

ARE YOU BEING LED BY A **JUDAS GOAT?**

GOD DOES NOT LIE

ProclamationMagazine.com

# Proclamation!

FORMER ADVENTISTS

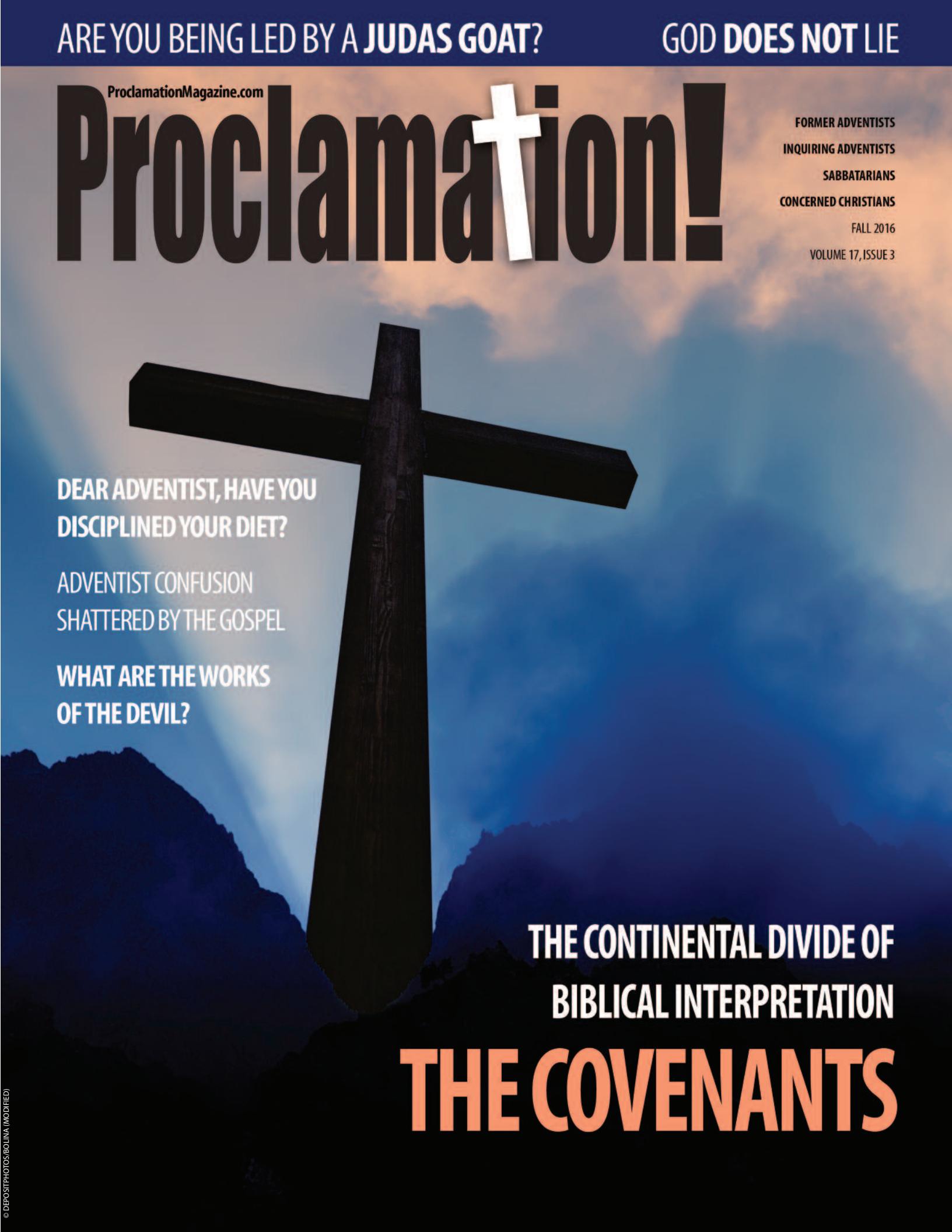
INQUIRING ADVENTISTS

SABBATARIANS

CONCERNED CHRISTIANS

FALL 2016

VOLUME 17, ISSUE 3



DEAR ADVENTIST, HAVE YOU  
DISCIPLINED YOUR DIET?

ADVENTIST CONFUSION  
SHATTERED BY THE GOSPEL

WHAT ARE THE WORKS  
OF THE DEVIL?

THE CONTINENTAL DIVIDE OF  
BIBLICAL INTERPRETATION

**THE COVENANTS**



COLLEEN TINKER

## REVEALING THE TRUTH THAT EXPOSES ADVENTIST THEOLOGY

**O**n October 31, 1517, Martin Luther inadvertently changed history. A German monk and a professor of moral theology, Luther was unable to accept the Catholic church's practice of selling indulgences in order to pay for sins and thus reduce one's time in purgatory. On that date, Luther sent a list of 95 Theses which were meant to stimulate academic disputation about repentance and forgiveness to the Archbishop of Mainz, the overseer of the sale of indulgences. To his surprise, his document, which he soon also posted on the church door in Wittenberg, sparked a movement he could not contain.

### THE NEW COVENANT IS THE TRUTH THAT EXPOSES OUR ADVENTIST VIEW OF SALVATION AND REVEALS JUSTIFICATION BY FAITH ALONE.

# Proclamation!

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LIFE ASSURANCE  
MINISTRIES

at that moment (Jn. 5:24). We will not come under judgment (Jn. 3:18).

God doesn't ask us to keep the law; rather, He asks us to believe and trust Jesus (Jn. 6:29). When we do, we are born again and sealed with the Holy Spirit (Jn. 3:3-6; Eph. 1:13-14). We are ushered into the new covenant as children born of God (Jn. 1:12) and also as His adopted children and heirs (Rom. 8:14-17). This reality shatters Adventist theology. Any other teaching is a false gospel.

Because the new covenant in Jesus' blood is the heart of the gospel that reveals the falsehood of Adventism's Sabbath requirement, we are dedicating this issue of *Proclamation!* to understanding how Jesus fulfilled the Law and inaugurated something new. We have updated Dale Ratzlaff's classic study, "The Covenants: The Continental Divide of Biblical Interpretation" which we last printed in the May/June, 2005, issue of the magazine. Because our mailing list has tripled since that date, we want to offer again the clear biblical evidence that the new covenant fulfills rather than adds to the old covenant.

We also share William Hohmann's article on the deceptive works of the devil that lure people away from believing God's word as well as Michael Pursley's short piece on Judas Goats.

Peter Zenthoeffer shares his story of how discovering the gospel caused him and his wife to leave Adventism to retain their integrity, and Rick Barker examines Adventism's Fundamental Belief on the Sabbath. We also hear from columnists Chris Lee, Carolyn Macomber, and Lisa Winn.

We pray that the miraculous truth of the new covenant in Jesus' blood will sweep away the futility of trying to keep the Law well enough to please God. We pray the truth of God's word will convict us all that Jesus is Lord, and only in Him can we know God. †

### FOR FURTHER STUDY

- Back issues of *Proclamation!* and the blog site **[ProclamationMagazine.com](http://ProclamationMagazine.com)**
- Books and other materials by Dale Ratzlaff **[LifeAssuranceMinistries.com](http://LifeAssuranceMinistries.com)**
- Day by day commentary on the Sabbath School lessons **[BibleStudiesForAdventists.com](http://BibleStudiesForAdventists.com)**
- Testimonies, Bibles studies, and the forum **[FormerAdventist.com](http://FormerAdventist.com)**
- Large body of resources for studying Adventism **[TruthorFables.com](http://TruthorFables.com)**

# WHY PUBLISH AGAINST ADVENTISM AND THE SABBATH

## Why do you persist in publishing against Adventism and the Sabbath?

I began in the early 80's when a small group of us organized a church and began studying the Sabbath together. I had studied the Sabbath often before and had even received an "A" from Dr. Hans LaRondelle's "Theology of the Sabbath" at Andrews University. In fact, every Adventist pastor knows the Adventist position on the Sabbath and how to defend it well. Yet the study we were doing was different. We were not going down a list of proof texts and explaining each one with another. Rather, we were seeking to squeeze everything out of a given text or section that was there, trying not to make the text say more than it did. For the first several months, I thought for sure we would end up with the traditional Adventist understanding of the Sabbath minus the belief that the Sabbath was the "seal of God".

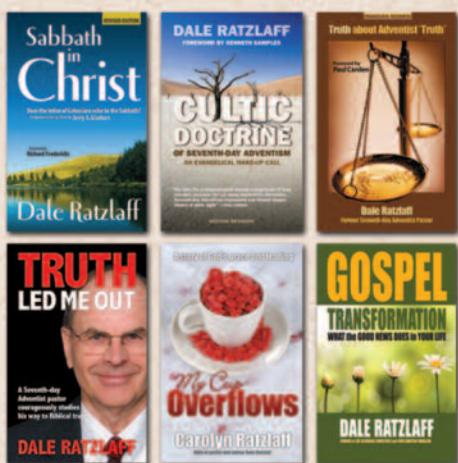
When we did a thorough, inductive study of the covenants, the tentative conclusions we reached on individual passages seemed contradictory to what we had believed. I was not sure we could find harmony. Then it happened. Like the explorers who first discovered Yosemite Valley must have felt, that "eureka experience" took us by surprise.

I was struggling to fit some of Paul's "difficult statements" in Romans, Galatians, 2 Corinthians, and Hebrews into our old paradigm. I had always "forced" them to fit before, as if

Dale and Carolyn Ratzlaff have authored six books: *Sabbath in Christ*—a volume that explains new covenant Sabbath rest, *Cultic Doctrine of Seventh-day Adventism*—explores the false Adventist doctrine of a pre-advent judgment that decides eternal destinies, *Truth Led Me Out*—

*About Adventist "Truth"*—a little book that's perfect to give to Christians that need to understand Adventism, *Truth Led Me Out*—in which Dale Ratzlaff tells his own story of following Jesus, no matter the cost, *My Cup Overflows*—Carolyn's autobiography, and *Gospel Transformation*—which teaches what the Gospel is and accomplishes.

Each of these books is available at [Ratzlaf.com](http://Ratzlaf.com) or by phoning (928) 554-1001.



putting a puzzle piece into an opening that looked correct but wasn't, thus yielding a messed up picture. Now, however, I had no reason to force anything. Rather, I thought, perhaps I need to accept a new paradigm and see if our tentative conclusions fit it. Therefore, I took Paul's statements about law at face value: the law was "added" at the time of Moses and was to last "until Christ." Christians are not under the law. Rather than try to fit Paul's statements into my old paradigm which I could not do, I took Paul's paradigm and tried to fit the other conclusions of our study into it. They fit! Suddenly, in an instant of time, my whole theological "picture" changed. No longer was the law the focus; no longer was the Sabbath the "testing truth". Now Christ alone was at the center of theology and life. He was my true rest.

That study yielded the book that is now *Sabbath In Christ*, but I longed for a way to reach more people with the good news of the gospel than I could with a book. In 2000 we launched *Proclamation!* magazine. Now, 16 years later, the demand for the magazine is

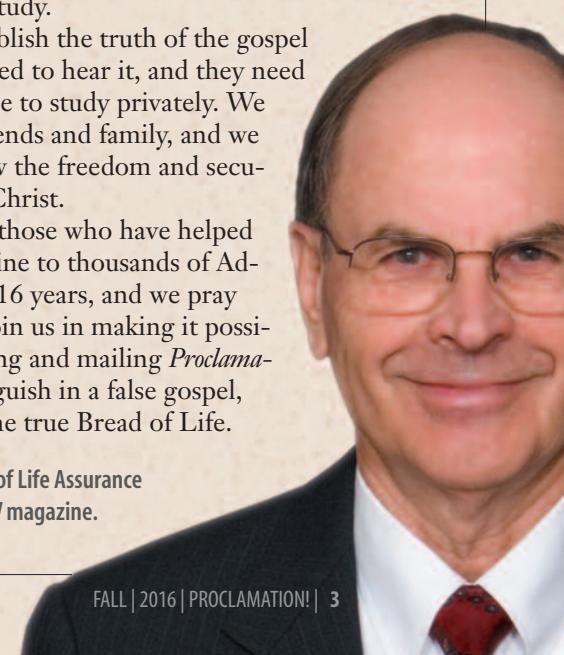
greater than ever. While some of us who have left Adventism years ago have settled most of our questions, there is an ongoing stream of new requests for the magazine from readers around the world.

Even though the magazine is online, the demand for the printed version is not waning. More and more Adventists are questioning the validity of Adventist doctrine, and they are hungry for the real Jesus of the Bible and for the real gospel of His finished atonement for our sin. As you know, the magazine is free, and many who receive *Proclamation!* do not support this ministry. Nevertheless, we know that some of you are among those who received *Proclamation!* for some time before you began your study.

We continue to publish the truth of the gospel because Adventists need to hear it, and they need the safety of being able to study privately. We love our Adventist friends and family, and we long for them to know the freedom and security of being alive in Christ.

We are grateful to those who have helped to provide this magazine to thousands of Adventists over the past 16 years, and we pray that others will also join us in making it possible to continue printing and mailing *Proclamation!* to those who languish in a false gospel, starving for want of the true Bread of Life.

Dale Ratzlaff is the founder of Life Assurance Ministries and *Proclamation!* magazine.



A color photograph of a man and a woman standing outdoors. The man, on the left, is wearing glasses and a blue and white striped button-down shirt. The woman, on the right, is wearing glasses and a red floral top. They are both smiling at the camera. The background is filled with lush green leaves and some small yellow fruits.

# ADVENTIST

## PETER ZENTHOEFFER

I was born on October 18, 1955, to very poor German immigrants in Winnipeg, Canada. Both of my parents and my grandparents were Seventh-day Adventists. When I was one year old, my parents moved our family to San Francisco, California. We attended church, but frequently my father would just drop us off and pick us up when church was over. Nevertheless, both my parents refrained from work on Saturdays and followed the Old Testament dietary laws. We ate some meat—and once in a great while, we ate fake meat. My mother wore a wedding band as most German Adventists did. We had the Bible in our home, but not E.G. White books; the prophetess was considered an American phenomenon.

In 1969 we moved onto a small farm in Mulino, Oregon. My father had always wanted to have a farm, and my parents were concerned about the negative influences of inner-city schools. Moving to rural Oregon proved to be a huge, largely positive change. My mother began taking us to the tiny local Adventist church where we received pressure to attend Adventist schools. Nevertheless, my brother and I enrolled in public schools.

Our small church taught historic Adventism. Ellen White was the central focus, and the members and the minister quoted and referenced her regularly. In fact, during many church services, only her books were read. One memorable Sabbath the old minister, who always wore a black suit, preached on the impor-

# CONFUSION SHATTERED BY THE GOSPEL

tance of obedience and instructed the congregation that they must not eat pickles because E.G. White forbade it. In spite of the suffocating menu of Ellen White, however, church was a social outlet for my mother. She worked hard all week at home and on the farm, and Sabbath was her one day off. Church provided an opportunity for her to socialize with other women.

I was in high school, and I did not fit into her religious culture. I was made to attend church regularly with my mother, but if I had been given a choice, I would have stayed at home with my father who refused to go. At school I began telling my friends that I was an agnostic. This personal act of boldness, however, was lost on my schoolmates; no one knew what an agnostic was.

## LOOKING FOR TRUTH

My life of doubt proved hollow, though, and during my junior year in high school, I began reading my Bible. I learned the gospel as I read, and as I understood that Jesus had died to pay for my sins, I accepted Him as my Lord and my Savior. Furthermore, I became convinced that God's plan for me was to become a physician. I was drawn to one teacher at this time who, it turned out, was an Adventist. This teacher's Adventism only served to confirm the Adventist upbringing I had received, so as my new faith grew, I tried more and more to participate in church again. Moreover, in an effort to grow my faith, I started reading E.G. White and other Adventist books. I had no idea I was undermining the truth I had discovered in the Bible.

From 1973 to 1976 I attended Oregon State University. I was a typical overly-anxious premed student who studied almost every waking hour almost every day of the week. In spite of my being consumed with studying, however, I enjoyed those of my friends who were active in Campus Crusade for Christ. I also tried to read my Bible daily, and it gave me peace. My church attendance, though, was spotty.

In 1976 I enrolled at the University of Oregon Health Sciences School of Medicine in Portland, Oregon. I studied hard and was still convinced that medicine was God's plan for me.

Meanwhile, I chose to attend the Mt. Tabor Adventist church located across the street from Portland Adventist Hospital and the dormitory where the Walla Walla College nursing students lived during their junior and senior years of clinical experience. Not too long after beginning to worship at Mt. Tabor, I met Elaine. She was very special, and I considered her to be truly a gift from God. We married in 1978. As we planned our wedding, I said I wanted to exchange wedding bands in the marriage ceremony; after all, my German parents and grandparents had worn rings. Elaine informed me, however, that American Adventists did not exchange rings and certainly did not have ring ceremonies. Moreover, I was told that American Adventists gave expensive watches as engagement symbols instead of rings. These details were news to me, but I reluctantly went along with them.

Interestingly, a few months later my wife bought a wedding band—and insisted I wear one, too!

