

Rebuilding the foundation of my faith BRIAN CAIN

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Proclamation!

FOR FORMER AGNOSTICS • ATHEISTS • AGnostics • CONCERNED CHRISTIANS

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2008

**What is the meaning
of the cross?**

DALE RATZLAFF

**Why did
Jesus die?**

THOMAS FRANCIS

My life was resurrected!

GRACE CARLSON



Ripped curtain, empty tomb COLLEEN TINKER

...for years I believed Jesus' breath went to God while He honored the Sabbath by lying lifeless in the tomb, His personality non-existent, inaccessible to His Father until Sunday.

As Easter approached this year, I pondered details about Jesus' death and resurrection that were obscure to me in the religion of my youth. For several decades Easter was, to me, mostly a non-event. Although I was drawn to the Christian celebrations I saw around me, inwardly I felt proud that I knew better than to believe a "pagan" holiday cele-

brated on Sunday had any spiritual importance. Sure, the resurrection happened, but it had no significance for me other than the promise that someday our bodies would rise from graves.

Moreover, celebrating on Sunday negated whatever value there might have been in remembering the resurrection.

I was blind to the impact of certain recorded facts. For example, the plain reading of Luke 23:43 and 56 tells us that when Jesus died, His spirit went to His Father. Further, one thief who died with him could be confident that he would be with Jesus in paradise that very day. Yet for years I believed Jesus' breath went to God while He honored the Sabbath by lying lifeless in the tomb, His personality non-existent, inaccessible to His Father until Sunday. Jesus might die, I believed, but Sabbath was eternal.

Moreover, I never saw that the anger and fear of the Pharisees was so great that they broke the Sabbath to plead with Pilate to secure Jesus' tomb. They were terrified that, as He had said, Jesus' tomb would be empty on the third day. They, the sticklers for the law, were so fearful of Jesus that they rationalized breaking the Fourth Commandment to strike a deal with the Roman governor (Matthew 27:62). By rejecting Jesus as the fulfillment of the law, they trampled on the law itself.

The event that takes my breath away today, however, is God's ripping the veil between the Holy and the Most Holy Places the moment Jesus died (Mark 15:38). At the moment He died, Jesus committed His spirit to the Father in the Most Holy Place—the presence of God—and God immediately accepted Jesus' blood and sacrifice. At that very moment God notified the world that the full price

for sin had been paid: He removed the barrier that separated us from Him.

Moreover, Hebrews 10:20 identifies the curtain God ripped as representing Jesus' body. It was the promise of Jesus' physical sacrifice—even before it occurred in history—that protected humanity from being destroyed by God's holiness as a result of sin.

In an act our pastor Gary Inrig describes as "divine vandalism," God ripped that temple curtain and declared the debt of sin between us and Him was gone. Something new was beginning—and on Sunday morning the unimaginable happened: having already shed the "blood of the eternal covenant" (Hebrews 13:20), Jesus "abolished death" (2 Tim 1:10) and revealed the heart of the new covenant: He had fulfilled all God demanded of us.

I am overwhelmed that because I have believed in the Lord Jesus, I am forgiven. I am sealed with the Holy Spirit (Eph 1:13-14), and I have Jesus' resurrection life and the promise of future glory. Because of Jesus' blood and resurrection, I have "crossed over from death to life," and I will never be condemned (John 5:24; Rom 8:1).

Now I can celebrate! On this day I honor the Lord Jesus and praise Father, Son, and Holy Spirit for accomplishing within the Trinity all that is necessary for my eternal security. I go to church and worship; I smell the Easter lilies and eat Easter brunch with a house full of brothers and sisters in Christ—and we rejoice because we no longer scoff at Easter. Instead, we praise Jesus for His death and life, and we stand before God and call Him our Father.

Thomas Francis explores in this issue the question of why Jesus had to die. Dale Ratzlaff shares a study on the atonement, and Brian Cain tells his story of rebuilding the foundation of his faith. Grace Carlson explains how God has resurrected her life in Jesus, and we present a report of the third annual Former Adventist Fellowship weekend.

Our prayer is that you, too, will rejoice in Jesus this Easter season. The curtain is ripped! The tomb is empty! He is risen! †

Proclamation!

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Law not abolished?

Question: How do you explain Matthew 5:17–19? “Do not think that I came to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I did not come to abolish but to fulfill. For truly I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not the smallest letter or stroke shall pass from the Law until all is accomplished. Whoever then annuls one of the least of these commandments, and teaches others to do the same, shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven; but whoever keeps and teaches them, he shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven. For I say to you that unless your righteousness surpasses that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will not enter the kingdom of heaven.”

Answer: Rather than giving you my conclusion, why not study this out for yourself? Find the biblical answers to the following:

1. In the context of Matthew, what does Matthew mean when he uses “Law”? Look up the following verses which contain all the other passages in Matthew where the word “Law” is used. See Mt. 5:25; 7:12; 11:13; 12:5; 22:36, 40; 23:23.

- a. How does Matthew use “Law”? _____
- b. Does “Law” refer to the Ten Commandments or to the Torah? _____

2. In the context of Matthew, how is the word “fulfill” used? Read all the other passages in Matthew that use “fulfill” or “fulfilled!” See Mt. 1:22; 2:15, 17, 23; 3:15; 4:14; 5:33; 8:17; 12:17; 13:14, 35; 21:4; 26:54; 56; 27:9.

- a. How does Matthew use “fulfill”? _____
- b. Does “fulfill” as used in Matthew usually refer to something Christ did? _____
- c. Does “fulfill” as used in Matthew usually refer to something we are to keep doing? _____

3. Now go back to Matthew 5:17–19 and plug in your answers to the meaning of these two key words.

- a. Assuming you found “Torah” to be the meaning of “Law”, what do these verses teach? Note that Matthew mentions “Law and prophets”. _____

- b. Assuming that you found “fulfill” to be something that Christ did to fulfill Old Testament passages that in some way pointed forward to His ministry, what do these verses teach? _____

4. Which do you feel is the correct interpretation of these verses?

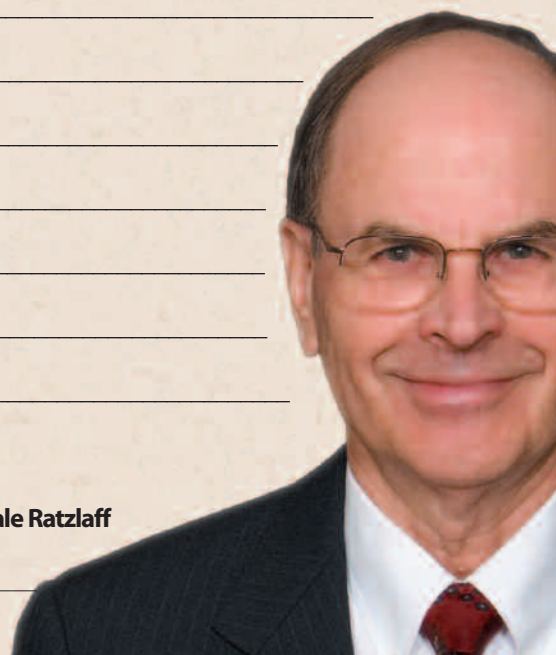
- a. Christ is saying that we are not to take away even the least of the 613 commandments in the Torah. This means that we must not only keep the Sabbath, but also the statutes and judgments including the seven yearly festivals.
- b. Christ is saying that nothing is to be taken away from the Torah until all is fulfilled. Since Matthew used the term “fulfill” to refer to the events in the life of Christ that fulfilled the Old Testament prophecies of the Messiah, his reference to teachers must be to the teachers of His day before the cross. At the cross, however, all the prophecies that pointed forward to the Messiah were fulfilled.

5. Can your conclusion be supported by passages outside of Matthew?

- a. Did Jesus fulfill all the prophecies of the Messiah? See Jn. 12:38; 15:25; 17:12; 18:9, 32; 19:24, 28, 30; 36. _____
- b. Does the Law continue after the cross? See Rom. 10:4; Gal. 3:17, 19, 23–25; Heb. 8:13. _____

6. Write a summary of what you believe Matthew 5:17–19 teaches.

Dale Ratzlaff



Weekend event a place for healing and equipping

The third annual Former Adventist Fellowship (FAF) Weekend, *For the Glory of God*, has impacted us deeply. Eighty-three registered attendees from across the USA and Canada—and even Australia—convened at Trinity Church on Friday and Saturday, February 15-16, for teaching, inspiration, and fellowship.

The opening meeting on Friday night was open to the public. We had invited over 450 local Christian pastors to hear Dale Ratzlaff speak on the subject *The Truth about Adventist "Truth"*—the title of his newly-revised book by the same name. Over 200 people attended the meeting including representatives from 13 local Christian churches. The meeting opened with worship led by Sharon Strum. Next Bill Ziprick from Spokane, Washington, formerly the West Coast legal council for the General Conference and for Loma Linda University Medical Center, shared his faith story.

Paul Carden, executive director for the Centers for Apologetics Research, introduced Dale. Paul, who used to work for Walter Martin at Christian Research Institute and who co-hosted the Bible Answer Man radio show for six years, also wrote the forward to Dale's book. Among other things Paul wrote this in his forward:

The time for a reassessment among evangelicals is long overdue, because for too many inattentive Christians, Adventism represents a profound danger hidden in plain sight. As Dale Ratzlaff amply demonstrates in the following pages, the movement is founded not on the infallible Word of God, but on such an extraordinary mass of

error and calculated deception that it must be seen to be believed. The differences between Adventism and biblical Christianity cannot be ignored, for they strike at the very heart of the gospel. The disciples of Ellen G. White do not merely offer an alternative view of secondary Christian doctrines, as many suppose; instead, they encourage millions to place their trust in a false prophet who sets obstacles in the path of anyone who would trust in Christ alone for their salvation and "adds" nothing to the written Word of God except her convoluted and contradictory speculations.

The evidence presented herein compels evangelicals to make an informed choice. Pastors, missionaries, relief agencies, and others need to face the potential problems of collaborating, on an organizational level, with a movement that affirms and promotes such error. Many of us who have served as missionaries in the Third World recognize the two faces of Adventism: indulging in cozy ecumenism in English-speaking cultures while engaging in bare-knuckle proselytizing nearly everywhere else. The Seventh-day Adventist Church cannot have it both ways.

