

**WHY SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTISM IS NOT EVANGELICAL • PART 2**

LifeAssuranceMinistries.org

# Proclamation!

**FOR FORMER ADVENTISTS  
INQUIRING ADVENTISTS  
SABBATARIANS  
CONCERNED CHRISTIANS**

OCTOBER–DECEMBER 2010  
VOLUME 11, ISSUE 4



**I THOUGHT I KNEW JESUS**

**Living life together**

**LOST BUT FOUND BY JESUS**

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## **THE UNDIVIDED LAW**

**The law of Moses and the law of God are one**



COLLEEN TINKER

## Christmas brings us the cross

It was Christmas time, 1994. Our neighbors with whom we were meeting weekly and studying the New Testament invited us to see their nephew star in a Christmas musical at the Friends Church in Yorba Linda, California. Feeling a new freedom to enjoy a program at a “Sunday church”, we enjoyed the warmth of the people and the palpable atmosphere of worship in the performance...until the musical reached its culmination.

I clearly remember my annoyance and even resentment as I watched the lovely Christmas story move into a depiction of the crucifixion and then the resurrection.

“No!” I wanted to call out. “This is Christmas, not Easter! Don’t ruin the loveliness of the nativity with the messiness of the cross!”

I’m not sure when it happened—I only know that just a few

years later, I could no longer separate the cross from the infant Lord Jesus. Without the cross, Christmas is meaningless, and the sentiment of Christmas carols and nativity scenes is merely a charade.

The faith once for all given to the saints is the truth that Almighty God the Son took a human body. He was born to a virgin; He lived an unremarkable life—until His last 3 1/2 years when He demonstrated systematically that He was the promised Messiah. He possessed every attribute of God, yet He subjected Himself to physical suffering, submitting to His Father as He did so.

The Lord Jesus did not demonstrate how we can resist sin. Rather, He became our sin so we might become the righteousness of God in Him (2 Cor. 5:21). He propitiated God’s wrath toward sin by being the perfect Sacrifice demanded as the only acceptable atonement (Rom. 3:24-26).

The Lord Jesus came to break the power of sin and to destroy death. He did not set aside His “God-power” to show us how to keep God’s law as a human with a fallen nature. No! He was eternal, almighty God the whole time He was on earth, just as He was a sinless, born-spiritually-alive human the whole time—and just as He still is.

Baby Jesus is not a sympathetic figure who had “sinful flesh” just like us. The Lord Jesus is our eternal God who literally came and lived with us in a physical body. He died the death only a

human could die and defeated our death—something only God can do.

Moreover, the faith once delivered to the saints declares that the Lord Jesus is all we need. We don’t accept Jesus and then look for “something more”. Contending for the faith means not being distracted by holy days, special food, special power, special knowledge, or theological formulas.

We contend by submitting to the Lord Jesus and His revelation of Himself in His word, allowing His Spirit to make His word alive in us, filling us with “all joy and peace in believing” so we “will abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit” (Rom. 15:13). We surrender to Him during temptation; we ask Him to teach us truth and root us in reality. We seek Him when we hurt; we submit to His healing when we struggle. We offer ourselves as living sacrifices so we can carry His glory into the world.

There is only one gospel: Jesus Christ died for our sins according to Scripture; He was buried, and He rose to life on the third day according to Scripture (1 Cor. 15:3-4). This is the faith for which we contend.

The Lord Jesus is God of the manger and God of the cross, and because of Him—only because of Him—we can cross from death to life (Jn. 5:24).

This Christmas we offer you “Contending for the Faith” condensed from our pastor Gary Inrig’s three-part sermon series on the book of Jude. Part two of Dr. Louis Talbot’s article on why Adventists are not evangelical applies the once-for-all faith as the standard for evaluating Adventism, and Dale Ratzlaff and Verle Streifling show that there is only one law, thus negating the addition of “holy days” to the once-for-all faith. Ross Cooper shares his story of being found by the Lord Jesus; Carolyn Macomber tells how she realized her “Adventist Jesus” was not the Jesus of the Bible, and Chris Lee challenges us to learn to live in fellowship.

We pray that this Christmas the manger and the cross will be inseparable as you worship the Lord Jesus—the baby whose sacrifice restored life to the human race. †

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## Proclamation!

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## Should Christians really participate in Christmas celebrations?

**Q: Was Christ really born on December 25, and if not, should Christians really participate in Christmas celebrations?**

**A:** My memory of Christmas decorations when I was a child is that about 50% were religious and 50% secular. Now, at least in my neighborhood, manger scenes are about as scarce as was a room at the inn for Joseph and Mary. “Happy holidays” is now the politically correct greeting. “Christmas trees” have magically been transformed into “holiday trees”.

These questions and transformations lead us to the more important, underlying issues. What is the message of Christ’s birth, and what emphasis should it have in our lives and churches?

Both Matthew and Luke narrate events surrounding the birth of Christ. However, neither Mark nor John even mention it. One would think that Mark, who most believe was a disciple of Peter, would include it in his Gospel, but he does not. Neither does John, Jesus’ closest disciple, narrate the nativity. Why?

Matthew had a theological reason to record events surrounding Christ’s birth. Writing to the Jews, Matthew shows that Christ is the second, perfect Israel, and thus, after recording the events of Jesus’ birth and earliest life, Matthew says, “...that what was spoken by the Lord through the prophet might be fulfilled, saying, ‘Out of Egypt did I call My Son’” (Mat. 2:15).

Luke, too, had a reason to record these events. Luke, the only gentile New Testament author, wrote two well-researched history books: his gospel which recorded the Christ event, and the book of Acts which recounted the development of the Apostolic Church.

From what Matthew and Luke wrote about the birth of Christ we know:

**Like the multiple, repeating signs along an interstate freeway, behind the events in the life of Christ were posted signs, “Cross Ahead”. The purpose of His birth was His death.**

- Mary was to name her son “Jesus, for it is He who will save His people from their sins.” (Mt. 1:21).

- Jesus was conceived by the Holy Spirit and was also named Immanuel which means “God with us.” (Mt. 1:23).

- The angels said to the shepherds, “Do not be afraid; for behold, I bring you good news of a great joy which shall be for all the people; for today in the city of David there has been born for you a Savior, who is Christ the Lord” (Lk. 2:10-11).

- Simon said of baby Jesus, “Behold, this Child is appointed for the fall and rise of many in Israel, and for a sign to be opposed—and a sword will pierce even your own soul—to the end that thoughts from many hearts may be revealed” (Lk. 2:34, 35).

Matthew and Luke foreshadowed the purpose of Jesus’ birth. Although Mark and John don’t mention the nativity, all four of these writers emphasize the culmination of Jesus’ life: Passion Week, the cross, and the resurrection. About half of John’s gospel deals with Jesus’ last week. In John 12:27 we read, “Now My soul has become troubled; and what shall I say, ‘Father, save Me from this hour’? But for this purpose I came to this hour.” Like the multiple, repeating signs along an interstate freeway, behind the events in the life of Christ were posted signs, “Cross Ahead”. The purpose of His birth was His death.

Even though we may not know the day of Christ’s birth, and although the political correctness of our secular society promotes the use of “Happy Holidays”, may we, like Paul, take every advantage when Christ is mentioned to tell the rest of the real story. Let us tell the good news of the gospel.

