

# LIFE ASSURANCE MINISTRIES, INC Proclamation!

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FOR FORMER ADVENTISTS • INQUIRING ADVENTISTS • SABBATARIANS • CONCERNED EVANGELICALS

## The Christian's life of Worshiping God in the Spirit

Verle Streifling

In the early 1980's a popular and informative Christian growth film series was making its way around Evangelical circles, called "How Then shall we Live?" It was produced by the great Christian thinker Francis Schaeffer, from his book of the same title. Then in the late 1990's another book

and nothing but the truth in their teachings, their worship is false worship. Yet it seems this wasn't what Jesus meant, for while the Greek word *alethia* which He used takes the meaning *truth*, it equally means *reality* or *genuine*, and He was addressing the "hows" or rituals of worship that the lady asked about, rather than doctrines which weren't in the discussion. Moreover, all the truth cannot be found in doctrines, but rather in the person of Christ, who said "I myself am the way, the Truth and the life"

**SOME TODAY EMPHASIZE [JESUS'] WORDS "AND IN TRUTH" TO URGE THAT UNLESS ONE HAS ALL THE TRUTH, AND NOTHING BUT THE TRUTH IN THEIR TEACHINGS, THEIR WORSHIP IS FALSE WORSHIP.**

So Jesus was saying that true worship wouldn't be that done in rituals, but rather the genuine or real worship that comes to God from man's heart. Indeed His indictment against Israel's ritual worship was "They worship me with their mouths, and honor me with their lips, but their hearts are far from Me."

hit the market *How Now Shall We Live?* by Chuck Colson, dealing with issues facing Christians today. Almost 2000 years ago, Jesus gave us his insight into the same issue, from his dialogue with the Samaritan at Jacob's well. The lady had asked in essence 'which is the right place and way of worship?' or 'Who's religion is right?' He responded "The hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshippers will worship God in Spirit and in Truth... God is Spirit, and is seeking such to worship Him who will worship Him in the Spirit and in Truth." (John 4:23+24)

But the phrase "in the Spirit" that Jesus used, can be misunderstood for it carries at least four different uses in the New Testament, so that one may easily bring the wrong definition into this text:

Some today emphasize His words "and in Truth" to urge that unless one has all the truth,

**It can be locative**, ie, speaking to the question "where?" that's answered by "in man's spirit". In this

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Addressing the key point

## LIFE ASSURANCE MINISTRIES (LAM), INC

**MISSION:** To proclaim the good news of the new covenant gospel of grace in Christ and to combat the errors of legalism and false religion.

**MOTTO:** Truth needs no other foundation than honest investigation under the guidance of the Holy Spirit and a willingness to follow truth when it is revealed.

**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

## How does one live “life in the Spirit”

would like to introduce this issue of *Proclamation* with a letter I recently received. It was written in response to Greg Taylor’s “Is leaving Adventism all that Great” printed in the last issue of *Proclamation*:

I was saddened by Greg Taylor’s article that as a former SDA pastor he didn’t have the courage to band together within the SDA church to pray for “renewal and revival” among us Pharisees. I believe it was Morris Venden [Well known SDA pastor] that said you clean the church from the inside not the outside. I think Jesus said that too.

From *Manuscript Release* [of EG White]; Vol. 21:155 [we read], “Of the prayers that have been ascending for the fulfillment of the promise—the descent of the Holy Spirit—not one has been lost. Each prayer has been accumulating, ready to overflow and pour forth a healing flood of heavenly influence and accumulated light all over the world.” NOT ONE PRAYER HAS BEEN LOST! Do you see why every prayer-meeting night should include prayers for the descent of the Holy Spirit? Engelkemier, J. “30 Days to More Powerful Intercessory Prayer”.

Some in the Adventist Church are praying for “renewal and revival”. As a lifetime SDA I’d like to make one request of you former pastors that you would truly pray for the descent of the Holy Spirit upon the Adventist Church. You couldn’t be doing us a greater favor... —Retired SDA Professor

We thank this person for her letter. Yes, many former SDAs are praying that the SDA church, and other churches as well, would receive an outpouring of the Holy Spirit. We pray that God will use this issue of *Proclamation* to that end. To bring things into focus, Paul’s question to the Galatians is poignant.

You foolish Galatians, who has bewitched you, before whose eyes Jesus Christ was publicly portrayed as crucified? This is the only thing I want to find out from you: did you receive the Spirit by the works of the Law, or by hearing with faith? Galatians 3:1-2

For those of us who long for more of the Holy Spirit in our church and lives, we must once and for all come to grips with the fact that the Holy Spirit comes with the proclamation—and its reception—of the simple gospel of Christ and not by the works of the law. We trust that the follow-

ing articles will clarify this truth.

In regards to cleansing the church from the inside and not the outside: History does not necessarily support this. It took a Luther who was willing to step outside of the established church to bring at least some reformation to the inside of that church. Without a Ronald Reagan, Russia would not have had the reforms when it did. Without a Desmond Ford who was cast out of the SDA ministry, the simple gospel of faith would not now be so accepted within the SDA church.

In reality, it takes people both on the inside and on the outside to move a well-established organization. Those of us on the outside can speak without fear of financial or career endangerment. When Jesus referred to cleaning the inside and not the outside, he had reference to the heart and not an organization.<sup>1</sup> It was Jesus who said that one cannot put new wine into old wineskins.

It is our prayer that by our work on the outside of Adventism, true reformation will come on the inside of the Seventh-day Adventist church.

### Thank You!

Thank you, to all of you who are praying for this ministry! It is such an encouragement to us to know that many are lifting us up to God each and every day! We thank all of you who have so faithfully—and many sacrificially—financially supported *Proclamation*. It is very gratifying to see the hand of God as He provides, through you, the funds needed each month! May God richly bless you in every way! **!**

<sup>1</sup> See Matt. 23:25–27.

## Proclamation!

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## COMING NEXT ISSUE

- LAM, Inc. expands ministry
- What about original sin?
- Born saved or lost?
- Are you “born again?”
- Salvation: God’s or man’s choice?

# Who has the original blueprints?

Sam Pestes

## Who designed this building, anyway?

The other day while driving we ventured upon a most unusual house that caused us to stop and gaze at it in amazement. It was a hodge-podge if ever I saw one. There was no specific design to it. It looked like a mixture of unrelated rooms that were patched together by some amateur. Each section was a different color. There was no pattern to the roofline, and the foundation, which was on different levels, was all cracked up. Yet it looked relatively new, as though it was just being worked on. Obviously, whoever was putting it up was doing so without a master plan or blueprint. It was a happening!

That structure reminded me of much in modern Christianity. Why are there so many pieces to it? Why are we so many parts that do not fit together harmoniously? Why does the world see us as a hodge-podge of conflicting and often competing organizations? Can we blame them for turning away?

Instead of excusing ourselves by creating lame reasons for our dilemma, let us face up to the facts and admit that someone (maybe all of us) have lost the original blueprint. Did God miraculously create this world out of nothing and then turn it over to us humans without any guidelines? What did He want us to do with the foundation He gave us? In short, where are the original blueprints for the building?

Another question: Suppose we do recognize the original foundation, is it possible for us to build on that foundation, with each one of us using our own design for what we build? That, friends, is exactly what many have been doing! That is why unbelievers are looking at us and saying, "No thanks!" They often equate Christianity with the low moral values and the self-centered lifestyle they see exported for profit. Let's see what the apostle Paul said on the subject in 1 Corinthians 3:11-15. It's scary!

For no one can lay any foundation other than the one already laid, which is Jesus Christ. If any man builds on this foundation using gold, silver, costly stones, wood, hay or straw, his work will be shown for what it is... It will be revealed with fire, and the fire will test the quality of each man's work. If what he builds survives, he will receive his reward. If it is burned up, he will suffer loss...

***Imagine! Paul said that even if it were possible to build on the foundation of Jesus Christ, but use our own ideas (which God considers as nothing but wood, hay or straw, in designing the super structure), such work will be rejected and burned up!***

Imagine! Paul said that even if it were possible to build on the foundation of Jesus Christ, but use our own ideas (which God considers as nothing but wood, hay or straw, in designing the super structure), such work will be rejected and burned up! It is possible to start building on the foundation of Jesus Christ using our own inferior ideas and ambitions, and then find all our work rejected because we did not carefully follow the instructions that the Master builder gave us in His blueprint. Here are some examples showing how easily we can deviate from God's plan when we become infatuated with our own grandiose ideas for building God's kingdom.

I make a distinction between the term "Christianity" as it is used today, and the original "Christ-centered faith" that was the foundation of the saints from the beginning of time. Many people do not know what "Christianity" means today. Most people think of Christianity as a religion which may include a variety of conflicting flavors poured into the same bottle like the Heinz variety of ketchup.

One of the hottest topics dividing Evangelicals today is, what role should Old Covenant laws play in the Christian faith? The church has come full circle to where the believers in Galatia were in the days of Paul. Was there a place for Old Covenant laws in the Christ-centered faith? In shock and amazement Paul wrote to them,

You foolish Galatians! Who has bewitched you? Before your very eyes Jesus Christ was clearly por-

trayed as crucified. I would like to learn just one thing from you: Did you receive the Spirit by observing the law, or by believing what you heard? Are you so foolish? After beginning with the Spirit, are you now trying to attain your goal by human effort? Galatians 3:1-3.

Paul's question was: after beginning entirely by faith, are you now trying to maintain your standing with God by trying to observe the law? Does God release you from the law only until you are saved and then send you back to the same law to prove yourself? That is witchcraft, Paul said. Just as God can save you by faith in Christ alone, so, by His Spirit, He can keep you by faith alone. You do not have to revert to the law to prove anything! Then in Romans 3:31 Paul seems to reverse himself:

Do we, then, nullify the law by this faith? Not at all! Rather, we uphold the law.

Confusing? To the man without God's original blueprint as a guide, this apparent contradiction makes no sense! Then, to illuminate those born of the Spirit, in a statement that further confuses the carnal mind, Paul said this regarding the 10 commandments:

Now, if the ministration of death, which was engraved in letters on stone, came with glory... will not the ministry of the Spirit be even more glorious?... But their minds were made dull, for to this day the same veil remains when the old covenant is read... Even to this day when Moses is read, a veil covers their hearts. 2 Corinthians 3:7,14,15.

