

LIFE ASSURANCE MINISTRIES, INC

Proclamation!

VOLUME 6
ISSUE 3
MAY
JUNE
2005

FOR FORMER ADVENTISTS • INQUIRING ADVENTISTS • SABBATARIANS • CONCERNED EVANGELICALS

HOW YOU VIEW GOD'S COVENANTS:

The continental divide of Biblical interpretation

DALE RATZLAFF

Studying the covenants is like pouring one's theological water jug out on the Continental Divide. Which ocean of theological understanding one ends up in is determined here. Differences that may seem minor at this point,

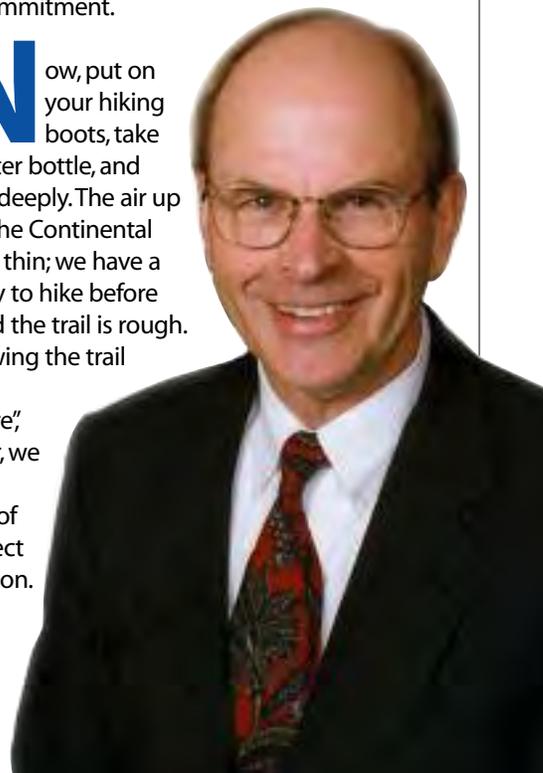
There is no clear-cut division between moral and ceremonial laws in the books of Moses. The terms, "the moral law" and "the ceremonial law" are artificial, unbiblical definitions.

when run their course down the streams of application, will be thousands of miles apart. Therefore, how important it is that we make sure which side of this great divide we choose.

I believe the Bible teaches that there have been high moral principles (call them moral laws if you wish) from the beginning of time, and these principles will continue into eternity. In fact, these eternal moral principles, as exemplified in the life of Christ, provide a much better guide than the Decalogue. I believe the Ten Commandments reflect the existence of these moral principles, but not as clearly as do the new covenant principles of righteousness. I would not lower the righteousness of Christ to that of "living the Ten Commandments." I believe His life exemplifies a much higher level. Therefore, when we look at

Biblical facts that indicate the Ten Commandments did not exist before Moses and are not to continue after the cross, we are not opening up the flood-gates to anarchy or wickedness. Neither do we have any hidden agenda. Rather, we are only seeking to be true to Scripture and nothing more. Wherever Scripture leads us, we are willing to follow. I pray that you, the reader, will be willing to make this same commitment.

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



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Dale Ratzlaff is founder and president of Life Assurance Ministries, Inc., the publisher of *Proclamation!* Life Assurance Ministries is a non-profit corporation that depends on tax-deductible donations.

Life Assurance Ministries, 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

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Finding my Sabbath rest

COLLEEN TINKER

It was noon on the first Sabbath of December, 1998. Deliberately I stood in front of the washer, loaded clothes, measured detergent, and started the wash cycle. If Jesus really fulfilled the law, I reasoned to myself, then I have to be willing to act in faith on that conviction. It's not enough merely to attend church on Sunday; I deliberately have to treat Sabbath as—well—as Saturday!

Richard and I had been holding home church on Sundays with our neighbors for two years. We had been growing in Jesus,

We had to give up our symbol of “truth,” our “sign” of belonging to God: we had to give up the Sabbath deliberately. In order to put our faith and confidence fully in Jesus, we had to stop hedging our bets. We had to throw all of ourselves—even our fears—on His mercy.

We had to give up our tradition of Sabbath observance in the same way the new Corinthian believers had to be willing to give up meat offered to idols. For them to eat meat offered to idols if they were still weak in faith (or if they were eating in front of those weak in faith) would mean triggering a cascade of memories and habits that would lead them into sin. (See 1 Corinthians 8.) Similarly, Sabbath-keeping kept us in a place of incomplete surrender, of allowing fear, false doctrine, and familiarity rather than faith to determine our practice.

Thus I stood in front of my washer, boldly doing laundry on Sabbath. Richard chose to make a public statement: he mowed the lawn on Sabbath afternoon. The miracle didn't come until later.

One week passed. We stood together in the kitchen.

“Every day was Sabbath this week,” Richard confided with wonder. “I used to hope to experience Jesus like this on Sabbath, but I never did. I felt His presence with me every day.”

“So did I!” I turned to him. “I never expected this!”

The Holy Spirit confirmed that Jesus, not a day, is our Sabbath rest, and the wonder of His presence has never left us. Only when we actually gave up the Sabbath for Jesus did He confirm the truth with His palpable presence: Jesus is ALL we need.

In this issue we are reprinting two articles previously published in 2001. Dale Ratzlaff shows that the New Covenant is really new, not merely a restatement of the Mosaic. Verle Streifling shows from the Bible that Jesus, not the seventh day, is our true Sabbath rest. Laura Denmark shares her story of being confronted with true Christianity while on a modeling assignment in Japan, and Steve Pitcher tells how participating in weekly, in-depth Bible studies have impacted his life.

Our desire is that you will risk releasing all that you have known and cherished and take hold of Jesus. He is everything promised in the Old Testament, and He is everything you will ever need.

Praise our Father for Jesus!

In order to put our faith and confidence fully in Jesus, we had to stop hedging our bets. We had to throw all of ourselves—even our fears—on His mercy.

and our lives had changed drastically. We were experiencing security in Him for the first time. We knew He had saved us. The Bible was a completely new book.

In spite of having church on Sunday, however, we had not had the courage to “abandon” the Sabbath. Although we didn't go to church on the seventh day, still we treated it as a day of leisure. We didn't do any work; we rested and read; we kicked back. Although we could clearly state that we knew we were secure in our salvation apart from Sabbath, there lurked a fear behind our bold assertions: what if Adventists were right? What if Sabbath really was significant? We hedged our bets; we could “do church” on Sunday, but we still wouldn't “give up” Sabbath. Besides, we loved Sabbath.

Having every weekend completely absorbed, however, made life difficult. We finally discussed our problem. We prayed. Everything in us rebelled at the thought of desecrating Sabbath. How could we be sure we weren't deceived in thinking the Sabbath was part of the law Jesus fulfilled? (See Colossians 2:13-17.)

Finally, however, we knew the answer: if it was true, as the Bible said, that nothing we did contributed to our salvation, that what matters is not observing laws but being new creations, then we had to make our lives congruent with our convictions. (See Galatians 6:14-15; 2:15-16; 3:23-25; 4:8-11; 5:1-6.)

Proclamation!

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Published by Life Assurance Ministries, Inc.
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While modeling in Tokyo, Laura met someone excited about Jesus

Love found me

LAURA DENMARK

It was 1989, and I was just about to turn 21—when God in His grace plucked me out of the Adventist Church and set me on a new path. I hadn't been questioning Adventism. Furthermore, I neither understood nor cared about the doctrines—that is, I didn't care until God took hold of me and made me a new creation in Him. It is hard to describe what I felt during that time of daring to question: fear, anger, relief, excitement, joy, and loneliness, yet God led me to truth and to freedom.

I was born into a long line of committed Adventists. My great-grandparents were missionaries in South America, and my parents were involved in our local church and school.

I had moments of sincere faith; I accepted Jesus many times and was baptized at age 12. I did not, however, have an ongoing walk with the Lord. As soon as Bible camp was over or the week of prayer speakers were gone, my heart became distracted. By the time I was in Academy I knew I would never be “good enough” to make it to heaven. I decided to focus on having fun while I could. My fellow “Badventists” and I spurred each other on to try new and foolish things. The world wooed us; we longed to be like the kids on the “outside,” not some strange, peculiar people. Throughout high school I had fun, didn't think about anything too deep, and got away with as much as I could.

I moved to an Adventist college and continued dating, partying, sneaking around—thinking little of the consequences. After my freshman year, I went overseas to an Adventist school and continued my ways, oblivious of God's presence. When I was about to return to the states, a family crisis broke. My parents were dealing with some very personal and painful issues that had become public in our little hometown. The last thing I

wanted to do was re-enter the “fish bowl” and be the topic of discussion, so I decided not to return to the Adventist college.