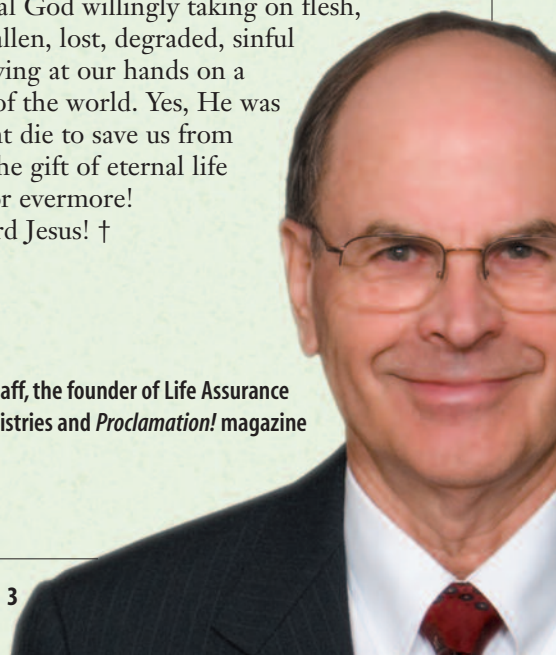
We should not celebrate the birth of Christ as an isolated event, as just another “Happy birthday, Jesus”. Rather we should understand the birth of Christ as the miracle of “God with us”—The Eternal God willingly taking on flesh, living with us poor, fallen, lost, degraded, sinful human beings, and dying at our hands on a cruel cross as Savior of the world. Yes, He was born so that He might die to save us from our sins and give us the gift of eternal life with Him now and for evermore!

Even so, come Lord Jesus! †



Dale and Carolyn Ratzlaff have authored five books concerning Adventism: *Sabbath in Christ*—a volume that explains new covenant Sabbath rest, *Cultic Doctrine of Seventh-day Adventism*—explores the unique doctrine of a pre-advent judgment that decides eternal destinies, *Truth About Adventist “Truth”*—a little book that’s perfect to give to Christians that need to understand Adventism, *Truth Led Me Out*—in which Dale Ratzlaff tells his own story of following Jesus, no matter the cost, and *My Cup Overflows*—Carolyn’s autobiography. Each of these books is available at [www.LifeAssuranceMinistries.com](http://www.LifeAssuranceMinistries.com) or by phoning 800-355-7073.

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





# Lost but

**M**y journey began in 1991 when I was lost and I didn't even realize it. I was a third generation Adventist pastor's kid. In case you've ever wondered, being a pastor's kid was truly a whole other level of stress; I had to be perfect even when I was not perfect. I had to dress up and put on a happy exterior even if there were troubles shaking the family. I always had to be cheerful even when I felt cold, lonely, and lost inside.

And then there were the doubts, the questions—the pricking of the Holy Spirit that things were wrong. How could I be having these doubts about what I was supposed to believe? There was a constant fear that I would forget to remember a sin that needed confessing, and with just a single one of those unforgiven sins—I would be straight out of luck. I suppose, to look on the bright side, I was certain as an Adventist that if I went to hell I'd be annihilated, so if I messed up at least I wouldn't really pay for it in any lasting way.

I had been baptized into “the church” in 1990. I was practically still wet when my questioning began, for goodness sake—but if I was baptized, I was saved wasn't I? Why then did I have this perpetual doubt? Why was the Word quietly calling me, and why was I afraid to pick it up and open it? Was I really still lost? More frightening still—if I was lost, did that mean Adventism did not have the truth?

My mom would always tell me to study the Bible for myself. Looking back I can only imagine that the reason she said that was as a matter of duty. Since we had “the truth”, she probably figured I would never get around to reading my Bible without prodding. And to be entirely honest, I did not really want to get into reading my Bible for reasons other than prognostication; I was afraid to read because of the possibility that my study could lead to a different truth. If such study did lead to a different truth, what would I do with that? I was afraid that if such a discovery happened, I would have to make an enormous decision.

Let's just put it this way: I was sick to my stomach even thinking about how I might tell my father that he'd been wrong about everything that he'd taught me religiously. On top of that possibility, the rest of my family seemed to be

## ROSS COOPER

LEFT: Ross Cooper doing what he enjoys best—witnessing on the streets where he formerly lived as a homeless person.

# t found by Jesus

quite happy and content; a change in my beliefs would lead to unforeseen consequences, none of them good.

## We Now Interrupt Your Message...

There was just one problem, The Holy Spirit was leading me to study the Bible, and you don't say no to God. So, taking a deep breath, I took my first of many longer and more in depth swims in the Word of God, and I realized something right as I dived in: if I actually read entire chapters, then sections, and on top of that—whole books, things made a lot more sense. Amazingly, I had found something called *context*. Verses that I had read before I was now finding in context, and they were consistently disproving things that I thought I knew for certain!

On Sabbath I often ran the sound system for church, and as my studies in the Bible got more and more complete and intense, I often found myself in silent disagreement with the pastor—even if he was my dad. On such occasions I would imagine myself muting his microphone whenever he said something I no longer believed to be the truth. Needless to say, that would have truly annoyed the other congregants who were there to hear the entire sermon, but in my fantasy, because of my actions they were getting the truth. Of course, I never acted out these daydreams because it's not my job to reveal the truth. That job belongs to the Holy Spirit, and it's something that the Holy Spirit is simply brilliant at doing.

During this time an online friend from Oregon was helping me in the studies of my new beliefs. She was fantastic; she was so kind, patient, and loving—and, just like the Holy Spirit—she worked slowly. It was quite amazing; both the Holy Spirit and my friend Inez would lead me into deeper study, and if I was ever confused, they would approach the subject from a different angle or answer another question first to make the original one clearer. Weeks turned into months and months into years, and my relationships became more intimate—both my relationship with the Holy Spirit and the one with Inez. Eventually I got past my fears and was able to study with an ever-increasing eagerness and wonder at each new revelation. It was as if Jesus slowly lifted up that Old Testament veil until one day it was gone, and I could see things clearly for the first time.

After seriously studying the Bible—especially the New Testament—for 8 years, my feelings for the Bible were revolution-

ized, as was my belief system. The Bible clearly painted an entirely different story about salvation than did Adventism. There was a freedom, a celebration; it was as if I was coming up for long gasping breaths after swimming far too long underwater.

## A New Life

In 2003 two events ensured I would sever my links with Adventism. The first was an absurd piece of discrimination to my then-fiancée Inez at a certain venue within the local conference. The second event occurred in December of 2003: I was married to my love Inez, and we moved to Oregon.

Making that move was like getting in an emergency escape capsule and landing well clear of any known Adventist ties. Not that there weren't Adventist churches nearby, of course, but my new family was fully involved in the local Calvary Chapel. Going to Calvary Chapel was almost overwhelming. I felt like I was being drowned in Living Water twice a week, every week. I had gone from a church where I practically never felt the Spirit to one where I was finding myself drenched by a nearly unquenchable deluge!

On one night in June, 2004, with Inez at my side, I made the most difficult phone call I'd ever made. It was a phone call to my Dad in California to let him know I was getting re-baptized as a Christ-follower. What would my dad say? Could I even get the words out? To be honest, I don't remember much of the conversation, but I do remember the last line: "Please, Dad, don't disown me!"