Here again, the law on stone and the Old Covenant seem to find no place in the gospel commands of Paul. He indicates that people whose main focus is to try to prove their loyalty to God by observing the law on stone do so because they are blinded by a veil that is pulled over their heads. How do we put this together with the next statement by the same writer?

So then, the law is holy, and the commandment is holy, and righteous and good (Rom. 7:12).

Compare this with what he wrote in Romans 3:20:

Therefore no one will be declared righteous in his sight by observing the law.

If a person is not made righteous by observing the law, nor does he maintain his right standing with God by observing the law, what place does it have in the life of the Christian? The problem is that some have not recognized the original blueprint that God gave us. Many have never seen God's original blueprint. They cannot even tell you whether or not the 10 commandments, which were the essence of the Sinai Covenant, were carried over into the post-cross era to become part of the New Covenant of faith or not. Most would guess that they were, with a few exceptions, of course. The main exception being the 4th commandment which required Israel to observe Saturday as the holy day of rest. When some are asked who gave them the right to dissect the decalogue, they merely shrug and go on to the next topic. We've got to be able to do better than that if we wish to reach the world.

To clarify, let us see what Paul meant by the term "law." The Greek word for "law" is *nomos*. It is a general term that may refer to a law, ordinance, custom or a tradition. It does not refer to the 10 commandments per se! It may include the Sinai law but is not limited to

that law. *Nomos* generally refers to the whole Torah which in turn includes all the Jewish religious customs and laws. *Nomos* does not distinguish between the 10 commandments and the other Torah laws. When Paul wrote that "we uphold the law," he was saying that the law was not a mistake, but that it had served its God-ordained purpose in pointing Israel to the coming Redeemer. Having done its work, Israel was released from its tyranny (Acts 15:10; Rom. 7:6; 10:4; Gal. 3:24, 25) and was freed to live by faith as did Abraham before them. In that sense the *Nomos* (Law) was holy and just and good.

### **Are You Playing With Lego Toys?**

The confusion arises when people take their favorite sections of the Bible out of context and use them like children playing with Lego toys. Out of the same pieces one makes a car, another makes a boat while another will create a house. It is not enough merely to

keep texts in context within their own epistle. For example: The letter Paul wrote to the Romans was not intended to cover the entire gospel message. It was written to address some particular problems that existed among the believers in Rome. The letter to the Galatians was not written to reveal the whole gospel either, but to deal with a particular problem facing the church in Galatia, and so on with the other letters Paul wrote.

### ***Even Paul's letters in***

### ***their entirety were not***

### ***meant to be studied***

### ***apart from the gospels***

### ***by Matthew, Mark,***

### ***Luke and John.***

Even Paul's letters in their entirety were not meant to be studied apart from the gospels by Matthew, Mark, Luke and John. And even those must be seen against the Christ-centered background that God had given to Adam and later revealed to Abraham. On the cross, Christ confirmed the covenant of Righteousness by Faith that He and the Father had jointly given to Abraham (See Genesis 15:17 and Hebrews 9:16,17). Unless we can stand back and get an overall view of the plan of redemption from the beginning of time, we will miss seeing the forest for the trees. This error has often fragmented the church.

Jesus Christ and the writers of the New Testament all based their teachings on the foundation of righteousness by faith that He and the Father had revealed to Abraham in Genesis 15:6. Christ expanded its borders to cover man's whole relationship with his Creator. The New Testament writers showed how that faith could conquer the futile religions based on righteousness by works to which Judaism had also fallen victim. That is the reason Jesus was crucified by the Romans at the insistence of the established "church." As one prominent Christian theologian told me recently, "We will have to fight the same battles over legalism that Paul had to fight."

Another clue to understanding the Bible is to remember what Peter said in 2 Peter 1:20.

Above all, you must understand that no prophecy of Scripture came about by the prophet's own interpretation. For prophecy never had its origin in the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.

This text warns us not to depend only on our reasoning powers to figure out what the Bible means. We must let the Bible be its own interpreter lest we split the body of Christ into hundreds of fragments. Peter himself faced this challenge. In 2 Peter 1:15, 16 he wrote:

Paul also wrote you with the wisdom that God gave him. He writes the same way in all his letters, speaking in them of these matters. His letters contain some things that are hard to understand, which ignorant and unstable people distort, as they do the other Scriptures, to their own destruction.

For the final authority in understanding statements that on the surface appear contradictory, we should find what Jesus said about the same subject. Rather than argue over what Paul might have meant, let us see what his Tutor said. Take Romans 3:31 for example. After telling us very explicitly that the Old Covenant law has no place in our salvation, he appears to throttle down his own argument with the statement:

Do we, then, nullify the law by this faith? Not at all! Rather, we uphold the law.

### Does its fulfillment destroy, or validate a prophecy?

It is almost amusing to see how writers go through all manner of mental contortions trying to harmonize this with his main theme of Righteousness by Faith, which is not of works, lest any man should boast. Why should we struggle to understand what Paul meant, when Jesus explains this perfectly? Facing a similar challenge from the Pharisees who also accused Jesus of destroying the laws of Judaism, He replied this way:

Do not think that I have come to do away with or undo the Law and the prophets; I have come not to away with or undo, but to *complete and fulfill them*. For truly, I tell you, until the sky and earth pass away and perish not one smallest letter nor one smallest hook [identifying certain Hebrew letters] will pass from the Law *until all things [it foreshadowed] have been accomplished* (Matt. 5:17, 18, Amp).

What was the main goal or objective of the Law and the prophets? Let us read Jesus' own words again.

...And these [very Scriptures] testify about Me! John 5:39 (Amp).

It is clear that the goal and purpose of the Law and the prophets was to prepare Israel to receive Jesus the Messiah. Paul verifies this in Romans 3:21.

But now a righteousness from God, apart from the law, has been made known, *to which the Law and the Prophets testify*.

If the purpose of the Law was to help prepare a people to receive Christ as redeemer, then its purpose was accomplished when the Redeemer came. Its job was done, or fulfilled, to use Jesus' own words. The Law was not destroyed! It had simply run its course and ceased to have any further function. Would you say that when a prophecy comes to pass it is destroyed? Absolutely Not! It is fulfilled! The Law was not a mistake. It was holy and just and good, and it completed the purpose for which it was

designed. It was a schoolmaster pointing Israel to the coming Messiah (Gal. 3:24).

Looking at Paul's statement in Romans 3:31 in the light of Jesus' words, we find that there is no contradiction in what Paul was saying. He was simply saying that the Law was, and remains, proof that Jesus Christ was the true Messiah. The Law was designed to show Israel that they could not win God's favor by ceremonies or by rule keeping, but that they needed a Redeemer from beyond themselves. The Law and the prophets identified Jesus as the fulfillment of that hope. *They were fulfilled in Him!*

Conversely, Jesus' life and ministry validate and authenticate the Law that foretold His coming. That proof will remain for all time. Today the Law stands validated, not because we are still under its

authority, but because it verified our Foundation, who is Jesus Christ. Because He remains, the testimony of the Law stands. For example, when the ancient Roman Empire had run its God assigned course, its purpose was fulfilled. Its contribution to history remains to this day, but we are not subject to its authority because after its purpose was fulfilled, it was replaced.

In the Scriptures the words "Law" and "covenant" are often used synonymously.

For if there had been nothing wrong with that first covenant, no place would have been sought for another. By calling this covenant

"new," he has made the first one obsolete: and what is obsolete and aging will soon disappear (Heb. 8:7, 13).

Having fulfilled the Law, Christ replaced it with grace. Grace succeeded Law. To find our way out of the religious wilderness, which is the product of human reasoning, we must start at the beginning by asking ourselves some questions. How can we expect the heaven to take us seriously so long as our own house is divided over the central theme of the gospel?

Who gave Abraham the Covenant of Righteousness by Faith?

Who was the mediator of the Abrahamic Covenant?

Who gave Moses the Sinaitic Covenant?

Who was the mediator of the Sinaitic Covenant—Christ or Moses?

What was the relationship between the Sinai Covenant and the 10 commandments?

What time span was allotted by God to each of those covenants?

How can these themes impact my personal relationship to Jesus?

For a more complete presentation of this topic you may want to order Sam Pestes' "Abraham: Messenger to the 21st Century" available on cassette tape and CD. In Canada order directly from Sam Pestes at: s.pestes@shaw.ca or by phone 250-765-5121. His web address is: www.abraham911.com In the US order from Life Assurance Ministries at www.ratzlaf.com or 800-355-7073.

## Dale Ratzlaff

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 7:6

**W**e need to understand the central role the Holy Spirit plays in the new covenant. Without this insight we will be left with nagging questions. Without His indwelling, we will be left longing for Sinai! When Jesus entered His ministry as the Covenant Messenger He was baptized in water by John, and ...while He was praying, heaven was opened, and the Holy Spirit descended upon Him in bodily form like a dove (Lk. 3:21,22). From that point on we see Jesus being led by the Spirit and demonstrating all the gifts of the Spirit!

Jesus full of the Holy Spirit was led about by the Spirit (Lk. 4:1). And Jesus returned to Galilee in the power of the Spirit (Lk. 4:14). The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me (Lk. 4:18).

# Life in the

After the outpouring of the Spirit on the day of Pentecost we see the central role the Holy Spirit played in the church, God's new covenant people. In Peter's sermon he quotes Joel and says,

It shall be in the last days, God says, that I will pour forth of My spirit upon all mankind; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams; even upon My bondslaves, both men and women, I will in those days pour forth of My Spirit and they shall prophesy (Acts 2:17,18).

Peter told the people,

Repent and let each one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. For the promise is for you and your children, and for all those who are far off, as many as the Lord our God shall call to Himself (Acts 2:38,39).

The history of the new covenant church is a history of the working of the Holy Spirit. "Filled with the Holy Spirit," they began "to speak the word of God with boldness" (Acts 4:31). The deacons were "full of the Holy Spirit" and they did "great wonders and signs among the people" (Acts 6:3,8). "The Spirit said to Philip, 'Go up and join this chariot'" (Acts 8:29). "The Spirit of the Lord snatched Philip away" (Acts 8:39). Ananias laid His hand upon Saul and he was filled with the Holy Spirit (Acts 9:17). The disciples were comforted by the Spirit (Acts 9:31). By the Spirit they foretold coming events (Acts 11:28). The Spirit spoke to the church (Acts 13:4). Paul was "sent out by the Holy Spirit" (Acts 13:4). They were filled with the joy of the

Holy Spirit (Acts 13:52). By the power of the Holy Spirit the sick were healed, the dead were raised, demons were cast out and the power of the enemy was broken. Here we see the fulfillment of the promise of Jesus.