Looking for love in all the wrong places, I set out for the nearest big city to pursue a career in the modeling industry. I had always had a desire to see if I could make it “big.” Somehow I ended up with a manager and a personal agent who mapped out my future and made it sound exciting. I began to dream of being famous and having everyone love and admire me. After six months of training, photo shoots, and auditions, I ended up in Tokyo, Japan, with a two-month contract. I really had no idea what I was doing; I was even more naive than my American roommates. I automatically became part of the community of expatriates, and we all hung out together. We used our passes to the night clubs for free food and drinks, or we would be wined and dined by the friendly Japanese men we'd meet. This was non-stop fun—and yet, I was empty. I was struck with the shallowness of the “scene,” and it began to annoy me.

One night I was in a Reggae bar with a roommate who introduced me to an American named Christina. She was in town for a few months but would return home to Hawaii soon. Christina was a Christian.

Laura Denmark lives in Redlands, California, with her husband Kent and their four children. She is a registered nurse but is now a full-time mom and is involved in leading a children's discipleship club at their local public school. She and Kent are deeply committed to the small group Bible study ministry at Trinity Evangelical Free Church



I had never met anyone before who was excited to talk about her faith! She missed her church so much that she had her pastor's sermons sent to her. I was blown away by her enthusiasm and her love for the Lord. Her relationship with God intrigued me, and I wanted to talk with her more. Miraculously, my contract was extended for a few extra weeks while most of my new friends left town. Consequently, I had few distractions. I spent as much time with Christina as I could, drinking in all she had to say about the Lord. I told her about my background and how I wanted what she had, but I had never seen it in my church. I asked her to come to the Adventist church so I could show her what it was like, and she took me to the church she

The first time I went to church on a Sunday morning—I was scared! I reasoned that the pastor had to know about the Sabbath, but he was tricking his congregation into believing it was ok to worship on Sunday!

was attending in Tokyo. I didn't know how I could get as excited about being an Adventist as Christina was about Jesus, but I wanted to be open minded.

I returned home and continued to think about Christina and how much she loved God. I called my agent and told her I didn't want to rush right back to the city and the modeling world. I needed some time to clear my head and lose a couple of pounds. Christina returned to her apartment in Hawaii and invited me to come rent a room from her. She wanted to take me to her church and to the Bible studies she attended. I jumped on a plane not knowing how long I would stay there; I just knew I was ready to go.

The first time I went to church on a Sunday morning—I was scared! I reasoned that the pastor had to know about the Sabbath, but he was tricking his congregation into believing it was O.K. to worship on Sunday! Once there, however, I couldn't deny the Spirit's presence. I remember watching Christina out of the corner of my eye as she raised her arms and worshipped God.

I started to go to Bible Studies with her, and I also began really reading my Bible for the first time. I had had so much spiritual pride. I thought I knew so much about God and truth, but that illusion quickly faded as I read. I realized I didn't know God or His Word at all. I fell in love with Jesus for the first time, understanding what He had done for me on the cross. Before this time I could not have told you what the gospel was; I had never heard it described at all. I was filled with excitement and joy, but I didn't know how I could reconcile all this with my Adventism. I was profoundly confused. I had never heard of anyone leaving Adventism and becoming "born again"!

Meanwhile, shortly after arriving, I had found the local Adventist church and had begun attending it as well as Christina's. My new Adventist friends were nervous about my Calvary Chapel attendance, and vice versa. I began to study Adventist doctrine to figure out exactly where the two groups parted ways. I read the appendix Dr. Walter Martin wrote in

Kingdom of the Cults to try to understand the differences, and God used Martin's analysis in a powerful way. Meanwhile, my parents were writing to me, calling and sending Adventist materials. I assured them I would never leave the Sabbath truth.

I could not get over how exciting it would feel just to be a "regular" Christian, but if I didn't believe Scripture supported "regular" Christian doctrine, I couldn't leave. I was torn. After two months of study and talking with both sides, the only real issue I had was the Sabbath. Scripture seemed to support Sabbath-keeping. I read and re-read the passages and believed there remained a Sabbath rest for the people of God. I went 'round and 'round with Christina and others.

I can still remember where I was when the veil finally lifted. Driving around Honolulu, I realized the Sabbath rest did remain, but it was every day—not just one day. All the scriptures that refer to the Sabbath suddenly made total sense. God had made it so beautifully clear. I could be a Christian, and I didn't have to be an Adventist!!! I was now living under the new covenant; what a sense of joy and freedom that gave me.

One day as I was reading my Bible I came across James 3:16 which says, "For where you have envy and selfish ambition, there you find disorder and every evil practice." God showed me that this verse exactly described the modeling world, and I knew He was calling me to leave it. I knew it was time to return home, and I began to pray about where God would lead.

Once I was home, my family saw the obvious changes in me—I was truly a different person. They were saddened, however, by my decision to leave the church. Why couldn't I stay and make changes within the system, they wondered? For me, though, staying would have meant spiritual death. I wanted to go where I could grow and learn. I had a lot of catching up to do.

God led me to Sonoma State University where I joined an amazing group called Intervarsity Christian Fellowship. They helped me understand what it meant to follow Jesus on a daily basis and to be a witness for Him on a university campus that was hostile to Christians.

While at SSU, I ran into a friend from an Adventist college. He wasn't walking with the Lord, and his guilt weighed heavily on him. I invited him to our campus meetings, and he came. He experienced God in a new way and rededicated His life to Christ. At the end of the year he left for medical school. He also left Adventism. We started to date long distance, but we tired of that quickly. Following Kent, however, meant moving back to Loma Linda, a thought which didn't thrill me. God had called me "out" of Adventism, and I didn't want to go back in any way, shape, or form. I did go, however, and God protected our commitments to Him and blessed us in many ways. We have been married for 13 years, have four wonderful children, and attend an amazing church.

Kent and I have studied and shared with many Adventists. We want them to understand what it means to walk with Jesus while experiencing freedom and joy. We have excitedly watched many others make their journey into freedom, including many family members. God is so good!

How to receive REST IN CHRIST

VERLE STREIFLING

“Come unto Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest... and you will find rest for your souls.” Matthew 11:28-29

In Matthew 11:28-30, Jesus gave His people a marvelous offer—His rest for their souls. While in context the offer was initially for Israel, yet it was certainly for the Gentiles too. Isaiah foretold Christ’s rest for all, “And in that day there shall be a Root of Jesse... for the Gentiles shall seek Him, and His rest shall be glorious” (11:10-11).

The author of Hebrews expounds the reason why the Messiah made this offer and why it had not been received long before. Heb 3:7 to 4:11: “Therefore, as the Holy Spirit says: ‘Today, if you will hear His voice, do not harden your hearts as in the rebellion, in the day of trial in the wilderness, where your fathers tested Me, proved Me and saw My works forty years. Therefore I was angry with that generation... So I swore in My wrath, they shall not enter My rest.’”

When was this ‘day of trial’ in the wilderness? The Hebrews passage quotes Psalm 95:7-11. The cross-reference connects Psalm 95:7-11 to Exodus 17:2-7, where Israel chided God and He gave water from the Rock. In Exodus 3&4 He had promised them His presence, His power, His provisions, and His protection. With miracles, signs, and wonders He freed them from Egyptian slavery, plundering the Egyptians. He vanquished Pharaoh’s army at the Red Sea, purified the waters of Mara, gave shade at Elim and manna and quail to eat. Yet for all of these blessings, in their hardness of heart and unwillingness to believe or trust Him, they rebelled again in the wilderness, so God swore, “They shall not enter into My Rest.” Yet He spoke of another day when His people would enter His rest, reminding them by David, and later, Isaiah, that Messiah will come, “and His rest will be glorious!”

What God’s rest IS NOT

What was God’s Rest that they failed to receive? It could not be Sabbath-keeping, because the rebel-

lion in Ex 17 was after Ex 16 when God gave Israel the Sabbath. They already had the Sabbath rest, but they had not received His Rest! Centuries later, through Isaiah, God said, “Your New moons and your Sabbaths, My soul hates!” (1:13+14). Then He asked, “Where is the house you’ll build Me, and where is the place of My rest” (66:1)? This question shows that Solomon’s magnificent temple and the Sabbath were neither the real temple, nor the real rest He wanted for them.

Israel sabbatized for 1500 years without receiving His Rest, until Christ offered it in Matt 11. Heb 4:4 says on the seventh day “God Rested”, but the Greek word *katapausis* (ceased) is used, rather than *sabbata* or *sabbatidzo* (sabbatize), and it is contextually defined in 4:10 as “God ceased from His (works)”. Paul quoted Gen 2:2+3, and the Septuagint translates this Genesis passage using the word *katapausis* (ceased), not “sabbatized.” The Hebrew MT uses *shahvath* (ceased) rather than *shabbathohn* (sabbatize), saying “God ceased from all He had created and made” (*Young’s Literal Translation, The Living Bible*).