Life was very busy, and I struggled. After medical school in 1980 we moved to California where I started my residency in obstetrics and gynecology at David Grant United States Air Force Medical Center. I found myself in a very, very demanding program. We residents routinely worked 100 to 120 hours per week, and after work there were hours of mandatory studying. In fact, much of what happened during those residency years is a blur because I was always so sleep deprived.

We weren't attending church very often, but I did read a book that rocked my world and changed the course of my life: *The White Lie* by Walter Rea, published in 1980. I could not believe what Rae wrote—it couldn't be true! Then I read the Adventist's answer to Rae's book, *The White Truth* by John Robertson and published in 1981, and I knew that Walter Rae was right.

Ellen G. White was a plagiarist, and she lied to cover it up.

Robertson's book attempted to whitewash the Adventists' problem and discredit Rae's research by calling Ellen White's plagiarism "borrowing". Saying that her plagiarism was not wrong because such "borrowing" was common practice in her day, however, was not a credible defense. Moreover, even if

“everyone was doing it”, Ellen White claimed her words came from God. One cannot plagiarize from another human being and ascribe those words to God. To do so is immoral and deliberately deceitful.

I was shaken so hard by this discovery that my Adventist foundation was cracked beyond repair. At about this same time, Desmond Ford, a religion professor at the Adventist Pacific Union College, was fired and “defrocked”, losing his Adventist ministerial credentials, for refusing to teach the investigative judgment and teaching instead the Good News Gospel that Jesus died for our sins on the cross and completed His atonement. Ford had completed extensive research on the investigative judgment, the central doctrine of Adventism, and had found that Scripture did not support it. After he defended his research to Adventist leaders and scholars at the infamous Glacier View convocation in 1980, the Adventists rejected his biblical evidence. They would keep the investigative judgment at all costs because it defined the Adventist organization.

## SHELL-SHOCKED AND DISILLUSIONED

Shell-shocked and disillusioned, I wanted to distance myself from the Adventist church, but where does an Adventist who no longer believes in Ellen White’s prophetic authority go? After all, we still have the Sabbath...right?

My work schedule made distancing very easy. In 1984 I accepted my first assignment as an OB/GYN at Fairchild Air Force Base (AFB) near Spokane, Washington. Instead of improving as I had hoped, however, my work life became worse. In our department there were just two OB/GYNs, and we had to staff the clinic and hospital 24 hours per day, 7 days per week. Elaine was always supportive and loyal, but I know she was lonely even though we started our family while we were in Spokane. Spiritually, however, we were slowly dying.

After three very long years at Fairchild AFB, I regained my freedom. We moved to Portland, Oregon, where I accepted a position with Kaiser Permanente. Life suddenly improved; I only had to work 70 hours per week, and we were finally able to address our family’s deeper needs. By this time we had two small children and were spiritually starving, so we decided to look for a church. After searching we found the Hoodview Seventh-day Adventist Church. For the first time in my life we heard the Gospel of Jesus preached from the pulpit—the gospel I had first heard from Desmond Ford. E.G. White was not referenced. We were blessed every Sabbath and left church feeling so thankful that God loved us so much. We didn’t mind driving almost one hour one way because Jesus was always the “main thing” in the sermons, and we started growing spiritually. We had assurance of salvation instead of wondering if we were good enough to be saved.

We mistakenly assumed that Adventism was changing and starting to teach the gospel. We didn’t yet understand the depth of the problems with Adventist doctrine that ultimately would stamp out the gospel where it might spring up. We attended Hoodview for many years—and then our pastor was forced to leave and was replaced by another. Immediately Hoodview be-

came a totally different church. Jesus was no longer the “main thing”, and the focus changed from Him to us. Now, instead of hearing how much Jesus loved us, we heard that we should pay more tithe and give more offerings; we should bring more visitors to church, and we were not working hard enough. Instead of feeling thankful for what Jesus had done for us, we were made to feel guilty for not doing enough to please Him. I was shocked and couldn’t believe what I was hearing! This new pastor’s message was totally different from the gospel presented in the Bible.

At this time our youngest daughter was attending Upper Columbia Academy, an Adventist boarding high school near Spokane, Washington. One Christmas when she came home for vacation, she started crying. We asked her what was wrong, and she told us that in school her religion teacher was telling everyone that the Great Recession (of 2007–2009) was proof that Jesus’ second coming was imminent, but our daughter was afraid because she was not yet good enough to be saved.

Hoping for some helpful perspective, we decided to visit the General Conference headquarters of the Adventist Church while we were on a trip back east to visit some relatives in Maryland. We were determined to learn exactly what Adventism was currently teaching. While there we were given a tour of the White Estate. The tour guide explained how, with E.G. White, Jesus, and the Adventist church’s help, we could get rid of any sin in our life and thus be ready when Jesus comes again. I couldn’t believe what we were hearing.

Back at home, we visited other Adventist churches in our area, and none of them taught the biblical gospel message. We were discouraged and didn’t know what to do as we slowly started to realize that Adventism hadn’t changed. Hoodview was not on the forefront of change, as we had hoped and imagined; rather, it had been a problem, and the “Hoodview problem” had now been fixed. We’d had blinders on; we had seen only what was right in front of us.

One evening we shared our frustrations with some Christian neighbors, and they invited us to their church. It was with great fear and trepidation that we visited this non-Adventist church—and then only because they had a Saturday evening service in addition to their two Sunday morning services. Our fear melted away, however, as we heard the gospel message presented again. We felt the Holy Spirit’s presence there—and we were spiritually blessed. Gradually we started attending the Canby New Life Foursquare church more and more. Jesus is the “main thing” there. Every week we learn how to apply the Gospel to our personal lives right now. We’ve considered this our church home since about 2010.

## REFLECTIONS

As I look back at our journey, I see three things that define Adventism and make the gospel almost impossible for an Adventist to see. The first defining obstacle is the Sabbath. Sabbath has been the most difficult doctrine for us to release because it and its proof-texts were hammered into us for as long as we could remember. In fact, it is arguably the most important Adventist doctrine. What has been most helpful for me to real-

# WHAT HAS MADE US FOLLOW THROUGH WITH LEAVING COMPLETELY IS OUR BELIEF THAT **INTEGRITY** IS MORE IMPORTANT THAN FAMILY AND SOCIAL RELATIONSHIPS.

ize, however, is that the Sabbath of the Old Testament was fulfilled on the cross and foreshadows the relationship we have with Jesus right now when we believe in Him and His completed atonement. The relationship we have with Him when we enter the new covenant in His blood gives us real peace, rest, and contentment.

I do think it's important not to work every day, so we try to take a break from our daily work and stresses every weekend, either on Saturday or Sunday or on parts of both—but not because either one is holy. Furthermore, in all likelihood Saturday is probably no more the Sabbath of Moses than Sunday is. In Moses' time they used a lunar calendar and not the Roman solar calendar in use today. In other words, with a lunar calendar, the weekly cycle was reset every month with the new moon, so Sabbaths were not fixed days throughout the year.

The second defining obstacle of Adventism is their continuing disbelief in the classic Christian Trinity. When Adventism was birthed, the founders denied the Trinity. Besides their belief that Jesus was not eternally Almighty God, they also denied the personhood of the Holy Spirit. Thus, the Adventist doctrines were formed without belief in the Holy Spirit as a person.

Over time Adventism tried to become more mainline and acceptable, but instead of believing the Bible's teaching about the Holy Spirit, they still were totally dependent on E.G. White, and the two are mutually exclusive. After all, if the Holy Spirit lives in believers and guides them, teaching them to apply God's word, there is absolutely no need for a prophet.

Recently I attended a new Adventist church in Loma Linda with my son-in-law. The subject of the sermon was that people should become more loving—a very laudable thought. Afterwards I talked to the pastor about how becoming loving is actually accomplished. His answer was, "Always keep your eyes on Jesus."

When I shared with him how the Holy Spirit lives in the hearts of those who have trusted Him as their personal Lord and Savior, explaining that the Holy Spirit, not our own will power, changes us from the inside out, his response was surprising. He said, "That sounds mystical!" He had no concept whatsoever about the indwelling Holy Spirit who seals us when we believe.

In spite of their official statement that the Holy Spirit is the third person of the Godhead, Adventists are still, for the most part, like Jehovah's Witnesses, believing that the Holy Spirit is a force or power and not fully God, the third person of the Trin-

ity. The concept that God wants to live in believers through the Holy Spirit is totally foreign to them and maybe even anathema.

Finally, when I talk to Adventists, especially the older ones, many still believe that they are obligated to keep the Ten Commandments like Jesus did in order to be judged good enough to be saved when Jesus comes again. Their perception of their relationship with God is more like that of a slave with a master than of an adopted child with a Father. They do not believe that they qualify right now to be adopted into God's family if they believe and trust that He died for their sins and rose again to give them life. This bondage to the Ten Commandments as a requirement for proving they are good enough is the investigative judgment doctrine even though they don't call it by name. This belief makes it impossible for them to realize the peace and rest that they could have right now and is so sad and unbiblical.

The Holy Spirit is at work, I believe, among some Adventists I have met who do seem to have some knowledge of the gospel and have no understanding of the investigative judgment. Nevertheless, they still have an Adventist worldview and are bound to the Adventist culture.

I'm sometimes told that we left the Adventist Church because we have more in common with our new church family than we did with Adventists. Absolutely not true! We had and still have a life-time of experience and culture in common with our Adventist family and friends. Our decision to leave Adventism has strained some relationships and ended others. We miss those we have lost. It's been extremely difficult leaving Adventism, especially for my wife who attended Adventist schools.

What has made us follow through with leaving completely is our belief that integrity is more important than family and social relationships. We hope and pray that our Adventist family and friends will have the veil lifted and finally understand the simple Bible gospel that is centered on the love of God who sent His Son to be the sacrifice for our sins, and on being adopted into God's family.

The Son has set us free indeed (Jn. 8:36)! †

**Peter Zenthoeffer** and his wife Elaine live in Portland, Oregon. Peter is a retired physician, and they have four adult children. They attend the Canby New Life Foursquare Church and continue to nurture relationships with their Adventist loved ones as they look for opportunities to share the beauty of the gospel with them.

# WHAT ARE THE WORKS OF THE DEVIL?

WILLIAM HOHMANN

The one who practices sin is of the devil; for the devil has sinned from the beginning. The Son of God appeared for this purpose, to destroy the works of the devil (1 Jn. 3:8).

What are the works of the devil which Jesus came to destroy? The account of Jesus' temptation in the wilderness helps us understand Satan's works:

Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. And after He had fasted forty days and forty nights, He then became hungry. And the tempter came and said to Him, "If You are the son of God, command that these stones become bread." But He answered and said, "It is written, 'Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God.'"

Then the devil took Him into the holy city and had Him stand on the pinnacle of the temple, and said to Him, "If You are the Son of God, throw Yourself down; for it is written, 'He will command His angels concerning You'; and 'On their hands they will bear You up, so that You will not strike Your foot against a stone.'"

Jesus said to him, "On the other hand, it is written, 'You shall not put the Lord your God to the test.'"

Again, the devil took Him to a very high mountain and showed Him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory; and he said to Him, "All these things I will give You, if You fall down and worship me."

Then Jesus said to him, "Go, Satan! For it is written, 'You shall worship the Lord Your God, and serve Him only'" (Mt. 4:1–10).

Satan attempted to lead Jesus into sin by a form of subterfuge. He deceitfully attempted to engage the Lord in a discussion of God's word, cleverly misusing it in an attempt to disorient and to deceive Jesus in order to cause Him to sin.

## Begin with Eve

If Satan's goal was to cause Jesus to be confused and even perhaps to discuss God's word instead of trusting and obeying it, what was his goal when he tempted Eve to eat of the fruit of the forbidden tree?

Eve's act of rebellion against God and His word was the consequence of Satan's temptation, but that rebellious act flowed out of Eve's deception and rationalization. Before actually eating that fruit, she had to disbelieve God and believe the serpent. She knew God had said not to eat from that tree, but instead of obeying God's word without question, she discussed His word with the snake.

She allowed the snake's question to lure her into a conversation, and as the serpent's clever nuances led her deeper into her defense and farther from the safety of obedience, she abandoned faith in God in favor of faith in the serpent. The decision to eat the fruit seemed simple enough. The temptation, after all, just involved fruit—fruit similar to other fruit found in the garden of Eden. The serpent's arguments seemed logical and compelling, and yet the results of Eve's decision were catastrophic.

The serpent succeeded in usurping her faith in God. Not only that, he got her to put her faith in him, the enemy of God. Adam soon followed.

## Jesus and the devil

The devil in his confrontation with Jesus started out much the same as the serpent's encounter with Eve. He suggested something simple—something apparently innocuous: "If you are the Son of God, command these stones to become loaves of bread" (Mt. 4:3). He seemed merely to offer Jesus a way to sustain Himself after his 40-day fast, but this logical suggestion came from the deceiver, not from the Father.

Jesus did not take Satan's bait. The Son of God, who referred to Himself as the Son of Man, stood up to the devil and, in spite of being weakened by fasting, answered His adversary by quoting God's word found in Deuteronomy 8:3: "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God" (Mt. 4:4).

Jesus did what Eve had failed to do: He refused to discuss God's word with His tempter. Instead, He lived His life according to God's word recorded in Scripture, and He was not confused by clever applications of God's word used out of context and with devious intent. Even if the devil quotes God's word, Jesus showed us that we are never to be deceived by his arguments. We are to refuse to engage with him and submit to the full council of God's word instead.

Creating and eating bread was not sinful; in fact, Jesus fed the 5,000 and the 4,000 by creating bread and giving it to the people to eat. Rather, the temptation was to listen to the tempter and to rationalize what He knew about God's will instead of staying firmly planted on God's revealed word and obeying it.

The devil then escalated his attempt to derail and overthrow Jesus, tempting Him to defend His identity and offering the world and everything in it. Significantly, the devil used out-of-context Scripture and promises of power as his weapons of deception. All Jesus had to do was to switch his faith and allegiance from God to Satan—but Satan failed to destroy Jesus. Jesus prevailed by knowing and obeying God's word. It was His only defense, and it exposed and destroyed the subtle deception that preyed on Jesus' humanity.

## The law: a promise of Jesus

The entire human race had been derailed and overthrown through a simple and subtle suggestion that had incalculable repercussions. The serpent promised superior knowledge, wisdom, and power, and it was all available by eating delicious fruit—the wrong fruit. The promised benefit, however, was a curse instead of a blessing. Adam and Eve died spiritually the day they listened to the serpent, and mankind has been choosing the wrong fruit ever since.

Finally Jesus came to destroy the works of the devil in which faith in God is lost. In those of us who believe that He took the curse Adam and Eve unleashed on us, He restores faith, and we are released from death to life (Jn. 5:24).

Before Jesus came, however, God gave His people the gift of seeing their sin and the promise of a Savior who would reconcile them to Himself. This gift which clarified humanity's sin and the hope of salvation was the law, but that law was never intended to be for all people for all time. God gave it to Israel on Sinai until faith would be revealed through Jesus. Paul explains it like this:

But before faith came, we were kept in custody under the law, being shut up to the faith which was later to be revealed. Therefore the Law has become our tutor to lead us to Christ, so that we may be justified by faith. But now that faith has come, we are no longer under a tutor. For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus. For all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free man, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus. And if you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's descendants, heirs according to promise (Gal. 3:23-29).

See to it that no one takes you captive through philosophy and empty deception, according to the tradition of men, according to the elementary principles of the world, rather than according to Christ. For in Him all the fullness of Deity dwells in bodily form, and in Him you have been made complete, and He the head over all rule and authority (Col. 2:8-10).

## Questions and answers

Now I have some questions and answers for Sabbatarians.

Q: Who told you to keep the law? Who told you to keep the Sabbath?

A: God didn't. He told the Hebrews to do those things through a covenant law.

Q: Who beguiled you into doing things God did not tell you to do in His written Word? Who then told you to continue in the law even though faith is now here and available to you?

A: God didn't. From Moses to Jesus, God's people were kept under the law until faith would be revealed. That faith has been revealed through the life, death, and resurrection of the Lord Jesus.

Q: Is a Christian complete in Christ, or does a Christian need the law also?

A: If we need the law also, then we cannot be complete in Christ. Christians, however, are sons and heirs of God, complete in Him, and no longer under the law's guardianship.

## Consequences of embracing the law

Interesting things happen to us when we abandon or reject faith in God and in His word alone. We gravitate to deception. Like Adam and Eve's forbidden fruit, deception looks attractive and appeals to human pride and reason. It promises a knowledge of good and evil and makes us feel special, as if we have spiritual insight ordinary Christians don't have. Deception, however, brings death.

On the other hand, the truth of God's word reveals Christ and the faith found in Him. In fact, Jesus showed us the truth and power of God's word as He obeyed and fulfilled it. Jesus did not engage in a discussion with the devil about what God said or what

He meant. He simply submitted to God's word and obeyed it, and Satan's clever deceptions were exposed.

So, once more, who told you to keep the law? Who told you to keep the Sabbath, the sign of that covenant law Paul calls "the ministry of death, carved in letters on stone" (2 Cor. 3:7)?