There was a very long pause before my dad came back on the line and simply re-affirmed to me what he'd said to me a number of years before: "You go where the Holy Spirit tells you to go! I love you, Son, and I always will; thank you for letting me know."

I was baptized in June of 2004, worshiping on Sunday, enjoying freedom in Christ. Soon Inez and I had three children with one more that didn't live but went to be with Jesus and the other little boys and girls in Heaven. My life looked good on the outside, but I was beginning to realize that God makes us alive while we're still in our sin (Eph. 2:4-6), and then He asks us to live by the Spirit

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE

**Ross Cooper** was born a 3rd generation Seventh-day Adventist pastors kid. He moved from England to the U.S., then to Northern Ireland, and finally back to the U.S. It was after the family's final move that the Holy Spirit began to lead him out of Adventism through extensive Bible study over a period of many years. Born again and rebaptized into Christ who is his Sabbath Rest in 2004 while living in Eugene, Oregon, he now lives in Southern California and attends Trinity Church in Redlands, California, and is a full-time Christ-follower. You can visit his blogs online at: <http://the-biblerunner.wordpress.com> and <http://undercoveradventist.wordpress.com>.



and put to death the deeds of the flesh (Rom. 8:8-13). On the inside, I was still full of sin.

### **The God Who Heals**

That is what ruined my life; Satan still had a firm grip on my flesh that I thought I had broken. No longer being with my wife and children hurt then, and it hurts even more now. However, the Lord wasn't finished with me, and I certainly wasn't finished with Him.

In 2009 I hitchhiked to a small town just north of Sacramento, California, and it was there during five days that God changed my life forever. While I was at the local Calvary Chapel for services on Sunday, someone was breaking into the halfway house where I was staying. They stole my laptop, and it was then I realized that my laptop had been my life. The folks at the halfway house couldn't believe I wasn't cursing God and reacting as most of them would. Instead I simply told them, "God stole my laptop so He'd have my attention."

Later, as I lived on the streets of Redlands, California, I became even more devoted to God. My nightly prayer was a simple testament to my faith: "Lord, it's time for me to go to sleep. If the next thing I see is your face, I know that you've called me home. And if the next thing I see is the sunrise, you still have things for me to do for you. Amen."

In June, 2010, I repented of that sin that had torn my marriage apart, and I felt His Spirit fill me as never before. This experience

proves the simple fact that living in Christ is always a work in progress. Christianity itself is about looking always to Christ and the heavenly perfection He promises through the sealing and regenerative power of the Holy Spirit to bring us to completion at the end. The law cannot save us; it only condemns and points us to our Savior. It is through His death and resurrection that we are born a new creation. It is through His sacrifice that we enter into the promised rest, and our sins are cast away as far as the east is from the west.

### **Where I Stand**

All I know right now is that my life is Christ's, and He works through me. He provides for me in miraculous ways, and I've run out of ways to thank Him. Over the last several months God has worked further revolution in my life. I am now a member at Trinity Church in Redlands, California, a fantastic truth-focused, gospel-centered, and Bible-believing church—a further clarification that there is abundant life outside of Adventism. I finally feel that I am now at home, and I am confident of my faith and my security in Christ. Now I can approach the very throne of God, as I am seen as sinless through the covering of His Son. Perhaps the greatest thing about my standing in Christ is that I can now, thanks to Him, start my prayers by saying, "Daddy, Father..."

I was lost, but He has found me. †

## **LETTER TO THE EDITOR:**

### **Vatican spokesperson elected president?**

This might as well have been the headline on the election of Ted Wilson as the new Seventh-day Adventist president. Roman Catholic theology, unchanged since promulgated at the Council of Trent (1547), could not have been stated better than Ted Wilson's words at his inaugural sermon which I quote below.

#### **Ted Wilson's Adventist theology (2010)**

"Grace is the promise of God's pardon and the provision of God's power – justification and sanctification. You cannot separate what Christ does FOR you (justifying you daily as if you had not sinned) from what He does IN you (sanctifying you daily as you submit to Him and allow the power of the Holy Spirit to change your life to become more and more like Jesus.) This is the everlasting Gospel spoken about in the first angel's message. It is righteousness by faith."

#### **Roman Catholic Council of Trent (1547)**

"Justification... is not only a remission of sins but also the sanctification and renewal of the inward man through the voluntary reception of the grace and gifts whereby an unjust man becomes just and from being an enemy becomes a friend, that he may be an heir according to hope of life everlasting... For though no one can be just except he to whom the merits of the passion of our Lord Jesus Christ are communicated, yet this takes place in that justification of the sinner, when by the merit of the most holy passion, the charity of God is poured forth by the Holy Ghost in the hearts of those who are justified and inheres in them; whence man through Jesus Christ, in whom he is ingrafted, receives in that justification, together with the remission of sins, all these infused at the same

time, namely, faith, hope and charity. For faith, unless hope and charity be added to it, neither unites man perfectly with Christ nor makes him a living member of His body."

What is even more shocking is that the same Council of Trent issued "anathemas" or curses of eternal death and perdition to those who dared believe differently, i.e. the emerging Protestant movement led by Luther.

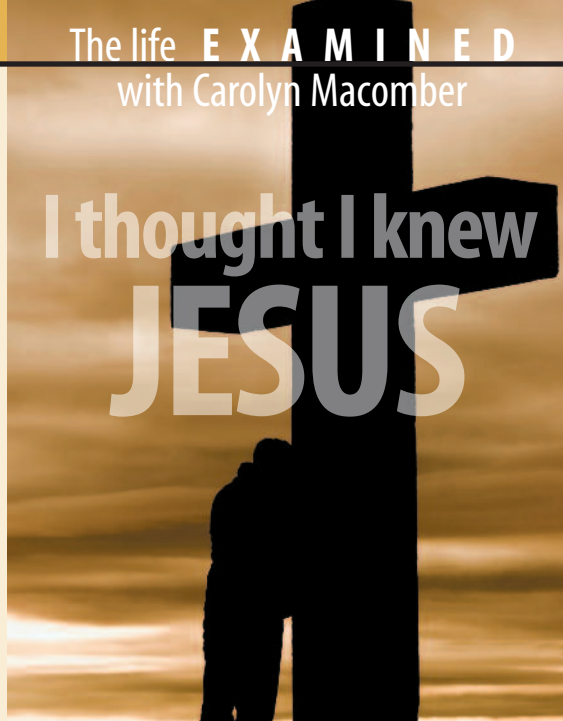
#### **Canon 11**

"If anyone says that men are justified either by the sole imputation of the justice of Christ or by the sole remission of sins, to the exclusion of the grace and the charity which is poured forth in their hearts by the Holy Ghost, and remains in them, or also that the grace by which we are justified is only the good will of God, let him be anathema."

Seventh-day Adventism, while denouncing Roman Catholicism as "the beast of Revelation", is one of the most ardent defenders of Roman Catholic theology. Further, while Seventh-day Adventism decries the union of Protestantism with Roman Catholicism, it speaks that voice from deep within the bosom of Roman Catholic doctrine and theology. That false theology will continue to be propagated world wide under the ministry of Ted Wilson and his myriad of false prophets, repeating the anathemas of the Council of Trent against those of us who by the grace of God have been called out of Adventism and led to salvation by the imputed and justifying righteousness of Christ, received by faith alone.