Some writers say that since *sabbatismos* appears in Heb 4:9, then God’s rest which is ‘left behind’ for the people of God (4:9) is “sabbatizing.” Addressing this argument, Dr. Ford’s Glacier View paper examining Daniel 8:14 relates an exchange of letters in 1957 between F. C. Clifford, then president of Austral-Asian Division, and F. D. Nichol regarding the galleys for their *Seventh-Day Adventist Bible Commentary*. Clifford was distressed that the commentary didn’t support their sanctuary teaching very well. Nichol confirmed this complaint with advice to stay out of Hebrews when trying to show their sanctuary and investigative judgment doctrines. In closing he also noted regarding Heb 4:9, “If you will look again at the galleys, you will note that we do not believe that Hebrews 4:9 presents a valid argument for the Sabbath. I am sure some folks will grieve over this, and perhaps argue we have weakened the Sabbath doctrine... We simply believe Hebrews is not the place to try to establish the Sabbath doctrine.”

Verle Streifling was raised in a devout Adventist family and graduated from Adventist schools. At age 26 he was born again, and intensive Bible study and the Holy Spirit led him out of Adventism and into Evangelical Christianity. In 1984 he was ordained for ministry, and by 1990 he earned his Ph.D. Over the past 25 years he has written numerous tracts and articles, a number of booklets and manuscripts, and his *Bible Answers for Sabbath Questions* is now being edited for publication. He and his wife plan to retire into full-time ministry in the Philippines next year.



What God's rest IS

Adventists' comments in their *Bible Commentary* regarding Heb 4:9 are lengthy (vol VII p 421- 423), stating that Joshua's failure to lead Israel into spiritual rest would provide no reason for Christians to observe the Sabbath. Further, "to declare that what remains for the people of God is the weekly Sabbath is to declare that what Joshua failed to lead Israel into was the weekly Sabbath"; and if the conclusion of this passage is that

weekly Sabbath-keeping remains, then "the writer of Hebrews is guilty of a non-sequitur for the conclusion does not follow logically from the argument." The text then cites Ellen White "(It) is the rest of Grace" (GC 253) and "It is the true rest of faith" (*Thoughts from the Mount of Blessings* 1) before concluding, "Accordingly, the promise and invitation to enter into God's spiritual rest remains valid (vs 6,9)."

So Jesus offered His Rest using the word *anapauo*, also used for OT "sabbath resting" (LXX). Hebrews exhorts, "Let us labor to enter His rest, lest we fall after the

same unbelief," adding, "We who have believed, relied on and trusted (in Christ) do enter his rest" (4:3 *Amplified*), for "He who has entered into His rest, has ceased from works, even as God did from His" (4:10). Here the SDA Commentary adds, "has ceased from works (for salvation) as God did from His (at creation)," thus explaining the meaning of *anapauo* in its OT reference to Sabbath resting.

Jesus has figuratively applied 'sabbath resting' to our souls, showing it is our Spiritual Rest. By making this application He has shown that the Sabbath was a shadow which was to be fulfilled in receiving His (God's) rest (*katapausis*). Thus Heb 4:6-11 says that there remains a Spiritual Rest for the people of God... Let us endeavor to receive and enter into that rest, lest we, too, fall after the same manner of unbelief as did Israel!

The *Amplified Bible* states it this way: "We who have believed, relied on and trusted in Christ do enter that rest" for "he who has entered has ceased from his works (for salvation) as God did from His." In John 6 Jesus' disciples asked him, "What works shall we do, that we may do the works of God?" to which He responded, "These are the works of God, that you believe in Him whom He hath sent!" Paul emphasizes this "work" of belief in Ephesians 2:8, "By grace you have been saved through believing... not of works lest any man should boast," and in Romans 3:21-28: "what of works? It is excluded!—especially not the works of the Law! For we are justified by faith / believing—apart from works!"

What God's Rest Includes

Thus, when we believe in Christ to enter His rest, we must put our trust in Him alone for our cleansing from all sin. 1 John 1:7 says, "the blood of Christ keeps on cleansing us from all sin,"

and Col 2:13 declares, "(God) has made us alive together with Him (Christ) having forgiven all our trespasses".

When we believe in Christ and enter His rest, we must put our trust in Him alone for our bridge to God. In Eph 2:18 we read, "For through Him we have access... to the Father," and again in 3:12, "...we have boldness and access with confidence through faith in Him." Believing in Christ, to enter His rest we must trust Him alone for our Peace with God. Eph 2:14 says, "He Himself is our peace," and Rom 5:1 emphasizes, "having been justified by faith we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." When we believe in Christ, to enter His rest we must put our trust in Him alone for our righteousness, as Rom 4:3-6 says: "but he who does not work... his faith is accounted for righteousness." And 10:4 reiterates, "Christ is the end of the law for righteousness, to all who believe (in Him)". Also, 4:22-25 illustrates this fact, "Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness... this was written for us. It shall be imputed to us who believe in Him."

Further, in entering His rest we must rely on Him alone for our justification. Romans 4:25: "(Christ) was delivered up for our sins, and raised for our justification" ... (5:1) "Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God..."

As we believe in Christ and enter His rest, we must rely wholly in Him for our holiness, as we read "...so He may establish your hearts blameless in holiness before God" (1Ths 3:13). Romans restates this truth, "having been set free from sin... you have your fruit to holiness" (Rom 6:22); and again, "but He for our profit, that we may be partakers of His holiness" (Heb 12:10).

To enter His rest by believing in Christ, we must trust Him alone for our saving and sustaining faith. Eph 2:8 says by grace you have been saved through faith and adds, "and that (faith) is not of ourselves, it is the Gift of God." When Paul said, "I am crucified with Christ," he adds, "the life I now live I live by the faith of the Son of God who loved me and gave Himself for me" (Gal 2:20). In Rom 3:22 he says "the righteousness of God which is through the faith of Jesus Christ... on all who believe"; and in verse 26, "that He might be just and the justifier of the one who has the faith of Jesus." In these texts, the Greek text is in the possessive case (of Jesus) rather than locative (in Jesus).

Acting in the faith of Jesus was so well illustrated that stormy night on Galilee when Jesus invited Peter to walk with Him on the water. When Peter's faith failed and he began sinking, Christ caught him, and Jesus' faith carried Peter back into the boat. John gives the rest of the story. The disciples had toiled into the third watch of the night, and they hadn't progressed even half-way across the sea. But once Jesus entered the boat, they immediately reached shore! Jesus' faith superseded all their works of that night—in a moment of time! So too for us His faith is perfect in our weakness, and it exceeds our works by infinite measure!

When we believe in Christ, to enter His rest we must depend on Him alone for our eternal life. Col 3:3-4 reads, "When Christ, Who is our life shall appear, you will also appear with Him in glory." Peter declared, "You (Jews) slew Him who is

"We who have believed, relied on and trusted in Christ do enter that rest" for "he who has entered has ceased from his works (for salvation) as God did from His"

the Prince of life" using the Greek *Arkay* meaning 'source' of eternal life. John 3:16 states, "God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life."

To believe in Christ and enter His rest, we must trust in Christ alone for our perfection. After saying Christ is the fullness of Deity in bodily form, Paul adds, "and you are complete in Him" (Col 2:9-10); in 4:12 he states again, "...that you may stand perfect and complete in all the will of God". Thus, once you're in Christ, there's nothing that you lack in measuring up to God's perfection! Only in Christ alone, can anyone fulfill God's command, "Be ye perfect, as I am perfect". Believing in Christ, we must trust entirely in Him and His finished works on our behalf. Titus 3:5 says it is "not by works of righteousness that we have done, but by His mercy He saved us". Heb 4:10 also emphasizes, "he who has entered His rest, has himself also ceased from works, as God did from His."

Now that, beloved, is the true rest for our souls! It's His perfection that completes us; and it's His finished work that ends all of our works for salvation! As John the beloved wrote, "God has given us eternal life and this life is in His Son. He who has the Son has life... These things I have written to you... that you may know that you have eternal life". (1Jn 5:11-13). We're also told that we've "passed from death to life," we "shall not come into judgment," we're now "sons of God"; if we do sin, "we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous, and He Himself is the propitiation for our sins," and "His blood continues cleansing us from all sin"! All we must do is continue believing in Him!

Jesus applied the figure of Sabbath resting to the rest for our souls by saying, "Come to Me... I'll give you rest *anapauso* for your souls". He used this metaphor because the Sabbath command forbade any and all work — whether good works or not—it was all outlawed! Likewise, for our salvation, our cleansing, our access to God, our peace with God, our righteousness, our holiness, our faith, our life, our perfection and all our spiritual needs, Christ calls us to come to Himself. He forbids us to do any works but tells us to only rest and trust in Him and all of His finished work for us!