It wasn't God who told you. You can search the Scriptures from Genesis to Revelation, and you will not find any place where God commanded Christians living in the new covenant of Jesus' blood, to keep the law, the Ten Commandments, or the Sabbath.

Such a command isn't there. Someone else told you to do those things. Someone else told you to abandon and reject living and walking solely and strictly by faith in Christ, compromising and negating faith by embracing old covenant law.

Sabbatarians, who wants you to reject walking by faith? Who wants you to think that walking by faith requires embracing the law?

Moreover, what is your response when confronted by those who wish to point you to Christ and total faith in Him only?

More often than we might want to admit, seventh-day Sabbatarians accuse those who preach the new covenant inaugurated by the shed blood of Jesus of being in league with and influenced by the devil. Yet Scripture is clear: it is the devil who wants to cause us to reject faith in God and in His Christ. His deceptions are subtle; any little compromise on the integrity of God's word will do. Any illegitimate proof-texting or faulty application can set us on a track that leads far from salvation by faith in Christ alone.

There is no "thus saith the Lord" for clinging to the seventh-day Sabbath when one embraces Jesus who fulfilled the law. To be sure, there are many true believers in Christ who have endorsed a first-day "Christian Sabbath", but this practice cannot be supported with the New Testament teaching of the new covenant. In fact, Scripture must be twisted in order to support sabbatarianism for the church, but if one claims to honor the law and breaks even one command ever so slightly, the law's curse of death applies to him, for "all who have sinned without the Law will also perish without the Law, and all who have sinned under the Law will be judged by the Law" (Rom. 2:12).

I appeal to Sabbatarians: believe God's word. Clinging to the law, relying on the law, walking in law—these things only condemn. Paul says returning to law means we have been "severed from Christ" (Gal. 5:4). God's word is true; it cannot fail, and His promises are sure. Jesus has fulfilled the law, and only in Him alone can we have life.

"But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in His name" (Jn. 1:20).†

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DALE RATZLAFF

# THE CONTINENTAL DIVIDE

Studying the covenants is like pouring one's theological water jug out on the Continental Divide. In fact, this mountain of the covenants divides between the ocean of old covenant types and the sea of new covenant fulfillment. Theological differences that may seem minor at first glance will, after running their courses down the streams of application, terminate thousands of miles apart depending upon which side of the Continental Divide of the Covenants they flow. Therefore, how important it is that we make sure which side of this great divide we choose.

I believe the Bible teaches that there have been high moral principles (call them moral laws if you wish) from the beginning of time, and these principles will continue into eternity. In fact, these eternal moral principles, as exemplified in the life of Christ, provide a much better guide than the Decalogue. I believe the Ten Commandments reflect the existence of these moral principles, but not as clearly as do the new covenant principles of righteousness. I would not lower the righteousness of Christ to that of "living the Ten Commandments." I believe His life exemplifies a much higher level. Therefore, when we look at Biblical facts that indicate the Ten Commandments did not exist before Moses and are not to continue after the cross, we are not opening up the floodgates to anarchy or wickedness. Neither do we have any hidden agenda. Rather, we are only seeking to be true to Scripture and nothing more. Wherever Scripture leads us, we are willing to follow. I pray that you, the reader, will be willing to make this same commitment.

**N**ow, put on your hiking boots, take your water bottle, and breathe deeply. The air up here at the Continental Divide is thin; we have a long way to hike before dark, and the trail is rough. By following the trail marked "Scripture", however, we will be assured of the correct destination.

## The Ten Commands are the very words of the old covenant

The Bible says:

And when He had finished speaking with him upon Mount Sinai, He gave Moses the two tablets of the testimony, the tablets of stone, written by the finger of God (Ex. 31:18).

So he [Moses] was there with the Lord forty days and forty nights; he did not eat bread or drink water. And he wrote on the tablets the words of the covenant, the Ten Commandments (Ex. 34:28).

So He declared to you His covenant which He commanded you to perform, that is, the Ten Commandments; and He wrote them on two tablets of stone (Deut. 4:13).

When I went up to the mountain to receive the tablets of stone, the tablets of the covenant which the Lord had made with you (Deut. 9:9).

And it came about at the end of forty days and nights that the Lord gave me the two tablets of stone, the tablets of the covenant (Deut. 9:11).

# THE COVENANTS

## NTAL DIVIDE OF BIBLICAL INTERPRETATION

So I turned and came down from the mountain while the mountain was burning with fire, and the two tablets of the covenant were in my two hands (Deut. 9:15).

There was nothing in the ark except the two tablets of stone which Moses put there at Horeb, where the Lord made a covenant with the sons of Israel, when they came out of the land of Egypt. And there I have set the place for the ark in which is the covenant of the Lord, which He made with our fathers when He brought them out of Egypt (1 Ki. 8:9,21).

These verses state unequivocally that the covenant between God and Israel which was made at Sinai was the Ten Commandments. This truth is underlined by the fact that the Ten Commandments were kept in the “ark of the covenant.”<sup>1</sup>

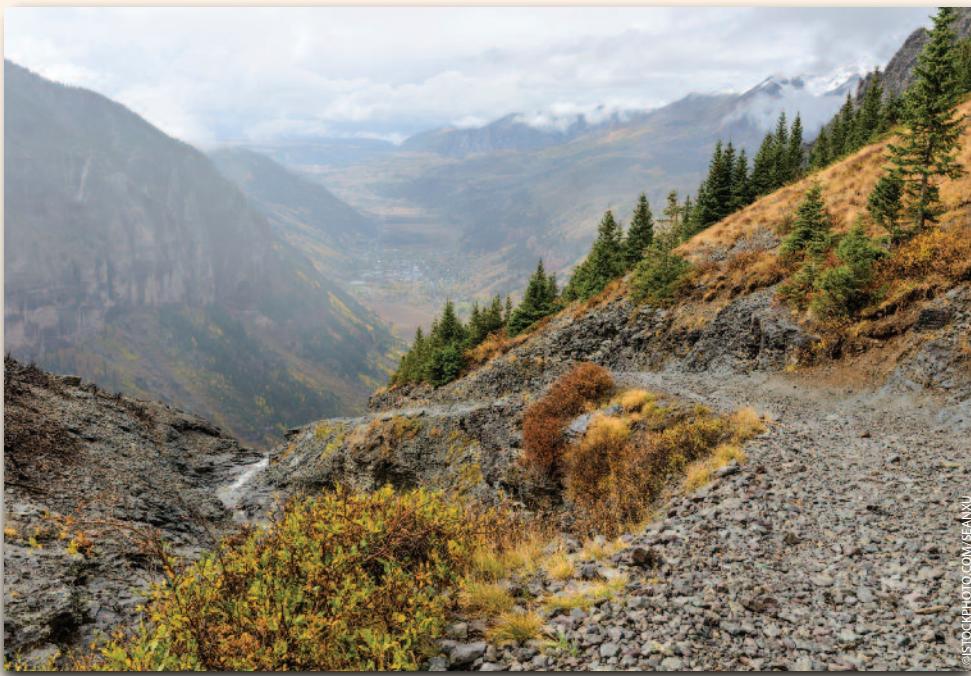
**The old covenant, or Sinaitic Covenant, is based upon one law, not two. It comprises the whole Mosaic law: moral, civil and ceremonial.**

There is no clear-cut division between moral and ceremonial laws in the books of Moses. The terms, “the moral law” and “the ceremonial law” are artificial, unbiblical definitions. While there are moral aspects and ceremonial aspects to the law, they are often intermingled. Adventists are quick to call the Sabbath a moral law because it is in the heart of the Ten Commandments. However, it is listed with the feast days and other ceremonial aspects of the law about a dozen times.<sup>2</sup> It finds itself in

the center of the Ten Commandments<sup>3</sup> because it is the sign of the Sinaitic Covenant<sup>4</sup> and ancient Near East treaty documents had the covenant sign in the center.<sup>5</sup> If one were to assign “moral” or “ceremonial” to the Sabbath, by virtue of association with other laws it would, by a 12:2 ratio, be a “ceremonial law.” When Jesus was asked which was the greatest commandment in the “law” (note one law), His answer was from Deut. 6:5 and Lev. 19:18,<sup>6</sup> not the Sabbath as Ellen White taught,<sup>7</sup> or even the Decalogue. Often those from Adventist backgrounds will immediately associate “law” with the Ten Commandments. Usually Matt. 5:17–19 is quoted to prove the perpetuity of the Ten Commandments when the Ten Commandments are not even in view in this passage.<sup>8</sup> I was amazed to find that by themselves, the Ten Commandments are never called “the law of the Lord,” or “the law of God” in Scripture.<sup>9</sup>

I quote from Riggle, *The Sabbath and the Lord’s Day*.

Again, sacrifices, offerings, sabbaths, new moons, and feasts are all required “in the law of the Lord” (see 2 Cor. 31:3). Scores of texts like this could be cited, where “the law of the Lord” includes sacrifices, circumcision, feast-days, and all the Jewish law. So the law of God is not simply the Decalog, but the whole law of Moses. In Neh. 8:1, 2, 3, 7, 8, 14, 18, they read “in the book of the law of Moses,” “the law,” “the book of the law,” “in the book of the law of God,” “the law which the Lord commanded by Moses,” “the law of God.” The law of God, then, included the whole law of Moses.<sup>10</sup>



have through Christ toward God. Not that we are adequate in ourselves to consider anything as coming from ourselves, but our adequacy is from God, who also made us adequate as servants of a new covenant, not of the letter but of the Spirit; for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life. But if the ministry of death, in letters engraved on stones, came with glory, so that the sons of Israel could not look intently at the face of Moses because of the glory of his face, fading as it was (2 Cor. 3:2–7).

Paul uses the term, “not written with ink” to refer to the “other laws” which were given by God to Moses that were an expansion, interpretation and application of the Ten Commandments to the life of Israel. It is also clear that Paul refers to the Ten Commandments in this passage by using “letters engraved on stones.” The new covenant is said to be “not of the letter”

“but of the Spirit”. This statement excludes the Ten Commandments from the new covenant, or the least that can be said, is that it excludes them in their codified form. It dubs the Ten Commandments specifically as “the ministry of death” in contrast to the new covenant which Paul says “gives life.”

In the book of Galatians, Paul specifically mentions that the old covenant comes from Sinai.

This is allegorically speaking, for these women are two covenants: one proceeding from Mount Sinai bearing children who are to be slaves; she is Hagar (Gal. 4:24).

We see, then, that the New Testament defines the “old” or “first” covenant as the Sinaitic Covenant which included all the laws given to the children of Israel, including the Ten Commandments—the very “words of the covenant”.<sup>14</sup> This agrees perfectly with our findings in the Old Testament.

#### The old covenant law was given only to the children of Israel

I quote from Riggle,

This is so manifest in every item of the law that it needs no argument to prove it. Moses says (Deut. 4:8) that no nation has a law so good “as the law which I set before you this day.” Then he names the Ten Commandments as a part of it (vss. 10–13). “This is the law which Moses set before the children of Israel” (vs. 44). Then no other nation had the law. This is stated a hundred times over. It was addressed to the Israelites, and to them only.

The very wording of the law proves that it was designed only for them. The Decalog is introduced thus: “I am the Lord thy God, which brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage” (Ex. 20:2). To whom is that applicable? Only to the Israelite nation. Neither angels, Adam, nor Gentile Christians were ever in Egyptian bondage. Then, the law was not addressed to them. Paul plainly states to whom the law was given. “Who are Israelites; to whom pertaineth the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law” (Rom. 9:4). It was given to Israel. In Mal. 4:4 it is clearly stated that the law given in Horeb was “for all Israel.”

One could break the Sinaitic (or old) Covenant by a violation of any of the Ten Commandments<sup>11</sup> and many of its “ceremonial-type” laws.<sup>12</sup>

We have now shown that the words of the covenant God made with Israel were the Ten Commandments, and this covenant was expanded<sup>13</sup> to include all the laws given by God to Moses and was collectively called the law, the law of the Lord, the law of God, the covenant, etc.

#### The New Testament defines the “old” or “first” covenant as the Sinaitic Covenant and unmistakably includes both the Ten Commandments and “other laws” in this covenant.

The author of Hebrews describes the “first covenant” and specifically mentions “the tables of the covenant”—an unmistakable reference to the Ten Commandments as being included in this “first covenant”.

Now even the first covenant had regulations of divine worship [the Sabbath was one of these regulations] and the earthly sanctuary. For there was a tabernacle prepared, the outer one, in which were the lampstand and the table and the sacred bread; this is called the holy place. Behind the second veil there was a tabernacle which is called the Holy of Holies, having a golden altar of incense and the ark of the covenant covered on all sides with gold, in which was a golden jar holding the manna, and Aaron’s rod which budded, and the tables of the covenant (Heb. 9:1–4).

This is unmistakable evidence that the Ten Commandments were included in the old, or first, covenant. Notice also, that both the Ten Commandments and the other laws are included in this one covenant. There is no separation between “moral” and “ceremonial”.

This same truth is clear in Paul’s descriptions of the covenants.

You are our letter, written in our hearts, known and read by all men; being manifested that you are a letter of Christ, cared for by us, written not with ink but with the Spirit of the living God, not on tablets of stone but on tablets of human hearts. Such confidence we

All these things show that this was a national law worded to fit the condition of the children of Israel at the time.

#### **The laws of Sinai, including the Ten Commandments, were not given until the time of Moses.**

Many people have shown that most, if not all, the moral principles upon which the Ten Commandments were founded were in operation before the time of Moses. The one exception, however, is the Sabbath, which is first mentioned in the time of Moses. For good reasons, we do not believe the Sabbath to be a moral law.<sup>15</sup>

**T**ake another drink and a five-minute break to catch your breath in this high altitude, then let's continue our hike on this trail of Scripture.

I quote from Riggle,

"The law was given by Moses" (Jn. 1:17). "Did not Moses give you the law?" (Jn. 7:19). "For until the law sin was in the world; but sin is not imputed where there is no law. Nevertheless death reigned from Adam to Moses" (Rom. 5:13, 14). The entrance of the law is here located at Moses. Every attempt to place it before that time contradicts the plain testimony of these texts. The Bible locates the law under the Levitical priesthood. "If therefore perfection were by the Levitical priesthood, for under it the people received the law" (Heb. 7:11). This drops the bottom out of Sabbatarianism. So the giving of the law is located "430 years after the covenant with Abraham." "And this I say, that the covenant, that was confirmed before of God in Christ, the law, which was four hundred and thirty years after, cannot disannul" (Gal. 3:17). This brings us to the very year the children of Israel came out of Egypt and arrived at Sinai. "And it came to pass at the end of the four hundred and thirty years, even the self-same day it came to pass, that all the hosts of the Lord went out from the land of Egypt" (Ex. 12:41). Beyond dispute, then, what the Bible calls "the law" was not given till Moses, 2,500 years after Adam, or nearly half the history of the world.<sup>16</sup> "The Lord our God made a covenant with us at Horeb [Sinai]. "The Lord did not make this covenant with our fathers, but with us, with all those of us alive here today." Deut. 5:2-3

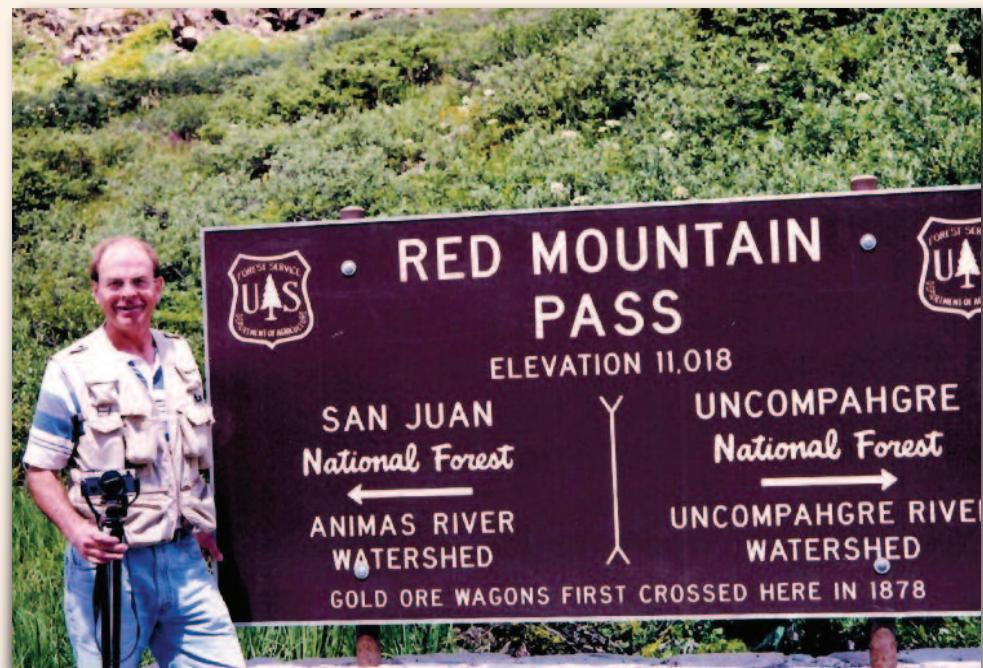
#### **The old or first covenant which included the Ten Commandments was in force only until the death of Christ.**

**A**fter reading the above statement you will want to sit down by the trail and look at the scenery here in the beautiful Rocky Mountains. We have now come to a major theological watershed. You must decide which way you will go. Are you going to continue to follow the trail marked "Scripture"? Or, are you going to opt for the trail

marked, "Ellen White"? You cannot go both ways. Take your time here in prayer and contemplation because the outcome of this decision will have major consequences to your future life no matter which way you go. Why not get out the maps—all three of them—and let's do some careful study? Let's determine now which is the right way!