—*Haroldo S. Camacho, former Adventist pastor, evangelist, and church leader, now a sinner saved by Christ alone, faith alone, grace alone.*

# I thought I knew JESUS



© ISTOCKPHOTO.COM/JOSELUISGUTIERREZ

All my life I had referred to Jesus as the Son of God, and many times I ended my prayers, “in Jesus’ Name”. I would talk with him often and thought, “If I could only be like Jesus”. He was my friend. It’s all about having a relationship with Jesus, I had been told. Well, I had one—or so I thought.

Suddenly, two years ago I had a complete paradigm shift in my understanding of salvation. I began to understand I added nothing to my salvation by good deeds, and I didn’t lose my salvation by my bad deeds (Eph. 2:1-8). Salvation was all about Jesus paying the price of my sin and dying in my place. I confessed my pride and independence from God, and it was then that I received Christ for the first time. My real relationship with Jesus began July 15, 2008.

I searched the Scriptures, and it seemed I was reading them for the first time. The Holy Spirit through the Word began to reveal to me the false messiah (Matt. 24:23, 24, 26; 1 Jn. 2:22; 1 Jn. 4:1-3) I had understood all my life.

I remember clearly one day sitting at my computer reading a dialogue on the former Adventist forum. The thread discussed who Jesus is. I was confused by what I read and thought, “I’m not accepting anyone else’s ideas.” I began to look up scriptural texts that were posted, reading not only the specific verses but the context before and after them. As I wrestled with the texts, it suddenly dawned on me with the impact of a blow: I had understood Jesus completely wrong as an Adventist. I broke down in front of the computer screen and wept. I remember saying over and over, “Oh God, oh, God, forgive me!”

Jesus was not Who I thought He had been. He did not give up His “God-ness” while on earth. He was not “elevated” to the position of Son of God or taken into the counsel of God

the Father. Jesus was fully God! He always had been and always will be God. Jesus humbled Himself and “took on” the “form” of man (Phil. 2:1-10). Paul in Philippians writes Jesus was equal with God, and took on the “form/likeness” of man by being born in the “form” of man though He had been in the “form” of God. Jesus, Who was/is Spirit (Jn. 4:24), encased Himself in flesh and bones and ligaments to pay the price for my independence from God.

Then, as I read further in Scripture, I realized that God the Father was “in” Christ reconciling the world (2 Cor. 5:18-21). God the Father was active in my redemption—He was not a bystander with arms crossed as His Son died for me. The whole Trinity was at work in my salvation (Heb. 9:14).

Christ did not claim to be less than God while He walked on earth. Christ claimed to be the Great “I AM” of the Old Testament, and that is why the Jews were going to stone Him (Jn. 8:58—the whole chapter is powerful). Jesus demonstrated in many ways that He was one with the Father. Jesus was God on earth.

My relationship and understanding changed that day as I sat at the computer and wept. I realized God’s wrath against sin is just as much a part of God’s character as His love. God the Son died in my place. Jesus Christ, fully God, took the wrath that I deserved and paid the price for my sin.

I thought I knew Jesus—but I know a totally different Jesus now. It is a Jesus Who loves me enough to suffer His own wrath against sin.

Jesus has brought me from spiritual death to spiritual life (Jn. 5:24). Do you know Jesus—I mean know the Biblical Jesus? Is your “Jesus” defined by Ellen White? Or is your Jesus defined by the Word and revealed by the Holy Spirit? †

**As I wrestled with the texts, it suddenly dawned on me with the impact of a blow: I had understood Jesus completely wrong as an Adventist. I broke down in front of the computer screen and wept. I remember saying over and over, “Oh God, oh, God, forgive me!”**

**Carolyn Macomber** is a doctoral student at Andrews University. Discovering increasing inconsistencies between Adventism and the Bible, she withdrew her membership from the Seventh-day Adventist Church in 2009. She is a member of The Chapel Evangelical Free Church near Andrews University in St. Joseph, Michigan, is a children’s teaching leader for the St. Joseph Bible Study Fellowship, and is co-founder and leader of the Former Adventist Fellowship at The Chapel. She will share her discoveries in this column, and you can read her experiences of processing out of Adventism into the Christian community at her blog at [www.keriananderson.wordpress.com](http://www.keriananderson.wordpress.com). You can watch her testimony at <http://www.formeradventist.com/weekends/fafweekend2010.html>.



**Beloved, although I was very eager to write to you about our common salvation, I found it necessary to write appealing to you to contend for the faith that was once for all delivered to the saints. For certain people have crept in unnoticed who long ago were designated for this condemnation, ungodly people, who pervert the grace of our God into sensuality and deny our only Master and Lord, Jesus Christ. JUDE 1:3-4, ESV**



**GARY INRIG**

**Based on a three-part sermon series on the book of Jude, presented at Trinity Church in Redlands, California**



**T**hornton Wilder put these words in the mouth of one of his characters: “Living is struggle. I know that every good and excellent thing in the world stands moment by moment on the razor-edge of danger and must be fought for.” (*The Skin of Our Teeth*, 1942).

Wilder is right. If we take things for granted, we will eventually lose them. Among all the things for which we fight, however, nothing is more under attack than the gospel.

The book of Jude, one of the smallest books in the New Testament, carries a big warning that the truth of the gospel stands on the razor’s edge of danger. Jude summons us to fight for the gospel with both our lives and our words.

### **Jude reorients his identity around the risen Christ**

The core of this book is the challenge in verse 3 to “contend for the faith”. Jude introduces this challenge, however, in verses 1 and 2 where he explains the nature of this faith and reveals his own identity.

The author identifies himself as “Jude”. The New Testament records at least eight people with this name or one of its variants, but Jude prevents our speculation by saying he is “the brother of James.” Only one “James” was so prominent in the early church that he needed no other identification: James, the brother of Jesus (Gal. 1:19). Thus we know that Jude was the younger half-brother of the Lord Jesus listed in Mark 6:3 and Matthew 13:55, but he doesn’t describe himself as the “brother of Jesus”. Instead, he says he is the “slave of Jesus Christ.”

Calling himself Jesus’ “slave” is much stronger than saying he’s Jesus’ “servant”. “Slave” says Jesus owns him—a remarkable statement of Jesus’ identity from a man who could claim kinship but instead sees himself as His slave. At the same time, a slave’s importance was directly tied to the status of his master. Thus, as Jesus’ slave, Jude was giving us a claim of authority.

Jude had not always believed in Jesus. John 7:5 says he and the rest of Jesus’ brothers did not believe in Him during His ministry, yet after the resurrection Jude had bowed in faith and trust at the foot of his half-brother, and now he demonstrates that he lives completely at His disposal. Jude gives us a wonderful insight into how we are to view the Lord Jesus and, as a result, how we are to view ourselves. Jude’s understanding of who Jesus is completely changed his view of himself.

### **Jude calls us to understand our need to contend for the gospel**

Jude does not tell us who the recipients of his letter were or where they lived, but his tone is urgent. The church is in a far more precarious situation than it recognizes, and he is concerned that Christians are “asleep at the wheel” while the truth is being stolen from them. This situation has happened repeatedly through

the centuries. We can look today at institutions and denominations which once stood clearly for the gospel, but now they stand against it.