Dale's talk listed the 10 problems of Adventism and five "gospels" found within it: historic, Messianic (keeping all the feast days), Great Controversy model (no forensic atonement and Christ is our example), progressive-pluralistic (wide variety of beliefs tolerated; sees Adventism as potentially a "world religion"), and evangelical.

Near the end of his talk, Dale made this statement:

Based upon these practices [the disfellowshipping or defrock-



A—Sharon Strum led worship. B—Bill Ziprick of Spokane, WA, gave his faith story on Friday evening. C—Paul Carden led a seminar on protecting people from the cults. D—Sara Perkins from Missouri, Della Grabow from Lake Arrowhead, California, and Grace Brunelle from Grand Terrace, California, enjoyed dinner together. E—Gary Inrig gave the Saturday morning

devotional. F—Marina Lovell, Pennsylvania, and July Boney from Perris, California, chatted over Sunday lunch. G—Paul Carden, Dale Ratzlaff, Colleen Tinker, Greg Taylor, and moderator Jonathan Bilima answered questions during the Friday evening Q & A. H—Clifton Lovell, Pennsylvania, and Richard Tinker visited at Sunday lunch.

Plan now to attend the next FAF Weekend in 2009!

ing of those who refuse to teach unbiblical doctrines and the damning to hell of those who leave unless they return], the continued promotion of *The Clear Word* and the errors of Adventism as officially taught and practiced as outlined in this book, it is with deep regret and sorrow that I now feel compelled to include the Adventist church in the kingdom of the cults.

I recognize that the term "cult" does not fit every Seventh-day Adventist. However, the fact that the Seventh-day Adventist church officially continues to refuse to renounce past errors and continues to hold to a mixture of truth and error puts it, I feel, outside the realm of evangelical Christianity. Mixing truth with error—error which compromises the gospel—only make the embedded error more dangerous because it is less apparent.

Following Dale's talk, Jonathan Bilima from the pastoral staff of Calvary Community Church in Phoenix, AZ, moderated a Q & A session with a panel comprised of Paul Carden, Dale Ratzlaff, Colleen Tinker, and Greg Taylor.

Saturday began with group prayer at 6:00 followed by breakfast prepared by local church members. Next, a devotional on 2 Corinthians 3:7-18 was delivered by Dr. Gary Inrig, pastor of Trinity Church. Shirley Burton of Winnipeg, Manitoba, gave her faith story.

"Christianity EDU" sessions through the day included biblical hermeneutics by Dr. John Shoup, understanding the emergent church movement by Dr. Rick Langer, the nature of Christ by Jon Rittenhouse, and a class on recognizing and protecting Christians

against the cults by Paul Carden. Smaller breakout sessions featured Dale Ratzlaff entertaining questions on Adventist theology, Greg Taylor teaching on the human soul/spirit, Martin Carey exploring the great controversy idea of "watching worlds", and Joan Yorba-Gray and Colleen Tinker discussing healing from shame.

After a dinner of chicken in pesto sauce, portabello mushroom ravioli, pasta primavera, salad, and garlic bread catered by Napoli's Italian restaurant, the evening ended with a communion service led by Greg Taylor, and Jonathan Bilima gave his faith story to launch a time of testimonies. The weekend ended with a potluck at Richard and Colleen Tinker's home after church on Sunday. A highlight of the afternoon was an impromptu Bible study led by Dale Ratzlaff on the lawn after lunch.

Audio files of the weekend are online at **FormerAdventist.com**.

Several people said, "This is the best weekend we've had yet." One attendee from British Columbia summed up the weekend with these words: "While most of the attendees were former Adventists, the focus was more on where we are going in Christ than where we had been in Adventism. I applaud the organizers for choosing speakers whose main emphasis was on understanding Scripture and continuing growth through grace."

We thank God for orchestrating a profound weekend, and we praise Him for dying to forgive us, for rising to give us life, and for glorifying Himself in our midst.



I—The Saturday evening communion service was a highlight of the weekend. J—Paula and Greg Taylor attended from Lancaster, Pennsylvania. K—Dale Ratzlaff led an impromptu Bible study after lunch on Sunday. L—Joan Yorba-Gray assisted by Colleen Tinker led a break-out session on healing from shame. M—Jon Rittenhouse, a Campus Crusade staff

member and president of Pursue Your Passion Ministries, conducted a class on the nature of Christ. N—Dale Ratzlaff answered questions about Adventist theology. O—Rick Langer taught a session on understanding the emergent church.

Like a casino sign on the Vegas strip, the words *The Great Controversy* suddenly blazed in my mind. “How can this be?” I protested to myself. “I don’t believe in Ellen White.”

Yet there they were—the words I least expected—startling me with sudden insight. Within a few seconds my entire religious foundation was gone, and I was left to piece it back together. Luckily I knew a good builder to help me: Jesus Christ.

A moderate Adventist

I grew up an Adventist, third generation to be exact. Mine wasn’t the most strict Adventist home—card games and hamburgers were as common as Special-K loaf and haystacks—but it wasn’t the most liberal home, either. We were somewhere in the middle of the religious spectrum. This moderate form of

Adventism greatly influenced my life and shaped my religious and world views.

My years in the Auburn Adventist Academy dormitory and later my time as a student at Walla Walla College (WWC) taught me that my family life was quite normal compared with other Adventist homes today. Most of my peers had the same moderate view of Adventism that I had, and this understanding could be seen in the lives we led. The local coffee shop was a great place to gather after Friday night vespers. Sabbath afternoons often involved a spirited game of Rook. Even strict vegetarianism was a rarity at best. I was content in the Adventist church with the ability to pick and choose my religious beliefs like cafeteria items, leaving behind what I didn’t like.

The major Adventist “pillar” that I tried to push aside was the teaching of E.G. White. Even as a child I was uncomfortable

Rebuilding the four



BRIAN CAIN

SHARON CAREY

with her status as a modern-day prophetess. I had a keen sense that the Bible was the word of God, and it did not need any illumination from Mrs. White. I believed in the Adventist message and was content to push Mrs. White aside and grasp onto the pieces of the church with which I did agree. My mind was never totally at ease with this compromise, but at least my life was comfortable.

I graduated from high school, went to college, and during my junior year at WWC I asked my high school sweetheart to marry me. I was enveloped in a cloud of happiness when she said yes, but a slight tinge of darkness crept over the engagement when our high school pastor declined to perform the ceremony because Sarah was not Adventist. He declined because we were “unequally yoked.”

How could two Christians be unequally yoked? What does

Linda is “Mecca,” and the pressure to be flawless was magnified ten-fold. The pressure soon became too much for my wife. She could not stand under the unrelenting strain of the law. With or without my blessing, she was going to find the truth.

This split between us wasn’t the way life was supposed to happen. I knew Sarah loved the Lord, and I knew He had placed us together to be married, but I couldn’t figure out why our marriage was suffering. It just didn’t make sense.

Not too long after she had declared her intent to find truth with or without me, we started attending a “Sunday-worshiping church” called Trinity. She was going to seek out God; I was going to save her from eternal condemnation. I wanted to appear supportive, but underneath I was using every tactic in my arsenal to thwart this experiment. For example, I tend to be a prompt individual, while my wife is notoriously late. On

Foundation of my faith

being Adventist have to do with being equally yoked? I was furious at first, but somehow I convinced myself that regardless of the misguided attempt by the Adventist church to separate itself from the rest of the Christian body, it was still the truth. I simply placed this Adventist error in the back of my mind with the rest and continued to disregard them as not part of MY religion. Moreover, even though my fiancé was not Adventist, I knew God had placed us together to be married. I truly thought she would see the truth and join the church.

Married life was great, but in the back of my mind it never seemed to be as God intended. Four years into our marriage my wife had still not found the truth in Adventism. Oh, she tried—but she never succeeded. I know now that God was closing doors along that route I so desperately wanted to travel, but during that time I blamed Sarah for not trying hard enough. The funny thing was—she was the one reading her Bible. She was the one praying. She was the one constantly seeking God and asking Him to heal our brokenness. I—the knowledgeable and truth-wielding Adventist—only picked up my Bible to prove a point. Deep down I knew I was wrong, but I was too proud to admit it. I was taught that I had the truth, and I thought I should act like it.

Changes

The division in our marriage grew daily, but on the outside everything was perfect. We had to be perfect to continue in our church community. In a church built on works, people can’t let on it isn’t working for them. To make matters worse we lived in Loma Linda, California, and both of us worked for Loma Linda University Medical Center. Within the Adventist church, Loma

Sabbaths her tardiness would often cause us to miss most of the church preliminaries, forcing us to find a seat in the back in some secluded corner just in time to catch the start of the sermon. This pattern would really irritate me when getting ready to attend an Adventist church, but I found it to be extremely useful on Sunday mornings. No longer would I bellow up the stairs to inquire as to the cause of her tardiness. In fact, I found myself even taking her place as the cause of our late arrivals at church.

But I was there. The Lord had me in the door. I tried not to listen. I tried to be as impersonal and unfriendly as possible. I was going to my wife’s church to save our marriage and to correct the lies she may receive while there. I knew the truth already.

But again, I was there. The Lord had me in the door. I could not stop my ears from hearing. After all, the messages were not all that different from what I believed from the Adventist church. Even the people were not all that different from those in the Adventist church—at least not visually. Everything

Mine wasn’t the most strict Adventist home—card games and hamburgers were as common as Special-K loaf and haystacks—but it wasn’t the most liberal home, either. We were somewhere in the middle of the religious spectrum.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 20

Would the pain never end? Would the blood never stop flowing? It felt as if her heart was being torn, ripped from the chest, pierced by a sword. Must she be forced to watch this carnage, this horror? This was her son! Would they never stop taunting Him? Wasn't it enough that they had beaten Him nearly to death? Did they have to strip Him and crucify Him? Listen to the laughter as they divide his clothes. Listen to the coarse, gleeful mocking of the priests and leaders of the people.

"This is MY SON!" The words screamed through her mind. What had He done to make them hate Him so much?

Her mind flooded with memories: the miracles she had witnessed and the many more of which she had heard. Lepers were cleansed, sight restored, demons cast out. The lame walked, the dumb talked, the blind saw, and the deaf heard. Diseases were cured, and even the dead were raised. Hadn't they seen? Didn't they marvel at this display of God's power and goodness? Were they so hard that they could not understand?

Then there were His teachings. He had told them about the kingdom of heaven. He had spoken with power, with such wisdom and understanding. Yet they had continued to challenge Him, question Him, even accuse Him of doing good in the name of evil. She had heard the rumors of their wanting to see Him dead, but like this? How could Jews stoop to using the power of the hated Romans to have one of their own crucified?