The map of Scripture says that "Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work."<sup>17</sup>

The map of Adventist doctrine before 1980<sup>18</sup> stated that the Scriptures were the "all-sufficient revelation of His will to men, and the only unerring rule of faith and practice."<sup>19</sup> Even after 1980 it still read, "...The Holy Scriptures are the infallible revelation of His will. They are the standard of character, the test of experience, the authoritative revelation of doctrines, and the trustworthy record of God's acts in history."<sup>20</sup>



The map of Ellen White states "God will have a people upon the earth who will maintain the Bible, and the Bible only, as the standard of all doctrines and the basis of all reforms....Before accepting any doctrine or precept, we should demand a plain 'Thus saith the Lord' in its support."<sup>21</sup>

What do you say, let's go down the trail marked "Scripture"! This will be rough and narrow at times. There will be large rocks to get around and over, but we can rest assured that it is this trail that ends up at "the sea of glass."

Accepting the proposition that the Ten Commandments came to a functional end at the cross completely shatters the whole paradigm of Adventist theology. I fought and fought against it. Then—I still remember the day—I decided there was plenty of Scriptural evidence to warrant accepting this proposition on a trial basis. I wanted to see if I could answer all of the questions that it raised and harmonize all the biblical statements

# ARE YOU GOING TO CONTINUE TO FOLLOW THE TRAIL MARKED “SCRIPTURE”? OR, ARE YOU GOING TO OPT FOR THE TRAIL MARKED, “ELLEN WHITE”? YOU CANNOT GO BOTH WAYS.

that I thought contradicted it. Then it happened. All of a sudden I saw a new paradigm! One that had the gospel of Christ at the center and, yes, the pieces of the puzzle came together without forcing them! While we may not be able to answer all the questions that immediately come to your mind in this issue of *Proclamation!*, there are answers. We will, nevertheless, now look at the biblical evidence that supports the proposition that the whole old covenant, including the Ten Commandments, came to a functional end at the cross.

I quote again from Riggle,

Adventists are continually crying, “God’s law [meaning the Sinaitic code] is unchangeable.” But Paul contradicts them, boldly stating “that there is made of necessity a change also of the law” (Heb. 7:12). “The law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ” (Jn. 1:17). “He taketh away the first, that he may establish the second” (Heb. 10:9). Two laws could not stand in the same dispensation. Therefore to establish the gospel—grace and truth, which came by Christ—the law was “taken away.” The manner in which it was taken away is thus explained in Christ’s own words: “Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: [note that the “law” here refers to the whole law of Moses<sup>22</sup>] I am not come to destroy, but to fulfill. For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled” (Mt. 5:17, 18). This text clearly states that when the law reaches its fulfillment it will pass away. It will not pass till fulfilled. So it is not eternal, but when fulfilled it was to reach an end. Then, the Lord points to himself as the fulfillment of the law and prophets—“For Christ is the end of the law” (Rom. 10:4). “The law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ” (Gal. 3:24). Since Christ is come “we are no longer under a schoolmaster” (vs. 25) “not under the law, but under grace” (Rom. 6:14). This nails the matter fast, and utterly refutes the Adventist plea for the perpetuity of the law.<sup>23</sup>

Note how John records the end of Christ’s life: “After this, Jesus, knowing that all things had already been accomplished, to fulfill the Scripture, said, ‘I am thirsty’” (Jn. 19:28).

The epistles are in agreement here:

When He said, “A new covenant,” He has made the first obsolete. But whatever is becoming obsolete and growing old is ready to disappear. Heb. 8:13. Then He said, “Behold, I have come to do Your will.” He takes away the first [covenant] in order to establish the second [covenant]. By this will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all. Heb. 10:9-10 Remember that the writer lists “the tables of the covenant” in this same context (Heb. 9:4) as part of the “first covenant.”

What I am saying is this: the Law, which came four hundred and thirty years later, does not invalidate a covenant previously ratified by God, so as to nullify the promise. For if the inheritance is based on law, it is no longer based on a promise; but God has granted it to Abraham by means of a promise...But the Scripture has shut up everyone under sin, so that the promise by faith in Jesus Christ might be given to those who believe. But before faith came, we were kept in custody under the law, being shut up to the faith which was later to be revealed. Therefore the Law has become our tutor [law = tutor] to lead us to Christ, so that we may be justified by faith. But now that faith has come, we are no longer under a tutor [the law]. For you are all sons of God [This includes the Gentiles who did not have the law] through faith in Christ Jesus. For all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, [The Greeks were separated by the old covenant law] there is neither slave [slaves or servants are mentioned in the Ten Commandments] nor free man, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus. And if you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham’s descendants, heirs according to promise [not according to the law] (Gal. 3:17-29).

We are accepted into the family of God, not on the basis of the law or law keeping, but upon the gracious promise made to Abraham which was fulfilled in Christ. The Gentiles “who do not have the law”<sup>24</sup> are included in this new covenant family based upon their faith in Christ. The Holy Spirit even writes the requirements [moral principles] of the law on their hearts.<sup>25</sup>

Here, in contextual teaching, Paul calls the law our tutor, then says we are no longer under a tutor. In other words he is saying that the old covenant law no longer has authority over the life of a Christian. But can we be sure this is what Paul really means? Yes. Note carefully his powerful allegory.

Tell me, you who want to be under law, do you not listen to the law? For it is written that Abraham had two sons, one by the bondwoman and one by the free woman. But the son of the bondwoman was born according to the flesh, and the son by the free woman through the promise. This contains an allegory: for these women are two covenants, one proceeding from Mount Sinai bearing children who are to be slaves; she is Hagar. Now this Hagar is Mount Sinai in Arabia, and corresponds to the present Jerusalem, for she is in slavery with her children. But the Jerusalem above is free; she is our mother...And you brethren, like Isaac, are children of promise. But as at that time he who was born according to the flesh persecuted him who was born according to the Spirit, so it is now also. But what does the Scripture say? Cast out the bondwoman and her son, for the son of the bondwoman shall not be an heir with the son of the free woman. So then, brethren, we are not children of a bondwoman, but of the free woman (Gal. 4:21-31).

The following chart will help us understand this passage:

<b>Old Covenant</b>	<b>New Covenant</b>
Hagar = Bondwoman	Sarah = Free woman
Sinai-Jerusalem	The Jerusalem above
Son of the bondwoman	Son of the free woman
Born of flesh	Born of promise
In slavery	In freedom
Persecuting (Like Ishmael)	Persecuted
Born according to flesh	Like Isaac
	Born according to Spirit

#### We can safely draw five conclusions (Gal. 4:30,31):

1. "Cast out the bondwoman" means that we are to cast out the old covenant.
2. "Cast out her son" means that we are to cast out [not accept the teaching of] those who promote the old covenant.
3. "For the son of the bondwoman shall not be an heir with the son of the free woman" means that the terms of the covenants are mutually exclusive.
4. "We are not children of a bondwoman" means that we are not under the old covenant.
5. We are [present tense] children "of the free woman" means that Christians are now under the new covenant.

Here, in clear contextual teaching over several chapters in Galatians, Paul states in three specific ways that Christians are not under the authority of the old covenant. (1) The law was given 430 years after Abraham and was in effect until the coming of Christ. (2) With the coming of Christ we are no longer under the Law. (3) Christians are to "cast out" the old covenant and those who promote its being kept.

In Romans 7 Paul states the same things in other words.

Therefore, my brethren, you also were made to die to the Law through the body of Christ, so that you might be joined to another, to Him who was raised from the dead, in order that we might bear fruit for God. For while we were in the flesh, the sinful passions, which were aroused by the Law, were at work in the members of our body to bear fruit for death. But now we have been released from the Law, having died to that by which we were bound, so that we serve in newness of the Spirit and not in oldness of the letter (Rom. 7:4-6).

It is important to note that Paul is not speaking about the condemnation of the law, from which the Christian is also free,<sup>26</sup> but rather he is speaking about Christian service. In other words, Paul is telling the Christians in Rome that the law no longer serves as a guideline for Christian living.<sup>27</sup> Notice also how Christians serve in the newness of the Spirit, a clear reference to the new covenant, in contrast to the oldness of the letter, a clear reference to the Sinaitic Covenant<sup>28</sup> which resulted in bearing "fruit for death." Those who want to be joined both to Christ and to the law are committing spiritual adultery.<sup>29</sup>

Remember, I told you this was not an easy trail! Nevertheless, it is well-marked; see, the sign "Scripture" is still there! In fact, it is a well-worn trail as millions of Christians have walked this way before!

#### The new covenant is much better than the old covenant law of commandments

**A**s mentioned earlier, one of the first reactions by Adventists—and I used to do the same thing—to a statement that the old covenant law, including the Ten Commandments, is no longer binding upon Christians is, "Well, then, you must be saying it is alright to kill, steal, cheat and commit adultery?" Nothing could be further from the truth. I believe that the morality taught in the new covenant is on a much higher plain than that taught in the old. While there are good moral laws in the Ten Commandments and other places within the old covenant, the moral principles found in the new covenant are much better for a number of reasons.<sup>30</sup> First, they are in general principles rather than specific laws. Principles can be applied in a Christ-centered way to a much broader set of circumstances, while the old covenant laws were given to meet the specific life situations of Israel. The new covenant is to go to all nations and is designed to penetrate all cultures without necessarily changing every cultural pattern.

Second, and more importantly, within the new covenant, the Holy Spirit plays a role in the life of every Christian in a way that He did not in the old. In the following reference, note how the Spirit in the new covenant replaces the function of the law in the old.

Who also made us adequate as servants of a new covenant, not of the letter, but of the Spirit; for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life. But if the ministry of death, in letters engraved on stones, came with glory, so that the sons of Israel could not look intently at the face of Moses because of the glory of his face, fading as it was, how shall the ministry of the Spirit fail to be even more with glory? For if the ministry of condemnation has glory, much more does the ministry of righteousness abound in glory. For indeed what had glory, in this case has no glory on account of the glory that surpasses it. For if that which fades away was with glory, much more that which remains is in glory (2 Cor. 3:6-11).

#### 2 Corinthians 3:3-18:

##### Old Covenant:

written with ink  
on tablets of stone  
inadequate\*  
of the letter  
letter kills  
ministry of death  
came with glory  
ministry of condemnation  
glory fades  
now has no glory  
veil remains unlifted  
veil lies over their heart  
bondage\*  
unable to change heart\*

##### New Covenant:

written with the Spirit  
on tablets of human hearts  
adequate servants  
of the Spirit  
Spirit gives life  
ministry of the Spirit  
abounds in glory  
ministry of righteousness  
glory surpasses it  
remains in glory  
veil removed in Christ  
veil taken away  
liberty  
being transformed

\*implied

In the next few verses, Paul comes to more practical matters. What about reading the old covenant?

But their minds were hardened; for until this very day at the reading of the old covenant the same veil remains unlifted, because it is removed in Christ. But to this day whenever Moses [the five books of the Law] is read, a veil lies over their heart. But whenever a man turns to the Lord, that veil is taken away. Now the Lord is the Spirit; and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty. But we all, with unveiled face beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as from the Lord, the Spirit (2 Cor. 3:12-18).

What is Paul saying here? First, the people with the veil over their faces are those who accept the old covenant as it reads, or read it through old covenant eyes. Paul is saying that to understand the old covenant correctly we must see it from the new covenant perspective. This is a very important principle of interpretation. The new covenant, which is a better and more nearly complete revelation of truth,<sup>31</sup> must be allowed to interpret, modify or transform all old covenant statements in a Christ-centered way.

Second, if we continue to read the old covenant from any other perspective it will be as though we are looking through a veil and we will be confused and could come to the wrong conclusions. This means that we should not accept any old covenant laws or practices on the basis of the old covenant statements themselves. Rather, we must examine every old covenant law and statement from the new covenant perspective: Jesus Christ.<sup>32</sup>

I now quote again from Riggle,

"For the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ" (Jn. 1:17). "Jesus the mediator of the new covenant" (Heb. 12:24). "Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ" (Gal. 6:2). Here are contrasted the two systems. The first was "the law" given by Moses, its mediator; the second is "grace and truth," the New Testament, which came by Christ, its mediator. The New Testament is "the law of Christ." This is the law Christians are now under.

In Isaiah 42:1-7 we have a clear prediction of the coming of Christ and his redemptive work. "And the isles shall wait for his law" (vs. 4). The law of Moses was given to one nation—Israel. But of the law of Christ—the New Testament—it was foretold that "the isles" should wait for it. "The isles" here mean the different nations of earth. The gospel is for all people and nations. The command is, "Preach the gospel to every creature" (Mk. 16:15), "Teach all nations" (Mt. 28:19). The gospel is "his [Christ's] law." The isles and the ends of the earth waited for this law; it is the standard of judgment in the earth.

Christ is the "one lawgiver" of this dispensation (Jas. 4:12). For God at "sundry times and in divers various manners" spake unto the fathers in time past, but "hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son" (Heb. 1:1, 2). In the presence of Moses on the mount, God said of Christ, "This is my beloved Son; hear ye him" (Mt. 17:1-5). Moses and his law are ruled out of this dispensation, and Christ and his superior law now rule in its stead. To go back to Moses is to reject Christ.<sup>33</sup> To go under the law is to ignore the gospel.

Christ taught the people "as one having authority" (Matt. 7:29). The precepts he taught are his law. We are under the "law of Christ" (1 Cor. 9:21)... His law is the truth (Jn. 1:17). The law of Moses gendered to bondage (Gal. 4:24), while the truth makes men free (Jn. 8:32). We obey and walk in the truth (3 Jn. 3). The law of Christ is the standard of conviction to sinners. When guilty souls fall at the mercy-seat for pardon, the law of Sinai never enters their minds. They consider only how they have grieved the Spirit of Christ, and broken his law—the New Testament.

The New Testament is a much higher law than the old. It not only condemns all manner of sin, but lifts up a standard of holy living far above the stone-table law. The grandest lessons of moral and religious truth ever spoken to men were given in Christ's Sermon on the Mount. The New Testament condemns sin in every form, lifts up the standard of righteousness and holiness in life and experience, and offers life and salvation to all. It is "the perfect law of liberty" (Jas. 1:25), "the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus" (Rom. 8:2). To break Moses' law—the Sabbath, etc.—was to be stoned to death. The penalty was temporal. But to break Christ's law is to be worthy of eternal damnation. In the day of judgment the Decalog will not be our standard of judgment, but "the word that I Christ have spoken, the same shall judge him at the last day" (Jn. 12:48). "When the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God," punishment will not be meted out to those who disregard the letter of the law as written in the tables of stone, but punishment will then be given to those "that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ" (2 Thess. 1:7-9). The law of Christ—the gospel—will be the standard by which we shall be judged in that day. To disobey the precepts of Christ is to sin. And to sin against his law is to make ourselves liable to eternal judgment and punishment. Obedience to Christ is what the New Testament enjoins (2 Cor. 10:5; Heb. 5:9). But not once in all the New Testament—the law of Christ, that law by which we shall be judged in the last day—are we commanded to keep the seventh-day Sabbath. We can observe every precept of the law of liberty, stand clear in his sight, and yet never observe the seventh day, which was one of the shadows of the law dispensation.<sup>34</sup>

### Many of the principles of the new covenant are now operating in the life of the Christian

Many Adventists state that the law has not yet been written on their hearts; they say the promises of the new covenant are only to be received now by faith and are not realized until the Second Coming of Christ. While there are some aspects of the new covenant that are not yet realized, there are other aspects that the Christian can now claim. To substantiate this claim, some quote Hebrews 8, showing that the verbs are future. Note, however, the writer of Hebrews is quoting from Jeremiah when the new covenant promise was future. In the epistles we find an oft-repeated phrase, "but now..."<sup>35</sup> Often this phrase serves to contrast conditions under the former old covenant with the present conditions under the new covenant. To say that the law cannot be written on the heart now goes against the Scriptures we studied above.<sup>36</sup> What genuine Christian walking by the Holy Spirit would want to kill, steal, lie, or commit adultery, etc. simply because they are no longer under the old covenant?

What happens to the Christian who is wedded to Christ and the law?<sup>37</sup> If one is seeking transformation of soul and is enamored by the Ten Commandments and focuses his attention on this law and the scenes of judgment, as Ellen White recommended,<sup>38</sup> what will be the result? Scripture is clear: "...for these are the two covenants; the one from the mount Sinai, which gendereth to bondage..."(KJV) or who "are to be slaves" (NASB). The Ten Commandments are described variously as a "ministry of death" and "a ministry of condemnation".<sup>39</sup> If one focuses on them it will not result in righteous living. It did not for the Jews, and it will not for the Christian. Rather, focusing on the old covenant is going back under the veil.