Jude’s conviction reveals that his readers must not only believe and value the gospel; they must contend for it. Before they contend for the faith, however, Jude wants them to remember the wonder of their common salvation. Verses one and two say: “To those who are the called, beloved in God the Father, and kept for Jesus Christ: May mercy and peace and love be multiplied to you.”

### **Christ-followers understand God’s provisions in the gospel**

As Christ-followers, we are called by God to salvation. The term “called” is one of the most frequent one-word descriptions of a Christian in the New Testament, and it explains why we are Christians. Further, the New Testament speaks of God’s call in two ways; there is a general call of the gospel for people to come to Christ, and there is a special and powerful call of God by the Holy Spirit that summons people to new life.

For Christians, the call of God is the inward, effectual, irresistible call of God the Holy Spirit that awakens faith in us and brings us to Christ. He convicts us of sin, takes away the veil that blinds us to Christ, and stirs up faith in our hearts (Rom. 8:28-30; 2 Tim. 1:9).

Moreover, when we are accepted in Christ, we are adopted into the Father’s family and experience the new, constant privilege of being those He loves. This love is not the general love of God that He has for the world, but the special, mysterious, grace-based love of God that he has for those who belong to His Son (1 Jn. 3:1; Deut. 7:7-8; 10:14-15; Jer. 31:3; Rom. 5:6-8; 8:38-39).

Finally, verse three tells us that not only are we called and loved by God the Father, but we are kept by God for the Lord Jesus. The Greek expression translated “kept” in verse one is a perfect tense, indicating that this is an ongoing status. This reality of God’s keeping us is the fulfillment of the Lord’s prayer for His people and of God’s promise. In His prayer Jesus said,

“I am no longer in the world, but they are in the world, and I am coming to you. Holy Father, keep them in your name, which you have given me, that they may be one, even as we are one. While I was with them, I kept them in your name, which you have given me. I have guarded them, and not one of them has been lost except the son of destruction, that the Scripture might be fulfilled...I do not ask that you take them out of the world, but that you keep them from the evil one (Jn. 17:11-15).

In this passage the word “kept” describes the action of a security detail which is guarding and protecting those the Father has given Him. Jesus asks His Father to guard His disciples for Him in His absence, and this protection keeps them safely in relationship with Him.



**...the contending we do is not only against those outside; this fight for the faith is also against those who claim to be inside the church. Furthermore, contending for the faith is not just verbal opposition but lifestyle integrity.**

Jude emphasized this point in verse 24: “Now to him who is able to keep you from stumbling and to present you blameless before the presence of his glory with great joy.”

We are kept by God for Jesus Christ, and one day we will be presented to the Lord Jesus as His bride with great joy. Hear the word of God saying to you, “You are called, loved, and kept.” We may be under attack, but we are also under protection—called, loved, and kept by God Himself. This is the promise of the gospel.

Jude follows this declaration of our status in Christ with this blessing in verse 2: “May mercy and peace and love be multiplied to you.” As His beloved called ones, kept for Jesus Christ and empowered by the Holy Spirit, we have a responsibility to contend for our great entrustment: the faith delivered to us once for all.

### **Embrace responsibility**

“The faith once for all delivered to the saints” (v. 3) is a fixed and final faith, a revealed body of truth from God. The apostles did not alter it, and it must not be altered by human traditions or diminished by unbelief and cultural accommodation. Similarly, it must not be subverted by immoral living. It cannot be adjusted so it becomes culturally more relevant to us.

It will not be added to. There are no new revelations of “present truth” or golden plates or “heavenly visions” bringing new light. The gospel is not a steadily accumulating, evolving human achievement. Rather, it is given by God Himself, and it is complete.

Finally, this faith is a divine entrustment. It doesn’t belong to an elite few but is the property and responsibility of all of God’s people. We each must guard the gospel.

The word “contend” is a term that comes primarily from the Greek games and primarily connotes the kind of intense energy expended in wrestling.

Paul uses a similar word in Philippians 1:27 where he says to strive “together for the faith of the gospel,” and again in 1 Timothy 6:12 where he admonishes his protégé to “fight the good fight of faith.”

In other words, we are not just to resist an attack on our faith but to fight for it. This command does not allow us to paper over all differences and accept everyone’s opinion as equally valid.

At the same time, the contending we do is not only against those outside; this fight for the faith is also against those who claim to be inside the church. Furthermore, contending for the faith is not just verbal opposition but lifestyle integrity.

Jude is saying that if you’ve understood the gospel, you are to contend for this entrustment. Don’t let the church you attend get off base. Don’t let culture and lifestyle dilute the faith.

You are called by God, loved by the Father, and kept for Jesus Christ. When those things seep into your soul, you know the One whose gospel you must defend.

### **Spiritual emergency**

In verse 4 Jude moves from a call to contend for the faith into exposing a spiritual emergency: the once-for-all faith is being attacked. The faith for which we must contend is an irreducible core of truth that centers on the person and work of the Lord Jesus. The Christian gospel is not a do-it-yourself “salad bar” spirituality where we choose what we like and discard what we dislike.

Rather, believers are called to contend constantly for this faith with both their words and their lives as a matter of loyalty to Christ.

Contending for the faith is challenging in a culture that exalts relativism, pluralism, diversity, and tolerance but rejects the concept of “fixed truth”. Even some Christians will say, “What you do is what matters, not what you believe.” Jude would directly oppose that notion: “this is the faith once for all delivered to the saints!” What you believe directly affects what you do.

Christians may cry, “Deeds over doctrine! Doctrine divides!” But this idea is not biblical.

Contending, however, does not mean “contentious”. It may not be wrong to be angry about the presence of false teachers, but it is always wrong to be unloving and unrighteous in our zeal for the truth. Nevertheless, we must contend, but in a way that honors the Lord Jesus whom we represent.

Verse 4 explains why we contend: “godless” persons have crept into the church unnoticed. This word means they have no reverence for God. They are religious; they use religious words and speak of God, yet they are not inflamed with passion for His glory.

Additionally, they are devious and have snuck into the church under false pretenses. They are professing Christians who are pursuing a secret agenda. They pervert grace to justify sexual immorality, claiming grace gives them the freedom to live as they please. For the specific false teachers Jude describes, self-indulgent sexuality is a major part of their agenda (note verses 7, 16, 18).

These false teachers also deny the Lord Jesus. Almost never is there a denial of Christian behavior without a corresponding denial of Christian theology. In the context of Jude, however, the false teachers’ denial was primarily behavioral. Similarly, in the evangelical community today, people are not overtly speaking incorrect theology, but they are justifying sinful lifestyles and thereby denying their Lord.

While heresies come in many different forms, false teaching is false teaching. Jude’s emphasis is strongly on the inevitable judgment of the false teachers at the hands of God.

### **A case study**

Jude’s audience knew both the Old Testament and the traditions that had developed related to many of the episodes. In verses 5–16 he refers to eight different events in “shorthand”, expecting his readers to understand his references. First, the references to biblical episodes occur in verses 5–7, 9, 11, 14–15, and 17–18. Then Jude compares the false teachers to the people and creatures in the biblical stories who opposed the will of God. These comparisons are noted by the words “these people”, and they occur in verses 8, 10, 12, 16, and 19. Jude uses these comparisons to describe the spiritual danger facing his readers.