Hush! He is speaking, "I'm thirsty."

"Oh my dear son, I am your mother. Call me and I will come to you and take care of you," her heart cried. They raised a sponge to His lips. How many times had He come to her as a child? "Momma, I'm thirsty." How she had loved to hear his voice and provide for His needs.

He was her firstborn. She remembered the beginning of the story—the stranger who had come with the announcement, "You will have a son, and He will receive the kingdom of His father David."

How could this be? "I am a virgin!"

"The Holy Spirit will come to you, and your son will be called the Son of God."


What a time! First the angel's announcement to her, then his night visit to Joseph assuring him of her integrity and even naming the coming child, "Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins." Such lofty promises. Wonderful expectations.

How could it come to this? The Son of God—naked, beaten, mocked, taunted, and nailed to a Roman cross? The words of Simeon, the holy man in the temple came to her memory, "A sword will even pierce your own heart." Oh, that the Roman guards would pierce her heart and remove her from this horror forever!

"It is finished!"

"NO! He's my son!" No mother should have to watch her son die. Not like this. Could the pain, the despair, the agony and depression get any worse? His name is Jesus—"our Lord saves."

THOMAS FRANCIS



Why Jesus

Why did he die?

Why didn't he save my son? Why my son? Why did Jesus have to die?

The Answer

I like to think that at this time, in the deepest point of her agony and despair, she heard a voice—a voice of unexpected comfort, a voice she remembered well from the days of her youth when she had reeled from the news of the promised birth. Only this time, the voice almost sounded like a sob: "Because He is My Son, too."

The question has been asked for two thousand years and is only answered when the Gospel is really understood in one's heart: Why did Jesus have to die? It's a simple question, yet it's so hard to understand unless one finds it for oneself through the regeneration of the soul by the Holy Spirit. As with all life-changing questions, the answer starts in the beginning.

The Bible says that God created man and pronounced him "good." Our first father and mother were created without sin. They enjoyed perfect fellowship with God. They walked with Him and talked with Him. What a shame on humanity that they didn't find this to be enough. The deceiver told them that they could be like God, that they could know something that only He knew. They could know good from evil. Consequently, in their pride they sinned and entered into a willful rebellion against their Creator and Friend. The Bible says that because of Adam's sin, all humans who followed are "sin." We don't just commit sin, we ARE sin, from the moment of conception. It is the very nature of humanity. There is no part of us that is not touched and stained by sin.

The Bible says that God is holy, sinless, perfect, all knowing, all-powerful, and totally sovereign. God hates sin. He will not allow it to be in his presence. For this reason natural man is not allowed into a perfect relationship with God. Because man is sin in his very nature, he stands before God's justice condemned, guilty, and completely helpless and hopeless. He has nothing to anticipate except God's wrath.

The Bible says that only by the shedding of blood can there be forgiveness of sin. There had to be a perfect, sinless blood sacrifice. Nothing less holy, less perfect, less sinful than God himself would satisfy God's standard of justice. God had to die for man, or man had no hope of ever being saved from God's wrath.

The Bible says that God became a man called Jesus and became the "propitiation" for our sin. That's a fifty-cent word with a ten dollar meaning. It means that Jesus, the sinless God-man, became the receiver of all of God's complete, total wrath against sin, so that we could be spared from any of God's wrath against our sinfulness. Jesus became our sin substitute, if we believe in Him.

When Jesus came to save His people from their sin, He didn't save them with His miracles, although there were many of those. He didn't save them with His teaching, although His words established the principles by which Christians live. Jesus came to die in the most shameful,

painful, horrible way possible—on a cross. It pleased God to crush Him in order to save us.

Alive!

Early on Sunday morning the women went to the tomb. Who would roll away the heavy stone, they wondered? Light was just dawning, but suddenly they could see the empty gash where the stone had been. What had happened?

Fearfully they approached and looked inside. "It's empty! The tomb is empty! Where have they taken Him? Why would they move Him?"

"Why are you looking for the living among the dead?" The angel messenger took their breath away. "He's not here. HE'S ALIVE!"

"How? We watched Him die. We saw the spear tear into His side and pierce his very heart. We watched as Joseph and Nicodemus wrapped His body with 75 pounds of burial spices!"

"HE'S ALIVE"

The meaning of the angel's words settled slowly into the women's hearts. They needed a day and several visits from Jesus to believe the truth fully. Is it any wonder that this one single event became the center focus of the church from that moment until this day? The way the believers worshiped, the day on which they worshiped, even the message they preached in worship all centered in the event we celebrate as Easter.

It is only in the message of Easter that we have hope. We can add nothing to what was fulfilled at that event. Without the message of Easter, we can never be good enough to satisfy God's standard of justice.

Pause a moment and gaze into the empty tomb. Then raise your eyes to see that bloody cross. Listen for the voice that has assured and comforted believers in Jesus through centuries of persecution, faith, trial, and final triumph.

"He that has the Son, has life. He who has not the Son, does not have life" (Jn 3:36).

"I assure you: Anyone who hears My word and believes Him who sent Me has eternal life and will not come under judgment but has already passed from death to life" (Jn 5:24).

"Come to Me, all who are tired and overloaded. And I will give you rest" (Mt 11:28).

"Those who come to me, I will never cast away."

"No one can snatch them out of my hand" (Jn 10:28).

The message of Easter means life forever with Him, if you believe in Him and trust Him completely by faith. The message of Easter means that your life forever with Him begins this moment if you believe in Him and trust Him completely by faith. The message of Easter is as certain as God Himself, because it is HIS plan and HIS way to save HIS people from their sin. It's HIS way. It is the ONLY way. If you believe in Him and trust Him completely by faith.

Do YOU believe in Him and trust Him completely, by faith?

+



Thomas Francis lives with his wife Carol in the rolling hills of horse country, in Marion County, Florida, where they have found their heart's earthly home. They have two children, three grandchildren, and two great grandchildren. They are members of College Road Baptist Church where he is the teacher of an adult Sunday School class. Begun five years ago with a membership of two, it now has a membership of near 50 with an average attendance of 30. The Bible has become a passion for him, and he reads it through several times a year. Despite being permanently disabled, Thomas says that God has blessed him greatly, and he praises His name.

DALE RATZLAFF COMING TO CLEBURNE AND KEENE, TEXAS, APRIL 25–27, 2008

The Dangers of Seventh-day Adventism

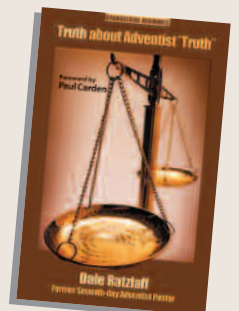
CLEBURNE BIBLE CHURCH • 111 North Pendell Street, Cleburne TX 76033

- April 25, Friday • 7:00–8:30 pm • Truth about Adventist "Truth"
- April 26, Saturday • 10:00–11:30 am • The Transitional Path, How to Minister to Adventists
- April 26, Saturday • 6:00– 7:30 pm • What about the Fourth Commandment?

CAFE CON LECHE RESTAURANT • Corner of Old Betsy Road and 4th Street, Keene TX

- April 27, Sunday • 4:00 – 5:30 pm • The Central Pillar of Adventism: Truth or Error?

FREE *Truth about Adventist "Truth"* (Reg. \$7.95) for attending all THREE of the meetings scheduled in Cleburne.



What is the meaning of the **CROSS?**

DALE RATZLAFF

Before exploring the meaning of Jesus' atonement, I want to start with an explanation of my hermeneutical presuppositions. First, I believe the New Testament explains the Old,¹ but eternal truths are represented in both Testaments.² In the Old Testament, however, truth is often represented in type³ or shadow,⁴ and these types and shadows are often less than the eternal truth to which they point. God set up the sacrificial system to teach



What is the meaning

truths regarding the coming redemption, and we should expect to find in these types and shadows something pointing to the greater truths of the atonement.

Second, I believe in the primacy of Scripture.⁵ There are many theologians today who look at the Old Testament types and shadows as bordering on paganism. Some believe that mature Christians have progressed far beyond the biblical pictures or models of the atonement. "Blood," they would say, no longer serves as a useful symbol of forgiveness. The forensic view of the atonement that stresses Christ's substitutionary life and death was necessary, they would say, for the legalistic Jews of Paul's day but should now be abandoned. Rather, some would have us focus primarily on knowing and trusting the loving character of God. Knowing God's character, they would say, is really all that is needed. However logical and philosophically appealing these concepts may be, this study will seek to discover what Scripture teaches: no more and no less. God's ways are not man's ways. After 39 chapters of long philosophical discussions in the book of Job,

"The Lord said, "Will the faultfinder contend with the Almighty? Let him who reproves God answer it." Then Job answered the Lord and said, "Behold, I am insignificant; what can I reply to You? I lay my hand on my mouth. Once I have spoken, and I will not answer; Even twice, and I will add nothing more" (Job. 40:5, 6).

I am not willing to go beyond what is written in Scripture. So right at the outset let me state that this article will be my best, albeit inadequate, attempt to bring meaning and harmony to the many biblical pictures and statements relative to the Atonement. Jesus is set forth as God's final word who is the radiance of God's glory and the exact representation of His nature, and upholds all things by the word of His power.⁶ Like Jude, we must "contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all handed down to the saints."⁷

Some months ago I told Colleen that I would like to write a gospel article for the Easter edition of *Proclamation!* Now, having studied the topic of the atonement for some time, I feel very much like the proverbial chipmunk which set out to gnaw down a giant sequoia tree. Where do I start on a project of this magnitude? Not only is the size of the project daunting, but trying to understand the various facets of the holiness, justice, love and mercy of God pushes one to the outer limits of human comprehension. We must come to grips with the magnitude and meaning of the sin of Adam, the original man. We must explore the meaning of forgiveness, ransom, redemption, propitiation and reconciliation and justification. We must ask why the death of Christ was required and by whom. Was God the Father punishing Christ for the sins of Adam? Why does sin even have to be punished? Can't we just come to know that God is love and forget the punishment thing as no longer relevant? To whom is the "price" of our redemption paid: to God or Satan? How does the death of Christ reverse not only Adam's sin but the sins of the whole world? What is revealed about the humanity of Christ? Did He take sinful or sinless humanity, and what difference does it make? Which view of the atonement is correct: sacrificial, moral influence, commercial, legal or substitutional—or are all these different facets of one larger view?