This offer ought to make everyone shout, "Hallelujah!" We who formerly had less than nothing to offer God now, in Christ, have more than everything we need because of "Him who loved us and gave himself for us"! Small wonder the Bible says we'll praise Him through eternity!

God's TRUE Temple, Worship, and Rest

We return to God's indictment on Israel in Isa 66:1, "Where is the house you'll build Me, and where is the place of My rest?" Quoting this passage to the Jews in Acts 7, Stephen told them, "God does not dwell in temples built with hands". So where is His Temple? Jesus revealed this mystery to the Samaritan lady in John 4. When she asked, "Where is the right place to worship God?" He answered, "The hour now is, when the true worshippers will worship God in spirit and in reality... God is spirit and those who worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in

truth (Gk, *alethia*)" (vs 23+24). Here He ended all the OT externals of worship, pointing out that true, genuine, and real worship must come from within Man's spirit. The old periphery of when, where, and how were all of the past, for God wants reality worship from the heart in lieu of ritual lip-service. Isaiah and Jesus decried ritual worship also: "They honor Me with their lips, but their hearts are far from Me." Mere shadow worship is inadequate—God desires genuine substance worship!

We are told, "You are the temple of God, and the Spirit of God dwells in you." (1 Cor 3:16). In the ritual sanctuary the Holy Spirit came down to dwell in shekinah glory on the mercy seat of the Holy of Holies, but only once a year. Now He continually dwells in man's spirit which is "the temple of God, as He has said, 'I will dwell IN them'" (2 Cor 6:16). In Galatians, Paul exhorts, "We are the true circumcision who worship God in the Spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and put no confidence in the flesh"; and in 1 Cor 14, "I will sing in the Spirit... I will pray in the Spirit... I will bless God in the Spirit" Heb 13 also states, "Let us offer to God the sacrifice of praise continually... giving thanks to His name." The true sacrifices to God are spiritual sacrifices!

David foresaw these things also, stating in the Psalms, "Let us worship at His footstool. Arise, O Lord, to Your rest... Let Your priests be clothed with righteousness, and let Your saints shout aloud for Joy!" to which God responds, "This is My resting place forever, here will I dwell for I have desired it... I will clothe her priests with salvation, and her saints will shout aloud for joy!" Indeed, beloved, we are His priests as 1 Pet 2:4-10 says, we are His royal priesthood, His holy nation and His special people called to "proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light"

God's true temple is not a building, but man's spirit—a spiritual temple. True worship is not rituals but 'worship in the Spirit', or Spirit-led worship. True sacrifices are not things, but spiritual sacrifices including praise and a contrite heart. Finally, His true rest is not 'sabbath keeping', but the Spiritual Rest for our souls that Jesus freely gives us when we've put our complete faith and trust entirely in Him and all the Spiritual blessings He alone provides us, as our only mediator to God (1 Tim 2:5).

Jesus provides more than everything we need to be completely saved and sealed by the Holy Spirit of promise. In Him we lack nothing to meet the gaze of the Great Law Giver—God Himself! The Scripture says, "If you confess Jesus is Lord, and believe in your heart God raised Him from the dead, you shall be saved... Whoever puts his trust IN HIM, will not be put to shame!" (Rom 10:9-13).

Have you, beloved reader, put your total trust in Christ, and in Him alone, that you too can experience His Rest for your soul? Isaiah promised, "unto Him shall the Gentiles seek, and His Rest shall be glorious!"

God's true temple is not a building, but man's spirit—a spiritual temple.



The continental divide of Biblical interpretation CONTINUED FROM FRONT

The Ten Commands are the very words of the old covenant

The Bible says:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

There is no clear-cut division between moral and ceremonial laws in the books of Moses. The terms “the moral law” and “the ceremonial law” are artificial, unbiblical definitions. While there are moral aspects and ceremonial aspects to the law, they are often intermingled. Adventists are quick to call the Sabbath a moral law because it is in the heart of the Ten Commandments. However, it is listed with the feast days and other ceremonial aspects of the law about a dozen times.² It finds itself in the center of the Ten Commandments³ because it is the sign of the Sinaitic Covenant⁴ and ancient Near East treaty documents had the covenant sign in the center.⁵ If one were to assign “moral” or “ceremonial” to the Sabbath, *by virtue of association with other laws* it would, by a 12:1 ratio, be a “ceremonial law.” When Jesus was asked which was the greatest commandment in the “law” (note one law), His answer was from Deut. 6:5 and Lev. 19:18⁶, not the Sabbath as Ellen White taught,⁷ or even the Decalogue. Often those from Adventist backgrounds will immediately associate “law” with the Ten Commandments. Usually Matt. 5:17–19 is quoted to prove the perpetuity of the Ten Commandments when the Ten Commandments are not even in view in this passage.⁸ I was amazed to find that by themselves, the Ten Commandments are never called “the law of the Lord,” or “the law of God” in Scripture.⁹

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

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

One could break the Sinaitic (or old) Covenant by a violation of any of the Ten Commandments¹¹ and many of its “ceremonial-type” laws.¹²

We have now shown that the words of the covenant God made with Israel were the Ten Commandments, and this covenant was expanded¹³ to include all the laws given by God to Moses and was collectively called the law, the law of the Lord, the law of God, the covenant, etc.

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

The author of Hebrews describes the “first covenant” and specifically mentions “the tables of the covenant”—an unmis-



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

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

takable reference to the Ten Commandments as being included in this “first covenant”.

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

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

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

You are our letter, written in our hearts, known and read by all men; being manifested that you are a letter of Christ, cared for by us, written *not with ink* but with the Spirit of the living God, *not on tablets of stone* but on *tablets of human hearts*. Such confidence we have through Christ toward God. Not that we are adequate in ourselves to consider anything as coming from ourselves, but our adequacy is from God, who also made us adequate as servants of a *new covenant*, not of the letter but of the Spirit; for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life. But if the *ministry of death, in letters engraved on stones*, came with glory, so that the sons of Israel could not look intently at the face of Moses because of the glory of his face, fading as it was. 2 Cor. 3:2–7

Paul uses the term, “not written with ink” to refer to the “other laws” which were given by God to Moses that were an expansion, interpretation and application of the Ten Commandments to the life of Israel. It is also clear that Paul refers to the Ten Commandments in this passage by using “letters engraved on stones.” The new covenant is said to be “not of the letter” “but of the Spirit!” *This statement excludes the Ten Commandments from the new covenant*, or the least that can be said, is that it excludes them in their codified form. It dubs the Ten Commandments *specifically* as “the ministry of death” in contrast to the new covenant which Paul says “gives life.”

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

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

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

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

I quote from Riggle,

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

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

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

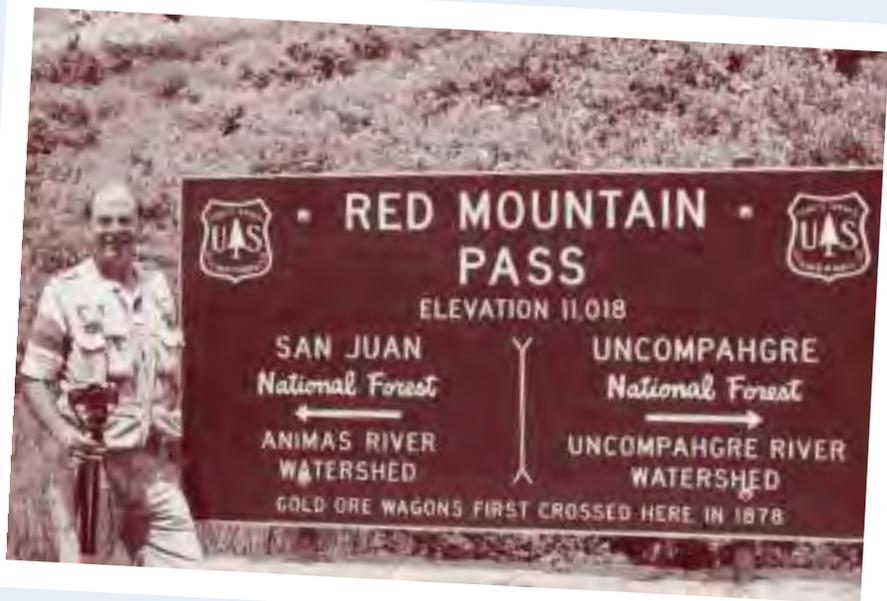
The laws of Sinai, including the Ten Commandments, were not given until the time of Moses

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

Take another drink and a five-minute break to catch your breath in this high altitude, then let’s continue our hike on this trail of Scripture.

