach, identifying universal factors applicable to the behavioural conduct of all cultures. Both perspectives are relevant, and Berry (1989, 721-735) outlines a five-step process, known as emic-etic-derived etic activity, to navigate their utilisation effectively. This process includes starting with emic research of one's culture, creating an imposed etic, using it to explore the emic category of the host culture, analysing both cultures for comparison, and determining if a valid comparison is possible before proceeding. In evaluation, Berry provides a valuable framework involving the five-step process that demonstrates a systematic approach and emphasises the need to assess the validity of the comparison before proceeding further. Its usefulness is manifested in its extension to biblical studies.

Cserhàti (2005, 313-322) emphasises the significance of the etic-emic approach in biblical studies, asserting that these aspects of culture need not be used exclusively of

each other. The etic categories are particularly valuable for analysing the intricate relationship between “thought and action, intention and result” (Cserhàti 2005, 317), complemented by the emic perspective. The author warns against exclusive focus on the emic category, highlighting its potential to disconnect theology and biblical interpretation from vibrant discussions in communities of faith and scholarship, underscoring the direct impact of interpreting sacred texts on community well-being. In evaluation, Cserhàti underscores the value of both emic and etic aspects to culture. The author cautions against exclusively concentrating on the emic category, emphasising its potential to isolate theology and biblical interpretation from dynamic discussions in communities of faith and scholarship. The author’s nuanced understanding of the interplay between etic and emic perspectives enriches biblical studies.

5.5.1 Toward a Biblical Sabbath Etic

The exploration of Sabbath discussions encompasses exegetical, doctrinal, historical, and theological dimensions. Exegetically, questions arise about justifying the Sabbath as a creation ordinance. Doctrinally, the focus shifts between worship on Saturday (as in the OT) or Sunday (early church practice). Historically, the inquiry spans the Old and New Testaments’ relationship, Sabbath origin, and the evolution of its doctrine.

Theological considerations include debates on transfer theology’s justification and the law’s validity as a paradigm for Christian reflection. Various theological discourses emerge, such as parallels between Judaic Sabbath and Christian Sunday, debates on the moral binding of a seven-day cycle, and symbolic understandings of the Sabbath fulfilled in Christ. This study advocates a shift from theoretical “day” conversations to moral discussions, aligning the Sabbath’s humanitarian ideals with Christ’s work, making it an everyday experience for the benefit of creation and redemption. The Christological fulfilment of the Sabbath regulates family and community relations, fostering repose from secular work and contributing to the overall well-being of God’s creation.

5.5.1.1 Creation and Redemption as the Framework of the Sabbath

The Sabbath obligation for God’s people is rooted in the fourth commandment of the Decalogue, referring back to the creation narrative. Scholars delve into the implications

of God's rest for creation, emphasising its significance for divine activity in the world. The fourth commandment, as per the Exodus tradition, focuses on family relationships. Heads of households are commanded to observe the Sabbath with their entire family, including animals and aliens (Exod 20:8-11). God's blessing and consecration of the Sabbath elucidate its purpose – communion with God the creator. The Sabbath's relation to creation suggests that the seventh day should inspire harmonious family relationships, where all creation temporarily stands equal before its Maker in anticipation of a permanent unity.

In the Deuteronomic context (Deut 5:12-15), the redemptive spirit of the Sabbath extends to day-to-day living. This redemptive experience is reflected in various festivals, including the weekly Sabbath, sabbatical years, and the Jubilee (Lev 23:1-3, 25:1-7, 25:8-55). These festivals emphasise the quest for redemption as integral to dignified humanity, shaping Israel's covenantal life and practical relationships. Prophet Isaiah later reinforces the connection between Sabbath observance, justice, and righteousness, emphasising that seeking justice aligns with the Sabbath's embedded theme of redemption (Isa 56:1-8). Throughout history, the Sabbath serves as a transformative force, shaping socioreligious relations and influencing the treatment of creation with dignity, particularly in the context of Israel's liberation from slavery in Egypt. The Sabbath, deeply embedded in Israelite consciousness, manifests the intertwined nature of redemption and Sabbath observance.