### **Cycle one: false teachers reject God-given moral boundaries (verses 5–8)**

Cycle one alludes to three different Old Testament stories. First, the Exodus generation, set free by God through miraculous events, refused to trust God to lead them into Canaan. Why? Ten out of twelve leaders sent to spy out the land reported that conquest was unthinkable because the inhabitants were so big. God judged this generation for their unbelief. Ten unbelieving leaders



**...they are devious and have snuck into the church under false pretenses. They are professing Christians who are pursuing a secret agenda. They pervert grace to justify sexual immorality, claiming grace gives them the freedom to live as they please.**

led an entire nation into unbelief and divine judgment, and that entire generation, with the exception of Caleb and Joshua, the two faithful spies, died in the wilderness.

Verse 6 refers to the story in Genesis 6 where apostate angels rebelled against God's order, engaged in immorality with women, and have come under judgment. God has kept those angels in "eternal bonds under darkness for the judgment of the great day."

Verse 7 refers to Sodom and Gomorrah, when the townspeople clamored for Lot to send his visitors out to them so they could engage in unlawful homosexual acts. Those people came under God's judgment and serve as an example of those who will undergo the punishment of eternal fire.

The false teachers are exposed in verse 8 as claiming to receive revelatory dreams. They claim to be spiritual authorities with present truth for the church, but they are indulging in immorality and are rejecting any authority above themselves, whether of the Lord or of angels. They are guilty of the same arrogance and immoral behavior as the ancient Israelites, as the apostate angels of Genesis 6, and as the inhabitants of Sodom and Gomorrah.

#### **Cycle two: false teachers disrespect divine authority (verses 9–10)**

This illustration is the story of the Archangel Michael and Satan disputing over the body of Moses. The story of Moses' death is recorded in Deuteronomy 34, but nothing is said about a dispute over his body. The Jews were fascinated with the story of Moses' death, and many traditions about it grew up in Jewish writings. Jude clearly believed one of these stories was true. We don't know where it originated, but Jude refers to it as truth. The essence of the story is that the Archangel Michael was commissioned to care for Moses' body, but Satan argued that because of Moses' sin, he had the proper claim to it. The central point of this account is that the Archangel Michael, an angel of the highest authority in heaven, did not assert his own authority and did not claim to have the right or authority to rebuke Satan. Instead, he deferred to the Lord.

Moreover, this account gives no hint that Moses was resurrected, nor is it possible that Michael the Archangel could be Jesus. Jesus had authority over Satan, rebuking him in His temptation in the wilderness and calling demons out of possessed victims. Furthermore, by His death on the cross He disarmed Satan (Col 2:15).

The false teachers are described in verse 10 as speaking with arrogance, claiming personal authority that only reveals their ignorance. This story of Michael deferring to the Lord instead of rebuking Satan should cause us to think twice before accepting a person's claim to have the authority to bind and rebuke the devil. It is the Lord Jesus who has the authority to disarm Satan.

#### **Cycle three: false teachers lead others into rebellion (verses 11–12)**

In this comparison Jude recalls Cain, Balaam, and Korah. Cain not only committed the first murder, but he led others away from the Lord as Genesis 4 makes clear. Balaam was a prophet for hire, and his story is told in Numbers 25. When the king of Moab hired Balaam to curse Israel, God stopped him. Balaam, though, suggested to the Moabite king that his men seduce the Israelite women and thus lead them astray. This straying would result in Israel's loss of God's blessing.

Korah was a leader in Israel who said he had as much right to enter God's presence as did Moses and Aaron whom he called self-appointed leaders. He entered the Most Holy place, and God caused the ground to swallow Korah and those who followed him.

All three of these people not only sinned but led others into sin, and in verse 12 Jude compares the false teachers with those rebellious leaders and labels them hidden reefs, clouds without rain, autumn trees without fruit, doubly dead, wandering stars for whom black darkness has been reserved.

#### **Cycle four: false teachers draw divine judgment (verses 14–16)**

In this cycle Jude refers to a source from the book of Enoch. No Jewish or Christian group considers this book to be inspired Scripture, but it was widely read in Jewish and early Christian circles and probably well-known by these false teachers. The prophecy Jude cites doesn't say anything that isn't found in many places in Scripture, and Jude considers this prophecy to be true, even if he doesn't view its source as inspired Scripture.

In this prophecy Enoch says God will come with thousands of angels to execute judgment and to convict all ungodly people of their ways and deeds and of all the ungodly things they have spoken against Him.

Jude makes the point that God will judge these false teachers when He returns. They are ungrateful and rebellious, self-indulgent, and manipulative.

#### **Cycle five: false teachers are scoffers, fulfilling prophecy (verses 17–19)**

Jude reminds his readers that Jesus' apostles warned that false teachers would emerge in the last days. These people would be "scoffers" who mock God and follow their own ungodly lusts. These false teachers are people who claim to be spiritual but in reality are divisive and unconverted. They do not have the Holy Spirit and do not know Jesus. They are deceivers and dangerous.



**Christians are not called to be “lone rangers”; rather, we are to be in fellowship with one another (Heb. 10:25). We contend for the faith by building up our own lives and each other on the truth and by means of the truth.**

### **The dynamics of false teaching**

We need to be aware of the danger of false teaching. Not all false teaching will follow the pattern outlined in Jude, but there will always be false teachers seeking to infiltrate and distort the truth of the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. False teaching is going on in our churches today.

There are some who add to the gospel. The book of Galatians was written to such a group: “It’s great to trust in Jesus, but you’ve also got to keep the Old Testament law, and be circumcised, and keep the Sabbath and the Old Testament food rules—and then we’ve got a few other suggestions for you...” They distort the gospel by addition.

In 1 John there were those distorting the gospel by subtraction, denying Jesus’ humanity, and there are others who deny His deity—or His death or His historic reality. There are leaders in mainline denominations who deny every distinctive point of faith including the reality of a personal God—yet they are allowed to retain their positions.

Others distort the gospel by adjusting it to the culture or morality of the times. Much of the discussion currently going on about issues such as homosexuality is this sort of adjustment to the gospel. We have to be aware of the danger: is what we embrace the faith once for all delivered to the saints?

We must also be willing to defend the gospel and to be faithful in our generation. We must ground our children in the fundamentals of the faith and prepare them for living under attack. This mandate requires not that we be well-versed in false things, but that we know, live, and declare the truth of the gospel.

Jude wants us to know another thing, also. No matter how successful the false teachers seem, God will deal with them. He dealt with Cain, with Korah, with Balaam, and with the apostate angels of Genesis 6. Jesus said, “I will build my church, and the gates of hell will not prevail against it” (Matt. 16:18).

### **Our goal is congruence with the faith for which we contend (verses 20-21).**

We do not contend for the faith simply by fighting what is false; we need to live for what is true. Jude describes this life with four commands. We are to build ourselves in the most holy faith, pray in the Holy Spirit, keep ourselves in the love of God, and wait for the mercy of the Lord Jesus that leads to eternal life.

Our first responsibility in resisting false teaching is to build ourselves up in the “most holy faith”. Jude isn’t talking about our personal trust in Christ in this passage but about “the faith”—the body of truth about Christ.