...He Himself will baptize you in the Holy Spirit and fire (Lk. 3:16).

I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may be with you forever; that is the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it does not see Him or know Him, but you know Him because He abides with you and will be in you (Jn. 14:16,17).

But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all that I said to you (Jn. 14:26).

When the Helper comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, that is the Spirit of truth who proceeds from the Father, He will testify about Me (Jn. 15:26).

But when He, the Spirit of truth, comes, He will guide you into all the truth; for He will not speak on His own initiative, but whatever He hears, He will speak; and He will disclose to you what is to come (Jn. 16:13).

# SPIRIT

An accurate knowledge of the role of the Holy Spirit is fundamental for a correct understanding of the new covenant and it is also necessary for a right interpretation of the Sabbath. The role the law filled in the old covenant is filled by the Holy Spirit in the new. Scripture compares and contrasts the law with the Spirit in many ways. A subtle example of this is seen in the events surrounding the giving of both covenants. After the law was given, the children of Israel immediately went into disobedience and fell under condemnation. They made a golden calf, worshiped it, sacrificed to it, and said, "This is your God, O Israel, who brought you up from the land of Egypt" (Ex. 32:8). Because of this sin "about three thousand men of the people fell that day" (Ex. 32:28). These three thousand were killed by their brothers at the command of God.

At the giving of the Spirit in the new covenant, on the other hand, we find a different and better outcome! "There were added that day about three thousand souls" (Acts 2:41). I believe these numbers are recorded to point out the contrasting nature of the two covenants and show the relationship between the law and the Spirit.

Notice thoughtfully how the Holy Spirit takes the place of the law in Paul's comparisons and contrasts between the old and new covenants in 2 Cor. 3:3-18.

## THE OLD COVENANT:

Written with ink  
On tablets of stone  
Not of the letter  
The letter kills  
Ministry of death  
Ministry of condemnation  
Came with glory  
Glory has faded away

## THE NEW COVENANT:

Written with the Spirit  
On tablets of the heart  
But of the Spirit  
The Spirit gives life  
Ministry of the Spirit  
Ministry of righteousness  
Abounds in glory  
Glory remains

Unless the new covenant Christian understands the role of the Holy Spirit and experiences His presence, he will long for Sinai. It is only the indwelling and empowering of the Holy Spirit that can write the principles of the new covenant law of love on our hearts so that we have an ever-present Person who will teach us all things (Jn. 14:26), guide us into all truth (Jn. 16:13), and testify to us of Christ (Jn. 15:26). The old covenant law was external—written on stone. The new covenant law is internal—written on our hearts. The new covenant Lawgiver is present in our hearts by the Holy Spirit.

If anyone loves Me he will keep my word; and My Father will love Him, and We will come to him, and make Our abode with him (Jn. 14:23).

## The Spirit and the Word

Today the church has, to a large degree, bought into the western world view, which eliminates the supernatural. That is not the view of Scripture. The book of Acts, as well as the whole of Scripture, is filled with the supernatural working of the Holy Spirit. It is my belief that the New Testament Christian who rejects the present-day “gifting” of the Holy Spirit is not experiencing the fullness of new covenant life: a personal relationship with the indwelling Christ

...who is able to do exceeding abundantly beyond all that we ask or think, according to the power that works within us (Eph. 3:20).

The Bible makes it clear that the Holy Spirit’s preferred way of working is through the word of God, the Bible. We believe that the Bible is the Spirit inspired word of God and therefore, the Holy Spirit takes this written word (logos) and as we prayerfully read and study it and He speaks to us the living word (rhema) of God.

And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God Eph. 6:17.

Those who seek to live by the “promptings of the Holy Spirit” without a corresponding study of the word of God place themselves in a position where they may think they are receiving specific direction from the Holy Spirit when, in reality, they are hearing from their own subconscious mind or wishful thinking. Sometimes we hear people saying, “God told me this,” or “God told me that,” and following these comments are statements that are incongruent with the written word.

While the work of the Holy Spirit cannot be boxed in or perfectly described, it is important that the Christian not try to live by the written word without the Holy Spirit as a guide to interpret it, or to live by the Holy Spirit without allowing the Holy Spirit to speak through the written word.

## How, then do we live?

In the book of Galatians we have the clearest teaching about the reign of law. It came in with Moses and ceased with Christ.<sup>1</sup> Paul, under the direct guidance of the Holy Spirit, foresaw the questions some of the immature Christians in Galatia who had been sidetracked by a law-focus “gospel” would ask. Therefore, we have his clear answer to the implied question: “Paul, if we are not under the law anymore, then how do we live?” His answer is clear, powerful, and relevant to those of us who come from a law-centered religion. Read this section through in context and then we will clarify what is taught.

But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not carry out the desire of the flesh. For the flesh sets its desire against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; for these are in opposition to one another, so that you may not do the things that you please. But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the Law. Now the deeds of the flesh are evident, which are: immorality, impurity, sensuality, idolatry, sorcery, enmities, strife, jealousy, outbursts of anger, disputes, dissensions, factions, envying, drunkenness, carousing, and things like these, of which I forewarn you, just as I have forewarned you, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God. But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law. Now those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. If we live by the Spirit, let us also walk by the Spirit. Let us not become boastful, challenging one another, envying one another. Gal. 5:16–26.

The above section is so important that I want to comment on each key element:

Paul’s statement, “if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the Law,” agrees perfectly with our findings thus far. To be led by the Spirit is to follow just where the Spirit leads. The Christian no longer needs an external set of rules if he is in step with the Holy Spirit and feeding on the Word of God.

The struggle is not between the Christian and the law, as portrayed in Romans 7:7–24, where Paul depicts what life is like for the Christian who lives according to the old covenant. Rather, the war the Christian must fight is between the Spirit and the flesh. The outcome is determined by who is master of our lives: the Spirit or the flesh.

Paul does not define evil as transgression of the law because Christians are free from the law. Rather he defines evil as the deeds of the flesh. These deeds are the natural outgrowth if we follow the promptings of our fallen nature.

These “deeds of the flesh” Paul says “are evident.” The mature Spirit-filled Christian<sup>2</sup> does not need to be told these are wrong. The Holy Spirit working in the conscience of the believer grounded in Scripture is a sufficient guide.

## The deeds of the flesh

Now let us consider Paul's list of the deeds of the flesh which can be subdivided into five categories:<sup>3</sup>

### Sexual sins:

"Sexual immorality" would include adultery, sex outside of marriage, or, we might say, the "natural sexual sins".

"Impurity" would include the unnatural sexual sins such as homosexuality, lesbianism, incest and bestiality.

"Sensuality" has the overtones of portraying, even in public, an attitude of indifference to or inappropriateness toward the sexual sins and desires.

### Loyalty sins:

"Idolatry" is allowing oneself to become infatuated and enamored with anything or anybody apart from Almighty God. This sin is rampant in the western world and in the church.

"Sorcery" has two basic connotations. The root word implies a use of drugs. Later the meaning of this word came to be used for any activity involved with the powers of evil including secret meetings with evil spirits. Today it would include a vast number of activities associated with the occult. Practicing sorcery is seeking power or guidance from some evil or source other than God and the Holy Spirit. This would include Ouija boards, horoscopes, fortune tellers, books on extra-sensory perceptions, etc. All power is not of God!

### Social or relationship Sins:

"Enmities" are hostile negative feelings.

"Strife" refers to people taking sides, fighting wars of words, forming cliques, and doing unloving acts.

"Jealousy" is seen when we envy others and often secretly hate them because they are perceived as being better than we are.

"Outbursts of anger" are hurtful words hastily spoken when strife and enmities are present.

"Disputes" refer to arguments as to who is right and who is wrong.

"Dissensions" reflect division, disloyalty and negative attitudes.

"Factions" are an outgrowth of the above works of the flesh. They occur when people align in groups, and the groups then champion their own agendas without concern for others.

"Envy" is inordinate desire to possess what someone else has such as wealth, popularity, prestige, position and power, etc.

### Self-control sins:

"Drunkenness" is abusing any substance to such a degree that it affects one's thinking and/or hurts one's self or others.

"Carousing" refers to activities such as wild parties which are often associated with people who are out of control and where unnecessary temptation and evil are present.

"And things like these." Here Paul implies that this list could be greatly enlarged. However, he has been specific enough so that his readers will understand what he is speaking about.

We must also note Paul's clear warning against those who make it a practice to give in to the deeds of the flesh. He did not say that they will go to heaven but just not get the same rewards as those who do not do such deeds of the flesh. Rather, he said, "as I have forewarned you, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God." In other words, those who make it a practice to follow the deeds of the flesh are not genuine Christians. They are not controlled by the Holy Spirit. They have another lord and master. Within the new covenant there is no open door to "living in sin" and having the assurance of salvation. True, we all fall short, but our loyalty to God is seen as we keep in step with the Holy Spirit residing in our lives and not following the flesh.

## The fruit of the Spirit

Having outlined the deeds of the flesh, Paul now turns to the fruit of the Spirit that will be manifest in the genuine Christian's life.

But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law.

Here is another insight worth underlining. The new covenant law can be summed up in one basic overarching principle.

This is My commandment, that you love one another, just as I have loved you. Jn. 15:12

In Galatians we find that the fruit (singular) of the Spirit is manifest first in love. We love because He first loved us. Here is the guideline for new covenant living! While the "gifts" of the Spirit are given severally as the Spirit wills, all are to participate in the fruit of the Spirit. These virtues are a greater evidence of the Spirit's control than any of the more spectacular gifts as mentioned in Corinthians 12-14. Let's examine the wonderful thing called the fruit of the Spirit. We will note that all the aspects of the fruit of the Spirit are supernatural and are outside the realm of personal achievement without the power of the indwelling Holy Spirit.

"Love" is agape love—a selfless love that loves not for its own sake but for the sake of the other person who needs our love. It is a sacrificial love, an unconditional love and a never-ending love. It is a wholesome attitude toward others that results in positive actions and is supremely modeled by Christ.

But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us (Rom. 5:8).

Walk in love, just as Christ also loved you and gave Himself up for us... (Eph. 5:2)

This love is not a natural love that can be worked up it is truly a "fruit of the Spirit"

...the love of God has been poured out within our hearts through the Holy Spirit who was given to us (Rom. 5:5).