5.5.1.2 Creation and Redemption as Maintained in Christ Fulfilment of the Sabbath

This study contends that the Sabbath evolves until its fulfilment in Christ Jesus, recognised as the Lord of the Sabbath (Matt 12:1-8). The encounter in Mark 2:23-28 encapsulates themes of creation and redemption. Debates arise on whether Jesus implies a creation Sabbath in his statement that the Sabbath is made for man, not man for the Sabbath. The study aligns with the perspective supporting the notion of a creation Sabbath in Christ's statement. Christ's Sabbath approach promotes the well-being of creation through healing and teachings. His Sabbath ministry extends the concept of redemption, as elaborated further in another context in Mark 10:42-45.

5.5.1.3 The Biblical Sabbath Etc

The Sabbath, rooted in early Jewish religion and culture, significantly shaped biblical and second-Temple Judaism, influencing various aspects of Jewish culture and receiving attention in the Talmudic tractate. Its practical observance extended to preparation, family and corporate worship, commerce, labour, health, lighting, heating, and time-reckoning in Jewish traditions (cf. Instone-Brewer 2011; Neusner 2010). Examining the etc of the Sabbath involves understanding its evolution within Judaism. Judaism, marked by adaptability and continuity, maintained relevance to changing circumstances while preserving its biblical heritage, including Sabbath teachings. Christ, as the Lord of the Sabbath, clarified and rectified its principles, emphasising the Sabbath's role as a vehicle for sustaining creation and redemption. Christ's statement, "The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath" (Mark 2:27, ESV), redirects focus from Jewish cultural practices to the broader significance of the Sabbath in the context of creation and redemption.

5.5.2 Sabbath/Sunday Worship and the Danger of Cultism

Christians should use their corporate gatherings on Saturdays or Sundays or any other day as opportunities to contextualise the Sabbath, drawing on theologies of creation and redemption. Emphasising the notion of corporate worship to socioreligious relations is crucial to avoid Sunday cultism that,

... isolate and insulate [Christians] from the challenges of the society in which their church has to make a practical impact in order to be faithful to the demands of the Christian mission... If Christians choose to detach themselves from the challenges of the society in which they live, the church to which they belong will appear to be a cultic club with exclusive membership, irrelevant to the needs of contemporary society (Mugambi 2007, 455).

In evaluation, Mugambi highlights a significant concern regarding Christians isolating themselves from societal challenges. He warns that such detachment can lead the church to appear as a cultic club with exclusive membership, losing relevance to contemporary societal needs. This underscores the importance of active engagement

and relevance for churches in fulfilling the demands of the Christian mission within their communities.

This study advocates for a shift in focus from the Sabbath/Sunday debate to emphasising socioreligious relations, anchored in theologies of creation and redemption. In Zambia, an individual's affiliation with a church signifies social-structural elements and a strong sense of community (Mildnerová 2015, 9). Church gatherings serve purposes like worship, healing, and maintaining social solidarity (Mildnerová 2015,9-10, 22; Nyman 2013, 33). People attend with expectations of divine intervention in socioeconomic challenges. This holistic viewpoint reflects an African cultural perspective where belief and praxis are intertwined. By interpreting insights from Mildnerová and Nyman, the study suggests that Zambian Christians approach life with a comprehensive understanding, integrating cultural, spiritual, and communal dimensions in their perception and practice because, for an African,

beliefs are not doctrine or abstractions to which a believer must avow to be a member of the faith. Instead, these beliefs are lived out in the day-to-day life experiences of the believer. This concrete expression is not a mechanical or rote but exists relationally. For the traditional African, one must live in a harmonious relationship among both the citizens of the seen world and the unseen world of spirits, deceased ancestors, and divinities. To do so is to experience wellness and wholeness within the community. Thus, many African practitioners will seek the blessings of the spirit world upon their crop, finding a mate, fertility, and finding deliverance from crises (Yoakum 2021, 123).

In evaluation, Yoakum underscores that beliefs in African contexts take a unified, harmonisation between community and the world around them. Beliefs are but lived experiences intertwined with day-to-day life relationally, emphasising harmonious connections with both the visible and unseen realms that include spirits, ancestors, and divinities is integral to community wellness and wholeness. This means that Africans conceptualise the wholeness of the world integrating agriculture, marriage, fertility, deliverance (redemption) from calamities. Agriculture is a crucial part of many African cultures, and seeking spiritual blessings for crops reflects the belief in the