New covenant righteousness comes "apart from the law."<sup>40</sup> The new covenant promise was made to Abraham, and Abraham's righteousness did not come by law.<sup>41</sup> The moral requirement of the law<sup>42</sup> is fulfilled in those who walk in the Spirit.<sup>43</sup> The Holy Spirit does not come through the works of the law.<sup>44</sup> The person who seeks righteousness by observing the law will be held accountable for all the requirements of the law.<sup>45</sup> Christ is the end of the law for righteousness.<sup>46</sup> If righteousness came through the law, Christ died needlessly.<sup>47</sup> Paul kept the law "blamelessly", yet he compared this righteousness to rubbish (dung, KJV).<sup>48</sup> The law is not made for a righteous person, but for those who are lawless and rebellious, for the ungodly and sinners, for the unholy and profane...<sup>49</sup>

Having been a fourth generation conservative Adventist, and having served as a pastor and/or Bible teacher for some 13 years in that denomination, it has been my experience, and it has been confirmed in conversations with dozens of others, that there are three main reactions to Historic Adventism.<sup>50</sup> First, there are those who, looking at the multitude of the requirements of the law and Ellen White,<sup>51</sup> just give up. Many of these later leave Adventism. Often they are afraid to attend a Sunday church for fear of receiving the mark of the beast. Their spiritual life withers and dies as they neglect Christian fellowship. Many of these "Formers" become agnostic, even cynical of all religion. I have talked with many dozens of them.

Second, there are those who see the numerous law standards and set out to keep them all and find themselves continually falling short. Day after day they confess their sin, determine never to fall short again, but it is not long until they do. These folks, in time, become discouraged with their way of life and their own sanctification. Their life is often filled with guilt for not achieving what they set out to achieve. These are the people who are drawn to Paul's message of justification by faith. Yet, Adventist theology often muddies the waters if one tries to harmonize Paul and Ellen White. Some have compared it to trying to mix water and oil.

Third, there are some who believe they are perfectly keeping the necessary require-

ments of Adventism and cannot understand why others do not measure up—usually to the standard they have set for themselves. Often these people will look down on others who are not following their strict rule keeping, and they become perfectionistic and judgmental.

### **The Ten Commandments are not now God's tools to promote righteousness—there is a better way!**

**N**ow it is time to take another rest here by the lake. Notice the beaver home reflected in the still, clear waters. In the background are tall Colorado Blue Spruce trees next to the grove of Aspen trees close to the lake. In the distance are majestic 14,000-foot peaks rising into the clean air.

What follows is only one frame in the art gallery of new covenant understanding. Yet, when this one frame is comprehended and put into practice, you can expect to experience peace of spirit and see major results in your life-transformation process.

I believe the Spirit-led Christian does have the law of Christ—the law of love—perfectly written in his spirit (table of his heart).<sup>52</sup> In his spirit the Christian is a new creation.<sup>53</sup> This all happens the moment we are saved—yes, the Bible teaches we can be saved and know it now!<sup>54</sup> However, our soul (*psuche*)<sup>55</sup> is being saved by a transformation process. Now here is where we see the "betterness" of the new covenant over the old covenant of Ten Commandments.

Rather than focusing on the Ten Commandment law, one goes to the New Testament and focuses on Christ, and what the New Testament says is now true for the believer! Wow! What a difference! We now have eternal life!<sup>56</sup> We now have peace with God!<sup>57</sup> We now have been reconciled to God!<sup>58</sup> Our old self (man) was crucified with Christ!<sup>59</sup> We are now to consider our-



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# THE PATH OF TRANSFORMATION IS NOT TRYING TO BECOME WHAT WE ARE NOT—AS IN THE OLD COVENANT. NOW TRANS- FORMATION IS **BECOMING** **WHO WE NOW ARE—A NEW CREATURE IN CHRIST JESUS!**

selves to be dead to sin!<sup>60</sup> We are now freed from sin!<sup>61</sup> We are now dead to the law.<sup>62</sup> We now have been released from the law!<sup>63</sup> We now serve in the newness of the Spirit and not in the oldness of the letter!<sup>64</sup> There is now no condemnation [NONE] to those who are in Christ Jesus!<sup>65</sup> We have now received the spirit of adoption!<sup>66</sup> We now overwhelmingly conquer through Him who loved us!<sup>67</sup> We are now sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise!<sup>68</sup> We are now saved through faith!<sup>69</sup> We are now the dwelling of the Holy Spirit!<sup>70</sup> We are now chosen in Christ.<sup>71</sup> We now have redemption through his blood.<sup>72</sup> God is now at work in us to will and to do His good pleasure.<sup>73</sup> We are now qualified to share in the inheritance of the saints in Light.<sup>74</sup> We have now been transferred to the kingdom of His beloved Son.<sup>75</sup> We have now entered His rest.<sup>76</sup> We now have each received a spiritual gift.<sup>77</sup> The Spirit now helps our weaknesses.<sup>78</sup> We have now been predestined to be like Christ.<sup>79</sup> And this is just the beginning! Do you see why the gospel is “good news”? One cannot work righteousness from the outside in—that was the old covenant way, and it never worked. Rather, in the new covenant God creates or regenerates our spirits. We are born of God.<sup>80</sup> We have the divine DNA, God’s life living in us, and that life is perfect.<sup>81</sup>

Some will answer, “I don’t believe all these things are true in my experience.” This is because the mind, emotions and will have been programmed to sin and are accustomed to accepting the lies the devil has been feeding them. Now that we are “in Christ”, we are to go to the word of God for truth. The path of transformation is not trying to become what we are not—as in the old covenant. Now transformation is becoming who we now are—a new creature in Christ Jesus! We are not to work in righteousness from the outside, but allow the Holy Spirit in union with our spirit and the Word of God to work out the righteousness that our spirits already possess! The life of God is alive in our regenerated spirits!<sup>82</sup>

In connection with Paul’s contrast of the covenants he gives us this powerful insight.

But their minds were hardened; for until this very day at the reading of the old covenant the same veil remains unlifted, because it is removed in Christ. But to this day whenever Moses is read, a veil lies over their heart; but whenever a person turns to the Lord, the veil is taken away. Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty. But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as from the Lord, the Spirit (2 Cor. 3:14-18).

Note that the transformation happens only as the “veil” of the old covenant is taken away. It takes place in an atmosphere of “liberty”, not law. We look into a mirror—what God’s word says is true about us. There we see the glory of the Lord and we are transformed in a process from glory to glory. The Word (*Logos*) of God working with the Holy Spirit is the active agent in this transformation process.<sup>83</sup>

Real transformation cannot take place in an atmosphere of “probation”<sup>84</sup> as Ellen White teaches, but in a milieu of full acceptance. Here the “central pillar”<sup>85</sup> of Adventism stands in the way of spiritual progress. Adventists teach that only those who have accepted God come into the scrutiny of the investigative judgment where even forgotten, unconfessed sins stand against the Christian.<sup>86</sup> This means that they must have a law/judgment focus. However, the Bible is clear that if we have accepted Christ we do not even come into judgment.<sup>87,88</sup> The judgment passages Adventists apply to Christians, the Bible applies either to the forces of evil<sup>89</sup> or to the judgment of rewards, not salvation.<sup>90</sup> Could it be that the Adventist doctrine of the investigative judgment requires the (false) teaching that postpones the blessings of the new covenant to the Second Coming?<sup>2</sup> According to Adventist theology, the fulfillment of “I will remember their sins no more”, cannot take place until the investigative judgment is finished shortly before the Second Coming of Christ<sup>91</sup> when Satan becomes the sin-bearer.<sup>92</sup> However, the Bible makes it clear that the “blotting out of sins” takes place at conversion/repentance/forgiveness.<sup>93</sup> The new covenant picture of God is vastly better than the old covenant concept because it is a more accurate revelation of God’s grace and love in Christ.<sup>94</sup>

To buttress his argument that nothing in the new covenant is realized now, some Adventists appeal to the statement in the new covenant promise that no teachers will be needed. However, the apostle John seems to indicate that this new covenant promise is in effect now.

“As for you, the anointing you received from him remains in you, and you do not need anyone to teach you. But as his anointing teaches you about all things and as that anointing is real, not counterfeit—just as it has taught you, remain in him.”<sup>95</sup>

This promise may not be fully realized now. However, some commentators believe the statement regarding not needing teachers relates to the fullness of the new covenant revelation and the infilling of the Holy Spirit in every true Christian—conditions which were not present under the old covenant that necessitated the need for more intensive teaching.<sup>96</sup> Reading the book of Acts it is clear that the Holy Spirit did teach and/or give

direction to the believers on many, many occasions.<sup>97</sup> Many Christians have experienced this to some degree.

Nevertheless, we can now apprehend many of the present realities of the new covenant blessings. God is our God, and we are His people! He has given us His Spirit who is able to do far more abundantly beyond all that we ask or think, according to the power that works within us.<sup>98</sup>

The book of Galatians is written to bring people back to the new covenant after Judaizers had put them under old covenant law. After Paul's convincing arguments showing that the Christian is not under the law, he goes on to answer an assumed question. "Paul, if we are not under law, then how do we live?" His answer is insightful in showing how the Spirit takes the place of law.

For you were called to freedom, brethren; only do not turn your freedom into an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another. For the whole Law is fulfilled in one word, in the statement, "You shall love your neighbor as yourself.... But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not carry out the desire of the flesh....But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the Law....But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law."<sup>99</sup>

### **The new covenant is about relationship with Christ**

Jesus is the new covenant center. The new covenant partners are God, the Father, and Jesus, His Son. "I will appoint you [the Messiah] as a covenant to the people, as a light to the nations." "I will keep you and give you for a covenant of the people." "For on Him [Jesus] the Father, even God has set His seal.<sup>100</sup>" "But now He has obtained a more excellent ministry, by as much as He is also the mediator of a better covenant which has been enacted on better promises.<sup>101</sup>

The old covenant partners were God and the "sons of Israel." The new covenant partners are the Father and the Son. Christ is the one who rendered perfect obedience to His father. We enter into the blessings of that covenant when we place our faith in Christ! Over and over again we hear Jesus saying, "My food is to do the will of him who sent me and to finish his work.... I do not seek my own will, but the will of Him who sent Me...I have kept My Father's commandments."<sup>102</sup> On that Friday afternoon when our Covenant Keeper was dying on the cross for our sins, His last words were, "It is finished." Just before these triumphant words we read these insightful remarks by the Gospel writer, "Jesus, knowing that all things had already been accomplished...<sup>103</sup> Then with keen, Holy-Spirit insight the Gospel writer records, "And Jesus uttered a loud cry, and breathed His last. And the veil of the temple was torn in two from the top to the bottom."<sup>104</sup> This divine intervention was to show that the old covenant had come to its end.

What is our work? Jesus answered and said to them, "This is the work of God, that you believe in Him whom He has sent."<sup>105</sup> "Come unto Me, all who are weary and heavy-laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For My yoke is easy and My burden is light.<sup>106</sup> We have this

promise. "Truly, truly, I say to you, he who hears My word, and believes Him who sent Me, has eternal life, and does not come into judgment, but has passed out of death into life."<sup>107</sup>

### **We must be careful not to read into Scripture the unbiblical concepts of Ellen White**

Some Adventists equate the "everlasting covenant" with the new covenant. In this everlasting covenant they include both the Abrahamic covenant and the Sinaitic covenant. The "newness" part of the new covenant, they say, is that Christ writes the Ten Commandment law on the hearts. To me, a better and more biblical way of expressing the plan of salvation would be "the new covenant in promise"<sup>108</sup>—before the cross, and "the new covenant in reality"—after the cross.<sup>109</sup> The term "everlasting (or eternal) covenant" is used in Scripture in various ways. It is used for the covenant of circumcision<sup>110</sup> which the New Testament clearly says is abolished.<sup>111</sup> The term "everlasting covenant" is used with meat offerings the Israelites offered to the Lord<sup>112</sup> in connection with the Sinaitic Covenant which is abolished. It is used for the Davidic Covenant.<sup>113</sup> It is used in future, Israel-centered prophecies.<sup>114</sup> Jeremiah uses this term in a similar context to the way he uses "new covenant."<sup>115</sup> The term "eternal [or everlasting] covenant as used in Hebrews 13:20 seems to be identical, or at least similar, to its usage in 12:24 when referring to the new covenant. The writer of Hebrews is reinforcing what has been taught throughout the book by showing the "betterness" of the new covenant over the old by stressing its eternal nature.<sup>116</sup> Could it be that the Adventist use of "eternal covenant" is simply a reflection of Ellen White and her extra-biblical theology?

I also do not see any Scriptural evidence for the Ten-Commandment law in the time of Adam, Noah, Abraham, Isaac, or Jacob, to say nothing of the institution of a covenant based upon the Ten Commandments before Sinai. The Bible references listed do not mention the Ten Commandments. Let's look at them. Unless the cited reference supports the stated conclusion, it is nothing but a ploy that may result in deception. Genesis 3:15 is a shadowy statement of a coming Savior at best. Nothing is mentioned about law. Genesis 9:9–17 Speaks about God's covenant with Noah in promising not to send another flood. I see nothing here that could be construed to be the Ten Commandments. Genesis 12:2,3, speaks about God making a covenant with Abraham regarding the land of Canaan and his future posterity. Again, there is nothing about law here. It is true that God said that "Abraham obeyed Me and kept My charge, My commandments, My statutes and My laws"<sup>117</sup> Yet he lied<sup>118</sup> and committed adultery;<sup>119</sup> therefore we must, it seems to me, interpret these commandments and laws that Abraham "kept" to be the specific instructions God gave to Abraham which he did keep.<sup>120</sup> If we read into Scripture that these laws are the Ten Commandments, then we make Scripture untrue. Abraham did not keep the Ten Commandments. To break one is to break them all.<sup>121</sup> Ellen White, however, supports all the unbiblical concepts of the Ten Commandment law preceding Sinai and applying to Abraham.

Another Adventist argument places much emphasis on whether the covenant is "commanded" or "agreement" in type.

This argument states that the Ten Commandments are a “Commanded Covenant”, and the old covenant is an “agreement covenant”. However, we have shown conclusively that the Ten Commandments are part and parcel of the old covenant. Therefore, these distinctions seem to be of no value here. There are also a number of references that disprove this assertion.

In Exodus 35:1, Moses says, “These are things that the Lord commanded you to do:” then follows instruction regarding the Sabbath, offerings, tabernacle workmen, instructions on building the sanctuary, and so forth, with no clear distinction between the Ten Commandments and the “other laws”.

Note also that in Deut. 29:1, Moses says,

These are the words of the covenant which the Lord commanded Moses to make with the sons of Israel in the land of Moab, besides the covenant which He had made with them at Horeb.

Here Moses says, “these are the words which the Lord commanded...” To what words is he referring? The careful reader will note that “these words” refers to everything between Deuteronomy 5:1–28:68—nearly the whole book of Deuteronomy! This section contains the Ten Commandments (6:11–21) and the laws relating to the following topics: sanctuary, clean and unclean, sabbatical years, feasts, administration of justice, Levites, spiritism, cities of refuge, warfare, crime, domestic relations, morality, whom to exclude from the assembly, divorce, first fruits, blessings and cursings, and many, many others. Therefore, all these law topics are included in the “commanded covenant”. When the Israelites agreed to keep the covenant, they were agreeing to keep the commanded covenant.

In 2 Kings 21:8 we read,

I will not again make the feet of the Israelites wander from the land I gave their forefathers, if only they will be careful to do every-

thing I commanded them and will keep the whole Law that my servant Moses gave them.

Notice here the whole law is what God commanded, not just the Ten Commandments. Therefore, I see no valid application of the distinction between “commanded” and “agreed upon”. Rather, these Scriptures reinforce our conclusion that the old covenant is the whole law of Moses.

## Conclusion

**W**e have come a long way down the trail of Scripture. If you have come with me thus far, you are to be commended. It has not been an easy hike. I warned you of the difficulties of the trail! As we look out over the glassy emerald lake, let’s review the highlights of this hike—the facts of Scripture.

1. The Ten Commandments are the very words of the old covenant.
  2. The old covenant, or Sinaitic Covenant, is based upon one law, not two. It comprises the whole Mosaic Law: moral, civil and ceremonial.
  3. The New Testament defines the “old” or “first” covenant as the Sinaitic Covenant and unmistakably includes both the Ten Commandments and the “other laws” in this covenant.
  4. The old covenant law was given only to the children of Israel.
  5. The laws of Sinai, including the Ten Commandments, were not given until the time of Moses.
  6. The old, or first, covenant which included the Ten Commandments was in force only until the death of Christ.
  7. The new covenant law of Christ is much better than the old covenant law of commandments.
  8. Many of the principles of the new covenant are now operating in the life of the Christian.
  9. The Ten Commandments are not now God’s tools to promote righteousness—there is a better way!
  10. The new covenant is about relationship with Christ.
  11. We must be careful not to read into Scripture the unbiblical concepts of Ellen White.
- In this hike we have not explored many of the side trails that give needed perspective to this subject. However, I believe we have given our readers enough to study for the next two months! It is my prayer that every reader will prayerfully study God’s Word on this important subject.