The more I study to discover the glory of the cross, the more cautious I become. To peer too deeply into the throne room of the Almighty is to be blinded, as was Paul, by the glory of the living Christ. When we get a vision of God's Majesty we must with Isaiah cry out, "Woe is me, for I am undone!...For my eyes have seen the King, The LORD of hosts."

Therefore, as I make this feeble attempt to bring meaning and understanding to this grand and central theme of Scripture, it is with much tentativeness, recognizing that I am like a third-grader seeking to understand Einstein's $E=MC^2$.

I have come to realize that the atonement is without doubt the most important, life-changing, God-honoring, complex and difficult truth of Scripture. There are so many facets that must be explored, yet individually focusing on one aspect of the atonement often makes God look like a monster. To see and experience the "glory of the cross" we must put all the puzzle pieces together in their right places to see "the Light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ."⁸ The atonement can only be correctly understood in the revelation and understanding of the attributes of God.

Determined before the foundation of the world

Whether God determined, foresaw, or foresaw the possibility⁹ of the entrance of sin into the world, it is clear that the atonement was blueprinted before the foundation of the world.¹⁰ It is important to recognize this biblical truth.



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There are some who look at Scripture and the shadows and types of the coming atonement as only man's developing concept of God and not as the progressive revelation of God. As the central and most important truth of all time, however, the truth of the atonement is God's revelation.¹¹ It is not a reflection of man's understanding.

The magnitude of Adam's sin

Adam's sin is set forth in Scripture as a voluntary historical act of enormous consequences that resulted in all mankind coming under the curse.¹² He lost access to the tree of life.¹³ He lost his position as the ruler of this earth. The dominion given to Adam at creation was apparently delivered to Satan when Adam sinned, for Jesus mentions Satan as the "ruler of this world" on several occasions.¹⁴ Most importantly for our study, Adam's sin caused "the fall of man" meaning that all humans after that tragic event were born guilty and born polluted with a sinful nature. This inherent guilt resulted in death spreading to all men. We will come back to Paul's teaching in Romans later to show how Christ undid the terrible consequences of Adam's sin, but for now it is important in the context of Adam's sin to fully understand Paul's thought.

"Therefore, just as through one man sin entered into the world and death through sin, and so death spread to all men, because all sinned—for until the Law sin was in the world, but sin is not imputed when there is no law. Nevertheless death reigned from Adam until Moses, even over those who had not sinned in the likeness of the offense of Adam, who is a type of Him who was to come...For if by the transgression of the one, death reigned through the one...So then as through one transgression there resulted condemnation to all men...For as through the one man's disobedience the many were made sinners (Rom. 5:12-19).

In the above passage Paul makes it clear that there was no law between Adam and Moses,¹⁵ yet people who lived between Adam and Moses suffered death. He states this to show that Adam's sin not only caused Adam's own death but also the death of every person after that time. Adam's sin resulted in "imputed sin" and also "imparted sin" in that every son and daughter of Adam has a sinful nature and grows up not only with the imputed guilt of Adam, but also the inherited pattern of sin from infancy. This concept must be understood to comprehend all the facets of the atonement. The atonement of Christ, as we will see later, must take away the guilt of the "imputed sin" we received from Adam and also the guilt of our own sin that resulted from our many personal sins springing from our polluted, sinful nature. Note how Paul describes this sinful nature that all the children of Adam have:

"And you were dead in your trespasses and sins, in which you formerly walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, of the spirit that is now working in the sons of disobedience. Among them we too all formerly lived in the lusts of our flesh,

indulging the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, even as the rest (Eph. 2:1-3).

An understanding of the nature of Adam's sin and the resulting fall of humanity will also be important when we consider the nature of Christ. A misunderstanding here will completely undermine the biblical truth of the atonement. Considering the enormity of Adam's sin, we now turn to the holiness of God.

The holiness and love of God

Holiness is perhaps the chief attribute of God, and I believe it is the foundational key to interpreting rightly the many facets of the atonement.

"Holiness is self-affirming purity...Holiness is not self-communicating love, but self-affirming righteousness. Holiness limits and conditions love, for love can will happiness only as happiness results from or consists with righteousness, that is, with conformity to God" (Augustus H. Strong, *Systematic Theology*, p. 268, 713).

Holiness and sin cannot coexist unless other factors come into play. The appearance of the glory of God is like a "consuming fire."¹⁶ Isaiah says,

"I saw the Lord sitting on a throne, lofty and exalted, with the train of His robe filling the temple. Seraphim stood above Him, each having six wings: with two he covered his face, and with two he covered his feet, and with two he flew. And one called out to another and said, "Holy, Holy, Holy, is the LORD of hosts, The whole earth is full of His glory." And the foundations of the thresholds trembled at the voice of him who called out, while the temple was filling with smoke. Then I said, "Woe is me, for I am ruined! Because I am a man of unclean lips, And I live among a people of unclean lips; For my eyes have seen the King, the LORD of hosts" (Isa 6:1-5).

When Moses said, "I pray You, show me Your glory!" the Lord answered,

"I Myself will make all My goodness pass before you, and will proclaim the name of the LORD before you; and I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will show compassion on whom I will show compassion. But He said, You cannot see My face, for no man can see Me and live!" (Ex. 33:18-20).

Because God is holy, sin must be eradicated.

Righteousness and truth, justice and mercy

While it is necessary at times to study a given attribute of God or facet of the atonement we must recognize that they never operate singly but always in concert harmony. God's holiness demands the eradication of sin. Yet his mercy reaches out in love to the sinner. His justice demands that the sinner reap the consequences of his own sin. His righteousness finds a way to do all this through the atonement that was blue-printed before the foundation of the world. This is a "God thing" that deserves our deepest study, devotion and worship.

"Lovingkindness and truth have met together; Righteousness and peace have kissed each other" (Ps. 85:10).

What is the meaning

Adam was created in the image and likeness of God. Granted that God's likeness has been all but obliterated through thousands of years of sin, yet we see vestiges of His attributes in all societies. Today when we see horrible crimes on the evening news something within the human heart cries out for justice. Evil deserves punishment. Yet when justice sets out to inflict the legal sentence we often have a feeling of remorse and wish something could be done to save and redeem the offender. We feel the anger of the Israelis as the rockets rain down on them day after day. Then when we see the carnage of Israel's counter attack on the seemingly helpless Palestinians, we cry out for some humane solution. In this we see the longing of the human heart for justice and mercy, righteousness and truth. Like the Old Testament prophet, Habakkuk, we cry out, "O Lord...in wrath remember mercy" (Hab. 3:2).

Therefore, rather than dismissing the biblical elements of the atonement as something mature Christians should leave in the children's sandbox, let us drink deeply of "the living water" that will become like a river flowing from our innermost being.¹⁷

Christ the Second Adam—God in the flesh

The central core of the atonement is the substitution of the life and death of Jesus Christ for ours—His righteousness for our sin. However, before we unpack this concept we must thoroughly understand the nature of Christ. Was Christ's human nature like ours, weakened by 4,000 years of sin? As a human being did Christ inherit the guilt of the imputed sin of Adam? Was the humanity of Christ the same as the humanity of Adam before or after the fall? Was the man Christ Jesus actually the Lord God Almighty—fully God sharing in eternity the same essence as God? Or, was Jesus the first of God's creation who was later promoted to be God? Was Jesus once Michael the archangel? These are vitally important questions, and they must be answered thoroughly from Scripture, or we will come up with the wrong concept of the atonement and a wrong understanding of the gospel.

The importance of the virgin birth

When the angel came to Mary and told her that she was going to have a son,

"Mary said to the angel, 'How can this be, since I am a virgin?' The angel answered and said to her, 'The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; and for that reason the holy Child shall be called the Son of God'" (Lk. 1:35).

Note that Jesus is called "the holy Child" and the "Son of God". Jesus had a human mother but did not have a human father. His human nature was the creation of the Holy Spirit and therefore He did not inherit either the imputed guilt of Adam's sin or the inherited pollution—sin nature—as all the rest of humanity. The record of Scripture is clear and must be accepted as truth.

"Now the birth of Jesus Christ was as follows: when His mother Mary had been betrothed to Joseph, before they came together she was found to be with child by the Holy Spirit (Mt. 1:18).

"But when he had considered this, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, 'Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife; for the Child who has been conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit'" (Mt. 1:20).

"Now all this took place to fulfill what was spoken by the Lord through the prophet: 'BEHOLD, THE VIRGIN SHALL BE WITH CHILD AND SHALL BEAR A SON, AND THEY SHALL CALL HIS NAME IMMANUEL,' which translated means, 'GOD WITH US'" (Mt. 1:22, 23).

The absolute sinlessness of Christ is a foundational truth of Christianity.

"He made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him (2 Cor. 5:21).

"And He who sent Me is with Me; He has not left Me alone, for I always do the things that are pleasing to Him." (Jn. 8:29).

"For we do not have a high priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but One who has been tempted in all things as we are, yet without sin" (Heb. 4:15).

"For it was fitting for us to have such a high priest, holy, innocent, undefiled, separated from sinners and exalted above the heavens (Heb. 7:26).

"But with precious blood, as of a lamb unblemished and spotless, the blood of Christ" (1 Pet. 1:19).

"WHO COMMITTED NO SIN, NOR WAS ANY DECEIT FOUND IN HIS MOUTH" (1 Pet. 2:22).

"For Christ also died for sins once for all, the just for the unjust, so that He might bring us to God, having been put to death in the flesh, but made alive in the spirit" (1 Pet. 3:18).

We see, then, that Christ as the sinless Second Adam recaptures the position as head of the human family. He was totally pure, holy, undefiled, and separate from sinners.

Jesus—fully God.

The atonement rests not only on the perfect sinlessness of the human nature of Christ but also, and equally important, on His full deity. Again we note the clear and undisputed teaching of Scripture.

"For a child will be born to us, a son will be given to us; And the government will rest on His shoulders; And His name will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Eternal Father, Prince of Peace" (Isa. 9:6).

"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God" (Jn. 1:1).

"Jesus said to them, 'Truly, truly, I say to you, before Abraham was born, I am'" (Jn. 8:58).¹⁸

"For in Him all the fullness of Deity dwells in bodily form" (Col 2:9).

"If you had known Me, you would have known My Father also; from now on you know Him, and have seen Him.' Philip said to Him, 'Lord, show us the Father, and it is enough for

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us.' Jesus said to him, 'Have I been so long with you, and yet you have not come to know Me, Philip? He who has seen Me has seen the Father; how can you say, 'Show us the Father?'" (Jn. 14:7-9).