I quote from Riggle,

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



God made a covenant with us at Horeb [Sinai]. "The Lord did not make this covenant with our fathers, but with us, with all those of us alive here today." Deut. 5:2-3

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

After reading the above statement you will want to sit down by the trail and look at the scenery here in the beautiful Rocky Mountains. We have now come to a major theological watershed. You *must* decide which way you will go. Are you going to continue to follow the trail marked "Scripture"? Or, are you going to opt for the trail marked, "Ellen White"? You *cannot* go both ways. Take your time here in prayer and contemplation because the outcome of this decision will have major consequences to your future life *no matter which way you go*. Why not get out the maps—all three of them—and let's do some carefully study? Let's determine now which is the right way!

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

The map of Adventist doctrine before 1980¹⁸ stated that the Scriptures were the "all-sufficient revelation of His will to men, and the only unerring rule of faith and practice."¹⁹ Even after 1980 it still read, "... The Holy Scriptures are the infallible revelation of His will. They are the standard of character, the test of experience, the authoritative revelation of doctrines, and the trustworthy record of God's acts in history."²⁰

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

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

Accepting the proposition that the Ten Commandments came to a functional end at the cross completely shatters the whole paradigm of Adventist theology. I fought and fought against it. Then—I still remember the day—I decided there was plenty of Scriptural evidence to warrant accepting this proposition on a *trial basis*. I wanted to see if I could answer all of the questions that it raised and harmonize all the biblical statements that I thought contradicted it. Then it happened. All of a sudden I saw a new paradigm! One that had the *gospel of Christ at the center* and, yes, the pieces of the puzzle came together without forcing them! While we may not be able to answer all the questions that immediately come to your mind in this issue of *Proclamation!*, there are answers. We will, nevertheless, now look at the biblical evidence that supports the proposition that the whole old covenant, including the Ten Commandments, came to a functional end at the cross.

I quote again from Riggle,

Adventists are continually crying, "God's law [meaning the Sinaitic code] is unchangeable." But Paul contradicts them, boldly stating "that there is made of necessity a change also of the law" (Heb. 7:12). "The law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ" (John 1:17). "He taketh away the first, that he may establish the second" (Heb. 10:9). Two laws could not stand in the same dispensation. Therefore to establish the gospel—grace and truth, which came by Christ—the law was "taken away." The manner in which it was taken away is thus explained in Christ's own words: "Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: [note that the "law" here refers to the whole law of Moses²²] I am not come to destroy, but to fulfill. For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled" (Matt. 5:17, 18). This text clearly states that when the law reaches its fulfillment it will pass away. It will not pass till fulfilled. So it is not eternal, but when fulfilled it was to reach an end. Then, the Lord points to himself as the fulfillment of the law and prophets— "For Christ is the end of the law" (Rom. 10:4). "The law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ" (Gal. 3:24). Since Christ is come "we are no longer under a schoolmaster" (vs. 25) "not under the law, but under grace" (Rom. 6:14). This nails the matter fast, and utterly refutes the Adventist plea for the perpetuity of the law."²³

Note how John records the end of Christ's life.

After this, Jesus, knowing that all things had already been accomplished, to fulfill the Scripture, said, "I am thirsty." John 19:28

The epistles are in agreement here:

When He said, "A new covenant," He has made the first obsolete. But whatever is becoming obsolete and growing old is ready to disappear. Heb. 8:13. Then He said, "BEHOLD, I HAVE

COME TO DO YOUR WILL.” He takes away the first [covenant] in order to establish the second [covenant]. By this will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all. Heb. 10:9-10

Remember that the writer lists “the tables of the covenant” in this same context (Heb. 9:4) as part of the “first covenant.”

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

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

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

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

The following chart will help us understand this passage:

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

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

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

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

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

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

It is important to note that Paul is not speaking about the condemnation of the law, from which the Christian is also free,²⁶ but rather he is speaking about Christian service. In other words Paul is telling the Christians in Rome that the law no longer serves as a guideline for Christian living.²⁷ Notice also how Christians serve in the newness of the Spirit, a clear reference to the new covenant, in contrast to the oldness of the letter, a clear reference to the Sinaitic Covenant²⁸ which resulted in bearing “fruit for death.” Those who want to be joined both to Christ and to the law are committing spiritual adultery.²⁹

Remember, I told you this was not an easy trail! Nevertheless, it is well-marked. See? The sign “Scripture” is still there! In fact, it is a well-worn trail as millions of Christians have walked this way before!

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

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

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

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

2 Corinthians 3:3-18:

Old Covenant:

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

New Covenant:

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

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

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

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

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

I now quote again from Riddle,

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

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

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

Christ taught the people “as one having authority” (Matt. 7:29). The precepts he taught are his law. We are under the “law

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

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

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

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

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

New covenant righteousness comes "apart from the law."⁴⁰ The new covenant promise was made to Abraham, and Abraham's righteousness did not come by law.⁴¹ The moral requirement of the law⁴² is fulfilled in those who walk in the Spirit.⁴³ The Holy Spirit does not come through the works of the law.⁴⁴ The person who seeks righteousness by observing the law will be held accountable for all the requirements of the law.⁴⁵ Christ is the end of the law for righteousness.⁴⁶ If righteousness came through the law, Christ died needlessly.⁴⁷ Paul kept the law "blamelessly" yet, he compared this righteousness to rubbish (dung, KJV).⁴⁸ The law is not made for a righteous person, but for those who are lawless and rebellious, for the ungodly and sinners, for the unholy and profane...⁴⁹

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

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

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

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

Now it is time to take another rest here by the lake. Notice the beaver home reflected in the still, clear waters. In the background are tall Colorado Blue Spruce trees next to the grove of Aspen trees close to the lake. In the distance are majestic 14,000-ft. peaks shadowed by billowing clouds building for an afternoon thunderstorm.



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

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

Rather than focusing on the Ten Commandment law, one goes to the New Testament and focuses on Christ, and what the New Testament says is now true for the believer! Wow! What a difference! We now have eternal life!⁵⁶ We now have peace with God!⁵⁷ We now have been reconciled to God!⁵⁸ Our old self (man) was crucified with Christ!⁵⁹ We are now to consider ourselves to be dead to sin!⁶⁰ We are now freed from sin!⁶¹ We are now dead to the law.⁶² We now have been released from the law!⁶³ We now serve in the newness of the Spirit and not in the oldness of the letter!⁶⁴ There is now no condemna-

tion [NONE] to those who are in Christ Jesus!⁶⁵ We have now received the spirit of adoption!⁶⁶ We now overwhelmingly conquer through Him who loved us!⁶⁷ We are now sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise!⁶⁸ We are now saved through faith!⁶⁹ We are now the dwelling of the Holy Spirit!⁷⁰ We are now chosen in Christ.⁷¹ We now have redemption through his blood.⁷² God is now at work in us to will and to do His good pleasure.⁷³ We are now qualified to share in the inheritance of the saints in Light.⁷⁴ We have now been transferred to the kingdom of His beloved Son.⁷⁵ We have now entered His rest.⁷⁶ We now have each received a spiritual gift.⁷⁷ The Spirit now helps our weaknesses.⁷⁸ We have now been predestined to be like Christ.⁷⁹ And this is just the beginning! Do you see why the gospel is “good news”? One cannot work righteousness from the outside in—that was the old covenant way, and it never worked. Rather, in the new covenant God creates or regenerates our spirits. We are born of God.⁸⁰ We have the divine DNA, God's life living in us, and that life is perfect.⁸¹

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

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

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

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

Real transformation cannot take place in an atmosphere of “probation”⁸⁴ as Ellen White teaches, but in a milieu of full acceptance. Here the “central pillar”⁸⁵ of Adventism stands in the way of spiritual progress. Adventists teach that only those who have accepted God come into the scrutiny of the inves-

tigative judgment where even forgotten, unconfessed sins stand against the Christian.⁸⁶ This means that they must have a law/judgment focus. However, the Bible is clear that if we have accepted Christ we do not even come into judgment.^{87,88} The judgment passages Adventists apply to Christians, the Bible applies either to the forces of evil⁸⁹ or to the judgment of rewards, not salvation.⁹⁰ Could it be that the SDA doctrine of the investigative judgment requires the (false) teaching that postpones the blessings of the new covenant to the Second Coming? According to SDA theology, the fulfillment of “I will remember their sins no more,” cannot take place until the investigative judgment is finished shortly before the Second Coming of Christ⁹¹ when Satan becomes the sin-bearer.⁹² However, the Bible makes it clear that the “blotting out of sins” takes place at conversion/repentance/forgiveness.⁹³ The new covenant picture of God is vastly better than the old covenant concept because it is a more accurate revelation of God’s grace and love in Christ.⁹⁴

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

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

This promise may not be fully realized now. However, some commentators believe the statement regarding not needing teachers relates to the fullness of the new covenant revelation and the infilling of the Holy Spirit in every true Christian—conditions which were not present under the old covenant that necessitated the need for more intensive teaching.⁹⁶ In reading the book of Acts it is clear that the Holy Spirit did teach and/or give direction to the believers on many, many occasions.⁹⁷ Many Christians have experienced this to some degree.