Yes, truth can stand the test of investigation! Yes, the truth will set you free!†



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## Endnotes

- <sup>1</sup> Ex. 40:20; Deut. 10:5,8.
- <sup>2</sup> See Lev. 23:2,3 noting the rest of the chapter; 1 Chron. 23:31; 2 Chron. 2:4; 8:12,13; 31:3; Ez. 45:17; 46:1–7; 2 Ki. 4:23; Neh. 10:33; Isa. 1:13,14; 66:23; Col. 2:16.
- <sup>3</sup> In Hebrew if one counts words from the beginning and end of the Ten Commandments, one will find that the central phrase is “remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy”.
- <sup>4</sup> Ex. 31:13–18. See also *Sabbath in Christ*, pp. 50–51 for a detailed comparison between the Sabbath sign in Ex. 31 and the circumcision sign in Gen. 17.
- <sup>5</sup> Meredith G. Kline, *Treaty of the Great King*, pp. 13,14,18,19,59
- <sup>6</sup> Matt. 22:37–40.
- <sup>7</sup> Ellen G. White, *Early Writings*, p. 33.
- <sup>8</sup> See *Sabbath in Christ*, pp. 235–246, where a whole chapter is dedicated to this verse.
- <sup>9</sup> See *The Sabbath and the Lord’s Day*, pp. 59,60 for more biblical support.
- <sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 61.
- <sup>11</sup> See *Ibid.*, p. 30ff. for biblical examples of each of the Ten Commandments.
- <sup>12</sup> Gen. 17:14; Ex. 31:14; Ex. 12:15; Ex. 30:33; Ex. 30:38; Lev. 7:20,21,25,27; 17:1–4; 18:6–18,19,22,23; 19:1–8; 20:3,6; 23:29; Num. 9:13.
- <sup>13</sup> See *Sabbath in Christ*, pp. 45,46 where abundant evidence is given to show that the “other laws” interpret and apply the Ten Commandments to the life situation of the Israelites.
- <sup>14</sup> See *Ibid.* p. 87–88. for additional material on this point.
- <sup>15</sup> See *Ibid.*, chapters 16–17 for a discussion of this statement with supporting material.
- <sup>16</sup> Riggie, p. 61.
- <sup>17</sup> 2 Tim. 3:16–17
- <sup>18</sup> When the 27 Fundamental Beliefs of Seventh-day Adventists were formulated. There are now 28 Fundamental Beliefs, and at the 2015 General Conference session, the wordings of several belief statements were revised.
- <sup>19</sup> Seventh-day Adventist Church Manual, 1976, p. 32.
- <sup>20</sup> *Fundamental Beliefs of Seventh-day Adventists*, No. 1.
- <sup>21</sup> Ellen G. White, *The Great Controversy*, p. 595
- <sup>22</sup> See *Sabbath in Christ*, chapter 18.
- <sup>23</sup> Riggie, p. 72.
- <sup>24</sup> Rom. 2:14.
- <sup>25</sup> Rom. 2:15; 2 Cor. 3:2–6.
- <sup>26</sup> Rom. 8:1.
- <sup>27</sup> This does not mean that the Christian will steal, kill, lie and commit adultery, etc. Rather, it means that there is a better guideline for service which is the Holy Spirit in the life focusing on the present realities of who we are in Christ helping us to live out what the Holy Spirit has put in. We are a new creation in Christ Jesus. 2 Cor. 5:17; Gal. 6:15.
- <sup>28</sup> *Sabbath in Christ*, p. 217.
- <sup>29</sup> Rom. 7:1–4; *Sabbath in Christ*, p. 217–220.
- <sup>30</sup> See *Sabbath in Christ*, see chapter 17 for many more insights regarding the two covenants.
- <sup>31</sup> Heb. 1:1–3.
- <sup>32</sup> *Sabbath in Christ* p. 92–94.
- <sup>33</sup> See John 9:28 and *Sabbath in Christ*, see chapter 12.
- <sup>34</sup> Riggie, p. 104–106.
- <sup>35</sup> See, for example, Rom. 3:21; 6:22; Eph. 5:8; Gal. 3:25; Heb. 8:6; 9:26; 12:26; 1 Pet. 2:10, 25.
- <sup>36</sup> Rom. 2:15; Gal. 3:2.
- <sup>37</sup> Paul in Romans 7 likens this to spiritual adultery.
- <sup>38</sup> See *Cultic Doctrine*, p. 228–235 for a number of EGW references.
- <sup>39</sup> 2 Cor. 3:7,9.
- <sup>40</sup> Rom. 3:21.
- <sup>41</sup> Rom. 4:13.
- <sup>42</sup> This does not mean that the Christian is under the old law of Ten Commandments, rather it means that the morality of the new covenant fully meets the moral principles upon which the Ten Commandments were based.
- <sup>43</sup> Rom. 8:4.
- <sup>44</sup> Gal. 3:2,3.
- <sup>45</sup> Gal. 5:3,4.
- <sup>46</sup> Rom. 10:4
- <sup>47</sup> Gal. 2:21.
- <sup>48</sup> Phil. 3:7–9.
- <sup>49</sup> 1 Tim. 1:9.
- <sup>50</sup> I define “Historic Adventists” as those who accept all 28 “Fundamentals” and believe the writings of Ellen White to be inspired of God.
- <sup>51</sup> Anyone who has read deeply into Ellen White will know the enormity of the weight of instruction and guilt she lays on her readers. Just read the nine volumes of the *Testimonies* and you will see! See also, *Cultic Doctrine*, p. 210–214.
- <sup>52</sup> 2 Cor. 3:2–18.
- <sup>53</sup> 2 Cor. 5:17; Gal. 6:15.
- <sup>54</sup> See *Cultic Doctrine*, p. 228ff.
- <sup>55</sup> This refers to the “self”—the mind, emotions and will. While our spirits are regenerated (saved) when we believe in the Lord Jesus and are given eternal life (*zoe*), the *psuche* (soul) is being transformed as we learn to submit to the word of God and His indwelling Spirit. Jesus came to undo what Adam had done. That is why we find that He did nothing without his Father’s approval. We, too, are to put our psuche under the control of the Holy Spirit. This submission is the process of sanctification which is worked out by the power of the Holy Spirit in our lives.
- <sup>56</sup> Jn. 6:47.
- <sup>57</sup> Rom. 5:1.
- <sup>58</sup> Rom. 5:10.
- <sup>59</sup> Rom. 6:6.
- <sup>60</sup> Rom. 6:11.
- <sup>61</sup> Rom. 6:18, 22, 1 Jn. 3:8,9.
- <sup>62</sup> Rom. 7:4.
- <sup>63</sup> Rom. 7:6.
- <sup>64</sup> Rom. 7:6.
- <sup>65</sup> Rom. 8:1.
- <sup>66</sup> Rom. 8:15.
- <sup>67</sup> Rom. 8:37.
- <sup>68</sup> Eph. 1:13.
- <sup>69</sup> Eph. 2:8.
- <sup>70</sup> Eph. 2:22.
- <sup>71</sup> Eph. 1:4.
- <sup>72</sup> Eph. 1:7.
- <sup>73</sup> Phil. 2:13.
- <sup>74</sup> Col. 1:12.
- <sup>75</sup> Col. 1:13.
- <sup>76</sup> Heb. 4:3.
- <sup>77</sup> Rom. 12; 1 Cor. 12; Eph. 4.
- <sup>78</sup> Rom. 8:26.
- <sup>79</sup> Rom. 8:29.
- <sup>80</sup> Jn. 3:3–5.
- <sup>81</sup> 1 Cor. 6:19; Rom. 8:9–12, 1 Cor. 2:12; 1 Cor. 3:16;
- <sup>82</sup> Rom. 8:9–11.
- <sup>83</sup> Heb. 4:12.
- <sup>84</sup> Probation is not a biblical term but is one used frequently by both Adventists and Mormons.
- <sup>85</sup> Ellen G. White, *The Great Controversy*, p. 409, See also, *Spirit of Prophecy*, Vol. 4, p. 258.
- <sup>86</sup> Ellen G. White, *The Spirit of Prophecy*, p. 331.
- <sup>87</sup> Jn. 3:18; 5:24.
- <sup>88</sup> See the chapter “I’ve Been Acquitted” in *Cultic Doctrine* for a thorough study of the good news of Judgment.
- <sup>89</sup> See *Cultic Doctrine*, p. 216–219.
- <sup>90</sup> Matt. 25:31–46.
- <sup>91</sup> *Cultic Doctrine*, pp. 152–165.
- <sup>92</sup> Ellen G. White, *The Great Controversy*, p. 422, See also *The Spirit of Prophecy*, Vol. 4, p. 267.
- <sup>93</sup> See Ellen G. White, *The Spirit of Prophecy*, Vol. 4, p. 308, where she says that sins will not be blotted out after the close of the investigative judgment. The Bible says otherwise, Ps. 51:1–2; 9; Isa. 44:22 KJV; Isa. 43:25. Heb. 8:12; Jer. 31:34. 1 Jn. 1:9. See also *Cultic Doctrine*, pp. 208–210.
- <sup>94</sup> Heb. 1:1–3.
- <sup>95</sup> 1 John 2:27.
- <sup>96</sup> See R.C.H. Lenski, *Commentary on the New Testament, Hebrews*, p. 268, 269.
- <sup>97</sup> Acts 4:31; 6:3,8; 8:29,39; 9:17,31; 11:28; 13:4,52.
- <sup>98</sup> Eph. 3:20.
- <sup>99</sup> Gal. 5:13,14,16,18,22,23.
- <sup>100</sup> Isa. 42:6; 49:8; Jn. 6:47.
- <sup>101</sup> Heb. 8:6.
- <sup>102</sup> Jn. 4:34; 5:30; 15:10.
- <sup>103</sup> Jn. 19:28–30.
- <sup>104</sup> Mk. 15:37,38.
- <sup>105</sup> Jn. 6:29.
- <sup>106</sup> Mt. 11:28–30.
- <sup>107</sup> Jn. 5:24.
- <sup>108</sup> Rom. 4:13,14,16,20,21; 9:8; Gal. 3:29; 4:23,28.
- <sup>109</sup> Recognizing that some aspects of the new covenant promise are not fully experienced until the Second Coming of Christ.
- <sup>110</sup> Gen. 17:13.
- <sup>111</sup> Gal. 5:1–4.
- <sup>112</sup> Num. 18:17–19.
- <sup>113</sup> 2 Sam. 23:5.
- <sup>114</sup> Isa. 61:8; Ez. 37:26.
- <sup>115</sup> Jer. 31:27–34; 32:40.
- <sup>116</sup> “It [the everlasting or new covenant] is the covenant or testament that was received by Abraham. It was first promised, but this promise was duly fulfilled by Jesus, namely ‘in connection with this blood,’ the expiatory power of which is permanent, eternal. The testament that was brought to Israel by Moses was only a temporary addition...The eternal seal upon the expiation of Jesus is his resurrection, when God brought him again ‘from the dead’” R.C.H. Lenski, *Hebrews*, p. 494.
- <sup>117</sup> Gen. 26:5.
- <sup>118</sup> Gen. 20.
- <sup>119</sup> Gen. 16.
- <sup>120</sup> Gen. 12, 17, 22.
- <sup>121</sup> Jam. 2:10.

# ARE YOU BEING LED BY A JUDAS GOAT?

MICHAEL PURSLEY

**T**here is an old story that emerged years ago from the stockyards in Chicago. The stock handlers could not find an effective way to get the sheep from the holding pens into the butcher house. The sheep were easily spooked, and the sounds and the smells in the yard alarmed them. The men introduced dogs to herd the sheep, but the method that worked in a pasture under the authority of a shepherd failed in a strange and dangerous place. Next the handlers tried pain. They formed lines of men with electric prods who attempted to force the sheep into going in the right direction, zapping them when they tried to cut and run. Again their plan failed. The sheep, afraid and untrusting, simply wouldn't walk obediently to their deaths.

Finally, the stock handlers found a solution. Following an old farmer's advice, the men trained a goat to come in and mingle with the sheep. It rapidly blended into the flock, and eventually, the goat, wearing a little bell, placed himself at the head of the sheep. It walked straight to the slaughterhouse, and the sheep trustingly followed. Once there, the sheep had their throats cut, and they died.

And what happened to the goat?

The goat just walked away, went to the next pen, and did the same thing again—and again.

Significantly, these slaughterhouse goats had a name: Judas Goats. Their only purpose was to lead sheep to their deaths.

Throughout history Satan has had a number of Judas Goats. Sometimes they were pagan emperors. Sometimes they have been TV evangelists. Often they have been false teachers, false prophets, or influential leaders who created false churches or deceptive religious movements.

Let me give you some characteristics of these spiritual Judas Goats. Once these characteristics are identified, Judas Goats become easy to spot. The texts following each characteristic show the biblical truth obscured by the Judas Goats' deception.

- Judas Goats say that Jesus is either not completely divine, or that He has a “fallen” (sinful) human nature (1 Jn. 2:22, 4:3; 2 Jn. 1:7; Col. 1:19; 2:9).

- Judas Goats subtract from Scripture or add to it with their own writings or teachings (Deut. 4:2; Rev. 22:18,19).
- Judas Goats twist plain, simple biblical statements on the essential matters of Christianity and thus change God's plan of salvation (Is. 28:13; Gal. 1:6-9; Col. 2:16-23).
- Judas Goats emphasize morality (sometimes the law), family values, prophecies, and lifestyle over the good news of the gospel (Phil. 3:2-11; Acts 15:19-21; Rom. 14; 1 Tim. 4:1-5).
- Judas Goats also minimize or change the finished atonement of Christ or teach that it is not yet finished. Sometimes Judas Goats even say that there was no need for an atonement. They often emphasize that Jesus was, and is, mainly an example (Rom. 3:21-28; Heb. 9:22; 1 Jn. 2:2, 4:10).
- Judas Goats will stress that salvation comes through their church, denomination, system of thought, or practices. Judas Goats never stress that salvation comes through Jesus alone (Rom. 10:9-10; Jn. 5:24; 6:29).

Now that I have mentioned some of the characteristics of Judas Goats, their identities become much clearer, don't they? If you, dear reader, identify with one or more of these Judas Goat characteristics, every time you lead people to your point of view or to your church, you are leading them away from the life of the gospel toward their deaths. Similarly, if you are being drawn by the teachings of a Judas Goat, you are being drawn into deception. Only the true Shepherd of the sheep can lead us into life and away from death.

Flee from the deception of the Judas Goats.†

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Michael Pursley has accepted the Lord Jesus Christ as his Savior. He completely and humbly rests upon the fact that God has revealed Himself in Jesus Christ who has blotted out all of his sins. Because of Jesus he has hope, peace, and joy, and his prayer is that all who do not know Jesus will trust Him who calls the dead to life.

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# DEAR ADVENTIST, HAVE YOU DISCIPLINED YOUR DIET?

Many Adventists today are unfamiliar with the writings of Ellen White, and Lisa Winn wishes to re-acquaint them with the roots of their faith. This column is intended either to encourage Adventist readers to hold fast to their faith as directed by Mrs. White, or, if her directives seem oppressive and legalistic, to re-examine their beliefs and prayerfully peruse the rest of this publication.

**W**hile contemporary studies reveal that a wholesome diet boosts longevity, Mrs. White's health message extends beyond mere physical well-being to purifying one's soul as well: "Those who indulge in any species of intemperance, either in eating or drinking, waste their physical energies and weaken moral power."<sup>1</sup> Just the act of eating meat "excite[s] and strengthen[s] the lower passions, and has a tendency to deaden the moral powers."<sup>2</sup> Indeed, in her mind, it is "impossible" to indulge the appetite and "attain to Christian perfection."<sup>3</sup>

## More than "Meats" the Eye

Most Adventists today seem blissfully unaware that many foods (not just meat) are condemned by Mrs. White: "Flesh-meats, butter, cheese, rich pastry, spiced foods, and condiments...do their work in deranging the stomach, exciting the nerves, and enfeebling the intellect."<sup>4</sup> Milk and eggs should be limited as much as possible.<sup>5</sup> Furthermore, she revealed (in 1901) that "the time will soon come when there will be no safety in using eggs, milk, cream, or butter, because disease in animals is increasing in proportion to the increase of wickedness among men."<sup>6</sup> (One might prayerfully consider whether that time is now!?)