The demonstration of God's righteousness

We now come to the heart of our study found in Romans 3:21-26. Let us take one verse at a time and squeeze all we can from this most important passage and drink deeply from the sweet fountain of the grace of God.

3:21 "But now apart from the Law the righteousness of God has been manifested, being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets."

Paul shows that the "righteousness of God" is not something found in the Torah. Even though the Torah had its types and shadows pointing toward the "righteousness of God," the manifestation of this righteousness took place outside the setting of the old covenant. This is the same truth we find in John 1:17, "For the Law was given through Moses; grace and truth were realized through Jesus Christ." We also note that Paul is not talking about the "righteousness of the law"; rather, Paul refers to the higher, perfect "righteousness of God" that only one who is sinless in nature and conduct can demonstrate; only the God-man, Jesus Christ, is able to manifest the righteousness of God.

3:22 "even the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all those who believe; for there is no distinction."

This one short verse is filled with gospel! The very "righteousness of God" comes to us "through faith in Jesus Christ" and it is for all who believe. He extends the reach of "all" by adding, "there is no distinction." There is no limited atonement here! But this is not universalism; it is only for those who place their faith in Jesus Christ.

3:23 "for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God."

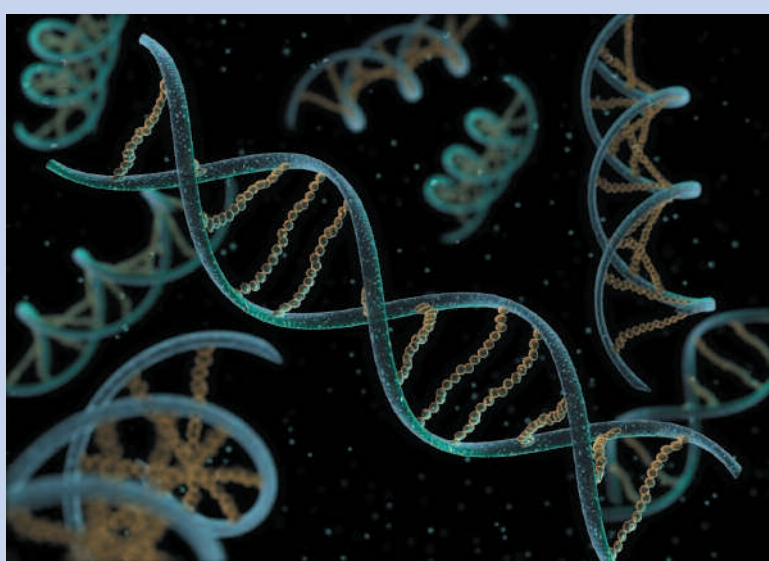
In Romans 1:18-3:19 Paul has demonstrated that the Gentile sinners, the people who live a moral life, and the Jews who were recipients of the law and the old covenant revelation are all under the guilt of sin. As children of Adam all are under the imputed guilt and imparted pollution of sin. "Fall short" is in the present continuous tense in Greek indicating that we all continue to fall short of God's glory. This alone spells doom for any who would seek reconciliation with God by any works of their own.

3:24 "being justified as a gift by His grace through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus."

What does it mean to be justified? Justification is a legal, forensic term denoting a judicial act of declaring a verdict of acquittal and so excluding all possibility of condemnation. Justification thus settles the legal status of the person justified.¹⁹ Justification determines the whole character of Christianity as a religion of grace and faith. It makes clear what faith is—belief in Christ's atoning death and justifying resurrection. Martin Luther said "a church that lapses from it can scarcely be called Christian"²⁰ Justification is a "gift." It

cannot be earned or deserved. It comes only by God's grace, which is unmerited favor, and the channel is "through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus."

Redemption, too, is a word rich with meaning. It revolves around a payment of a ransom. Liberal theologians would have us dismiss this "picture" of salvation as a primitive aspect of the atonement. Yet it runs through the revelation of God from ancient times to the majestic song of triumph in the book of Revelation. The Old Testament is saturated with the concept of redemption and ransom,²¹ and it is central to the atonement presented in the New Testament.



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Jesus had a human mother but did not have a human father. His human nature was the creation of the Holy Spirit and therefore He did not inherit either the imputed guilt of Adam's sin or the inherited pollution—sin nature—as all the rest of humanity.

"Just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many" (Mt. 20:28).

"There is one God, and one mediator also between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, who gave Himself as a ransom for all, the testimony given at the proper time (1 Tim. 2:5,6).

"Be on guard for yourselves and for all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood (Act. 20:28).

And they sang a new song, saying, "Worthy are You to take the book and to break its seals; for You were slain, and purchased for God with Your blood men from every tribe and tongue and people and nation (Rev. 5:9).

What is the meaning

Redemption, ransom, and purchase are the words of God's revelation of salvation. They are key facets of the atonement. Note that the price paid for our redemption is the precious blood of Christ.

"Knowing that you were not redeemed with perishable things like silver or gold from your futile way of life inherited from your forefathers, but with precious blood, as of a lamb unblemished and spotless, the blood of Christ (1 Pet. 1:18, 19).

Today we are far removed from the blood of sacrifice. Many churches have taken out the old Christian hymns that speak of the blood of Christ. We must ever remember it is not what we think of the blood that counts. Rather, it is God's estimation of the blood and what it represents that is of value. In the infinite wisdom of God before the foundation of the world the details of the atonement were worked out in such a way that God could be just and the justifier of the one who places his faith in Christ. I for one do not want to look into the face of my Savior who hung on the cross with his life-blood dripping down for my sin and disdain that precious blood. The following verses should settle once and for all the issue of redemption, ransom, and the price of the precious blood of Christ.

"Therefore, brethren, since we have confidence to enter the holy place by the blood of Jesus" (Heb. 10:19).

"His eyes are a flame of fire, and on His head are many diadems; and He has a name written on Him which no one knows except Himself. He is clothed with a robe dipped in blood, and His name is called The Word of God" (Rev. 19:12, 13).

"How much severer punishment do you think he will deserve who has trampled under foot the Son of God, and has regarded as unclean the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified, and has insulted the Spirit of grace? For we know Him who said, 'VENGEANCE IS MINE, I WILL REPAY.' And again, 'THE LORD WILL JUDGE HIS PEOPLE.' It is a terrifying thing to fall into the hands of the living God" (Heb. 10:29, 30).

3:25 "Whom God displayed publicly as a propitiation in His blood through faith. This was to demonstrate His righteousness, because in the forbearance of God He passed over the sins previously committed" (Rom. 3:25).

In this verse we grapple with a number of the facets of the atonement. It was necessary for God to make a public display of the death of Christ. It is set forth as a "propitiation in His blood through faith." Here again liberal theologians would dismiss the concept of propitiation as a primitive concept to be abandoned. Yet we find it is the very heart of the atonement. Propitiation is a turning away of wrath by an offering.²² This can only be understood in the realization that all the activities of the atonement take place within the Trinity. A literal reading in Greek is, "God did set forth for himself Jesus Christ."²³ The multiple attributes of God working together in perfect harmony found a way to punish the sin and let the sinner go free in a way that satisfied God's holiness, grace, mercy, love, justice, righteousness and wrath against sin. God also provided a way for the sinner to be ultimately reunited with the heavenly family without the guilt and pollution of sin.

God not only satisfied His own need for righteousness, but He demonstrated it by making a public display of Christ on the cross. From the time of Adam to the cross the real consequences of sin had been passed over. True, the shadows and types provided a way that the sinner could be forgiven, but the propitiation, the payment for sin, had only been rolled ahead like a revolving charge account year after year.

The Old Testament Day of Atonement served as a shadow of two aspects of the atonement.

"He shall take from the congregation of the sons of Israel two male goats for a sin offering and one ram for a burnt offering" (Lev. 16:5).

Note that both goats were "for a sin offering".

"He shall take the two goats and present them before the LORD at the doorway of the tent of meeting. Aaron shall cast lots for the two goats, one lot for the LORD and the other lot for the scapegoat. Then Aaron shall offer the goat on which the lot for the LORD fell, and make it a sin offering. But the goat on which the lot for the scapegoat fell shall be presented alive before the LORD, to make atonement upon it, to send it into the wilderness as the scapegoat (Lev. 16:7-10).

Some teach that the scapegoat represents Satan. Personally, after thorough study, I feel this is the height of blasphemy. Note the following points:

- Both goats were without blemish.
- Both goats were "for a sin offering".
- The "Lord's goat" was slain representing the **means** by which sin could be forgiven. It was the ransom, the price paid that settled the legal issues.
- Atonement was made over the scapegoat, and it was sent into the wilderness representing the **effects** of the sin offering. The sins of the people were in type removed from their presence!

"But in those sacrifices there is a reminder of sins year by year. For it is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins (Heb. 10:3, 4).

Therefore, unless one is willing to make Satan their "sin offering" and make Satan an active participant in the atonement for their sin, Satan cannot be represented by the scapegoat. Rather, what we have here is a representation in type and shadow of two different aspects of the atonement of Christ. (1) Christ died for our sin providing the means by which sin could actually be forgiven²⁴ and, (2) while Christ is the epitome of sinlessness, He was made to be sin for us.²⁵ This aspect of the atonement was prefigured when,

Then the LORD said to Moses, "Make a fiery serpent, and set it on a standard; and it shall come about, that everyone who is bitten, when he looks at it, he will live" (Num. 21:8).

Later Jesus used this shadow to explain the gospel to Nicodemus.

"As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up; so that whoever believes will in Him have eternal life" (Jn. 3:14, 15).

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The scapegoat represented Christ, and as the sin bearer He carried away our sin once and for all. "He himself took our infirmities and carried away our diseases."²⁶ The writer of Hebrews alludes to Christ as the scapegoat.

"Therefore Jesus also, that He might sanctify the people through His own blood, suffered outside the gate. So, let us go out to Him outside the camp, bearing His reproach (Heb. 13:12, 13).

There are a number of "pictures" of this same truth.

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

"You will cast all their sins into the depths of the sea (Mic. 7:19).

Yes, in God's forbearance He passed over sins previously committed. However, at the cross He made a public display of the means and the effects of that atonement that satisfied the righteousness of God and freed us from the condemnation of guilt and sin.

3:26 "for the demonstration, I say, of His righteousness at the present time, so that He would be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus."