"Joy" is an inner attitude of cheerfulness that is not dependent upon circumstances. It is a supernatural joy often expressed in the very face of persecution and difficulty.

But the Jews incited the devout women of prominence and the leading men of the city, and instigated a persecution against Paul and Barnabas, and drove them out of their district. But they shook off the dust of their feet in protest against them and went to Iconium. And the disciples were continually filled with joy and with the Holy Spirit. Acts 13:50-52.



But even if I am being poured out as a drink offering upon the sacrifice and service of your faith, I rejoice and share my joy with you all. Phil. 2:17

“Peace” is an inner contentment and serenity of mind. It is what I call “living the eternal kind of life.” It is knowing that we are saved and that no matter what happens to us, we will be with Christ. It is experiencing eternal life NOW. Peace is the assurance that everything is right between us and God. It is a supernatural gift of the gospel. It is peace with God.

Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ (Rom. 5:1).

It is also the peace of God.

And the peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus (Phil. 4:7).

“Patience” is patient endurance that waits hopefully for God’s timing. It is a divine quality that allows us to endure other people and their offensive actions without these circumstances triggering the deeds of the flesh and causing us to retaliate. It is seeing those who cause us frustration or real hurt as needing our offer of forgiveness and our prayer of encouragement.

The Lord is not slow about His promise, as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing for any to perish but for all to come to repentance (2 Pet. 3:9).

The Lord’s bond-servant must not be quarrelsome, but be kind to all, able to teach, patient when wronged (2 Tim. 2:24).

Patience is tested not just when we have to wait for something, patience is demonstrated when we have been wronged and do not react to the one who wronged us.

“Kindness” is not only an attitude that wishes others well, but a divine quality that moves us to positive actions which are appreciated by others.

Or do you think lightly of the riches of His kindness and tolerance and patience, not knowing that the kindness of God leads you to repentance? Rom. 2:4

It will be the supernatural quality of kindness expressed to others that will point them to our kind God.

“Goodness” is a divine quality that motivates us to be good people. Good people avoid hurting others and seek the good of all.

The good man brings out of his good treasure what is good; and the evil man brings out of his evil treasure what is evil. Mt. 12:35

In the quotation of Jesus above, it is clear that the heart must be renewed by the Holy Spirit. It is the “new man” that must be present on the inside before we can bring something good from the heart. In its unregenerate condition the heart is desperately wicked and unclean.

“Gentleness” is a divine quality that is careful not to cause hurt or harm. It is a quality that is needed when we seek to restore others.

Brethren, even if anyone is caught in any trespass, you who are spiritual, restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness; each one looking to yourself, so that you too will not be tempted. Gal. 6:1

Gentleness has a long reach—even if anyone is caught in any trespass he/she is to be treated with a spirit of gentleness!

“Self-control” is an all encompassing virtue given by the Spirit. A self-controlled person is not one to have outbursts of anger or disputes. Self-control allows one to be truly free—free to choose how he/she will respond to varying and adverse circumstances rather than be controlled by unbridled passions and lusts. A self-controlled person is a mature person, one who needs few, if any, external laws to govern behavior.

Paul concludes this section by saying,

...against such things there is no law. Now those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. If we live by the Spirit, let us also walk by the Spirit. Gal. 5:23–25.

It becomes patently clear that one who walks by the Spirit does not need the old covenant law to govern external behavior for he has the internal guide and power of the Holy Spirit. Life in the Spirit is mature life—a life lived by a few overarching principles taught by Christ and interpreted and applied by the grace and power of the Holy Spirit. Thoughtfully look over the list of the deeds of the flesh and the fruit of the Spirit. They cannot coexist! Both are expressions of the inner man, or heart. Either one is motivated by the flesh or by the Spirit. Yes, indeed, life in the Spirit produces righteousness far beyond the law! Now it becomes clear how and why the Spirit replaces the function of old covenant law in the life of the believer!

## Summary

1. The Holy Spirit plays an indispensable role in the life of a Christian teaching him “all things,” “testifying about Christ,” “guiding into all truth.” And “disclosing what is to come.”

2. In the new covenant the Holy Spirit plays much the same role as did the law in the old covenant.

3. The Holy Spirit actually indwells the believer, and there is the secret of life in the Spirit.

4. If a Christian is led by the Spirit, he/she is not under the dominion of old covenant law.

5. Paul defines evil, not as transgression of the law, but as the deeds of the flesh.

6. The deeds of the flesh are “evident” to a Spirit led Christian.

7. The fruit of the Spirit is a supernatural manifestation of the qualities of love.

8. The Holy Spirit indwelling the believer is a better guide to righteous living than old covenant law.

9. The Holy Spirit works in conjunction with the word of God, the Bible.

10. The Holy Spirit not only guides the believer but supplies the power to live the Christian life. **!**

<sup>1</sup> Gal. 3:15–29.

<sup>2</sup> Genuine Christian who allows the Holy Spirit to reign in his life.

<sup>3</sup> Some of the insights presented here were gathered from Clinton Chisholm’s excellent tape set, “The Christian and the Mosaic Law” available from Life Assurance Ministries.

Michael V. Houghton, Sr.

# The problem of **Azazel** in the Day of Atonement

**T**he Day of Atonement was the holiest day of the Hebrew year. The ritual prescribed by the Lord for this day was rich in meaning, yet this meaning is not easily translated across the time and cultural barriers that exist between then and now. The tendency among Christians is to look back into the richness and texture of the Old Testament and see only the face of Jesus, and in doing so they believe that they have added fresh meaning to stale old rituals.

It is the intent of this paper to show that the truth is contrary to this impression—in other words, the modern reader does not add to the meaning by simply seeing the act of God in Jesus at the cross when he looks at the ritual associated with the Day of Atonement. This type of culturally insensitive handling of scriptures takes away from the intensity of the ritual and the understanding of its ultimate meaning—both to the Hebrew and to the modern, Western reader.

As far as such a thing is possible, this paper will attempt to look at this day devoid of modern Christological assumptions in an attempt to understand what made this day the holiest day of the Hebrew calendar. This effort will be made using semantic and theological tools and will focus on two areas:

- The problems associated with the semantic range of the inseparable preposition “le” in l’azazel.
- An attempt will be made to define the theological implications of the atonement.

## **The semantic range of the preposition l<sup>e</sup>**

TWOT<sup>1</sup> lists a range of meaning as follows: to, at, in, in reference to, of, by and even occasionally from. When one sees the tremendous flexibility of the preposition l<sup>e</sup>, the questions concerning the text in Leviticus begin to demand attention. This paper will address the following questions:

- Is the correct rendering here “to” azazel, making azazel some sort of deity and this act of sending a goat to him some form of sympathetic magic?
- Is the correct rendering “at” azazel, making

azazel a location where sin is isolated from mankind?

- Is the correct rendering “of” azazel, making azazel the intended result of the ritual performed on the goat?

In this case the root word gives us only a minor amount of help because the word azazel is only used four times in the Old Testament, all within the context of the Day of Atonement. There are four primary theories<sup>2</sup> concerning the etymology and meaning of azazel:

- Many have taken the position that this word means “the goat that departs” from the Hebrew words for “goat” and “turn off.”
- Some state that this word comes from the Aramaic word azala, meaning to “banish” or “remove,” and have rendered it as “for the entire removal.”
- Rabbinic interpretation generally sees the word as designating the place to which sin was sent or the height from which the goat was thrown.<sup>3</sup>
- The fourth and final possibility is that it designates a personal being that is opposite of the good of the Lord.<sup>4</sup>

## **Implications of the semantic range in interpreting the text**

One who uses only the *Revised Standard Version* is confronted with suggestions 3 and 4, and since these are closely related—the name of the place and the name of a personal being who dwells in a place—we will deal with them as one. In Lev 16:8 we find the RSV renders l’azazel as **for Azazel**, and in v. 10 as first **for Azazel** and then as **to Azazel**, indicating that both a place and personality where sin is carried are the most possible. Support for this is widespread among scholars, and both scriptural and extra-biblical literature seems to add support to this theory.

First, this is not the only biblical mention of Israel sacrificing to demons. Lev. 17:7 refers to sacrifices made to goat demons (NASB) or satyrs (RSV). Additional mention of these types of beings is in Isa

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34:14, where the prophet talks about God destroying Edom and causing it to become a wilderness filled with wild animals and birds, among which are the satyr and Lilith, the “night hag.” 2 Chron 11:15 also refers to the satyr as an object of worship.<sup>5</sup> Additionally there is an account of a sacrifice for a recovered leper found in Lev 14:1-9 involving two birds. One bird is killed and the leper and the other bird are both touched with the blood of the first and then the second bird is released. This second bird carried the evil, the leprosy, away into an open field at which point the leper was pronounced clean.<sup>6</sup>

In the extracanonical literature, Azazel is found to be the leader of the angels who desired to know the daughters of men (Gen 6) in 1 Enoch. Azazel was eventually bound by Raphael and cast into a dark wilderness.

One must also be aware of a parallel to this scapegoat ritual that existed in Babylonian culture. As part of the New Year festival, a sheep was slain and carried from the city and thrown into the river, signifying the removal of evil from the city. The person who carried this animal carcass to the river was considered to be unclean until the end of the day — as was the man who led away the *azazel* goat.<sup>7</sup>

However, it is the position of this author that these references to Azazel and to satyrs and Lilith when taken in context cannot be related. If one believes that Scripture is true and not just a collection of Jewish folk tales, then the situation described in Leviticus cannot mean that homage is being paid to any deity other than the LORD. Since the prescriptions of Lev 16 are said to have come from the Lord himself, it is unthinkable for these to be referring to an offering to demons. J.H. Hertz as quoted by G.J. Wenham concurs, pointing out that since the worship of satyrs is considered a heinous crime in Lev 17, the incongruity would be too great if we take chapter 16 to refer to such worship.<sup>8</sup> Additional evidence against this view is found in the way that the Septuagint renders this word with various forms of the Greek word *αποπομπη*, meaning *to carry away*. The Latin Vulgate also uses similar language here.

If one approaches this text from the perspective of a holy and righteous God who is creator and designer of all things, then a consistency of approach is to be expected. However, if one approaches from the opposite perspective, namely that these stories are simply Hebrew folk tales written down after generations of oral transmission, then it is possible to see them as simple stories designed to convey complex religious truth to a simple and backward nomadic people. The author rejects this idea as unproven.