Mrs. White specifically warned against young children eating butter,<sup>8</sup> eggs and meat because it: "...feeds and inflames the animal passions. This makes it very difficult for [children] to overcome the temptation to indulge in the sinful practice of self-abuse [masturbation], which in this age is almost universally practiced. This practice weakens the physical, mental, and moral powers and bars the way to everlasting life."<sup>9</sup> Children should be taught "self-denial" of the appetite from "babyhood."<sup>10</sup>

## Health Reform: Progressive, Not Permissive

Admittedly there is much debate about which foods belong in the Adventist diet—perhaps because Mrs. White intended reform



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to be progressive for each individual, instructing people over time how to work towards eating an ideal diet.<sup>11</sup> "If we come to persons who have not been enlightened in regard to health reform, and present our strongest positions at first, there is danger of their becoming discouraged as they see how much they have to give up..."<sup>12</sup> She warned that such strong health reform does not belong at the forefront of evangelism, and it is not to be a test, like the Sabbath.<sup>13</sup> She recognized that, "We should meet the people where they are...for the world is given to gluttony."<sup>14</sup> However, the longer one has been an Adventist, and the more instruction one has received in health reform, the firmer the health mandate becomes: "Abstinence from all hurtful food and drink is the fruit of true religion. He who is thoroughly converted will abandon every injurious habit and appetite."<sup>15</sup> One should be ever progressing towards a "plain, simple, wholesome" diet.<sup>16</sup>

Ellen White herself gave up rich foods,<sup>17</sup> and while she may not prove a perfect role model herself,<sup>18</sup> her writings demonstrate that she intended Adventists ultimately to eradicate rich foods from their diets. Mrs. White tells her son Edson and his wife, "The sin of indulgence of appetite is greater in your case than with many because you have had great light. You may both venture to indulge your taste and enjoy your butter and fleshmeats, but remember you are sinning against God. You will feel the result of indulgence physically, mentally, and morally."<sup>19</sup> While this is a personal exhortation, one would be remiss to claim these principles do not apply to "the remnant church"<sup>20</sup> at large.

## Dear Adventist

What can we find on the tables of generational Adventists today? Surely in your close-knit community, you have received at least as much light as Mrs. White's own children! If you have access to healthful, affordable food but are not eradicating rich foods from your diet, then you are renouncing the health message. You are "guilty of a great sin" and are becoming "criminal before God"<sup>21</sup>. I urge you either to examine the health message in the light of the gospel or to live with integrity by being truly Adventist.†

## ENDNOTES

- <sup>1</sup> *Christian Temperance and Bible Hygiene*, p. 53.3.
- <sup>2</sup> *Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 2, p. 352.1.
- <sup>3</sup> *Counsels on Diet and Foods*, p. 22.3.
- <sup>4</sup> *Christian Temperance and Bible Hygiene*, p. 46.3
- <sup>5</sup> *The Ministry of Healing*, p. 320.0.
- <sup>6</sup> *Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 7 p. 135.1.
- <sup>7</sup> <https://www.ministrymagazine.org/archive/1989/02/milk-has-the-time-come>
- <sup>8</sup> *Counsels on Diet and Foods*, p. 245.3.
- <sup>9</sup> *Manuscript 5*, 1881.12.
- <sup>10</sup> *Christian Temperance and Bible Hygiene*, p. 46.1.
- <sup>11</sup> *Testimonies for the Church*, vol 7 p. 135.1.
- <sup>12</sup> *Testimony to the Church*, p. 45.1 ([https://egwwritings.org/?ref=en\\_PH\\_159.1&para=255.3](https://egwwritings.org/?ref=en_PH_159.1&para=255.3)).
- <sup>13</sup> *Manuscript 5*, 1881.15.
- <sup>14</sup> *Testimony to the Church*, p. 44.1 ([https://egwwritings.org/?ref=en\\_PH\\_159.1&para=255.3](https://egwwritings.org/?ref=en_PH_159.1&para=255.3)).
- <sup>15</sup> *Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 9, p. 113.1.
- <sup>16</sup> *Counsels for the Church*, p. 238.1.
- <sup>17</sup> *Spalding and Magan Collection*, p. 169.1.
- <sup>18</sup> Letter 61 1878.2.
- <sup>19</sup> Letter 47a 1874.5
- <sup>20</sup> *Counsels for the Church*, p. 231.6.
- <sup>21</sup> Letter 47a 1874.8.

**G**od does not lie. This fact is foundational to the Christian faith. Another foundational truth is God can be trusted. I am staking my life on these two foundational Christian truths. If I'm completely honest, though, I lose sight of them. I was born and was raised to believe that God lies and can't be trusted.

Scripture tells me that I was the one who did not seek for God. I was born a liar and a deceiver (Rom. 3:10–18). Furthermore, I have more bad news—you were also born a liar and a deceiver.

I was a child of wrath, like the “rest of mankind”, and I was following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is even now at work in this world (Eph. 2:1–3). My relationship with God was dead, and your relationship with God was also dead (Eph. 2:1–8).

Satan, the other part of this equation, is known as a liar and deceiver. Eve believed his lies. She had been told not to eat of the fruit of the tree that was in the midst of the garden or she would die (Gen. 3:3). We know from Scripture that Satan told her, “You will not surely die” (Gen. 3:4–5). Eve saw that the tree was good for food and that the tree was desired to make one wise, so she believed the lie and ate. At the moment she and Adam ate, they became dead to God and hid from Him.

God hadn't lied. Adam and Eve died. Was God at fault? He told the truth. Eve is the one who believed the lie.

In my counseling practice I often hear the phrase, “A loving God would not have allowed \_\_\_\_\_. ” The clients' trust in God has been affected, but I listen, because their comments are usually steeped in pain.

Scripture says that there are two unchangeable things, and one of the two is this: it is impossible for God to lie (Heb. 6:18). In light of this statement, we know that when Scripture tells us that we will experience trials of various kinds (Jas. 1:2), it is the truth. God never promised we would not suffer.

Humans, on the other hand, do lie. Sometimes they lie to soften the truth. For example, a child needs a shot. The parent may attempt to calm the child by saying, “It won't hurt. Don't worry.” The child then receives the shot and realizes it did hurt—and that Mom or Dad didn't tell the truth. Furthermore,

# GOD DOES NOT LIE

**GOD CAN BE TRUSTED  
TO TELL THE TRUTH—  
EVEN THE HARD TRUTH.**

the child may wonder what other times Mom or Dad didn't quite tell the complete truth.

God always tells the truth. And one of His truths is: you will suffer when on earth. God can be trusted to tell the truth—even the hard truth.

When people ask me where God is when they suffer and why He allowed their pain, I can't answer the “why”, but I can tell them God hasn't lied to them. God was in their suffering. In fact, God was beside them and in the midst of it all. God put on their suffering, because He took sin (which involves pain, guilt and death) and died with all of it in His very being. He took the ultimate pain upon Himself so that we would not suffer forever.

*“For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, being justified as a gift by His grace through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus; whom God displayed publicly as a propitiation in His blood through faith” (Rom. 3:23–25a).*

We are told to trust in the Lord with all our hearts and to lean not on our own understanding, but in all our ways we are to acknowledge Him, and He promises to direct our paths (Prov. 3:5–6). Do you believe that God doesn't lie? Do you struggle trusting Him? God has told you in advance that you would experience pain, but it will not be forever if you choose to believe in Jesus—even though the pain may be so intense it may feel like forever.

With what area in your life are you struggling to trust God? Will you share that area with Him and ask Him to turn your lack of trust into truth and faith? †

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**ADVENTISM'S FUNDAMENTAL BELIEF #20:**

# THE SABBATH

**ADVENTISM'S FUNDAMENTAL BELIEF #20**

The beneficent Creator, after the six days of Creation, rested on the seventh day and instituted the Sabbath for all people as a memorial of Creation. The fourth commandment of God's unchangeable law requires the observance of this seventh-day Sabbath as the day of rest, worship, and ministry in harmony with the teaching and practice of Jesus, the Lord of the Sabbath. The Sabbath is a day of delightful communion with God and one another. It is a symbol of our redemption in Christ, a sign of our sanctification, a token of our allegiance, and a foretaste of our eternal future in God's kingdom. The Sabbath is God's perpetual sign of His eternal covenant between Him and His people. Joyful observance of this holy time from evening to evening, sunset to sunset, is a celebration of God's creative and redemptive acts.

**COMMENTS ABOUT THE BELIEF STATEMENT**

It would be impossible to address adequately the complexity of the Adventist Sabbath doctrine in one short column. Instead, I will address what the Bible teaches about Sabbath as compared with Adventism's Sabbath doctrine and show how this belief statement deceptively obscures the organization's real belief.

First, if the Sabbath commandment was instituted for all people as God's sign of His covenant between Himself and His followers, then Seventh-day Adventists are correct in insisting on resting during the seventh day from evening to evening. There is no biblical case to be made, however, that the seventh-day Sabbath was ever adapted for the church.

The central question is this: is the Sabbath day a universal command given by God to all people for all times? Let's examine the facts:

1) There is no record of God commanding anyone to observe the Sabbath, nor of anyone observing the Sabbath, before the nation of Israel was brought out of Egypt.

2) The seventh-day Sabbath command is given as both a memorial of creation (Ex. 20:8-11) and of Israel's exodus from Egyptian slavery (Deut. 5:12-15).

3) The Sabbath is described as a sign between God and Israel (Ex. 31:12-17; Eze. 20:12). Exodus 31 is clear for whom the Sabbath was a covenant: "Therefore the people of Israel shall keep the Sabbath, observing the Sabbath throughout their generations, as a covenant forever. It is a sign forever between me and the people of Israel that in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, and on the seventh day he rested and was refreshed" (vs 16-17).

4) The Holy Spirit is described as the sign or seal between God and His followers in Christ (2 Cor. 1:22; Eph. 1:13-14; Eph. 4:30).

5) There are no recorded New Testament cases of believers gathering to worship on Sabbath. The frequently cited cases of Paul's Sabbath synagogue attendance are all in the context of presenting the Gospel to the Jews and the gentile followers of Jewish teachings who were already gathering on the Sabbath. There are no cases where Sabbath observance is noted after people believed in Jesus and were born again. In the few recorded cases of believers gathering for worship, they either met every day (Acts 2:46-47) or on the first day of the week (Acts 20:7; I Cor. 16:1-2).

The Sabbath question ultimately hinges on the question of God's covenants. If the covenant that applies to all of mankind is the law of the Ten Commandments, then the seventh-day Sabbath remains as part of this covenant. However, Scripture is clear that the covenant God made with Israel was not a covenant He had made with their fathers (Deut. 5:2-3). Some Adventists try to claim that the Ten Commandments were not God's covenant with Israel but were separate from it. The plain testimony of Scripture, however, declares the tablets of stone to be the tablets of the covenant (Deut. 9:9-11). Furthermore, the covenant God made with Israel after the exodus from Egypt is described as being inside the ark (1 Ki. 8:21), and we know that the only law inside the ark was the Ten Commandments (Heb. 9:4; 1 Ki. 8:9). If any doubt remains about the identity of the covenant God made with Israel, the direct statement of Deuteronomy 4:13 should clear up the confusion: "And he declared to you his covenant, which he commanded you to perform, that is, the Ten Commandments, and he wrote them on two tablets of stone."

Paul also distinguishes plainly in Galatians 3:12-18, 29 between the temporary covenant of the law and the permanent covenant of promise:

But the law is not of faith, rather "The one who does them shall live by them." Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us—for it is written, "Cursed is everyone who is hanged on a tree"—so that in Christ Jesus the blessing of Abraham might come to the Gentiles, so that we might receive the promised Spirit through faith. To give a human example, brothers: even with a man-made covenant, no one annuls it or adds to it once it has been ratified. Now the promises were made to Abraham and to his offspring. It does not say, "And to offsprings," referring to many, but referring to one, "And to your offspring," who is Christ. This is what I mean: the law, which came 430 years afterward, does not annul a covenant previously ratified by God, so as to make the

# FOR BELIEVERS IN JESUS AND HIS FINISHED ATONEMENT, “TODAY”—NOT THE NEXT SEVENTH-DAY ON THE CALENDAR—IS THE DAY FOR SABBATH REST.

promise void. For if the inheritance comes by the law, it no longer comes by promise; but God gave it to Abraham by a promise...

And if you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's offspring, heirs according to promise.

The law came after the covenant of promise. God receives believers in Christ on the basis of the covenant of promise, not on the covenant of the law (including the Sabbath law). The new covenant included a new law (Heb. 7:12; 8:13), and this new law includes substantial changes from the law covenant established at Sinai—including changes to the requirement of Sabbath.

In fact, the newly-formed church acknowledged this change in covenant laws when the leaders met at the Council of Jerusalem (see Acts 15) to discuss whether Gentiles were required to follow the laws of Moses (verse 5). The conclusion of both the apostles and the Holy Spirit was a resounding, “No!” Gentile believers were not required to follow the law of Moses (see verses 28-29).

Several New Testament verses detail this change in law regarding the Sabbath:

1) Colossians 2:16-17: Therefore let no one pass judgment on you in questions of food and drink, or with regard to a festival or a new moon or a Sabbath. These are a shadow of the things to come, but the substance belongs to Christ.

2) Romans 14:5-6: One person esteems one day as better than another, while another esteems all days alike. Each one should be fully convinced in his own mind. The one who observes the day, observes it in honor of the Lord. The one who eats, eats in honor of the Lord, since he gives thanks to God, while the one who abstains, abstains in honor of the Lord and gives thanks to God.

## SABBATH REST FOR GOD'S PEOPLE

Scripture teaches that there remains a Sabbath rest for the people of God (Heb. 4:9). Sabbatarians often ask, “Doesn't that text plainly argue for the continuity of the seventh-day Sabbath?”

Context, however, denies this argument. Hebrews 4:1-10 states:

Therefore, while the promise of entering his rest still stands, let us fear lest any of you should seem to have failed to reach it. For good news came to us just as to them, but the message they heard did not benefit them, because they were not united by faith with those who listened. For we who have believed enter that rest, as he has said, “As I swore in my wrath, ‘They shall not enter my rest,’” although his works were finished from the foundation of the world. For he has somewhere spoken of the seventh day in this way: “And God rested on the seventh day from all his works.” And again in this passage he said, “They shall not enter my rest.” Since

therefore it remains for some to enter it, and those who formerly received the good news failed to enter because of disobedience, again he appoints a certain day, “Today,” saying through David so long afterward, in the words already quoted, “Today, if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts.” For if Joshua had given them rest, God would not have spoken of another day later on. So then, there remains a Sabbath rest for the people of God, for whoever has entered God's rest has also rested from his works as God did from his.

This passage teaches that, in spite of having the seventh-day Sabbath, the people of Israel didn't enter into a true Sabbath rest with God. Perhaps it could be argued that this failure to achieve rest was because people never really observed the Sabbath as commanded, but the next verses clarify that failure to observe a day was not the reason they did not enter His rest. Rather, unbelief was the reason they did not find rest. Moreover, true Sabbath rest is available now on “another day” (v. 8). For believers in Jesus and His finished atonement, “Today” (vs 7)—not the next seventh-day on the calendar—is the day for Sabbath rest.

## HOW CAN GOD'S LAW CHANGE?

The law changes because the covenant is changed, and the new covenant requires new laws. Let's look at some ways the new covenant is different and therefore requires new laws.

First, there is a new priesthood. Jesus wasn't eligible to be a priest, and certainly not our High Priest, according to the laws of the old covenant, because he was not from the tribe of Levi. In fact, the laws about the priests pointed to a greater Priest who would come.

Second, the entire sacrificial system is now disbanded. The once-for-all sacrifice of Christ isn't possible under the laws of the old covenant. The laws about the sacrifice pointed to a better sacrifice that would come. CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE

**Rick Barker** is a native of Southwestern Ohio and facilitates a weekly Bible study for former and transitioning Adventists in the Dayton, Ohio, area. Rick graduated from Andrews University in 1987 and received a Masters degree from the University of Dayton. Rick and his wife Sheryl formally left the Adventist church in 2004. Prior to this they had been active in the Miamisburg and Wilmington, Ohio, Adventist churches.



Third, the weekly Sabbath (as well as the monthly and yearly sabbaths) disappears. We come to Christ and begin our rest in Him the day that we believe. Wearing the robe of His own righteousness, we no longer have to “work” to be righteous. The weekly Sabbath law pointed not just to a future eternal life in God’s Kingdom, but to our entrance into that Kingdom the day that we believe, for we have already passed from death to life (Jn. 5:24; 1 Jn. 3:14).

Importantly, just because believers aren’t subject to the laws of the old covenant does not mean that they are lawless. Certainly three overriding laws are presented in the New Testament: we are to believe in Jesus as the Son of God, the Messiah, and our Savior; we are to love God; and we are to love others as ourselves, or more demandingly, as Christ loved us.

These three overarching commands only scratch the surface of the imperatives given to believers. We are to feed the poor, care for the sick, preach the Gospel, baptize, make disciples, refrain from gossip, and flee sexual immorality, just to name a few, but these commands are the fruit of being saved, not the condition for being saved. In fact, Jesus’ once-for-all sacrifice promises us perpetual rest and assurance when we believe and trust what He has already

done. Our obedience to the old covenant law has nothing to do with our being saved.