Paul makes it clear it was at the cross where God made the demonstration of His righteousness. The new covenant community is not to look back into the types and shadows to evaluate God, sin, or righteousness. Neither are we to look to some future last day remnant people who will perfectly keep the law to demonstrate God's justice in the way He runs His universe. Rather, all this was demonstrated "at the present time"—in the Christ event. There and there alone do we find public demonstration that God is both just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus. John records Jesus' last words as "It is finished."²⁷

3:27 "Where then is boasting? It is excluded. By what kind of law? Of works? No, but by a law of faith.

We must underline in our thinking that the demonstration of God's attributes resulting in the atonement were made outside of the old covenant and were made within the Trinity without any participation of mankind. This demonstration had nothing to do with the law of works. Our inclusion into the blessings of the atonement is solely the result of God's grace, mercy, and love. The only condition for our inclusion into the benefits of the atonement is our faith in Christ.

3:28 "For we maintain that a man is justified by faith apart from works of the Law."

Independent legalism runs in our veins as part of our inheritance from Adam. Paul, guided by the Holy Spirit, understood, as did Luther, that the Christian must be eternally vigilant against the toxic effect of trying to make ourselves acceptable to God through obedience to the Law. The law only condemns; it never saves. Until we come to fully accept this fact, we will never be "free" to live a life of "natural obedience" to the moral principles of the new life in Christ. True obedience springs from full acceptance. That is

why we always fail if we seek sanctification or holy living before we understand and accept justification by faith which completely rules out all condemnation.²⁸ This declaration of "not guilty" is achieved always and only as an unmerited gift of God's grace when we respond in faith and reach out our unworthy hand and take the priceless gift. Then, as fully accepted members of God's family—"saints in Christ Jesus"—we are admonished to live like the kind of persons we now are in Christ.

The legacy of the Second Adam

Let us go back to Romans 5 and consider what we left out the first time through. We saw that Adam's sin resulted in passing on to all mankind both the imputed guilt and the pollution of a sinful nature. Let us now discover how Christ reversed the terrible legacy of Adam.

5:14, 15 "Nevertheless death reigned from Adam until Moses, even over those who had not sinned in the likeness of the offense of Adam, who is a type of Him who was to come. But the free gift is not like the transgression. For if by the transgression of the one the many died, much more did the grace of God and the gift by the grace of the one Man, Jesus Christ, abound to the many."

Here and in the following verses, Paul contrasts both the similarities and differences between Adam and Christ. In every instance we will see that Christ's work of grace in reversing Adam's work of sin is "much more." Christ's redemptive "work" supersedes Adam's sin in both result and scope. In reality, this passage introduces not a comparison

The law only condemns; it never saves. Until we come to fully accept this fact, we will never be "free" to live a life of "natural obedience" to the moral principles of the new life in Christ. True obedience springs from full acceptance.



What is the meaning

but a contrast between the scope and effect of Adam's sin and the much greater scope and effect of Christ's work.

5:16 "The gift is not like that which came through the one who sinned; for on the one hand the judgment arose from one transgression resulting in condemnation, but on the other hand the free gift arose from many transgressions resulting in justification.

Judgment on Adam's sin resulted in his condemnation and the condemnation of all his posterity. However, the "free gift"—note the emphasis on grace by the repeated con-

5:17 "For if by the transgression of the one, death reigned through the one, much more those who receive the abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness will reign in life through the One, Jesus Christ."

The emphasis in this verse centers on the superabundant results occurring to those who receive the grace and gift of righteousness. We will reign in life through Jesus Christ. Here we see cause and effect. If we receive the abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness then we will reign in life through Jesus Christ. While the focus of Paul's thought in Romans 5 is on the legal aspect of condemnation and justification, nevertheless I believe we have a foreshadowing of what Paul will develop in Romans 6–8. Namely, when we accept the gift of God's justifying grace we are also delivered from the reign or controlling power of sin. We become new creatures²⁹ in Christ Jesus, and as such we are to:

"Consider yourselves to be dead to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus" (Rom. 6:11).

"Put on the new self, which in the likeness of God has been created in righteousness and holiness of the truth" (Eph. 4:24).

5:18–19 "So then as through one transgression there resulted condemnation to all men, even so through one act of righteousness there resulted justification of life to all men. For as through the one man's disobedience the many were made sinners, even so through the obedience of the One the many will be made righteous."

Paul shows conclusively that Christ as the Second Adam reversed the tragic results of the first Adam. "The many" who will be made righteous, are those who receive the gift of grace provided to all. Paul uses the future tense, "the many will be made righteousness." I do not believe Paul is saying that the experience of being "made righteous" is postponed until the consummation, rather he has in view that the blessings of justifying righteousness are ever available to all future believers when they place their faith in Christ. I believe he also widens his thought to include both justifying righteousness—the present declaration of God—and the moral righteousness that is developed in our lives by the Holy Spirit as we daily live "in Christ." Both find their geneses in the free gift of God's grace.

5:20, 21 "The Law came in so that the transgression would increase; but where sin increased, grace abounded all the more, so that, as sin reigned in death, even so grace would reign through righteousness to eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord."

"Between Adam and Christ stood Moses... Law, says Paul, was added, the verb showing that it held no primary place. Its purpose was that the trespass might increase. It was not concerned with preventing sin (it was too late for that). Nor was it concerned with salvation from sin (it was too weak for that). The law can only condemn... Paul does not say that the "trespasses" increased; it is what sin essentially is that the law magnified. Paul is not concerned with minor distinctions among grades of evil. The important thing is at the end of clause—grace increased all the more."³⁰

cept—had its foundation in "many transgressions" in which Christ was not involved. While there is a cause and effect relationship between Adam, judgment and condemnation, there is no such relationship between the "many transgressions" that would result in justification. Rather, justification comes from outside the realm of cause and effect and has its source only and ever in God's "free gift" of grace. Here the imputed sin of Adam and the resulting condemnation is reversed by God's free grace which results in the legal declaration of justification.



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of the CROSS

The cross of Christ—the pinnacle of human history

The cross stands at the pinnacle of human history. It was on this very mount that over a thousand years before, the aged Abraham placed his only son, the son whom he loved,³¹ on the altar of sacrifice. He stood ready with knife-raised hand, when suddenly God spoke, “Do not stretch out your hand against the lad, and do nothing to harm him.”

“Then Abraham raised his eyes and looked, and behold, behind him a ram caught in the thicket by his horns; and Abraham went and took the ram and offered him up for a burnt offering in the place of his son. Abraham called the name of that place The LORD Will Provide, as it is said to this day, “In the mount of the LORD it will be provided” (Gen. 22:13, 14).

Jesus said, “Your father Abraham rejoiced to see My day, and he saw it and was glad.”³² For Abraham and for us, substitution stands at the heart of the atonement.

He made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him (2 Cor. 5:21).

Consider all the facets of the atonement; its legal and moral consequences; the scope of redemption purchased by the precious blood of Christ; the condescension of God becoming man; the rejection from the people He came to save; the betrayal and denial by his own apostles; the sufferings of Christ in the garden; the cruel mob; the unjust trial; the mocking of those for whom He was providing salvation; the pain and humiliation of the cross; experiencing the ultimate wrath of God—separation from His Father, “Why have you forsaken me?” The repentant Peter who was commissioned by the Risen Lord to feed the flock of God records:

“While being reviled, He did not revile in return; while suffering, He uttered no threats, but kept entrusting Himself to Him who judges righteously; and He Himself bore our sins in His body on the cross, so that we might die to sin and live to righteousness; for by His wounds you were healed. For you were continually straying like sheep, but now you have returned to the Shepherd and Guardian of your souls (1 Pet. 2:22).

“For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life” (Jn. 3:16).

With hearts overflowing with thankfulness, let us join our voices with the throng of the redeemed.

“Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power and riches and wisdom and might and honor and glory and blessing.” And every created thing which is in heaven and on the earth and under the earth and on the sea, and all

things in them, I heard saying, “To Him who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb, be blessing and honor and glory and dominion forever and ever” (Rev. 5:12–13).

I’m forgiven, because You were forsaken,
I’m accepted, You were condemned.
I’m alive and well, Your spirit lives within me,
Because you died and rose again.
Amazing love, how can it be?
That You, my King, would die for me.
Amazing love, I know its true.
It’s my joy to honor you in all I do.³³

Endnotes

1. God, after He spoke long ago to the fathers in the prophets in many portions and in many ways, in these last days has spoken to us in His Son, whom He appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the world (Heb. 1:1–2).
2. Now these things happened to them as an example, and they were written for our instruction, upon whom the ends of the ages have come (1 Cor. 10:11).
3. Rom. 4:15; Heb. 11:9.
4. Col. 2:17; Heb. 8:5; 10:1.
5. Jn. 10:35; 19:28; Gal. 3:8; 2 Tim. 3:16; 2 Pet 1:20.
6. Heb. 1:1–3.
7. Jud. 1:3.
8. 2 Cor. 4:6.
9. Whether you are a Calvinist, Armenian or somewhere in between.
10. Jn. 17:24; Eph. 1:4; 1 Pet 1:20.
11. Col. 1:26, 27.
12. Gen. 3:14–24.
13. Gen. 3:24.
14. Jn. 12:31; 14:30; 16:11.
15. There were eternal moral principles in play during this time.
16. Ex. 24:17; Heb. 12:29.
17. See Jn. 7:38.
18. This is an obvious reference to Jesus claiming to be the “I AM,” the self-existent one mentioned in Exodus 3.
19. See Water A. Elwell, *Evangelical Dictionary of Theology*, p. 593.
20. *Ibid.*
21. Ex. 21:30; 30:12; Num. 3:46, 48, 49, 51; Job 33:24; Ps. 69:18; Isa. 50:2; Hos. 13:14.
22. See Water A. Elwell, *Evangelical Dictionary of Theology*, p. 888.
23. R.C.H. Lenski, *Commentary on the New Testament, Romans*, p. 255.
24. Heb. 10:12.
25. 2 Cor. 5:21.
26. Mat. 8:17.
27. Jn. 19:30.
28. Rom. 8:1.
29. Gal. 6:15.
30. Leon Morris, *The Epistle to the Romans*, p. 241, 242.
31. Gen. 22:2.
32. Jn. 8:56.
33. Words and Music: Billy Goote © 1996
Worshiptogether.com

Dale Ratzlaff is the founder of Life Assurance Ministries, Inc, and owns LAM Publications, LLC. He served as an Adventist pastor for 13 years, seven of which were at Monterey Bay Academy where he taught Bible. He and his wife Carolyn left the Adventist church in 1981 when he realized he could no longer teach the investigative judgment in clear conscience. He has authored *Sabbath in Christ*, *The Cultic Doctrine of Seventh-day Adventists*, *The Truth About Adventist “Truth”* and *Truth Led Me Out*. These are available through his website, LifeAssuranceMinistries.com.