interconnectedness between humans and the natural world. Rituals and ceremonies may occasionally be performed to ensure a good harvest and the well-being of the crops. Additionally, in traditional African societies, finding a partner often involves more than just individual choice; it may also involve seeking guidance and blessings from spiritual sources. There may be rituals or ceremonies dedicated to this purpose, aimed at bringing two individuals together in a harmonious union. Further, fertility is highly valued in many African cultures, both in terms of agricultural productivity and human reproduction. Rituals and ceremonies may be performed to ensure fertility in both plants and animals, as well as in human beings, to ensure the continuation of the family line and the community. Finally, Traditional African belief systems often involve a strong sense of spirituality and belief in supernatural forces. In times of crises, whether they be personal, communal, or environmental, individuals may turn to spiritual practices and rituals to seek deliverance or protection from harm. This may involve seeking assistance from ancestral spirits, deities, or other spiritual entities believed to have the power to intervene in human affairs. Overall, the African quest for life hinges on a redemption that harmonises and reconciles humanity with the world around them. It is to this dynamic and interactive nature of African spirituality, or religious relation, that this study proposes an introduction of the creation and redemption aspects of the Sabbath. It emphasises the lived, relational, and community-oriented aspects of belief systems.

5.5.3 The Emic Category of the Zambian Cultural Context

In Zambia, despite being declared a Christian nation constitutionally, there are persistent socioeconomic challenges like inadequate shelter, health issues, natural resource degradation, HIV/AIDS, orphaned children, poverty, hunger, and gender inequalities (ZDHS 2019). Climate change exacerbates these issues (MoLNR n.d., 13). Domestic violence, linked to poor health, insecurity, and social mobilisation, is prevalent (ZDHS 2015, 273). As noted in Nyman (2013), some Zambians attribute these problems to the Devil's influence due to religious sensitivity. Given the biblical Sabbath's focus on the dignity and redemption of creation, this study aims to explore how its teachings can be applied to address these socioeconomic challenges and contribute to the holistic wellbeing of Zambia's population.

5.6 Toward Applying the Sabbath to Zambian Context

While the original Jewish context of Sabbath teachings differs from Zambia in terms of space, time, and culture, certain universal themes like God, land, eschatology, rest, freedom, and restoration can be relevant for Zambian Christians. These themes connect to theology from above, labour, and anticipated emancipation. The unchanging character of God is a common theological thread, and work is a universal activity tied to concepts of land, rest, and freedom. Addressing oppressive elements in Zambia aligns with Sabbath regulations, applying theological principles of creation and redemption. The intertwined nature of these theologies emphasises God's ongoing work in redeeming humanity within the context of creation.

5.6.1 Creation and Redemption

Creation and redemption are interwoven throughout the biblical narrative, with each concept presupposing and complementing the other. This connection is evident comparatively in Walton's ANE comparative cosmologies (Walton 2003, 156-168) and Osborn's biblical theology (Osborn 2000, 429-435). While the explicit teaching of creation is found in passages like Genesis, its implications extend across the OT and NT. Creation, as God's original work, highlights humanity's significant role in the narrative, involving theological considerations such as order, goodness, time, history, creation by word, creation ex nihilo, and redemptive-historical elements. This study particularly emphasises the link between creation and redemptive history from a biblical theology perspective.

In the OT, creation is depicted with environmental concern, celebrated in the Psalms, magnified in wisdom literature, and anticipates redemption in prophetic texts. Despite its original goodness, creation faces violation due to human activities, leading to judgement and awaiting renewal culminating in the eschatological Sabbath. The NT highlights a theocentric orientation of creation, climaxing in Christological renewal realised through redemption (Rom 8:18-25). This underscores that redemption, specifically eschatological rest, is the ultimate goal of creation. Christ's perspective urges the effects of redemption to manifest in the present world, motivating Christian moral

obligation through his sacrificial death (Mark 10:42-45). Teaching the Sabbath should commence from the interconnected perspectives of creation and redemption.

5.6.2 Deciphering the Sabbath Etic for the Zambian Context

In Zambia, the challenge lies in harmonising the Sabbath teaching with its origins in the old covenant (Jewish context) and its evolution under the new covenant in Christ. The original purpose of the Sabbath, rooted in the old covenant, was to guide conduct related to God, fellow humans, land, and animals, addressing societal, worship, imitatio Dei, and socioeconomic restoration needs. Over time, this context found its fulfilment in Christ, ushering in a new understanding without nullifying its significance. Both Christ and the Apostles de-emphasised the specific day of worship, highlighting the Sabbath's broader intent for promoting the welfare of humanity.