This leaves us with the first two positions to be considered. Is this word from two Hebrew words: goat” and “turn off,” or is it from the Arabic *azala*, meaning to “banish” or “remove”? Is this the goat that departs or the goat that removes sin? The TWOT tells us that the meaning of this word is at best unclear.<sup>9</sup> The BDB lexicon gives only one definition, *entire removal*, as in the entire removal of sin from the camp into the wilderness.<sup>10</sup> Both of these sources favor the Arabic etymology, but their rendering does not exclude the possibility of a Hebrew origin, resulting in the goat that departs. Without further evidence it must be concluded that it is most probably not a reference to a person<sup>11</sup> who is the opposite of the LORD, nor is it likely that it, in spite of the rabbinic tradition, is the name of a place to which sin is banished. Either option is acceptable in light of the revealed nature of God found in Scripture, but one cannot be favored above the other. That leaves us with a ritual involving two male goats that shows one goat dying to cleanse the people from sin and another goat carrying those sins entirely away from the people into the wilderness.

**Theological implications of this interpretation**

If, as some have suggested, these ritual sacrifices were intended as a foreshadowing of the Messiah, how can we reconcile the dual nature of this sacrifice with the one person of our Lord and Savior, Jesus? Does this not seem contradictory to the concept of a single Messiah? In light of what we know from the New Testament accounts, is it possible to reconcile the cultic ritual of the nation of Israel on the Day of Atonement with the work of Jesus of Nazareth on the cross at Jerusalem? It is the position of the author that despite what appears to be a conflict between these accounts, no such conflict exists in reality.

**Dual nature of messianic expectation in first-century Israel**

There is strong indication that some, if not many, of the faithful Israelites of the first century were looking for two Messiahs to come to Israel, one political and one religious.<sup>12</sup> Perhaps the ritual imagery of the Day of Atonement contributed to that thinking. When we look at the two goats we can understand how people might have seen in them an expectation of dual messiahship involving a political savior and a religious savior. The first goat seems to correspond well with the concept of a religious or spiritual savior and with the “suffering servant” language of Isaiah’s prophecy that through his willing sacrifice the nation of Israel is cleansed from sin. The second goat seems to track well with the idea of a political savior who

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**PEOPLE HAVE LONG  
DEBATED THE NATURE OF  
THE PERSON JESUS: IS  
HE A MAN WHO, BY THE  
POWER OF GOD, TAUGHT  
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GOD HIMSELF COME TO  
SAVE HIS PEOPLE?**

was to permanently remove all unrighteousness from the people of Israel.

The debate has long raged over the meaning, in light of the Christ event, of the symbols in the Day of Atonement ritual. Many have insisted that the high priest is the type of Christ, yet his need for such elaborate purification is problematic. Others have stated that the goat that is killed is the type of Christ since it is the blood of Christ that brings about remission of sin—this seems more plausible, yet it is still incomplete, as the death of Jesus alone would not have been sufficient to bring about the salvation of mankind.<sup>13</sup> A third possibility is that the scapegoat or Azazel goat represents Christ,<sup>14</sup> since the sins of all the people are placed on his head—this also seems inadequate, since this goat is turned loose in the wilderness and has no further contact with the people.

Perhaps the inadequacies of all these positions indicate a failure to appreciate the significance of two goats and what they indicate about the nature of our Savior. People have long debated the nature of the person Jesus: is he a man who, by the power of God, taught great things; or is he God himself come to save his people? Attempts, too numerous to discuss here, have been made by leaders of the church down through the centuries to reconcile the obvious humanity of Jesus with the deity of the Messiah as seen in Scripture, with sometimes disastrous results.<sup>15</sup>

It is the conclusion of this paper that the question of which goat represents the Messiah is a question that should be answered with, “both are.” The goat who dies is a type of the physical nature of Jesus, who died on the cross and through his blood brought about cleansing from sin, and the second goat, who removes sin completely from the people, is a type of the divine nature of Jesus that works in the lives of believers to thoroughly remove sin. The two male goats become a type of the one Son of God, who has two natures—divine and human. This is the mystery of God that our fathers in the faith have long wrestled with, and, as evidenced by the dual messianic expectation of some in Jesus’ day, the scholars of the pre-Christian era wrestled with as well. **!**

Seeing this as the height from which the goat was to be thrown to its death is somewhat less problematic in this regard, as they would only have to find a spot with sufficient height each year no matter where they are. We are still left with the problem that Scripture does not discuss the death of this goat, only its banishment to the wilderness.

<sup>4</sup> Thus indicating an evil spirit along the lines of those found in Enoch 8:1;10:4; 2 Chronicles 11:15; Isaiah 34:14 and Revelation 18:2, or possibly even Satan himself.

<sup>5</sup> Victor Hamilton, *Handbook of the Pentateuch* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1982), 291-93.

<sup>6</sup> Schultz, “azazel,” 2:658.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

<sup>8</sup> Gordon J. Wenham, *The Book of Leviticus* (New International Commentary on the Old Testament; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1979), 234.

<sup>9</sup> Schultz, “azab,” TWOT 2:658-59.

<sup>10</sup> Francis Brown, S.R. Driver, and Charles A. Briggs, *Hebrew and English Lexicon* (Peabody: Hendrickson, 1999), 736.

<sup>11</sup> This opinion is recognized to be in contrast to the opinions of many early rabbinic scholars. For example, the Mishnah (Yoma 4:1) uses the terminology “for Azazel.”

<sup>12</sup> The Dead Sea Scrolls present us with evidence that at least many of the Jewish people of the era were expecting not only one messiah but at least two. 1QS<sub>a</sub>, 1Q28<sub>a</sub>, which contains only two columns of text, describes in great detail the order of events at the coming “Messianic Banquet.” In this document, we find two messiahs with different functions. The priestly messiah will enter the banquet first, followed by his entourage, and then the kingly messiah will enter with his own entourage. 4Q174, also known as *the Florilegium*, a midrash on the last days, is a collection of texts from 2 Samuel, the Psalter, and other passages of Scripture, which serve to announce the coming of two messiahs, the “Branch of David” and “the Interpreter of the Law.” Of 4Q174 column 3, line 10 Michael Wise, Martin Abegg, Jr. and Edward Cook tell us:

This passage refers to the shoot of David, who is to arise with the interpreter of the Law, and who will [arise] in Zi[on] in the La[st] Days, as it is written, “And I shall raise up the booth of David that is fallen” (Amos 9:11). This passage describes the fallen Branch of David, [w]hom He shall raise up to deliver Israel. (*The Dead Sea Scrolls: A New Translation* (San Francisco: HarperCollins, 1999))

In both of these passages one can see an expectation of dual messiahship. One is the Interpreter of the Law who will restore the practice of the Law to Israel in the strict and comprehensive way that the sect believes is needed to restore God’s blessing to Israel. This messiah is expected to be of the line of Zadok, the high priestly line. The second expected messiah is to be the kingly messiah, the Branch of David, who would reign on the throne of David over the restored nation of Israel.

<sup>13</sup> 1 Cor 15:17: “If Christ has not been raised, your faith is worthless; you are still in your sins.”

<sup>14</sup> Barnabus 7:7-11, which is dated to the end of the first century or at least the beginning of the second century, tells us: “Notice how the type of Jesus is manifested ... the first goat is for the altar but the other is accursed.” (quoted from *The Interpreter’s Bible: Volume II, the Book of Leviticus* (New York: Abingdon, 1939))

<sup>15</sup> Roger E. Olsen in his work *The Story of Christian Theology—Twenty Centuries of Tradition and Reform* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 1999) gives a detailed and very readable account of the progression of this debate down through history.

<sup>1</sup> R. Laird Harris, Gleason L. Archer, Jr., and Bruce K. Waltke, *Theological Wordbook of the New Testament* (Moody: Chicago, Illinois, 1980), 1:463.

<sup>2</sup> Carl Schultz, “azazel,” TWOT 2:657-58.

<sup>3</sup> This interpretation is difficult if one holds an early writing of the Pentateuch. How could a single place be meant at a time in Israel’s history when they were wandering around the desert and had no idea where they would be from year to year?

# Editor's Note concerning the scapegoat

**A**dventists teach that the scapegoat represents Satan upon whom all the sins of God's people will be placed as God makes the "final atonement" just before the coming of Christ.

When Christ, by virtue of His own blood, removes the sins of His people from the heavenly sanctuary at the close of His ministration, He will place them upon Satan, who, in the execution of the judgment, must bear the final penalty (Ellen G. White, *The Great Controversy*, p. 422)

The scape-goat was sent away into a land not inhabited, never to come again into the congregation of Israel. So will Satan be forever banished from the presence of God and his people, and he will be blotted from existence in the final destruction of sin and sinners (Ellen. G. White, *Spirit of Prophecy*, Vol. 4, p. 267).

## **Biblically untenable teaching**

I believe this teaching is biblically untenable for the following reasons:

1. To my knowledge, no other Old Testament shadow represents Satan; why then, should Israel's most holy service include a "shadow of Satan"?

2. While there is evidence, as pointed out in the forgoing article, that there were certain "goat" ceremonies practiced in Old Testament times that may have been dedicated to some desert demon; this does not mean that the Day of Atonement scapegoat ceremony given by God represents some demonic force, or Satan himself. We normally associate a "serpent" with Satan<sup>1</sup> and the Bible makes this comparison dozens of times, however, Scripture—and Christ himself—did not interpret the "serpent" placed on a standard by Moses as Satan. Rather, Christ took this symbol of Satan and used it to represent one aspect of His atonement.

And Moses made a bronze serpent and set it on the standard; and it came about, that if a serpent bit any man, when he looked to the bronze serpent, he lived (Num. 21:9).

As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up (Jn. 3:14).

3. When Paul referred to the old covenant holy days, which include the Day of Atonement services, he called them a "shadow" and in context, it is a shadow of Christ and not Satan.

Therefore do not let anyone judge you by what you eat or drink, or with regard to a religious festival, a New Moon celebration or a Sabbath day. These are a shadow of the things that were to come; the reality, however, is found in Christ. Col. 2:16, 17.

The same holds true in Hebrews 10:1 where we have a clear reference to the yearly services of the Day of Atonement and no mention is made of Satan. Rather, they are part of the law and are "only a shadow of the good things to come..."

For the Law, since it has only a shadow of the good things to come and not the very form of things, can never, by the same sacrifices which they offer continually year by year, make perfect those who draw near (Heb. 10:1).