Rebuilding the foundation of my faith FROM PAGE 7

looked correct, but I perceived something very different within the church. At first I would have attributed the perceived difference to be falsehood, but I was not comfortable with that conclusion. Something was different, and it wasn't negative or wrong.

The weekends came and went, but my attitude changed very little. Monday would come, and I would look ahead to Sunday with dread. Not only were we now attending the services on a regular basis, meaning my aversion tactics failed more often than not, but I was now forced to follow up church with lunch at a church member's home. This wasn't just once or twice, but every Sunday following the service. My wife insisted she go every time, but I often found ways of getting out of it. I must have cleaned the garage a dozen times during those months.

The Lord did not give up on me. Slowly I stopped cleaning the garage so often and started attending the lunches after church. It turned out those church members who were feeding us every Sunday had a lot more in common with me than I realized. Not only were they filled with the Holy Spirit—that I could not deny, but they were former Adventist members. To add to God's divine planning, they were also the leaders of a group within Trinity Church called Former Adventist Fellowship. This group was formed to help minister to Adventist believers who had left the SDA church and were looking for answers. I began to be a bit more interested in Sunday lunch and focused my attention on the conversations going on around me.

Moment of Truth

Soon after I had learned of this group I also found out that my wife had enrolled us in a special Former Adventist Fellowship weekend that was fast approaching. At this point the Lord had removed enough scales from my eyes for me to see the timing of this weekend was not all coincidence. To my wife's amazement—and to my own, to be honest—I was not angry.

Friday night of the weekend arrived, and I went to the service with eagerness I had not known before. During the service I heard things I had never heard before and was astonished to find them directly from the Bible. For the first time I saw the Bible as good for learning and not for proving. All those months I had been going to Trinity, I probably heard many of the same truths that were spoken that night, but I never heard them for the truth they were. It was as if I had a filter over my ears and mind, and God had been slowly changing the filter over all those months to allow more information to penetrate, until at that moment at that service I had almost no filter at all.

God wasn't finished yet. Still a small filter remained, and the next day it would be removed completely. It was during one of the many classroom sessions that God unleashed His truth on me. I hadn't even chosen to go to this particular session. I wanted to attend another that sounded more interesting, but strangely I ended up exactly where God wanted me. It wasn't even a profound statement that impacted me. Rather, it was simply a question that devastated the false foundation upon which I had built my life.

It was a small, innocuous question. The answer wasn't even important. It was the question that held the key. The man teaching

the session was a philosophical sort of person. As he raced through his topic on the nature of Christ, he off-handedly posed a question about Jesus. He asked, "Could Jesus as a man commit sin?"

Boom! Immediately my mind took off like a rocket-driven locomotive. I couldn't help myself. I tried to apply the brake, but someone else was driving this train. Quickly my mind found an answer:

Yes. Jesus had to be able to sin.

Why?

Because He came to conquer sin.

But why?

Because he had to show Satan and the heavens it was possible.

Why?

Because He had to prove to us that we could follow the law.

WHY?

And like a giant neon sign, The Great Controversy blazed in my head! I don't remember anything else that was said to me for the remainder of the class. My wife said dinner was good, but I don't remember the food touching my lips or the conversations around me. I spent the rest of the evening in my head, opening every door and looking in every corner for what I thought was truth. I searched in vain for my foundation, but all I found was Ellen G. White. The one "thing" I knew I did not believe as an Adventist, the one influence I worked so hard to eliminate from my theology, was the one thing upon which I had unknowingly built my theological house. As strong as my foundation appeared from a distance, the stones in it were merely sandstone, easily washed away during the rains. I am so glad it was God's holy rain that came down upon my foundation that day.

I am now left to build my foundation again, but God has not left me to do it alone. He has given me Jesus. I can now use solid rock to create a firm footing for my theology. In the weeks since that day I have been poring over the Bible, and I am seeing that Jesus did have an advantage I don't have. I'm beginning to see that I misunderstood the issue. Jesus wasn't sinless because He kept the law. He was sinless because He did not have a sinful nature. He was conceived by the Holy Spirit and was born spiritually alive. He was the only human ever born who did not have to be born again. He had no sin!

Now I attend church with a desire and passion to learn truth. I look forward to the weekend, wanting to have fellowship with my truth-filled brothers and sisters in Christ. Sunday afternoon lunch is an indescribable joy and a necessary recharge for my week. I read the Bible searching for answers, not to prove anything.

Most of all, my marriage is the way God intended, or at least it is on the right path. The rift is still present, but like a cut it will take time to heal. God now has us pulling in the same direction, and He is guiding our footsteps. I always knew God would bless my life and marriage, I just never thought I would be the one to change. †

Brian Cain is 27 years old and resides in Yucaipa, California, with his wife Sarah. He is a graduate of Walla Walla College with a degree in biological sciences. Currently he works in the administrative department of a skilled nursing facility and is working towards his M.B.A. at the University of Redlands.

To our unsuspecting partners...

Several years ago, we bought seven pairs of breeding parrots—Africa Grays, the kings of the talking birds. We fully expected them to provide some extra income for our retirement. Evidently the birds had other plans; after producing some babies, they stopped! We had no baby birds and no eggs for well over a year.

Finally, after a nice rain, the birds began to lay once more. We had eggs at last; by all rights these should within a month turn into baby birds. Out of four eggs, two hatched and one lived. Hugh, my beloved and long-sufferingly patient husband, out of some deep longing, one morning during our devotional told God that if these birds lived—if we had any birds in the future which we could sell—we would give a tenth to *Proclamation!* magazine. Let it be noted that this was entirely his idea—and a great one!

It turns out that God is interested in your endeavor, because the birds began to hatch—and live. We pull them from the nest (and away from their angry parents—wanna see the scars?) as soon as they hatch, and three birds were well and healthy. The last was so weak we doubted that he would live through the night. Hugh spent the entire night feeding him every two hours all night long. Maybe I should mention that we hand feed these babies, and that means for the first weeks of their lives, every two hours around the clock. This allows one of us to get some sleep early nights, and the other to sleep late in the morning. Against all odds, this tiny creature survived and, in fact, thrived. He tackled the feeding time as an endurance trial, lying on his back, kicking at the air, and screaming at the brutality of it all.

The first bird sold today. Friends simply came for dinner and fell in love with the bird. Who but God could orchestrate that?... It won't be a lordly sum, but you will get another [check] with each sale, and we still have three more birds and seven

eggs—which may or may not hatch—I choose not to wager against God.

I've never doubted God's leading but was truly astounded (oh lack of faith) by the way things have been working out. I might warn that it's not a good idea to make a deal with God unless you are completely ready to handle your part of the agreement.

You might say a small prayer of thankfulness, and that our bleary vision due to lack of sleep and our patience hold. We're now tied to home. We are unable to go anyplace together, at least anyplace where we might be gone for more than two hours—they're now on an every three-hour feeding schedule, but don't forget the eggs. Normally they wouldn't all hatch, but I'm not making any bets on these.

Thanks for your inspiration and your comfortable assurance,
VISALIA, CA

Experience the seven last plagues

I have read your magazine and feel sorrow for not only your rejection of the truth but also your attack on God's faithful remnant.

In the book of Revelation (after reading your information, Dale, I feel you no longer find it relevant) it repeats seven times a fate that states, "He who overcomes will have right to the tree of life and live forever in Heaven." I am sure you feel that means overcoming Adventism, but no, Dale, it means overcoming sin. Sin is defined in Scripture as "the transgression of God's law." And God's law is the Ten Commandments. Not nine, but ten.

Your rejection of the Fourth Commandment will put you in that group of people who will experience the seven last plagues. You will be in that group who will experience the second death. When the national Sunday law is passed—whose side of the great controversy will you and your followers be on? Those who keep the commandments of God and have the faith of Jesus, or those who follow the devised fables of men? There are only two sides, Dale, and I pray you will repent and follow Scripture.

Please remove my name from your mailing list. Do not send my household any more information from your organization, for as I see it, your organization is working for the Lord like the devil.
HUTCHINSON, MN

Offended

I am offended by your magazine. Please do not send me another issue. Your twisted stories do no good, only harm, and I am embarrassed that anyone seeing it in my mail may think I am as twisted as you are. Just in case you think I am an uneducated Adventist who has been duped as your magazine seems to think we all are, I have a masters in education and have worked for 25

years as a teacher of all grades, preschool to college. I teach Bible also, and I was once searching and have studied with the Baptists, First Christian, Nazarene, Assembly of God, Jehovah's Witness, Catholic priests, and my mother's original church the Methodists and the Dutch Reformed. If you don't think I see the truth when it is presented to me, you are wrong. The Ten Commandments including the Sabbath are still alive and needed as much today as when Christ Himself reaffirmed them. I DO NOT NEED your magazine. I think of it as propaganda. No thanks, been there done that. Do not answer this either. I study my Bible daily and I am not open for discussion with someone whose mind is set, but I will pray for you and your readers. Looking for the Lord's coming and hoping that you, too, will look for Him in truth.

HOLBROOK, AZ

Receiving a blessing

Thank you so much for your ministry. We receive such a blessing from your magazine. Please keep up the good work! The ones that we have asked to be put on the mailing list are receiving a blessing also. You are so appreciated!
WEST CARROLLTON, OH

Remembering why I left

Thank you for writing *Sabbath in Christ*, Dale. The Spirit spoke through your book and changed my entire way of thinking. I'm another damaged former Adventist; the books from your website have opened my eyes to the truth. Praise the Lord, I've finally found peace and many answers to many questions! It was Colleen and FormerAdventist.com forum that sent me your direction.

When I read your letters section I remember why I left the Adventist church. "By their fruits you shall know them" comes to mind. It is not the content of the emails but rather the spirit they are written in that is most revealing. All I see is hatred and anger. Well done for publishing all opinions, it takes courage and honesty. I know of another organization that would not be so forthcoming.
BORDON, UNITED KINGDOM

No outdoor toilet

I just wondered why you thought I'd want to get this paper that you're sending in the mail. I've gotten rid of my outdoor toilet, so I don't need paper like this.