The word “build” in this passage is a construction term. It is deliberately plural, not singular, and it conveys the fact that we are

not just responsible for ourselves. Christians are not called to be “lone rangers”; rather, we are to be in fellowship with one another (Heb. 10:25). We contend for the faith by building up our own lives and each other on the truth and by means of the truth. It is both the foundation and the means of our growth.

### **Pray in the Spirit**

The false teachers, according to verse 19, do not have the Holy Spirit. They are not born again. When we place our faith in the Lord Jesus, however, the Holy Spirit indwells us and changes the way we think about God. By the Spirit we realize we are His adopted children. We have a new relationship with Him, and we are called to pray in the Spirit who indwells us.

Whatever you may think about praying in tongues and how that fits into the Christian life, that is not what Jude is talking about. The phrase “pray in the Spirit” occurs also in Ephesians 6:18 where Paul says, “With all prayer and petition pray at all times in the Spirit, and with this in view, be on the alert with all perseverance and petition for all the saints.”

Notice the word “all” in this text. Paul isn’t describing a special kind of prayer; rather, he is challenging us to pray in every situation with the Holy Spirit as our moving and guiding power—a prayer life God has made possible by putting His Spirit in us. Romans 8:26-27 describes this prayer further. Even when we don’t know what to pray, the Spirit intercedes for us “with groanings too deep for words”. Our prayers are not rote, formal words; rather, prayer is “family talk”. Even when we don’t know what to say, the Spirit will take our jumble of feelings and thoughts and present it to the Father as it ought to be given.

Praying in the Spirit is praying by depending upon the work of the Spirit who connects us to the Father. Samuel Zwemer said, “True prayer is God the Holy Spirit talking to God the Father in the name of God the Son, and the believer’s heart is the prayer room.”

We are to pray stimulated by, guided by, and empowered by the Spirit. This praying is essential in our being able to contend for the faith.

### **Keep yourself in the love of God**

At first Jude’s words in verse 21, “keep yourselves in the love of God,” may seem like a contradiction to verse 1 that says we are loved and kept by the Father for Jesus Christ. The command, however, doesn’t say, “Keep God loving you,” but “Keep yourselves in God’s love.” God’s love is the constant; we are to keep within it.

For example, you may tell a child who has been sick, “You can go outside and play, but keep yourself in the sunshine.”

“How can I keep the sun shining?”

“You can’t, but you can keep yourself in the sunshine.”

It is entirely possible to live in a spiritual “June gloom”.

There is a reciprocal effect of love. John 15:9-10 explains: “Just as the Father has loved Me, I have also loved you; abide in My love. If you keep My commandments [instructions and teachings], you will abide in My love; just as I have kept My Father’s commandments and abide in His love.”

Jesus is saying that God’s love is a fact, and we are to remain in it. This is family language. I love my children; in fact, there is nothing they can do to make me stop loving them. There are certain things they could do, however, to make it very hard for them to enjoy my love or for me to express my love. If children want to remain in my love in the place where it is not only present but also felt and enjoyed (especially when they are young and living at home), they need to obey me.

When Jude says, “Keep yourself in the love of God,” he is reminding me that if I want to know what it means to remain in His love, then I have to keep myself in His love.

Keeping myself in His love, however, does not mean “keeping myself saved”. Jude is speaking to people who have been born again and have been adopted by the Father and indwelt by the Holy Spirit. One does not become “unborn” when he wanders outside of God’s love any more than my children become no longer mine if they disobey. We are justified and saved when we place saving faith in Christ; nothing can snatch us out of His hands (Jn. 9:27-29).

Obedience to the Lord Jesus doesn’t earn love; once we are born again, however, it enables love’s free flow. Meanwhile, as we keep ourselves in God’s love, we wait “for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ to eternal life.” The word “wait” means looking forward with certainty as part of God’s family to the return of the Lord Jesus, and it summons us to a lifestyle of contending and compassion while we wait.

### **Our goal: compassion toward those for whom we contend (verses 22–23)**

Jude describes three groups of people for whom we are to care. First he says we are to be merciful to those who doubt. These are the people who come under the influence of the false teachers.

Next are the endangered who need to be snatched from the fire. These take another step beyond doubt and are in danger of falling into eternal destruction. The third group are somehow “toxic”, like radioactivity. The text says, “on some have mercy with fear, hating even the garment polluted by the flesh.” This image refers to the Old Testament laws that said even the clothes that touched the skin of a leper were to be burned because they were contaminated and could transmit the disease.

We are to respond appropriately to these categories of people. Notice the double repetition of “show mercy”. Our goal isn’t to put doubters and toxic people in their places, but to show the compassion of Christ. Show mercy to doubters. Let them ask questions, and show mercy as you answer them.

People who are about to plunge into destructive beliefs and behaviors must be rescued before they destroy themselves, while those who have become mired in sin and false beliefs so deeply they are toxic need our careful response. We must interact with them only if we are wearing protective gear, a spiritual hazmat suit. Notice Jude says, “Have mercy with fear.” These are people who are in real ways dangerous to be around, but we are still to have mercy.

There are spiritually contagious diseases. We must respond, but notice that compassion is never to compromise with evil.

### **Confidence in God on whom we depend (verses 24–25)**

Most New Testament books end with final greetings or benedictions. Jude, however, ends with a doxology. He wants us to understand that authentic worship is a powerful means of spiritual battle.

We praise the God who is able to keep His people from falling. Our God is the guarding, preserving God who keeps us “sure-footed”. There will be times when we feel we are going over the edge of a cliff, but God will keep our feet planted.

Moreover, He not only keeps us now, but when finally death comes or the Lord returns, He is able to present us faultless—not sinless—to God in the presence of the angels.

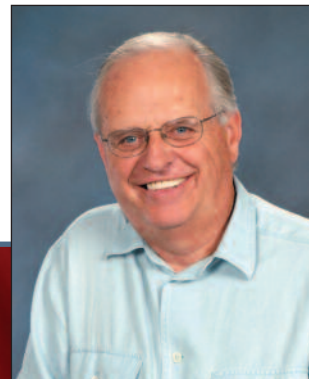
Because we will stand before God dressed up in Christ, we will be presented as faultless. Our condition is based on His merits, not our own. God will see us in Jesus, and He will see Christ’s perfection credited to us.

Moreover, He will present us with great joy—both the joy of Jesus who endured the cross for us, and our joy when we finally stand before Him.

Until that day we contend for the faith, the gospel of God, defending it from the razor’s edge of danger that continually threatens it.

As we contend, we echo Jude as we exalt our sovereign God who works through His Son: “to the only God our Savior, through Jesus Christ our Lord, be glory, majesty, dominion and authority, before all time and now and forever. Amen.” †

The sermons on which this article is based are entitled “Jude: Contending for the Faith” and can be accessed at <http://trinityonline.org/cgi-bin/MediaList.cgi?section=>



**Gary Inrig** joined the staff of Trinity Church as senior pastor in September of 1992 after many years of fruitful ministry in Calgary and Dallas. He holds D.Min. and Th.M. degrees from Dallas Theological Seminary. He has authored nine books and has taught in various capacities in many seminaries and Bible colleges. He and his wife Elizabeth have three children and eight grandchildren.