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

The book of Galatians is written to bring the people who had been disturbed by Judaizers and had opted to go back under old covenant law, back to the new covenant. After Paul’s convincing arguments showing that the Christian is not under the law, he goes on to answer an assumed question. “Paul, if we are not under law, then how do we live?” His answer is insightful, showing how the Spirit takes the place of law.

For you were called to freedom, brethren; only do not turn your freedom into an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another. For the whole Law is fulfilled in one word, in the statement, “YOU SHALL LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF....” But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not carry out the desire of the flesh.... But if you are led by the Spirit, you

are not under the Law.... But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law.⁹⁹

The new covenant is about relationship with Christ

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

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

What is our work? “Jesus answered and said to them, ‘This is the work of God, that you believe in Him whom He has sent.’”¹⁰⁵ “Come unto Me, all who are weary and heavy-laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you learn from Me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For My yoke is easy and My burden is light.¹⁰⁶ We have this promise. “Truly, truly, I say to you, he who hears My word, and believes Him who sent Me, has eternal life, and does not come into judgment, but has passed out of death into life.”¹⁰⁷

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

Adventists often refer to the “everlasting covenant” to prove that God’s covenant with Abraham is the same as the new covenant and to avoid identifying the Sinaitic covenant as something different. It seems to me that a better and more Biblical way of expressing the plan of salvation would be “the new covenant in promise”¹⁰⁸ —before the cross, and “the new covenant in reality”—after the cross.¹⁰⁹ The term “everlasting (or eternal) covenant” is used in Scripture in various ways. It is used for the covenant of circumcision¹¹⁰ which the New Testament clearly says is abolished.¹¹¹ The term “everlasting covenant” is used with meat offerings the Israelites offered to the Lord¹¹² in connection with the Sinaitic Covenant which is abolished. It is used for the Davidic Covenant.¹¹³ It is used in

future, Israel-centered prophecies.¹¹⁴ Jeremiah uses this term in a similar context to the way he uses “new covenant.”¹¹⁵ The term “eternal [or everlasting] covenant as used in Hebrews 13:20 seems to be identical, or at least similar, to its usage in 12:24 when referring to the new covenant. The writer of Hebrews is reinforcing what has been taught throughout the book by showing the “betterness” of the new covenant over the old by stressing its eternal nature.¹¹⁶ Could it be that the Adventist use of “eternal covenant” is simply a reflection of Ellen White and her extra-biblical theology?

I also do not see any *Scriptural evidence* for the Ten-Commandment law in the time of Adam, Noah, Abraham, Isaac, or Jacob, to say nothing of the institution of a covenant based upon the Ten Commandments before Sinai. The Bible references listed do not mention the Ten Commandments. Let’s look at them. Unless the cited reference supports the stated conclusion, it is nothing but a ploy that may result in deception. Gen. 3:15 is a shadowy statement of a coming Savior at best. Nothing is mentioned about law. Gen. 9:9–17 Speaks about God’s covenant with Noah in promising not to send another flood. I see nothing here that could be construed to be the Ten Commandments. Gen. 12:2,3, speaks about God making a covenant with Abraham regarding the land of Canaan and his future posterity. Again, there is nothing about law here. It is true that God said that “Abraham obeyed Me and kept My charge, My commandments, My statutes and My laws”¹¹⁷ Yet he lied¹¹⁸ and committed adultery;¹¹⁹ therefore we must, it seems to me, interpret these commandments and laws that Abraham “kept” to be the specific instructions God gave to Abraham which he did keep.¹²⁰ If we read into Scripture that these laws are the Ten Commandments, then we make Scripture untrue. Abraham did not keep the Ten Commandments. To break one is to break them all.¹²¹ Ellen White, however, supports all the unbiblical concepts of the Ten Commandment law preceding Sinai and applying to Abraham.

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

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

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

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



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

In 2 Kings 21:8 we read,

I will not again make the feet of the Israelites wander from the land I gave their forefathers, if only they will be careful to do everything I commanded them and will keep the whole Law that my servant Moses gave them.

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

Conclusion

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

1. The Ten Commandments are the very words of the old covenant.
2. The old covenant, or Sinaitic Covenant, is based upon one law, not two. It comprises the whole Mosaic Law: moral, civil and ceremonial.
3. The New Testament defines the “old” or “first” covenant as the Sinaitic Covenant and unmistakably includes both the Ten Commandments and the “other laws” in this covenant.
4. The old covenant law was given only to the children of Israel.
5. The laws of Sinai, including the Ten Commandments, were not given until the time of Moses.

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

7. The new covenant Law of Christ is much better than the old covenant law of commandments.

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

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

10. The new covenant is about relationship with Christ.

11. We must be careful not to read into Scripture the unbiblical concepts of Ellen White.

In this hike we have not explored many of the side trails that give needed perspective to this subject. However, I believe we have given our readers enough to study for the next two months! It is my prayer that every reader will prayerfully study God's Word on this important subject.

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

Endnotes:

1. Ex. 40:20; Deut. 10:5,8.
2. See Lev. 23:2,3 noting the rest of the chapter; 1 Chron 23:31; 2 Chron. 2:4; 8:12,13; 31:3; Ez. 45:17; 46:1-7; 2 Ki. 4:23; Neh. 10:33; Isa. 1:13,14; 66:23; Col. 2:16.
3. In Hebrew if one counts words from the beginning and end of the Ten Commandments, one will find that the central phrase is "remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy".
4. Ex. 31:13-18. See also *Sabbath in Crisis*, pp. 40-43 for a detailed comparison between the Sabbath sign in Ex. 31 and the circumcision sign in Gen. 17.
5. Meredith G. Kline, *Treat of the Great King*, pp. 13,14,18,19,59
6. Matt. 22:37-40.
7. Ellen G. White, *Early Writings*, p. 33.
8. See *Sabbath in Crisis*, pp. 219-234, where a whole chapter is dedicated to this verse.
9. See *The Sabbath and the Lord's Day*, pp. 59,60 for more biblical support.
10. *The Sabbath and the Lord's Day*, p. 61.
11. See *The Sabbath and the Lord's Day*, p. 30ff. for biblical examples of each of the Ten Commandments.
12. Gen. 17:14; Ex. 31:14; Ex. 12:15; Ex. 30:33; Ex. 30:38; Lev. 7:20,21,25,27; 17:1-4; 18:6-18,19,22,23; 19:1-8; 20:3,6; 23:29; Num. 9:13.
13. See *Sabbath in Crisis*, pp. 36, 37 where abundant evidence is given to show that the "other laws" interpret and apply the Ten Commandments to the life situation of the Israelites.
14. See *Sabbath in Crisis*, p. 79ff. for additional material on this point.
15. See *Sabbath in Crisis*, p. 187-218 for a discussion of this statement with supporting material.
16. *The Sabbath and the Lord's Day*, p. 61.
17. 2 Tim. 3:16-17
18. When the *Fundamental Beliefs of Seventh-day Adventists* were last revised.
19. *Seventh-day Adventist Church Manual*, 1976, p. 32.
20. *Fundamental Beliefs of Seventh-day Adventists*, No. 1.
21. Ellen G. White, *The Great Controversy*, p. 595
22. See *Sabbath in Crisis*, p. 220ff.
23. *The Sabbath and the Lord's Day*, p. 72.
24. Rom. 2:14.
25. Rom. 2:15; 2 Cor. 3:2-6.
26. Rom. 8:1.
27. This does not mean that the Christian will steal, kill, lie and commit adultery, etc. Rather, it means that there is a better guideline for service which is the Holy Spirit in the life focusing on the present realities of who we are in Christ helping us to live out what the Holy Spirit has put in. We are a new creation in Christ Jesus. 2 Cor. 5:17; Gal. 6:15.
28. *Sabbath in Crisis*, p. 198.
29. Rom. 7:1-4; *Sabbath in Crisis*, p. 198ff.
30. See *Sabbath in Crisis*, p. 75-87; 173-233 for many more insights regarding the two covenants.
31. Heb. 1:1-3.
32. *Sabbath in Crisis*, p. 85.
33. See John 9:28 and *Sabbath in Crisis*, pp. 127-138.
34. *The Sabbath and the Lord's Day*, p. 104-106.
35. See, for example, Rom. 3:21; 6:22; Eph. 5:8; Gal. 3:25; Heb. 8:6; 9:26; 12:26; 1 Pet. 2:10, 25.
36. Rom. 2:15; Gal. 3:2.
37. Paul in Romans 7 likens this to spiritual adultery.
38. See *Cultic Doctrine*, p. 225-240 for a number of EGW references.
39. 2 Cor. 3:7,9.
40. Rom. 3:21.
41. Rom. 4:13.
42. This does not mean that the Christian is under the old law of Ten Commandments, rather it means that the morality of the new covenant fully meets the moral principles upon which the Ten Commandments were based.
43. Rom. 8:4.
44. Gal. 3:2,3.
45. Gal. 5:3,4.
46. Rom. 10:4
47. Gal. 2:21.
48. Phil. 3:7-9.
49. 1 Tim. 1:9.
50. I define "Historic Adventists" as those who accept all 27 "Fundamentals" and believe the writings of Ellen White to be inspired of God.
51. Anyone who has read deeply into Ellen White will know the enormity of the weight of instruction and guilt she lays on her readers. Just read the nine volumes of the Testimonies and you will see! See also, *Cultic Doctrine*, p. 210-214.
52. 2 Cor. 3:2-18.
53. 2 Cor. 5:17; Gal. 6:15.
54. See *Cultic Doctrine*, p. 228ff.
55. This refers to the "self"—the mind, emotions and will. It is the "exalted self" for fallen man. God designed the psuche (soul) to be in subjection to the spirit of man which in turn is to be in subjection to the Holy Spirit. Adam and his posterity, however, exiled their psuche and came out of this subjection. While our spirits are regenerated (saved) at conversion and are given eternal life (zoe) the psuche (soul) is being saved. Jesus came to undo what Adam had done. That is why we find that He did nothing without his Father's approval. It was the psuche (soul-life) that Jesus laid down, not his zoe life. We, too, are to put our psuche under the control of our spirit, which, in turn, is to be in subjection to the Holy Spirit. This is the process of sanctification which is worked out by the power of the Holy Spirit in our lives.
56. Jn. 6:47.
57. Rom. 5:1.
58. Rom. 5:10.
59. Rom. 6:6.
60. Rom. 6:11.
61. Rom. 6:18, 22, 1 Jn. 3:8,9.
62. Rom. 7:4.
63. Rom. 7:6.
64. Rom. 7:6.
65. Rom. 8:1.
66. Rom. 8:15.
67. Rom. 8:37.
68. Eph. 1:13.
69. Eph. 2:8.
70. Eph. 2:22.
71. Eph. 1:4.
72. Eph. 1:7.
73. Phil. 2:13.
74. Col. 1:12.
75. Col. 1:13.
76. Heb. 4:3.
77. Rom. 12; 1 Cor. 12; Eph. 4.
78. Rom. 8:26.
79. Rom. 8:29.
80. Jn. 3:3-5.
81. 1 Cor. 6:19; Rom. 8:9-12, 1 Cor. 2:12; 1 Cor. 3:16;
82. For a train load of insights relative to this teaching, I highly recommend a cassette tape set by Dutch Sheets entitled, "Becoming Who You Are", available from Life Assurance Ministries.
83. Heb. 4:12.
84. Probation is not a biblical term but is one used frequently by both Adventists and Mormons.
85. Ellen G. White, *The Great Controversy*, p. 409. See also, *Spirit of Prophecy*, Vol. 4, p. 258.
86. Ellen G. White, *The Spirit of Prophecy*, p. 331.
87. John 3:18; 5:24.
88. See the chapter "I've Been Acquitted" in *Cultic Doctrine* for a thorough study of the good news of Judgment.
89. See *Cultic Doctrine*, p. 216-219.
90. Matt. 25:31-46.
91. *Cultic Doctrine*, pp. 152-165.
92. Ellen G. White, *The Great Controversy*, p. 422. See also *The Spirit of Prophecy*, Vol. 4, p. 267.
93. See Ellen G. White, *Spirit of Prophecy*, Vol. 4, p. 308, where she says that sins will not be blotted out after the close of the investigative judgment. The Bible says otherwise, Ps. 51:1-2, 9; Isa. 44:22 kjv; Isa. 43:25. Heb. 8:12; Jer. 31:34. 1 Jn. 1:9. See also *Cultic Doctrine*, pp. 208-210.
94. Heb. 1:1-3.
95. 1 John 2:27.
96. See R.C.H. Lenski, *Commentary on the New Testament*, Hebrews, p. 268, 269.
97. Acts 4:31; 6:3,8; 8:29,39; 9:17,31; 11:28; 13:4,52.
98. Eph. 3:20.
99. Gal. 5:13,14,16,18,22,23.
100. Isa. 42:6; 49:8; Jn. 6:47.
101. Heb. 8:6.
102. Jn. 4:34; 5:30; 15:10.
103. Jn. 19:28-30.
104. Mk. 15:37,38.
105. Jn. 6:29.
106. Mt. 11:28-30.
107. Jn. 5:24.
108. Rom. 4:13,14,16,20,21; 9:8; Gal. 3:29; 4:23,28.
109. Recognizing that some aspects of the new covenant promise are not fully experienced until the Second Coming of Christ.
110. Gen. 17:13.
111. Gal. 5:1-4.
112. Num. 18:17-19.
113. 2 Sam. 23:5.
114. Isa. 61:8; Ez. 37:26.
115. Jer. 31:27-34; 32:40.
116. "It [the everlasting or new covenant] is the covenant or testament that was received by Abraham. It was first promised, but this promise was duly fulfilled by Jesus, namely 'in connection with this blood,' the expiatory power of which is permanent, eternal. The testament that was brought to Israel by Moses was only a temporary addition; Israel has lost its promises. The eternal seal upon the expiation of Jesus is his resurrection, when God brought him again 'from the dead'." R.C.H. Lenski, Hebrews, p. 494.
117. Gen. 26:5.
118. Gen. 20.
119. Gen. 16.
120. Gen. 12, 17, 22.
121. Jam. 2:10.

What (Friday night) Bible study means to me CONTINUED FROM BACK

to leave the church. Feelings of loss followed by anger and joy, sadness and happiness, guilt and freedom, desired vengeance and resolution are but a few of the polarized emotions people may experience sequentially or concurrently as they transition out of the church.

My emotions and spiritual understanding were about to go on a rollercoaster ride that has only recently started to become more level. For both the fluctuating emotions as well as the cognitive dissonance of finding my beliefs contradicted the words of Scripture, I discovered one solution—aside from prayer—that would result in my spiritual stability: Bible study.

The Former Adventist Fellowship Bible Study on Friday evenings is unlike any Bible study with which most Christians would be familiar. The format of the evening, however, is a common one.

We begin with a time of fellowship including snacks and drinks during which each individual in the group shares a blessing from God or praise for what God has done in his or her life during the past week. Following the praise time, we have prayer and then continue with our study of one of the books of the Bible. After the study, we sing a song of praise or worship, share prayer requests, and close with prayer.

The Bible study is the unique component of the evening. God the Holy Spirit usually takes over the meeting at this time. To say that we study a passage of scripture each week

as we attempted to identify why God chose him or her for commendation. Our conclusion after months in Hebrews 11 might be summarized by saying that there was little or nothing the individuals contributed via their own faith. The reason they were listed in the “faith chapter” was solely that God had chosen them. The faith that qualified them for Hebrews 11 was God’s gift. Because of God’s equipping, these people were able—often in spite of themselves—to allow God to glorify Himself through them.

Week after week I am surprised to learn what the Bible says on any topic. As I have studied, the veil of the Law which impeded my growth has been removed from my face, and I see clearly. I now see that the grace of God is greater than any system of laws we might impose on ourselves. As I have participated in the Bible study over the last five years, there have been significant changes in my beliefs and practices. Some of these beliefs in contrast to what the Adventist church teaches are:

1. God is sovereign. His purposes always succeed, regardless of whatever human intervention may have been attempted.

2. We are now righteous in Christ. We are not trying to mimic the life of Jesus, He lived that life for us as our substitute. We are seated with Him in heavenly places (Ephesians 2:4).

3. I see a lot of dead people walking around (non-born-again). We are spiritual beings, not just flesh, blood and electricity. The dead are conscious.

4. Jesus, not Satan, is the scapegoat, and Jesus is not Michael the Archangel.

5. Communion should be practiced frequently without foot-washing.

6. God is not being scrutinized by us, the angels, the demons, or any other entity in the universe. He is sovereign over all, and He does not have to vindicate Himself.

7. God loves me just as I am.

8. God is not waiting for a “remnant” to live as Christ lived before the end. In accepting me just as I am, He brings me to life by the indwelling Holy Spirit. The Spirit then motivates me towards change and a holier life.