Despite this biblical emphasis on the Sabbath's comprehensive purpose, Zambian Sabbath teaching often gets entangled in day-debates (Kabwe 2008, 1-2), missing the broader focus on addressing current oppressive challenges. The study advocates for a shift in perspective, urging recognition of the Sabbath's enduring relevance beyond legalistic discussions. It emphasises the Sabbath as a tool for promoting the wellbeing of humanity and the restoration of creation. This aligns with Christ's intent, as demonstrated through his Sabbath healings and teachings that prioritised the welfare of individuals and the broader community.

The key contention is that the Sabbath should not be reduced to a mere legalistic observance but should serve as a holistic framework for addressing contemporary societal issues. By aligning with Christ's approach to the Sabbath, which emphasised compassion, healing, and restoration, Zambian Sabbath teaching can become a potent tool for addressing the multifaceted challenges faced by the society, including issues like poverty, health, and social justice. This paradigm shift calls for a more nuanced and dynamic understanding of the Sabbath that goes beyond rigid adherence to specific days and embraces its transformative potential in promoting the well-being of both humanity and creation.

Current attempts to apply the Sabbath in Zambia focus on perpetuity debates (Kayombo 2008, 3-7), historical motivations (Mwalimu 2008, 8-11), practical observance

(Chishimba 2008, 12-16), and spiritual benefits (Mwetwa 2008, 17-19). However, these lack a robust Christological interpretation. Jesus, the Lord of the Sabbath, emphasised restoring humanity and creation, transcending specific days. His teachings aimed at maintaining creation's dignity and propelling it towards God's redemption. This Christocentric approach harmonises creation and redemption, fundamental in Israel's covenant and Christ's mission. The study calls for a deeper exploration of the Sabbath's transformative potential in addressing contemporary socioreligious challenges, emphasising its dynamic role in promoting the well-being of both humanity and creation.

5.7 Applying Sabbath Etc to the Zambian Context

The nature of Sabbath teaching, rooted in the Bible, is inherently spiritual, aiming to transform socioreligious relations. Zambia's spiritual and religious landscape is complex, shaped by traditional heritage, modernity, and Christianity. Modernity, technologically assertive, sometimes clashes with traditional values deeply rooted in Zambian society. The Zambian traditional religious heritage, particularly an African traditional one, can "scarcely assert [itself] technologically and make [its voice] heard in the process of globalisation" (Bujo 2003, 11). In Zambia, modernity lacks a strong religious stance, allowing the prevailing traditional cultural paradigm to significantly influence societal values and practices. Many Zambians naturally lean towards spirituality (Mkandawire, Simooya, and Monde 2019, 79). The traditional religious paradigm, though technologically muted, strongly influences societal ethos and practices. Despite the influence of modernity, Zambia remains predominantly spiritual, interpreting life with an awareness of spiritual forces (Guhrs n.d.). This worldview is evident in socioreligious practices, ceremonies, healing ministries (Mildnerová 2015), and social events (Taylor 2006). The Sabbath, within this context, serves as a potent instrument to address the intricate interplay of spiritual, traditional, and modern elements, fostering a holistic transformation in socioreligious relations.

The Sabbath, intricately tied to Zambian spirituality and religiosity, extends beyond a mere break from labour in the Hebrew Bible. It symbolises the culmination of God's purposes and the enjoyment of a perfected creation (Barker 2003, 688). Christ's invitation to find rest in him (Matt 11:28-29) underscores the Sabbath's intended

benefits for humanity and creation (Matt 12:1-14). This challenges a ritualistic view of the Sabbath, cautioning against cultism. Christ taught that the Sabbath was purposed to benefit humanity, and creation at large (Mark 2:23-28). His teaching may indicate that “human need is a higher law than the religious ritual” (Wessel and Strauss 2010, 734). In fact, that is the spirit that subsists for Sabbath encapsulation in the Decalogue and Covenant Code (Exod 20:8-11; Deut 5:12-15; cf. Exod 23:12). Pastors and Christian leaders are urged to contextualise Sabbath teachings, ensuring practical applications that positively impact humanity. This approach is essential for guiding socioreligious relations within families and communities, aligning with Christ’s emphasis on the Sabbath’s significance in fostering communal wellbeing and maintaining harmony between religious practices and everyday life. The Sabbath, in its broader context, becomes a transformative force that shapes not only religious observance but also influences societal values and relationships in the Zambian context.