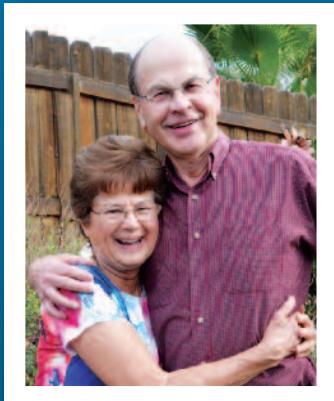
This new covenant teaching is exactly the opposite of the Seventh-day Adventist doctrine of the Sabbath, regardless of how much Adventists might sugarcoat the teaching. Official Adventist doctrine “requires the observance of this seventh-day Sabbath” and considers it “a token of our allegiance”. This wording, however, soft-sells Adventism’s complete teaching about Sabbath. They teach the seventh-day Sabbath is the seal of God<sup>1</sup> and that the day is coming when anyone worshiping on a different day will receive the mark of the beast.<sup>2</sup> At that time, only those who observe the Sabbath will be saved.

According to Adventist doctrine, the defining point of salvation will be the “work” of correctly following a law rather than having faith and believing that Jesus has accomplished all the work necessary for our salvation.

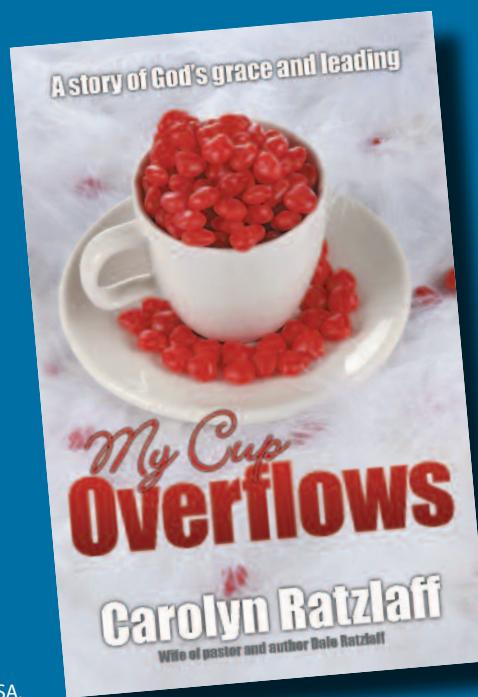
Must we rely on works of the law, or do we rest in assurance that Christ’s sacrifice was sufficient for our salvation? This is the fundamental question arising from this Fundamental Belief. †

<sup>1</sup> White, Ellen G., *The Great Controversy*, p. 640. <sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 605.

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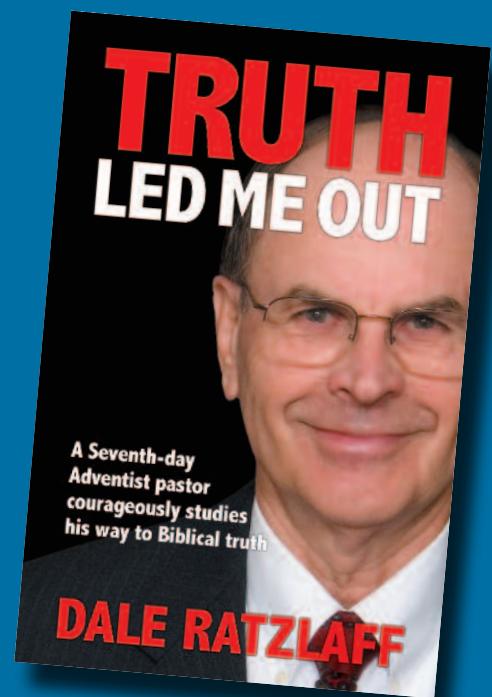
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**Enjoyed open theism article**

We enjoyed the article by Martin Cary on open theism so much. Even as gospel believers, we had held for a long time to some of the wrong views about God without even realizing it. Keep the truth coming.

RIDGWAY, CO

**Intellectually infantile**

You can save some money by removing my name from your list. I find your magazine mainly entertaining; it is intellectually infantile, and its biblical interpretations are simplistic and philosophically untenable. And your writers don't have a clue about church history.

LINCOLN, NE

**Comforting and terrifying**

I received a copy of *Proclamation!*, vol. 17, issue 2, and read it almost cover to cover. Please send another issue. I have been an Adventist my whole life and am 58 years old. I found the issue you sent me to be both comforting and terrifying. On one hand it releases me from legalism, and on the other it tells me that the eternal torture of hell fire awaits those that do not believe.

As if I could be happy knowing there are those suffering unimagin-

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**MESSAGE**

"For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is a gift of God; not of works, that no one should boast." Ephesians 2:8,9

able pain while God's chosen experience the joys of heaven!

But I have asked God to reveal His true self to me, and not my belief of what His true self is. I know this from personal experience: every time I have allowed God to

Let's read what God says through His prophet Jeremiah in Jeremiah 18:7-8: "If at any time I announce that a nation or kingdom is to be uprooted, torn down and destroyed, and if that nation I warned repents of its evil, then I

joyful that God had raised up His last day remnant church who would keep His Commandments and stand firm during the final testing over the Sabbath.

Then, in the mid 1970s and early 80s, we enjoyed seminars held by Robert Brinsmead who directed us to re-study the teachings of the Reformation which revealed justification by faith. We soon began to study the gospel found in Romans and Galatians—a gospel we had never studied in Adventist schools. All of a sudden we became excited to see the simple messages of God's finished work of judgment at Calvary.

After Christ's death, burial, and resurrection, He ascended to His Father and sat down. His work was finished, and now, under a new covenant, we could rest in Him alone! Praise God we had to leave Adventism. Their messages were based on old covenant concepts, but we are accepted under the new covenant of God's grace (Heb. 8:13).

Our sins are forgiven, and we are justified, reconciled, and our names are written in the Lamb's Book of Life! We appreciate *Proclamation!* which reveals these truths and more.

SELAH, WA

**Corrected text**

I have run across your publication and find it refreshing. I have a question, however, concerning an article in the volume 17 issue 2 edition titled "Hell and the Clear Word", page 26. Here the author, Stephen Pitcher, quotes Revelation 19:20 from the English Standard Version (ESV) as follows: "and the devil who deceived them was thrown into the lake of fire and sulfur where the beast and the false prophet were, and they will be tormented day and night forever."

I have searched four different Greek texts—Wescott-Hort, Nestles, the Received Text, and Moffatt's Greek text—and four translations, including the ESV, and cannot find corroboration for the concluding phrase in Mr. Pitcher's version.

## ...I HAVE ASKED GOD TO REVEAL HIS TRUE SELF TO ME, AND NOT MY BELIEF OF WHAT HIS TRUE SELF IS.

take control of a situation in my life, I have never been disappointed (given the advantage of time). Never. Love, grace, mercy, forgiveness, compassion, and patience is my experience with the Creator and Jesus His Son. If what you proclaim is true, I trust God will reveal it to me.

LINDSAY, CA

**I'll be corrected soon enough**

Thank you so much for the magazines. Unfortunately, however, I would like to be taken off the mailing list now. I know that the work you do is very important and helpful to this fallen world we live in, but my beliefs do not fall in line with all of the ones you profess (I hold a non-trinitarian view). If this view is wrong, I will be corrected of my error soon enough (as we do agree in the closeness of the climax of these end times). Thank you again for the two issues I've received.

BUTLER, PA

**Destroying Jonah to save Ellen**

When I discuss the false prophetess Ellen G. White with my Adventist friends and family, they invariably argue that if Ellen White is a false prophet, then Jonah was a false prophet, too, since God did not destroy Nineveh after sending Jonah to Nineveh to tell the citizens that God was going to destroy their city.

will relent and not inflict on it the disaster I had planned."

Now let's look at the story of Jonah. Jonah went to Nineveh and declared that God would overturn the city in 40 days. The king and the city turned from their evil ways! Jonah 3:10: "When God saw what they did and how they turned from their evil ways, he relented and did not bring on them the destruction he had threatened."

Jonah told Nineveh they would be overturned in 40 days. The Ninevites turned from their evil ways. God relented and did not inflict disaster upon the land. Every bit of this story is Biblical and does not make Jonah a false prophet. God kept His word.

It is sad that the Adventist religion must try and tear down true prophets in an effort to lift their false prophet.

ROYCE EARP  
SMYRNA, TN

**Our walk out of Adventism**

In the early 1960s my wife and I began following some young men from the state of Washington who called us to believe there was to be an awakening within Adventism for the purpose of getting ready for the soon coming of Jesus. For around 10 years we studied the Sanctuary doctrine in detail to get ready before probation closed. We were excited and

It seems to me that Mr. Pitcher's argument relies in part on that concluding phrase. Please explain this discrepancy.

INTERIM PASTOR, VIA EMAIL

**Editor's response:** Thank you for writing. We indeed had a typo in that article. The text that should have accompanied that verse is Revelation 20:10. We apologize for the confusion.

### Stealing Adventist sheep

My father has been receiving your magazine by mail, even though he is not aware of having subscribed to it.

Since he is not very savvy with e-mail correspondence or the English language, he has asked me to contact you to cancel his mail subscription to your magazine.

Though my family and I greatly respect your ministry and the journey many of your authors have taken up, we consider ourselves very much Adventist and do not want to associate with nitpickers and waste our time with criticism (which might be well-founded). Rather we want to focus on the social aspect of true Christianity and employ our minds, hearts, and hands in Christ's service.

We are sure that the money you save from cancelling our subscription can be used to steal Adventist sheep elsewhere who are more dissatisfied with the church than we are, and actually have the time to appreciate reading your magazine.

NEU-ULM, GERMANY

### Throw out the baby with the bathwater

RE: "Hell and the Clear Word", *Proclamation!*, Summer 2016, p. 21-26.

When are you folks going to wake up to the fact that conditional immortality is NOT considered heretical in many evangelical circles; not by the NAE, not by Gordon Conwell Theological Seminary, nor by [the late] John Stott, to name but one of many evangelical scholars of today? You are throwing out the baby with the bath water!

MELROSE, MA

**Editor's response:** I am aware that conditional immortality is moving into evangelicalism in some quarters. The difference, however, between "regular" conditional immortality and Adventists' view of it is the fact that Adventists don't believe people have immaterial spirits. Conditional immortality is a technical discussion of whether or not people are eternally conscious after death or whether they are burned out of existence in hell.

Adventists, however, say that people are merely bodies plus

It is my humble prayer that one day you see the light and go back before it is too late. You don't understand the amount of damage you have caused people out there. They view Christ as not requiring anything because of your teachings. Please stop doing this.

VIA EMAIL

### I married an Adventist

Please pray for me and my family. I married a Adventist eight years ago. She is Adventist from birth but hasn't always toed the

## I WAS SKEPTICAL AT FIRST, BUT THE MORE I READ, THE MORE THE ARTICLES HIT HOME.

breath. This idea that man is only physical has implications far beyond the idea of conditional immortality; it reaches into the nature of the Lord Jesus Himself and the nature of sin and salvation.

While I do not believe that conditional immortality is the teaching of Scripture, I believe that Adventism's hiding behind that label to obscure their true belief that man is merely a body that breathes is deceptive and disingenuous.

### Damaging people

I will begin by saying God loves you. I am an Adventist and believe in Christ. I have been following with keen interest your discussions about the faith. I generally feel that you grew up as Adventists and you never really repented and accepted Christ or had an experience with Christ. You were just conforming to what your families have taught you. I am certain that the world is nearing its end, and the Three Angels' Messages need people like you to spread the gospel of Christ to the world. Christ has admonished us to love one another, and I don't see that in your message.

line. I have shown her direct contradictions of the writings of her prophet and the Bible. She defends her at all costs, and her mother and her church tell her what EG White meant to say. I have been pulling my hair out over this! They come up with their own rules and follow only certain Scriptures as well as the rules their prophet has laid down as being from God. As far as reading the Bible together, it's useless. She reads through the lens of EG White. I am so frustrated! We have five and seven-year-old daughters that I am very concerned about. We cannot ever discuss any beliefs without getting into arguments and making tension in the house for everyone. I get nauseous if my wife takes them to "Sabbath school" or to the Adventure club. I didn't know anything about Adventism but now wish I had researched it thoroughly. My decision would have been different eight years ago. Thank you for any help.

MAYNARDVILLE, TN

### Articles hit home

My wife and I spent 40 years as members of the Adventist church (we are no longer members). I held

the offices of head elder and deacon, and my wife held many offices also. Over the years we began to learn that many of the 28 Fundamental Beliefs were not in harmony with what the Bible said. When we would bring up a question or present a different view on a subject, we were told, "That's not what Ellen White said about it."

Along came *Proclamation!* magazine. I was skeptical at first, but the more I read, the more the articles hit home.

We withdrew our membership from the Adventist church a few weeks ago, and we cannot tell you of the relief we have found as we trust in Christ's righteousness and not a bunch of rules! We are attending a local non-denominational Sunday church and love the fellowship and Christ-centeredness of the messages.

Thanks so much for the work you and your people are doing.

GALETON, PA

### Narcissistic Adventists?

I admire what you are doing to help people. One thing that bothers me about cults like the Adventist church is the question of why they have such control over people's minds....

An Adventist has told me that I am not saved and will not be in God's kingdom because I now attend a church on Sunday. Her insults to me show she thinks she knows best, and that I am too stupid to know the true church. This attitude seems typical of a narcissistic person.

Since the Adventist church is totally based on legalistic works, it does not have grace. People without grace have no compassion.

I sensed the Holy Spirit was lacking in the Adventist church when I was a member. I am thankful God had mercy on me and led me out and into a living church.

VIA EMAIL

### MAIL LETTERS TO THE EDITOR TO:

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#### FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 17, 2017

- 9:00 Welcome/Worship
- 9:15 Adventist Issues #1, Dale Ratzlaff
- 10:30 Death and Life #1, Gary Inrig
- 11:45 Breakout Sessions (Dale, Martin, Jim)
- 1:45 Death and Life #2, Gary Inrig
- 3:30 Adventism Reacts, Colleen Tinker
- 6:30 Public Session, *Understanding Adventists*  
Three Errors of Adventism, Dale Ratzlaff  
Adventism In the Mission Field, Paul Carden

#### SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 18, 2017

- 9:30 Death and Life #3, Gary Inrig
- 11:00 Breakout Sessions (Dale, Martin, Jim)
- 1:00 Adventist Issues #2, Dale Ratzlaff
- 2:30 Breakout Sessions (Dale, Martin, Jim)
- 4:00 To be announced!
- 6:30 Death and Life #4, Gary Inrig (Communion)

#### SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 19, 2017

- 10:30 Church: Redeemer Fellowship (Loma Linda)
- 12:30 Fellowship Lunch (Redlands)

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## THE LIFE AFTER WITH CHRIS LEE

The church service was barely half over, and I was already squirming thanks to the extra cup of coffee in which I had indulged at breakfast. Slipping past my wife and two daughters to exit the pew, I quietly made my way down the side aisle back toward the foyer, then took the stairs to the lower level in pursuit of the men's room. That's when I saw it. In passing the boiler room, I was riveted by a sinister orange glow dancing through the crack beneath the door. Cautiously easing the door open, I was confronted by a raging fire.

My first instinct was to run, exit from a lower level door, and get as far away from the conflagration as I could. But of course I couldn't leave my family to the flames. Taking a deep breath I headed back upstairs. I have to admit that, as I entered the foyer, I considered discreetly gathering my family and escorting them out without making a ruckus. As odd as it sounds, even though I knew the danger, I felt reluctant to disrupt the service. I could imagine some people being offended and maybe not even believing me.

When it came down to it though, I couldn't just leave my friends, extended family, and loved ones there without even a word of warning. So, I mustered my courage and uttered that word of alarm, "Fire!"

I wish I could say it went well, but it didn't really. A few listened and left with me, but most were as offended as I had imagined.

The pastor assured everyone there was no fire, had a few words of admonishment for "trouble



**Chris Lee** lives in Lincoln, Nebraska with his wife, Carmen, and daughters, Ashlyn and Alyssa. They attend the Lincoln Berean Church. Chris is a self-described "theology junkie" whose mission is to proclaim the unfathomable grace of Christ in a clear, understandable, and Biblical way. Chris is the editor of the *Proclamation!* Blog at [ProclamationMagazine.com](http://ProclamationMagazine.com). You may contact Chris by email at [ambulater@gmail.com](mailto:ambulater@gmail.com).



makers", and then went back to his sermon. My family, a few friends, and I left the building a bit bewildered as to why others seemed oblivious to their peril.

At that point I just wanted to walk away—I really did—but I couldn't. There were too many people in the church that I cared about too deeply just to shake the dust from my feet. So I called 911 and waited outside for help to arrive. I waited near the church where I could help the survivors who occasionally came trickling out the door and windows. Some were nearly overcome with smoke, emerging scared and scarred. I wrapped blankets around them and escorted them to paramedics.

I wanted to walk away, but I couldn't. I had yelled "fire" and helped others out because it was the right thing to do, because it was the loving thing to do, and because in a sense everyone in that church was my family.

To my Adventist friends, family, and loved ones: I'm still here longing to help and obligated to help. There is a fire in your church. I can't turn my back on those inside. I've been blessed to help many and long to help more. I'm obligated to proclaim what I know and to serve obediently as God gives me opportunity. It's the only loving, faithful way to live the Life After.†

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