4. The atonement of Christ carries such a vast load of truth that one sacrifice was inadequate to picture the atonement of Christ. Therefore, the Old Testament used many sacrifices and symbols to point forward to Christ. For me the key truth presented by Pastor Houghton Sr. is his conclusion that Christ not only died for our sins but also *carried them away, never to be seen again*. This interpretation is biblical, Christ-centered and in harmony with the new covenant gospel of grace! Yes, both goats point forward and bring the good news of a finished atonement *and* removal of sin!

As far as the east is from the west, so far has He removed our transgressions from us (Ps. 103:12).

I have wiped out your transgressions like a thick cloud and your sins like a heavy mist. Return to Me, for I have redeemed you (Isa. 44:22).

For I will be merciful to their iniquities, and I will remember their sins no more (Heb. 8:12).

Hide Your face from my sins And blot out all my iniquities. Ps. 51:9

In those days and at that time," declares the Lord, "search will be made for the iniquity of Israel, but there will be none; and for the sins of Judah, but they will not be found; for I will pardon those whom I leave as a remnant (Jer. 50:20).

Who will bring a charge against God's elect? God is the one who justifies (Rom. 8:33).

And their sins and their lawless deeds I will remember no more. Now where there is forgiveness of these things, there is no longer any offering for sin (Heb. 10:17,18).

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VAST LOAD OF TRUTH  
THAT ONE SACRIFICE WAS  
INADEQUATE...**

## Worshiping God in the Spirit CONTINUED FROM FRONT

case, because the Samaritan woman asked “which is the right place...” the context requires “in the Spirit” to be locative. Moreover, as Christ desires worship from our hearts, and as ‘heart’ and ‘spirit’ are synonymous of the inward man, then this certainly fits. In Rom 8:9 Paul said “but you are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you”. As He lives within man’s spirit, and since He came to glorify Christ, our worship must come from within.

It can mean **‘as being Led by the Holy Spirit’**. In Galatians 3:3 Paul asked the rhetorical question “Having begun in the Spirit, are you now being made perfect by the flesh?” They were led

**“In the Spirit” may also be ‘within the enveloping presence of the Holy Spirit’**. On Patmos, John wrote “I was in the Spirit on the Lord’s Day” and again “Immediately I was in the Spirit and behold a throne set in heaven...” telling of his visions when in the Spirit.

From this, if we seek Jesus’ meaning from the text instead of bringing our own into the text, we’d rightly conclude that ‘in the Spirit’ has both locative and instrumental uses, for it tells both Where real worship occurs, as well as How it occurs. Genuine worship comes from within man’s spirit and it is Led by the Holy Spirit who indwells man, who is ‘the Temple of the Holy Spirit.’

This worship as led by the Holy Spirit would include praising God in the Spirit (above), when being filled with the Spirit we “sing in psalms, hymns and spiritual songs” (Eph 5:18+19); and praying in the Spirit. While Paul said “I will pray in the Spirit” (1 Cor 14), he also explains “for we do not know how to pray as we ought, but the Spirit Himself intercedes for us with sighs too deep for words” (Rom 8:26 RSV). St. Jude exhorts us “Building yourselves up in your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Spirit.” (vs 20)

Yet in Romans 12 Paul speaks of being transformed by the renewing of our minds, which is your reasonable service of worship. This indicates that one’s worship must be a way of life. Thus worshipping God in the Spirit must also include a lifestyle of ‘walking in the Spirit’. Paul told the Galatians “Walk in the Spirit and you will not fulfill the lusts of the flesh... If you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law... If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit” (5:16, 18, 25). Our living in the Spirit must include love in the Spirit, having the Love of the Holy Spirit for our brethren in Christ” (Col 1:8; Rom 15:30). As such, it would also produce the ‘fruit of the Spirit’ in our lives.

Our walking after the Spirit, as led by the Spirit, frees us from condemnation of the law as Paul emphasizes in Rom 8:1+2 “Thus there is no condemnation to those who are in Christ, for the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set us free from the law of sin and death”. Peter adds “For this reason the gospel was preached to those who were dead, that they might... live according to God in the Spirit”. (1 P 4:6)

### GENUINE WORSHIP COMES FROM WITHIN MAN’S SPIRIT AND IT IS LED BY THE HOLY SPIRIT WHO INDWELLS MAN, WHO IS ‘THE TEMPLE OF THE HOLY SPIRIT.’

by the Holy Spirit into salvation by faith in Christ. When they believed in Jesus, they were born again of the Spirit who then in-dwelt them, making them Sons of God. Paul said “For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are the Sons of God” (Rom 8:14). So too, the Holy Spirit leads believers in True Worship of Jesus Christ.

**This may even be ‘in other tongues’ as given utterance by the Spirit.** In Acts 2, the believers were filled with the Spirit, and when speaking in other tongues they were praising God for His wonderful works. In 1 Cor 14:1+2 Paul states “He who speaks in a tongue is not speaking to man, but to God, for no man understands him, but in the Spirit he is speaking mysteries”. Here ‘in a tongue’ is equated to ‘in the Spirit’. Yet Paul said he would worship both in tongues and with understanding: “I will pray in the Spirit and I will pray with understanding, I will sing in the Spirit and I will sing with understanding”.

Thus the New Testament contrasts the OT Law covenant with the New Covenant of the Holy Spirit. The old pertained to outward rituals of the flesh but the New has the inward realities of the Spirit. The Old covenant was sealed by outward physical circumcision, so that the Jews prided themselves for being circumcised, compared to others who were uncircumcised dogs. But in the New covenant, at our new birth, we are sealed by the Holy Spirit of Promise, while the outward circumcision would sever us from Christ. Thus Paul explains in Phil 3:3 "We are the true circumcision who worship God in the Spirit, and put no confidence in the flesh". The real Jew is not one who's circumcised outwardly, but inwardly; and the NT Church is separated from the outside world (or unbelievers) by their lifestyle of continually worshipping God "in the Spirit and in Reality".

The Old had ritual animal sacrifices and outward cleansings, but the New has reality Spiritual Sacrifices and the inward cleansing of the heart. 1 Pet 2:4-8 says we are a Royal Priesthood and a Holy Nation, and we are called to offer Spiritual

prayer be set before you as incense and the lifting of my hands as the evening sacrifice," David wrote. And there's the Sacrifice of Joy and Rejoicing as in Psalm 27:6: "Therefore I will offer sacrifices of joy in His tabernacle" and Romans 15:9-11: "That the Gentiles might glorify God for His mercy... rejoice, O Gentiles, with His people... Praise the Lord all you nations, laud Him all you people."

God also wants the sacrifice of righteousness. Paul says "Present yourselves to God... and your members as instruments of righteousness" (Rom 6:13), and David explains, "You shall be pleased with sacrifices of righteousness." John says "He who practices righteousness is righteous just as He is righteous" (1Jn3:7).

This includes sacrificing our bodies as Paul said, "I beseech you brethren... that you present your bodies a living Sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service of worship" (Rom 12:1+2).

In addition, God wants us to offer the spiritual sacrifice of sharing or giving for other's needs. Jesus told the rich young ruler, "If you will be perfect, sell what you have, and give to the poor." In the early church those who were better off sold their goods to provide for those without, because of the oppression they suffered when receiving Christ. In Heb 13:16 we read, "But do not forget to do good (for others) and to share, for with such sacrifices God is well pleased." In Matt 25 Jesus shows our final judgment will be in how we have lived out His New Covenant Law of Love, by giving to the poor: "I was hungry and you fed me, I was naked and you clothed me..."

Just as the Old ritual sacrifices were replaced by the New Covenant's Spiritual Sacrifices, so too the Old ritual worship, at designated places and on specified days and times, were replaced by Christ's New Covenant reality: worship in Spirit as a continuous worship in the spirit. The early church was noted for 'continually praising God,' being 'daily in the temple,' praying 'without ceasing,' 'continually offer[ing] the Sacrifice of Praise,' 'giving thanks always for all things.' The Old Covenant's days of outward physical rest were replaced with the New Covenant's continual Spiritual Rest in Jesus Christ, which He offered in Matt 11:28-30 and which Paul sets forth in Heb 3:7 to 4:12.

As just touched on above, our worship and life in the Spirit is to be a continuous relationship with God:

## ...THE OLD RITUAL WORSHIP, AT DESIGNATED PLACES AND ON SPECIFIED DAYS AND TIMES, WERE REPLACED BY CHRIST'S NEW COVENANT REALITY: WORSHIP IN SPIRIT AS A CONTINUOUS WORSHIP IN THE SPIRIT.

Sacrifices to God who has called us out of darkness into His marvelous light"

These Spiritual Sacrifices are such sacrifices as giving our hearts wholly repentant to God. "The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit, a broken and contrite heart," David said. In Luke, Jesus spoke of the publican, who broken in heart, went away justified. So James entreats us "Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord and He will lift you up" (4:6+10).

There's the Sacrifice of Praise as we read in Hebrews 13:15: "By Him let us continually offer the sacrifice of praise to God, that is the fruit of our lips, giving thanks to His name." And there's the sacrifices of prayer and thanksgiving: "Let my

Eph 5:20, "Giving thanks always for all things to God;" 1 Ths 5:16-19 "Rejoice evermore, pray without ceasing;" Eph 5:18, 'continually being filled with the Spirit;' Gal 5:16 'continually walking in the Spirit;' etc.

In these passages the perfect tense has both aspects of beginning and continuing in the action. In Ps 34:1 David declares, "I will bless the Lord at all times, His praise shall continually be in my mouth" and "to declare your kindness in the morning and your faithfulness every night". The early church continued in the temple daily praising God, even as in heaven 'they cease not praising Him, day and night, forever and ever' (Rev 4:8-11; 7:9-5). So, New Testament Christians never limited their worship to a certain day, nor taught that if one worshiped on a given day of the week, he'd receive the mark of the beast!

The continual life of worshipping God in the Spirit results from the believer's continually drinking from the Holy Spirit. In Psalm 36:9 and Jer 2:13, Jehovah is spoken of as the fountain of Living Waters. In Isa 55:1 God offered, "Ho, everyone who thirsts, come to the waters... (and drink)." So in John 4, when Jesus spoke with the Samaritan lady at Jacob's well, He repeated this offer, "If you knew the gift of God... you would have asked of Him and He would have given you the Living Water... whoever drinks of the water that I shall give him, will never thirst, But that water that I shall give him will become in him a fountain of water springing up into Everlasting Life" (4:10, 13+14). It's of this Paul says, "...continually being filled with the Holy Spirit, singing to yourselves in psalms, and hymns, and spiritual songs."