Pastors and Christian teachers play a pivotal role in interpreting theologies of creation and redemption, facilitating the bridging of biblical Sabbath teachings with the congregants’ relationships with God, the world, self, and fellow humanity. Given the pressing societal challenges in Zambia, such as the quest for human dignity and emancipation, these theological concepts become vital tools for addressing urgent and critical issues within the community. Pastors and leaders bear the responsibility of contextualising and imparting these theological perspectives to foster a meaningful impact on the lives of congregants and address societal concerns effectively.

5.8 Conclusion

This chapter underscores the need to reorient the Christian celebration of the Sabbath in Zambia, emphasising humanitarian ideals rather than fixating on the day. Drawing on Christ’s Sabbath healing and teaching ministry, the chapter advocates for the promotion of the dignity of creation with a redemptive mission. The application of the Sabbath in the Zambian context necessitates the use of the etic-emic-derived etic model, bridging biblical and Zambian contexts around the fallenness of the world (creation) and the yearning for redemption.

5.8.1 Biblical Context

The biblical context analysis reveals the Sabbath's central role in defining the covenant community, evolving until Christ, the Lord of the Sabbath, provided new insights into creation and redemption. Importantly, Christ and the Apostles did not invalidate the Sabbath but offered a new understanding. Mutual respect among believers regarding the Sabbath day is emphasised.

5.8.2 Contemporary Context

In the contemporary context, the Sabbath should benefit humanity, particularly in the realm of human relationships within family and community. Pastors and Christian leaders are urged to employ theologies of creation and redemption in a way that aligns with the Zambian worldview, combining traditional heritage, modernity, and Christianity. Using the etic-emic-derived etic model, the chapter proposes engaging with Zambian beliefs in God, nature, mediation and healing, the world as humanity's abode, and the centrality of community under the concept of rest.

The concept of rest is pivotal, encompassing repose from laborious activity, perfection, and harmonisation, all aimed at restoring human dignity and eliminating socioeconomic ills in Zambian society through socioreligious relations at the family and community levels. It advocates dissecting cultural from supra-cultural elements of the Sabbath, with cultural elements involving literal day observance and Jewish rituals and supra-cultural elements extending to the Christian community through Christ's fulfilment.

Creation and redemption emerge as central themes in both biblical and Zambian contexts. Pastors and Christian leaders are encouraged to move beyond a narrow focus on the day, using theologies of creation and redemption to establish a contextualised understanding of the Sabbath rooted in the unique elements of Zambian culture and biblical theology. The chapter proposes a nuanced engagement with internal elements (emic) and universal elements gleaned from biblical theology (etic) in the Zambian Sabbath context.

CHAPTER 6: Conclusion

6.1 Introduction

This comprehensive study delves into the intricate relationship between theological themes such as creation and redemption and their role in shaping a contextual understanding of the Sabbath for pastors and Christian leaders in Zambia. The investigation unfolds across five chapters, each building upon the preceding one to provide a nuanced exploration of this crucial subject.

In Chapter 1, the groundwork is laid, introducing the study's background and underscoring the significance of exploring how pastors and Christian leaders in Zambia can utilise themes like creation and redemption to frame a contextual understanding of the Sabbath.

Moving to Chapter 2, the study scrutinises the historical and cultural roots of the Sabbath, tracing its origins through the Hebrew Bible and early Judaism. The Sabbath's centrality in Jewish life is emphasised, particularly in its connection to the Sinaitic covenant, where observance is motivated by both creation and redemption.

Chapter 3 advances the narrative by delving into various perspectives on the Sabbath, with a specific focus on theological themes that inform debates surrounding this sacred day. The Christological interpretation emerges as a key aspect, portraying the Sabbath as an everyday life experience that dignifies creation.

The link between the Sabbath and redemption takes centre stage in Chapter 4. Despite the church's efforts to culturally communicate the message of redemption, the study reveals a noteworthy neglect of the Sabbath's contribution to this essential narrative.

In Chapter 5, the study pivots towards the spiritual and religious dimensions of the Sabbath, exploring how it can be applied to Zambian spirituality and religiosity. The study aims to bridge the gap between theological understanding and everyday life, particularly in the socioreligious relations at the family and community levels within the Zambian context.

Throughout the research, the study draws attention to the perpetuity of the Sabbath, spanning even the millennial reign, and engages in theological conversations surrounding its extension in the Decalogue. The etic-emic-derived etic model is employed to understand the Zambian context, demonstrating the practical application of the Sabbath teaching to resonate with Zambian religiosity and spirituality.