VOICEMAIL MESSAGE

Editor's note: If you call to have your subscription cancelled, please leave your name and address. We occasionally receive calls and even email or letters asking to be removed from the mailing list, but the names and addresses are not included.

LIFE ASSURANCE MINISTRIES

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

Finished at the cross

Regarding the latest copy of *Proclamation!* (Jan, Feb. 2008) and the article "Doctrine Determined by Faulty Hermeneutics," I believe we can look at this from another perspective, and that is strictly from God's word. There are 13 references in the New Testament (NT) regarding Jesus and His place of residence after His ascension to heaven; they are: Mark 16:19; Luke 22:69; Acts 2:33; 5:31; 7:55, 56; Rom 8:34; Col. 3:1; Heb. 1:3, 13; 10:12; 12:2 and I Pet. 3:22.

Referencing the Bible texts above, I have two simple questions for my Adventist brothers and sisters that I would like to ask: if Ellen G. White was really God's messenger and was led by His Spirit, how could she be so incorrect on the Investigative Judgment topic? Would God have not shown her that she was promoting the wrong message regarding Christ's work in the heavenly Sanctuary? God and Christ finished the work of redemption at the cross, so there was no need to start it all over again (sanctuary services). The Epistle of Hebrews speaks specifically about where Christ is (the Holy of Holies) and the work He is currently performing on our behalf.

My prayer is that God will open the eyes of all those that are truly seeking Him so that they will see that "we are saved by grace through faith... not by works" Eph. 2:8, 9.

SOLS BERRY, IN

Additional information for you

Hello to you who search for faith and Christianity. I want to help you find what you are looking for in the Bible....

What is said in the Holy Bible in Genesis is that "he rested on the seventh day from all the work which he had made. And God blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it: because that in it he had rested from all his work which God created and made." That means that the seventh day is special to God. Now, if something is special to someone and you ignore it, just maybe that being will ignore you, when it comes to take you to where he wants to take his "saved" beings from this earth.

So, what the Ten Commandments do to this "rest" is specifically outline some items that God does not want you to do on his special day. As Exodus 20:8 to 11 says, "Remember," and then God outlines what he says He wants you to remember.

Now, if your acknowledged "Higher Power" says to "remember" something and notes to you how and what to remember, I suggest it might be important to remember it. Yes, even managers and bosses on this earth will terminate you from their organizations if you don't recognize them and do what they tell you—specifically, if they say to you "remember," and you don't do it....

I would note here that if there is any hint of

my being left out of a life with my Savior Jesus Christ, I want you to know that I would not risk the loss of my future life over such a "little" thing as thinking that I am better than He who came to rescue me from a failing and condemned world or thinking that my pride in my understanding is better than the printed (or handwritten) words of Jesus Christ...

So yes, you are all "FREE" to do what you want on the weekly seventh day. But then, Jesus is also totally free NOT to accept you as one of His saved persons from this earth, in that you have NOT followed His commandments and the faith of Jesus.

May I suggest that you all reconsider what you believe and who the ultimate being is that determines your future life?

VIA EMAIL

Moses, resurrection, and the IJ

Concerning Colleen's editorial in your January/February issue. When Adventists and Ellen G. White teach that Moses has already been resurrected, they contradict their investigative judgment [IJ] doctrine. Why? Because they teach that Jesus did not even "open the books" until 1844, and only then did He begin [reviewing names starting] with Adam. Since Moses' life had not been "investigated" before 1844, then he could not have been resurrected. That would also apply to the Adventist viewpoint of Enoch and Elijah.

Russell Earl Kelly, author of *Exposing Seventh-day Adventism*

Rest

We enjoy the Sabbath rest, thanking God for the salvation he has freely given us. Just because something God made (i.e. the Sabbath) has often been misused, does not make it bad or wrong.

If, as you say: "This removal of the law—the entire Mosaic law including the Decalogue—literally occurred..." then to be consistent you should ignore the other nine commandments as well, not just the one you have a problem with.

We are sorry that you have chosen to be so negative about your previous experiences. God wants you to be free, but not to indulge the sinful nature, Gal. 5:13, "biting and devouring" others, v.15, or promoting "dissensions and factions" v.20.

We love you! We will pray for you! Please delete our name from your unsolicited mailing list. Sincerely your friend.

LOMA LINDA, CA

Keep doing what you do

Considering how much Dale's books and all the wonderful columns and articles in your magazine have helped me in my own journey, it seems only fair to offer my help. Please keep doing what you do. Thanks.

SPARTANBURG, SC

Soon we'll know...

It saddens me to see how Satan works in such deceitful ways and how many people will be and are being led astray by your ministry. In the Bible we are warned of false Christs and false prophets. Only by a thus saith the Lord can they be detected.

I pray that you will awaken to the error you are proclaiming. An attack on God's last day church is a direct attack on Him. Your publication is so filled with criticism. Where is God's love? It appears that you are very unhappy, and misery loves company. One day soon God's name will be vindicated, and we will know that His commandments are and always have been very vital to our Christian walk. They reflect the very character of God which we are to attain. Please remove my name from your publication.

GREEN RIVER, WY

No longer blind

Thank you for faithfully sending me *Proclamation!*. I look forward to each issue, read it from cover to cover, and deeply appreciate the spiritual insights contained in the articles as well as the over-all positive tone of the magazine.

All of the 29 years that I was an Adventist, I sincerely believed that Ellen White was an "inspired commentary" on the Bible and spent many hours studying the Bible through the eyes of Ellen White. When I began to seriously question Ellen White in 1980, the scales dropped from my eyes, and I began to study the Bible with the help of the Holy Spirit in a new and exciting way...

As I look back now I see how this dependence upon Ellen White to be the FINAL interpreter of what the Bible was actually saying was blinding me to be able to see what scripture was actually saying. As I'm reading the latest issue of *Proclamation!*, January-February, 2008, I can really see as never before how wrong it is to think that one person should dominate our understanding of Scripture and how much we need the great Teacher that Jesus promised to send in the Gospel of John. Thank God for that!! Some things you said in your article "Right Message, Wrong Messenger" really spoke to my heart and prompted this letter to thank you personally.

God bless you as you continue to help those who have questions about traditional SDA beliefs. I'm grateful for your ministry. If earlier this type of information had been made available to me, I would have left Adventism much sooner than I did, for I always had so many unanswered questions all of the years I was in it.

SPOKANE, WA

MAIL LETTERS TO THE EDITOR TO:
Editor, Proclamation! Magazine
P.O. Box 905
Redlands, CA 92373
 OR EMAIL EDITOR: proclamation@gmail.com

Special DVD Offer: The Privileged Planet



Martin Carey and his son

After Martin Carey's article "Are Other Worlds Watching Us?" was published in the January/February, 2008 edition of *Proclamation!*,

a friend of Life Assurance Ministries contacted us. Martin's article had impacted him, and he offered to make full-length (approx. 60 minutes) copies of the DVD, *The Privileged Planet*, available free to donors of this ministry.

The Privileged Planet, subtitled "The Search for Purpose in the Universe," takes a deeper look at the question of intelligent design introduced in last issue's article. This brief review of the movie is on the sleeve of the DVD: "Many have claimed that Earth is an insignificant speck of dust, adrift in a vast cosmic sea. But astronomical evidence suggests otherwise. Only a precise set of factors makes Earth suitable for complex life. Astonishingly, those same factors provide the best conditions for scientific discovery. *The Privileged Planet* explores this eerie correlation between life and discovery, and considers whether the universe is designed for a purpose."

To receive your own copy of *The Privileged Planet*, send a suggested donation of \$30 or more to Life Assurance Ministries within 30 days of your receipt of this magazine and ask for this special offer. Send your gift to Life Assurance Ministries, PO Box 905, Redlands, CA, 92373, or use the envelope included in this magazine. Credit card donations are accepted online at LifeAssuranceMinistries.com or by calling (800) 355-7073.

Thank you to all the supporters of this work. "We fight not against flesh and blood..."

ILLUSTRAMEDIA PRESENTS

The PRIVILEGED PLANET

THE SEARCH FOR
PURPOSE IN THE UNIVERSE



To receive your own copy of *The Privileged Planet*, send a suggested donation of \$30 or more to Life Assurance Ministries within 30 days of your receipt of this magazine and ask for this special offer. You will receive a DVD produced for ministry use and which is not for resale.

LIFE+ASSURANCE
MINISTRIES

As a new Christ-follower, Easter has become my favorite holiday. Easter is the day on which we celebrate the risen Savior; it is a beautiful conclusion to the redemption story. Because Jesus died, I could die to my flesh. And because He was raised, I could be made spiritually alive. Forgiveness, grace, and mercy are present at the cross, but it is at the empty tomb where victory over death is sealed. Hallelujah!

If this were all there is to the resurrection experience, it would certainly be more than enough. But there is a mystery to the fullness of this miracle that continues to overwhelm me. This same

tremendous resurrection power that raised Jesus from the dead and brought me from death to life has also been a continuing source of quiet healing for my soul. Not only does God resurrect the physically and spiritually dead, but He also resurrects the emotionally dead.

I spent a majority of my life trying to cover up my "dry bones." I camouflaged my emptiness and shame with a hyper-vigilant approach to life and spirituality. In

My life was RESURRECTED!

GRACE CARLSON

©ISTOCKPHOTO.COM/JILL FROMER

order to feel alive, I began to focus on my good accomplishments, all the while displaying an artificial cheery disposition. But in spite of my efforts, my failures continued to outnumber my successes. And with each disappointment, the persistent painful ache in my soul intensified. Consistently overcome with discouragement, I often found myself wondering, "When does it end? When do I get to let my guard down? When can I stop pretending everything is alright?" As the years progressed, my heart began to go numb, and somewhere along the way, the pain stopped.

But God being a God of truth, "resurrected" me out of denial and

right into reality. He began to bring situations into my life that exposed the deep emotions that I had so carefully sealed off. The stones that once guarded my heart began to roll back. And as I let go of the need to manage myself, I began to realize that my true identity is only found in Him. Regardless of what I do or how I feel, I am forever His daughter. I know He holds me securely in His hands, and every part of me is safe in His Presence, including my deepest pain. God's healing touch has brought new life to my heart.

My spirit has been awakened in every way possible through His love and compassion. And by His resurrection power, He continues to transform me into the person He desires me to be. I was a walking dead woman, and He brought me to life. Once dead, now I live. I am a resurrected miracle! I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me (Galatians 2:20, NIV). †

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