Again on that last day of Tabernacles, Christ stood up and cried out "If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink... out of his inner being will flow rivers of Living Waters... This He spoke of the Holy Spirit whom those who believe on Him would receive..." (John 7:37-39). So Revelation 7:17 says of Him, "The Lamb... will shepherd them and lead them to Living Fountains of Water". And Ezekiel portrays this in 47:1-9 where these rivers of living waters flow from the throne in God's Temple and bring healing wherever they go; getting deeper and wider the farther they go, and when reaching the Dead Sea, they heal the waters of the dead sea and bring it to life.

Jesus' invitation of Isa 55, John 4, and 7 is still for us today. How John on Patmos who 'was in the Spirit' and saw such wonderful things, must have felt the bursting of God's love in his own heart as he penned the words "The Spirit and the Bride say 'come', and let him who hears say 'come', and let him who thirsts come, and whosoever wills, let him come and take of the Water of Life FREELY!" (22:17).

He is our source of power to live the Spirit led life. He's our source of power to witness for Christ and without fear to publicly declare the wonderful works of God. He's the One who will confirm the gospel as preached with signs following, and He's the source from which we'll bear His fruit of love, joy, peace, etc. in our daily living.

May our lives be a continual worship of God in the Spirit and in reality, offering spiritual sacrifices to Him, and daily walking as the Spirit leads us in greater knowledge of God and the revelation of His will for our lives. **!**

## We're starting a **FORMER ADVENTIST FELLOWSHIP DATABASE**

Both Life Assurance Ministries (LAM) and Former Adventist Fellowship (FAF) are receiving increasing numbers of requests from people wishing to find other former Adventists in their areas with whom to fellowship and study. In order to help people find each other, FAF will begin compiling a database of names and sorting them geographically.

If you are interested in finding other formers in your area (even if you have already sent such a request to LAM or to FAF), please email your name, address, telephone number and email address to [formeradventist@aol.com](mailto:formeradventist@aol.com). Please also

include a brief explanation of your story and your current status with the church, i.e. questioning, leaving, already left, etc.

If you are willing to be the contact person in your area who will receive names, follow up with them, and put them in touch with each other—perhaps even leading a Former Adventist Fellowship eventually—please indicate that interest in your email.

For more information about Former Adventist Fellowship, visit the FAF website at: [www.FormerAdventist.com](http://www.FormerAdventist.com)



## Letter answered: addressing the key point CONTINUED FROM BACK

elation of His will..." As this was interpreted to me, it means that the will of God comes through infallibly, but the Scriptures in themselves are not necessarily infallible.

I have no problem with the basic Evangelical statement that says the Scriptures themselves are infallible in the original documents. However, we do not have any of the original documents but only copies of copies. Therefore, the Evangelical statement is really a statement of faith. It does, however, express the authority placed in Scripture, the need to carefully evaluate the Greek manuscripts in order to discover as far as possible the original wording and the importance of using a lateral translation of the Bible when doing careful Bible study.

It seems to me, as Dr. Gladson pointed out, that the writer of Ecclesiastes is not stating ultimate truth. Rather, he is evaluating life UNDER THE SUN from his limited Old Testament perspective. I do not believe one can solve the problems in Ecclesiastes with slogans and clichés on infallibility or inspiration. Rather, the answer will be found in hermeneutics. How does one interpret this book and its difficult statements? Here we have something we can sink our theological teeth into and try to make sense out of this difficult book as Dr. Gladson was seeking to do. This is why several of the early issues of Proclamation were devoted to the principles of hermeneutics. It is these hermeneutical principles that give us a foundation upon which we can lay the bricks of doctrinal correctness. Here we can find principles that guide us to the infallible truths of God's Word and what they mean in real life.

Here are just a few of the major tenants of hermeneutics. Study every test in it immediate and wider context. Try to find out what the passage under consideration meant to the writer and to whom it was addressed. Search for the eternal moral principle behind a given situation and then apply that principle to today's culture. Because the revelation of Christ far surpasses that within the Old Testament, the New Testament must always be the norm and all Old Testament statements must be interpreted by the New. As Christ is the central theme of all Scripture, our interpretation must be Christ centered. The epistles are the inspired and infallible interpretation of the Christ event and were written to young Christian churches under the guidance of the Holy Spirit; therefore, they are to be considered as the pinnacle of doctrinal correctness. No important teaching is based on a single statement. We should place the emphasis where Scripture places the emphasis. Doctrine should not be derived from esoteric or apocalyptic portions of Scripture, but from clear, didactic, contextual teaching. Where the Bible is clear, we can be certain. Where the Bible is unclear or can honestly be interpreted in several ways, we must be tentative. We must be careful not to let our theological paradigm blind us to the statements that do not fit our system of truth. A correct, biblical perspective of the covenants is essential to a right interpretation.

Considering these principles, regardless of what Ecclesiastes says, from the New Covenant point of view we can say with assur-

ance: Life is good. There is purpose to life. Being is better than not being. There is hope after the grave. All do not go to the same place. Birth is better than death (unless at death one goes to be with the Lord as Paul says!)

You suggested that I "slammed" Ellen White in my answer to you. I don't know if that is the right word or not but I did point out some of the problems with the writings of EGW and there are many. I was a firm believer in EGW for many, many years as my former students will testify. I was also under her bondage but was blinded to that fact until I started studying the Bible without her commentary. I personally know dozens (if not hundreds) and have communicated with many hundreds (if not thousands) of people whose lives have been terribly warped by the bondage of trying to live by her "Testimonies." And speaking of Ellen White, are you

***I have many Adventist friends. I often pray for Adventists, many of whom are in enthusiastic agreement with most of the articles in Proclamation and support this ministry both with their prayers and finances.***

willing to accept her writings as a "continuing and authoritative source of truth..." as the Fundamental Beliefs of SDAs state, and with which all baptismal candidates are to agree in a public vow before the congregation?

You also state that I "just don't like Adventists." Here you are wrong. I have many Adventist friends. I often pray for Adventists, many of whom are in enthusiastic agreement with most of the articles in Proclamation and support this ministry both with their prayers and finances. I do dislike the apparent duplicity in Adventism, but no church is perfect. I continue to pray that Adventist leaders, professors and pastors will be true to Scripture and jettison the cultic teachings of historic Adventism.

You say we do not have any reason to exist other than to dislike Adventists and slam EGW. I don't know how long you have been reading Proclamation, but if you read all the issues, I think you will see that we do speak about God's love and it is our desire to make Christ central as we promote the simple gospel of God's grace. Readers must remember that our target audience is former Seventh-day Adventists and other sabbatarians, many of whom are still under the bondage of false guilt, have little assurance of salvation and are filled with questions that must be addressed before they can experience the freedom offered in the new covenant gospel.

Pastor English, I hope this answers your questions more fully. May God bless you and yours as you proclaim the simple gospel of Christ.

### A most painful transition

Thank you for helping us during a most painful transition period. God bless you and your ministry.

### I have found great joy and peace

I thank God for your ministry. I am a fourth generation Adventist. After four years of study I finally left the Adventist cult. The two red books by Dale Ratzlaff entitled *Cultic Doctrine* and *Sabbath in Crisis* were the final and most effective reasons to leave. I have found great

joy and peace in an evangelical church in my area and have been liberated from the dogma of Adventism for quite some time. My family is all Adventist and they have tried to bring me back to the fold in many ways. Now they are simply convinced I'm going to hell. It is a very sad thing for me to know they feel that way. I pray and hope they can be brought out... Thanks you for your incredible liberating ministry. There are not enough "thank-yous" in all languages combined to express my appreciation.

### Strange bedfellows

I appreciate your willingness to print letters that do not support your positions as well as those that are in harmony with your purpose. I was also grateful that you clarified your position on Sunday worship in response to my letter on your use of early church fathers. I had thought you believed like many evangelicals and fundamentalists that Sunday was a holy and sacred day. By logical deduction then I would assume you agree with the SDA Church when we see no Bible instruction that God directed His followers to worship on Sunday. If He had intended this then it would have been appropriate for Jesus to teach this before he sealed the New Covenant with His blood on the cross. The fact is that Jesus seems to have held the Sabbath in highest regard. His statement that it was "lawful to do well" on the Sabbath, and that the Sabbath "was made for man" in the context of something to be a blessing rather than the curse His people had made it. If you read the Bible He appears to be expecting some would be keeping it many years after His death during the invasion of Jerusalem. And the references to the Sabbath in the Book of Acts, do not suggest any controversy over worship on two different days. Mr. Goyne's argument that Paul's failure to proclaim Sabbath observance shows it was not to be kept reveals just the opposite. It was a given that Christians were observing it. Why argue for it any more than any Christian belief. If one is to resort to the argument from silence, one could say that if there was a controversy over which day to worship in the early church, then this would have been a major conflict as it obviously was among the later church fathers who are frequently quoted in your journal as evidence for Sunday worship. They wanted to remove everything associated with Judaism; I understand your frequent mention of early fathers as evidence that Sunday worship came in quite early is an effort to show that Sunday was observed much earlier than many realize.

That too is a given. But again it seems to draw support from church fathers whose deviation from New Testament truth is widely understood. It would be like your using Mormons now as evidence that Sunday was a day of worship at a particular time. Strange bedfellows. What is also interesting in your response to my letter is your statement, "Any day is appropriate to worship God, for new covenant Christians." You choose Sunday you state because the resurrection "was the greatest event in world history." Other equally sincere Christians see the cross as the greatest event separating two histories. After all the resurrection and all that followed would not have happened had it not been for the cross. Paul said, "I am determined to know nothing among you save Jesus Christ and Him crucified." Others might believe the creation of the world and man was the greatest event. I hope you would concur that the Sabbath was given for this purpose, as a reminder that God is our Creator and thus we have an allegiance due Him. This has been generally lost sight of in today's secular, evolutionary thinking world. Apart from all the evidence for Sabbath worship in the early church in Acts, it would seem logical that the need to "Remember" is just as prevalent now as it always has been. Please remember too we worship the Creator and not the day. Despite the tone of Proclamation that often seems to suggest SDAs are cold legalists, your publication allows "Any day is appropriate to worship God." Then it would seem you are allowing room for sincere Christians to worship God on this day?