In conclusion, this study contributes significantly to the theological discourse surrounding the Sabbath, providing a foundation for pastors and Christian leaders in Zambia to enrich their understanding and application of this sacred concept within their cultural and religious context.

6.2 Sabbath in Hebrew Bible and Early Judaism

The placement of the Sabbath within the Decalogue is deeply rooted in the motif of creation, a theme that scholars have meticulously examined in the context of God's *שבת* (*cessation/rest*) as depicted in the creation narrative. This narrative, as explored in section 2.1.5.1, signifies God's initiation of an intimate relationship with his creation by opening a new way of relating to it. Framed within the concept of a cosmic temple, God's rest after creation becomes not just a physical cessation but a theological introduction to the Sabbath and the enduring presence of God within his creation, as elucidated in section 2.1.5.2.

The theological significance of the Sabbath, stemming from its origin in creation, encompasses multiple dimensions, as detailed in section 2.1.5.3. This includes an understanding of God's lordship, the reckoning of time, the imperative of creation care, the covenantal relationship, and the overarching theme of redemption.

Moreover, the institution of the Sabbath within the Decalogue retains its foundational motivation linked to moral implications centred on covenantal life, as examined in section 2.2.5.1. The Sabbath, in this context, becomes a catalyst for creation care as per section 2.2.5.2, extending beyond the physical realm to encompass the spiritual sphere as per section 2.2.5.3.

In the Deuteronomic setting, the Sabbath undergoes contextualisation for a new generation, re-enacting the creation narrative as it extends to the historical redemption

of the Israelites. This served the purpose of limiting the exploitation of the weak by the powerful within society as per section 2.3.5.1. The nuanced discussion on the Sabbath's beneficiaries, including the omission of wife, clarifies that this does not imply biblical sexism but rather involves representation through masculine pronouns as per section 2.3.5.2.

The Sabbath, as explored in sections 2.4.5.1 and 2.4.5.2, introduces concepts of worship and creation rhythms that address humanitarian concerns and influence the perception of time. Furthermore, it becomes a benchmark for covenantal faithfulness across nationalities and social statuses, with the inclusion of eunuchs and foreigners among the faithful Sabbath-keepers, as per section 2.5.5.1. The promise of God to be their shepherd adds a spiritual dimension to Sabbath-keeping, as per section 2.5.5.2.

However, the rich theological background of the Sabbath in Judaism, as outlined in section 2.6, also reveals a downside – strict Sabbath observance led to legalistic tendencies that distorted the essence of the Sabbath. This sets the stage for Christ's clarification of the Sabbath within the context of Judaism. Christ, as illuminated in the subsequent sections, employs Sabbath healings and teaching to elucidate his messianic mission, portraying the Sabbath as an everyday life experience that dignifies creation under God's redemptive mission, with both protological and eschatological realisations.

6.3 Perspectives of the Sabbath

The Sabbath discussion unfolds through two primary lenses: the concept of rest (3.1) and the dichotomy between Sabbath and Sunday, as noted in section 3.2. At the core of this discourse is the crucial notion of creation, intricately woven into the fabric of the law detailed in section 3.3. The debate, as illuminated in section 3.4, does not negate the Sabbath's intrinsic connection to the act of creation. Christian deliberations on the Sabbath revolve around its validity concerning law, covenant, and ecclesiastical history. Sections 3.6.2 to 3.6.5 underscore the significance of OT law, early NT church practices, the new covenant, and ecclesiastical history, collectively affirming the Sabbath's validity. Consequently, a reconsideration of the Sabbath from a creation perspective emerges as a potentially enlightening avenue for further exploration.

6.4 Sabbath as Redemption

Creation and redemption stand as inseparable theological twins, their connection embodied in the Sabbath. This link extends to social relationships in section 4.3, where the redemptive aspect propels cultural engagement. The church, seeking to proclaim redemption through diverse cultural models such as religious pluralism, transformist, and two kingdoms, exemplifies this connection in section 4.4. A robust biblical case supports the Sabbath as redemption in section 4.5, drawing theological inspiration from the concepts of the weekly Sabbath, sabbatical year, and jubilee in section 4.6. This theological synthesis underscores the Sabbath's profound role in bridging creation, redemption, and cultural expression within the Christian faith.