9. Jesus could return at any moment. God is not being delayed by anything we do or don’t do as Christians.

10. The work of Christ was finished on the cross as Jesus said, “It is finished.”

The impact of our weekly, corporate in-depth Bible study has grounded me in Jesus and has given me a supportive group of people who have walked with me through the emotional upheavals of leaving Adventism. Becoming immersed in Scripture has taught me who I am in Christ and has taught me God is sovereign. Best of all, it has taught me that I am secure in Jesus’ finished work, and His grace will keep me until the day I finally see Him.

Come, Lord Jesus!

Our conclusion after months in Hebrews 11 might be summarized by saying that there was little or nothing the individuals contributed via their own faith. The reason they were listed in the “faith chapter” was solely that God had chosen them.

is both an overstatement and an understatement. As we have studied various books of the New Testament inductively, we’ve rarely left a stone unturned as we trace names, words, or themes throughout the New and Old Testaments. This meticulous digestion of the Word of God results in weeks to months of studying one chapter or even one small group of verses of Scripture.

Perhaps the best and most obvious example of our method of inductive study was our journey through the book of Hebrews. When we reached chapter 11, we made a commitment to study each of the individuals named in the “Spiritual Hall of Fame.” In each case, we turned to the Old Testament and studied each person’s life, looking at his or her experiences

Best short summary

The article "The Investigative Judgment: Your Questions Finally Answered" is the best short summary on that issue that I have read. Christ Badenhorst hit all the colossal errors of the investigative judgment. He highlighted a distinction that previously I was unaware of, viz., Ellen White thinks of the "sacrifice" as complete and the "atonement" as incomplete. As an evangelical even while a Seventh-day Adventist, I presumed these words were synonymous and both were complete. Now I know how far Ellen White had drifted in the mire by denying a complete atonement. If I had known she was that much of a heretic when I enrolled at Union College (an Adventist institution) in 1974, I doubt in good conscience I could have remained at that school.

Faithful to the Gospel

Enclosed is a check for a donation to the ministry. You've been so good and faithful to the message of the gospel and in correcting doctrinal error in a day and age when there is compromise abounding. At this point I cannot promise monthly support, but I will do what I can whenever I can, and you will also be in my prayers.

Helped Me Overcome Background

I would like for you to send my brother your *Proclamation!* Even though he hasn't attended an Adventist church in years and goes to a Protestant Evangelical church, he is still hung up on some of the Adventist doctrines. I think you are doing a wonderful work, and *Proclamation!* has certainly helped me overcome my Adventist background.

Concise teaching of God's word

My husband and I are so grateful for your ministry. Your clear, concise teaching of God's word has changed our lives, and, more importantly, brought glory to our God. Thank you so very much.

First Copy

I just got my first copy of *Proclamation!* Thanks!! It was very informative and well put together. I would like to send a subscription to my brother. May God bless you and your ministry. It appears the movement out of Adventism is gaining momentum. Count on me to pray for that!

Read Until 2:00 AM

How I thank God and you for *Proclamation!* The latest one arrived yesterday. I planned to read it today; however, I made the "mistake" of opening it before retiring for the night—and ended up reading it through before turning the light off at 2:00 A.M. Thank you! Needless to say, keep on keeping on!

Help for my brother

I can't thank you enough for your magazine—I read every page the day it comes. I would like help for my brother. Could you send him some magazines? I keep mine; he lives too far from me to share.

Spurious and Disgusting

I am asking, demanding that you take my name off your mailing list. You are disturbing my privacy. I do not want your spurious *Proclamation!* I refute it. I am disgusted by it. I never sought it. [The person who received it] is dead. Send it to the cemetery. You are disgusting. No more of your spurious *Proclamation!* I know what I believe, and I am happy!

Thank you

Thank you for keeping me on your mailing list. I look forward to reading your magazine—every time it arrives I devour its contents for hours at a time. I'm so thankful for your ministry. Thank you, Jesus, for *Proclamation!* Please continue to send me your magazines without delay because I truly need them here. God bless you! I pray God to continue to bless all your labor of love. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Mail letters and donations to:

Life Assurance Ministries
P.O. Box 905
Redlands, CA 92373

Who pays for this publication?

This week we received a call from a *Proclamation!* subscriber. As we chatted about discovering the Bible and about *Proclamation!*, she admitted that until a few months ago, she had never really understood who supported the magazine or how it arrived in her box every two months or so. She commented that she suspected many of the magazine's readers have no real understanding of how this magazine is produced.

Here's a brief explanation. *Proclamation!* is a publication of Life Assurance Ministries, Inc.—a non-profit, donation-supported ministry. Subscriptions are free, and we encourage you to send us the names and addresses of people whom you think would benefit by reading it. The magazine has been in circulation since the end of 1999.

Life Assurance also reaches out through two websites: www.LifeAssuranceMinistries.org, and www.FormerAdventist.com.

During the summer of 2004, the ministry board contracted with Colleen Tinker to assume the full-time work of editing the magazine and of managing the ministry. Richard Tinker continues to donate his time designing the magazine. Dale Ratzlaff, the organization's and the magazine's founder, remains the president of the board of directors.

All publishing expenses including Colleen Tinker's contracted amount are met by means of tax-deductible donations. We praise God for His provision through the years. We also want to say "thank you" to a donor who paid the extra \$300 each for four-color covers for the remainder of 2005. We at Life Assurance Ministries depend upon our partnership with you who pray for this ministry and also with you who give.

We invite you to pray about becoming a supporter of Life Assurance Ministries. We need your prayers for God to direct us and to provide for us, and your donations make it possible for us to continue to send *Proclamation!* to those who are searching for Jesus and for the freedom that comes from placing their confidence in Him alone. He alone is worthy!

You may contact us by using the envelope inserted in this magazine.

What (Friday night) Bible study means to me STEVE PITCHER

It's 6:30 on a Friday evening. Depending on the time of the year, sunset may be near, but this fact is irrelevant to a former Seventh-day Adventist. The relevancy of this time is that in one-half hour, a group of Adventists, Former Adventists, Sabbatharians and Evangelical Christians will join in Christian fellowship at Trinity Evangelical Free Church in Redlands, CA. The primary purposes of this fellowship are first, to provide emotional and spiritual support, and second, to pursue uncompromising study of the Bible.

When I made my final decision to leave the Adventist church, I began a journey of spiritual adventure, discovery and encounter with Jesus in ways I had not seen practiced in Adventism. At first I maintained my support of the church and attended weekly for my wife's sake. The complete aloneness I felt, however, both in church as well as at home, continued gnawing away at me as I reached the end of my rope.

It was a Friday, early afternoon. I was disoriented, tired, and not sure what I believed. Earlier that week, I had found a website advertising a group of Former Seventh-day Adventists meeting in Redlands, CA. I printed the directions to reach Trinity Church. As disoriented and depressed as I was, I simply got in my car and began driving. Although my driving seemed aimless, it was as if the Holy Spirit took control of the car, and my drive quickly ended as I approached the church building. I had no conscious, specific purpose for being there. On the other hand, I had no specific purpose for turning and driving away.

I walked into the church office. Three hours later, I returned to my car and drove home with a new purpose.

I had met three people that afternoon. First, the senior pastor saw me immediately upon

my arrival. As we spoke, I received answers to questions I hadn't consciously asked that clarified why the Adventist church even exists. God allows false teachings to develop, Pastor Gary Inrig said, because they drive believers to Scripture to search for truth. Secondly, I was introduced to a former Adventist who was on staff at the church at that time. I was astonished to meet another "former" in a leadership position at a Christian church. Thirdly, I met one of the founders of the Former Adventist Fellowship who happened,

For both the fluctuating emotions as well as the cognitive dissonance of finding my beliefs contradicted the words of Scripture, I discovered one solution—aside from prayer—that would result in my spiritual stability: Bible study.

by divine "chance," to stop at the church on an errand at the moment I stood by the door, ready to leave. It was like meeting mild-mannered Clark Kent (aka Superman); he was quiet and unassuming, and when there was a need, he would rise to the occasion. After a few minutes in discussion, Richard Tinker invited me to the FAF meeting the following Friday night. I attended the meeting and quickly realized that there was no going back.

For those who have left or are leaving the Adventist church, emotional support is vital. The full range of human emotion is not only felt but frequently displayed by those who have chosen

CONTINUED ON PAGE 18



Steve Pitcher, who became a Christ-follower and was baptized in a Baptist church at the age of seventeen, subsequently spent 15 years as a Seventh-day Adventist. He left Adventism about five years ago and currently attends Pathway Christian Church in Riverside, California. He also attends the weekly FAF Bible study in Redlands.

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