**Editor's note:** Thanks for your sincere letter. You make several good points and ask several good questions. You state that Jesus "held the Sabbath in highest regard." Remember that Jesus lived during the closing days of the old covenant and we would expect him to do so. However, a closer look will show that Jesus really violated the letter of Sabbath law (See Jn.

### Church every weekend should be a joyful celebration of God

I currently attend an SDA Church. I had become a member some 32 years ago in another country. Shortly after becoming an SDA I began to have qualms about EGW. I was not the most bible savvy or spiritual person, but I wondered why pastors would take to the pulpit several EGW's books, then read one or two scriptures and then constantly page quote this or page that from EGW's books during their sermons. I believed the in keeping the Sabbath to the point

5:16-18) as he did other old covenant ritual laws and was understood by the people of his day to have openly violated the Sabbath on several occasions. As we have stated previously, the reason Acts and the Epistles have little Sabbath controversy, is that the overarching controversy of old covenant law, of which circumcision was the sign, included all old covenant rituals. Therefore, there was no need to deal with the individual rituals, such as the Sabbath, rather all these were included in the controversy over circumcision. There are numerous statements in the New Testament that show the law was given 430 after Abraham and was to last until the cross. The Law was a schoolmaster to last until Christ. Now we are no longer under the law. (Gal. 3, 4) When the new covenant was ratified by the death of Christ the old covenant became obsolete. (Heb. 8:13). Colossians 2:16 clearly states that the Seventh-day Sabbath was a shadow of things to come, but the substance belongs to Christ. The fact that in Christ there is no distinction between Jew and Gentile indicates that the Jewish laws were not required for Gentile converts. Therefore, we support the conclusion of Goyne that the Sabbath was not widely kept among Gentile converts.

While it is true that some of the church fathers held some beliefs that would not be considered mainstream, the fact that these sincere men, some of whom were willing to be martyred for their faith in Christ, were free to worship on the first day of the week is strong evidence that seventh-day Sabbath worship was not considered important.

I have not found that Christians who worship on Sunday are more likely to compromise Creation than Sabbath keepers. Regarding your statement that the death of Christ is central: I would agree that the death of Christ is central. It is also true that the resurrection gives meaning to the death of Christ and also plays an indispensable role in salvation history. We should not pit one against the other.

that I gave up my job as a police officer. Then I came to America and was active in the church holding several church positions. Then something happened in the church I was a member of in Houston, Texas. As a result I walked away from the church and never set foot on any Adventist premises for nearly eight years. I joined Sunday churches where I thoroughly enjoyed their lively praise and worship services. I believe that going to church every weekend should be a joyful celebration of God...

**I am depressed and saddened**

Would you please remove my name from your mailing list. I do not appreciate the magazines. They are not a "breath of fresh air." I am depressed and saddened to see how you twist the Scriptures and try to lead people away from the Bible truths. The Scriptures pronounce a curse on those who lead others away from the truth. How could you ignore God's commandment to "remember the Sabbath Day?" As for the PUC graduates that left the church, look at the hundreds that are all around the world teaching the Advent message.

**Thanks you so much for Proclamation!**

Thanks you so much for *Proclamation*. It has helped us so much!

**Right on with the Word of God.**

Please accept these 2 money orders as our gift to your ministry...I have been out of Adventism for over 3 years now, and my wife is in transition. It was her idea to gift you this money, as she has been blessed by the *Proclamation!* newsletters we have just received. We have only received the last 2 issues and we find you to be "right on" with the Word of God. We would definitely like to be included in your mailing list for future issues, and can hardly wait until the next one comes. My wife got your name from \_\_\_\_\_. After she went on line to the Ellen White web site, she was appalled to find out about E. G. W. and how the church "actually" started. We thank you for your ministry and for your literature. You and your organization remain in our thoughts and prayers.

**I hope that you are able to give it up and find God**

I have satisfied my curiosity about your organization and no longer want any associa-

tion with it. You are against much. Your bitterness shows. I hope that you are able to give it up and find God, following Him, whether or not you stay in organized religion. Forming your own version of God will never make you free. You have my prayers that you will go back to the Bible and study it, finding the Savior of the Bible, rather than spending your time and money trying to create doubt and dissatisfaction in others.

**It is really a valuable tool**

I recently received your *Proclamation* because I had asked questions on the Life Assurance Ministries web site. I think it is really a valuable tool for the work you are doing. Please pray for my \_\_\_\_\_ that your publication may open her heart to God's grace.

**We are trusting God to give us the wisdom**

Dear Pastor Ratzlaff, I write to thank you on behalf of my friend and Bible study partner \_\_\_\_\_. She no longer attends the SDA church but the elder and some members have been visiting her and inviting her to return. However we (I am not an Adventist) are planning to formulate some questions from our studies of the various SDA doctrines and the life of E.G White and her claims. When we have these questions together \_\_\_\_\_ will pay the church a visit and confront the leaders with the questions forcing them to "come clean". Please pray for us. We are trusting God to give us the wisdom that everything will be done in love. Once more thanks for the *Proclamation*. We especially found the article "The role of conscience in Belief" very enlightening. Please continue to send *Proclamation* to us.

**What a shame and a pity**

It makes me sad that Clay Peck, and many other "formers", did not discover Jesus, His love, His grace, His precious justification, His new covenant promises and the wonderful assurance of the gift of present salvation while they were still SDA's. He must have felt that legalistic practices, binding standards and strictures, and harsh doctrinal presentations were what Adventism was all about. What a shame and a pity. In it all, he missed the beauty. He missed Jesus. I want to say as a retired SDA pastor who has spent 52 years in ministry in this move-

ment, that it is possible to "get it all together" as a SDA Christian. It does not have to be "law or grace", "works or faith", "obedience or love". All of these things meld together in a happy, saving relationship with Jesus Christ where we trust in Him as our righteousness, our perfection, our Justification, our Sanctification, our precious Advocate before the Father. His life in our behalf, His obedience in our behalf, His pleasing the Father in our behalf, His death in our behalf, His resurrection in our behalf, His ministry before the Father in our behalf. Here is my hope. HE IS MY HOPE! Not in my Sabbath-keeping. Not in my healthful living practices. Not in my doctrinal understandings. Not in my having been a SDA pastor for all these years. All of these, apart from Jesus, are rubbish, filthy rags, yea...dung. There are legalists in the SDA Church. There are unconverted people in the SDA Church. There are those who think that their "doctrinal correctness" and their 2nd, 3rd, or 4th "SDA generationism" is where it's at. At the same, I hasten to add, there will be such people in Grace Place, in Damascus Road Community Church, and in every other church and denomination. This is reality. They just have not understood well what Jesus spoke in Jn.14:6 where He stated "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me". *Philip W. Dunham*

**Editor's comments:** If you carefully read Greg Taylor's "Manifesto" posted on our web site and his articles in *Proclamation*, I think you will find that pastor Taylor did discover the simple gospel of grace while he was a Seventh-day Adventist. In fact one of the reasons Pastor Taylor left the SDA church was because he felt he could not in clear conscience teach other Adventist doctrines without compromising his loyalty to the simple gospel of grace.

**Mail letters and donations to:**

**Life Assurance Ministries  
PO Box 11587  
Glendale, AZ 85318**

# Letter answered: addressing the key point

*The following letter is from Elder Douglas L. English, pastor of the Sunnydale Seventh-day Adventist Church in Centralia, Missouri. Pastor English is the same Adventist pastor whose letter we published in the July/August issue of Proclamation. We appreciate his sincere comments and questions which I will address at the conclusion of his letter.*

## **You dismissed my observations without addressing the key point I was making**

Your response to my letter on the article by Jerry A. Gladson dismissed my observations without addressing the key point I was making, namely that the article discounts Biblical authority all too readily. Certainly I will coincide that some SDA pastors have a liberal view of inspiration, but unlike you, I find them to be in the minority. And even if this is so, what has that to do with the fact that Dr. Gladson, and to all appearances your editorial board as well, does not accept the Bible as infallible? It may be true that some within my church have issues with inspiration, but my church clearly has a position on inspiration. Despite the fact that you quote the Bible authoritatively when it suits your purposes. Articles such as Dr. Gladson's leave one with the sense that you don't have a coherent position on inspiration, or the authority of the Bible, or on any other point of doctrine so far as I can determine. The one thing that unifies you came out very clearly when you turned your response into an opportunity to slam Ellen White: you just don't like Adventists. No other reason exists for your organization: not the love of God, the need to share Jesus, or any other legitimate issue. How is a serious person supposed to take you seriously?

## **Editor's comments**

Pastor English, thank you for your letter. You raise a number of good and important points, which to answer fully, would take this whole issue. However, with the limitations of space, here are a few observations which I hope will be helpful.

It may be true that Dr. Gladson has, what you would call, a more liberal view of inspiration than I, or some of the other contributors to *Proclamation*, do. We must each be true to our own conscience. When seeking truth there must be an openness to carefully evaluate

all the evidence and not limit ourselves only to the material that agrees with our position. You discredit Dr. Gladson for the way he treats Ecclesiastes in general and Eccl. 9:5 in particular but are you willing to take as inspired or authoritative the following texts from Ecclesiastes which are only a sampling of problem statements in this book?

So I congratulated the dead who are already dead more than the living who are still living. But better off than both of them is the one who has never existed, who has never seen the evil activity that is done under the sun. Eccl. 4:2-3

Do not all go to the same place? Eccl. 6:6

The day of one's death is better than the day of one's birth. Eccl. 7:1

So I commended pleasure, for there is nothing good for a man under the sun except to eat and to drink and to be merry, and this will stand by him in his toils throughout the days of his life which God has given him under the sun. Eccl. 8:15

Indeed, if a man should live many years, let him rejoice in them all, and let him remember the days of darkness, for they will be many. Everything that is to come will be futility. Eccl. 11:8

You state that it appears we do not accept the Bible as infallible. Do YOU accept the above statements from Ecclesiastes as infallible?

When I attended the SDA Seminary, we were explicitly taught that SDAs should never claim the Bible as infallible. My professors went to great lengths to show that the parable of the Sower in Mark 4 was not spoken by Christ but was added many years later. For the first several years after leaving Andrews University I did not use this portion of Scripture. Now with a more conservative view of inspiration, I feel most comfortable to use this section. Another professor pointed out the "error" in Leviticus 11:6 which states that the rabbit chews its cud when in reality it does not. I have seen many attempts to correct this "error" but none very convincing. It is my understanding that SDAs do not officially hold to the infallibility of Scripture per se, rather they state that "...the Holy Scriptures are the infallible rev-

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