6.5 Family and Community Socioreligious Relations

The Sabbath, deeply rooted in biblical foundations, necessitates an introduction to the Zambian cultural context for enhanced socioreligious relations within families and communities. Section 5.1 emphasises the importance of comparing the religiosity and spirituality of the Sabbath with that of the Zambian context. Introducing the Sabbath to Zambia entails a multifaceted task, progressing from contextualisation in section 5.2 to firmly grounding the teaching within the cultural milieu in section 5.3. This process, guided by an etic-emic-derived etic approach in section 5.4, meticulously considers both the outsider and insider perspectives, ensuring a harmonious integration of the Sabbath within the unique dynamics of Zambian religiosity and spirituality.

6.6 Recommendations and Implications

This study undertook a significant exploration into the application of theologies of creation and redemption in shaping a contextual understanding of the Sabbath for ordinary Christians in Zambia. Rooted in the ancient Hebrew community's Sabbath observance, the study revealed a profound connection to God's rest at creation and an eschatologically oriented redemptive aspect. Notably, the ancient Hebrews integrated Sabbath teachings into practical life, weaving together God, land, and people.

Crucially, the study challenged prevailing tendencies that relegate theologies of creation and redemption to the periphery of Sabbath discussions. Instead, it showcased these

theologies as integral, evidenced by the creation motivation in Exodus and the redemption motivation in Deuteronomic contextualisation.

The study identified a critical flaw in discussions that isolate the Sabbath from these theologies, often associated with the Sabbath cessation position. Contrary to this, the study proposes a more exciting and biblically grounded approach: utilising theologies of creation and redemption to inform a contextualised understanding of the Sabbath within the Zambian socioreligious landscape.

To effectively implement this approach, the study recommends further investigations into the concepts of Sabbath as creation rest, its perpetuity, and implications for upholding the dignity of creation in a sociological context. Additionally, developing strategies for the contextual interpretation of the Sabbath is suggested to address the challenges identified in the study.

In conclusion, this study offers valuable recommendations that extend beyond its immediate focus. It encourages a more integrated exploration of the Sabbath, bringing theologies of creation and redemption to the forefront, and urges continued scholarly inquiry to enrich biblical studies, inform church and societal dynamics, and contribute to ecclesial and pastoral theology.

6.6.1 The study proposes a profound connection between the Sabbath and creation, emphasising God's rest on the seventh day as a transformative moment in the Creator's relationship with His creation. It advocates for additional exploration into the correlation between God's שבת (*rest/cessation*) in Gen 2:2-3 and Christ's invitation to find rest in Him, as articulated in Matt 11:28. This recommendation encourages a deeper understanding of these biblical concepts for a more nuanced and contextually relevant appropriation within the Zambian context.

6.6.2 The study contends that Isaiah 56:1-8 does not nullify Pentateuchal restrictions on foreigners and eunuchs, suggesting they address distinct contexts. It urges further investigation into the relationship between the inclusive Isaianic text and the exclusive Pentateuchal Sabbath perspective. Additionally, the study recommends exploring the implications of Isaianic

inclusiveness for the composition of the church, as members are drawn from diverse ethnicities. This inquiry could shed light on the Sabbath's role in fostering inclusivity within the ecclesiastical community.

6.6.3 The study proposes contextualising the creation concept of the Sabbath in the social setting through the lens of redemption. It recommends further exploration into reclaiming the connection between the redemptive aspect of the Sabbath and its impact on familial and communal living, and how such understanding may enrich the church's holistic ministry.

6.6.4 The study reveals Zambia's challenges with environmental, political, and socioeconomic issues, as outlined in section 5.5.3, aligning with the national aspirations articulated in Vision 2030. Recognising the impact of these challenges on sociological relations, the study proposes a comparative analysis between Vision 2030 and Sabbath ideals within a covenantal context. This inquiry aims to formulate strategies for pastors and Christian leaders, specifically addressing socioreligious issues. The goal is to contribute to the political, economic, and social emancipation of humanity in Zambian society through a nuanced integration of Sabbath principles.

Christ's fulfilment of the Sabbath, not as abrogation but as an everyday experience, presents promise for addressing socioreligious relations. Through Sabbath healings and teachings, Christ exemplifies a model of caring for creation. The study suggests exploring responsible stewardship implied in Sabbath principles, extending this inquiry to the Anthropocene era, to comprehend and apply these principles in contemporary contexts.

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