# Why Seventh-day Adver

## Part 2

LOUIS T. TALBOT, CHANCELLOR  
BIBLE INSTITUTE OF LOS ANGELES

Reprinted from *The Kings Business*, May, 1957



In the last issue of *Proclamation!* we ran part one of a three-part series of articles written by Louis Talbot, then the chancellor of the Bible Institute of Los Angeles (now Biola University), in *The King's Business* in 1957. This series was a direct response to Dr. Donald Grey Barnhouse's articles in *Eternity* magazine in 1956 in which he announced that Seventh-day Adventists were evangelical based on the conferences with Walter Martin and representatives of the Adventist Church.

Last month I stated my conviction that Seventh-day Adventism never has been, and is not at present, evangelical because of eight unscriptural teachings, and more, that form a part of their creed, namely:

1. that the Lord Jesus Christ in His incarnation assumed the sinful, fallen nature of man,
2. that the atonement was not completed on the cross
3. that Christ is at present conducting an "investigative judgment" of the records of all who have taken upon themselves the name of Christ, upon which investigation their immortality is conditioned,
4. that the soul of the believer does not go immediately into the presence of Christ at death but "sleeps" in the grave until the resurrection,
5. that souls who reject Christ actually do not "perish", that is, endure everlasting punishment but are annihilated eventually,
6. that Satan as "the scapegoat" has some part in the bearing away of our sins,
7. that we are not saved by grace alone apart from works of any kind,
8. that the seventh-day Jewish Sabbath is God's test and seal.

I declared also that since I believe none of these doctrines have any scriptural support, in all conscience and consistency I cannot extend "the hand of fellowship" to those who propagate them. Fellowship involves prayer, financial support, a common purpose, and united labors.

Furthermore, I expressed my judgment that those Christian editors who are espousing the cause of Seventh-day Adventism, while at the same time claiming not to be in agreement with

them on these and other issues, are bringing confusion and harm to the church of Christ, and great unhappiness and eventual disillusionment to themselves. One cannot correct false doctrine by consorting with those who teach it. While I have compassion for those untaught individuals entangled in these systems and pray sincerely for their deliverance, I strongly oppose the teaching of these doctrines and have done so for more than 25 years in a public "cult ministry" which God has blessed.

In April we considered the first of these doctrines of Seventh-day Adventism, the one having to do with the nature of Christ, and quoted three unimpeachable "official" Adventist sources to prove that this has been their teaching for more than 50 years. If the sect intends to abandon this false view in regard to the humanity of our Savior, it will be obliged to state unequivocally and officially that Mrs. White, L. A. Wilcox, and the authors of *Bible Readings for the Home Circle*, at least as late as 1944, and others, were utterly mistaken and their views are repudiated.

A subtle rewording will not do, as in the case of a later edition of the book above referred to, for this older publication, a devotional book, is still today in use in thousands of Adventist homes.

It is claimed that certain heretical teachings of Seventh-day Adventism somehow mysteriously "got into print"; that they were merely positions advocated by "individual authors" of a "lunatic fringe" of the denomination. The only Adventist literature that has ever come into my hands, and I have quite an extensive library of their writings supplied to some extent by Adventists and those who have renounced Adventism, has been published by official Seventh-day Adventist publishing houses.

# ntism is not evangelical

## Adventist Reaction to Eternity Articles

Last month I made reference to official Adventist reaction to the *Eternity* articles as expressed by president Figuhr in the Adventist publication, *Review and Herald*, for December 13, 1956. Some of his statements are quite significant. After much flattery for the *Eternity* editors, Mr. Figuhr writes: “The great point of misunderstanding has been in the matter of Seventh-day Adventists’ belief regarding Christ—His nature, the completeness of His atoning sacrifice, and His mission, as our sole hope of salvation. We have been charged with being legalists, who believe in salvation by our works, either entirely or in part. This has been a point of very serious misunderstanding.”

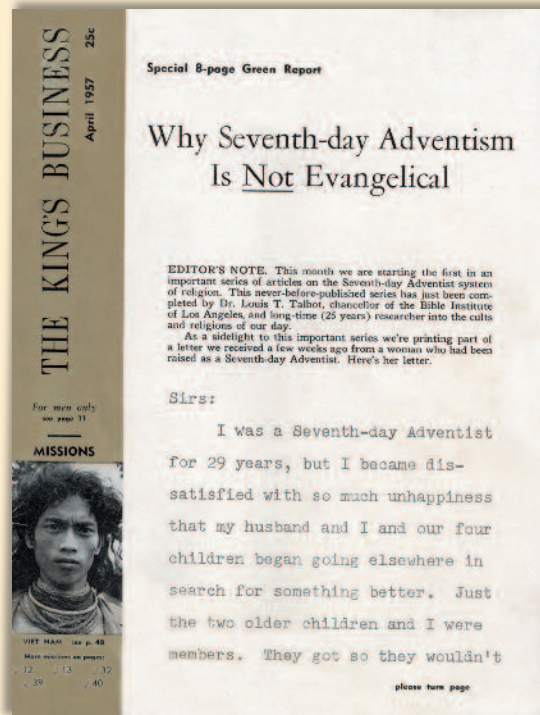
Any misunderstanding—and I do not acknowledge there has been any—has come from the simple process of our reading what the Adventist leaders themselves have written over the years. It is disagreement, not misunderstanding!

I continue to quote from President Figuhr: “On this fundamental issue, it has been so reassuring to turn to the writings of Sister White, where Christ, His nature, His mission, and the completeness of His atonement are so clearly and unquestionably set forth.”

Is not this rather startling in view of the claim of contemplated changes in Adventist doctrine? For in Mrs. White’s writings one finds all of the heresies I have listed, and more! In spite of all the fanfare about an alteration of creed, we are right back where we started from.

The Adventist stand has not differed from that expressed in the Adventist *Review and Herald Supplement* back in 1883: “our position on the Testimonies [Mrs. White’s writings] is like the keystone to the arch. Take that out, and there is no logical stopping-place till all the special truths of the message are gone. Nothing is surer than this, that the message and the visions [of Mrs. White] belong together, and stand or fall together.”

According to this declaration and that of Mr. Figuhr, we need consult no other books than Mrs. White’s for Seventh-day Adventist doctrine. It is as I have believed always, that Mrs. White is Seventh-day Adventism and ever shall be. So this sect is no nearer to being evangelical than it has been from the beginning.



The cover of the April issue of *The Kings Business*, the official publication of the Bible Institute of Los Angeles (now Biola University), and the largest Christian periodical of its day, is shown above.

The views of Mrs. White regarding the nature and redemptive work of Christ may be *reassuring* to an Adventist, but they are not to one who relies upon the revelation of the Word of God and not upon man-made theories. Of all the fables and vagaries ever devised by man, this sanctuary, scapegoat, investigative-judgment heresy is one of the worst. It ranks with the Roman Catholic view of purgatory and all such extra-scriptural ideas.

Even the editor of *Eternity* himself called it “the most colossal face-saving phenomenon of all time!”

Because it is so inextricably woven into the teaching of the atonement of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, it cannot be dismissed as an eccentricity of a strange religious group but must be considered seriously under the light of God’s Holy Word by which test it is proved to be completely false.

## Where is the proposed change?

Before discussing this teaching in detail, I would like you to note a few more sentences selected from Mr. Figuhr’s article in *Review and Herald*:

“With many of our [Adventist] distinct points of faith, such as the Sabbath and the state of the dead, they [*Eternity* editors] continue to differ, although they recognize that not a few leading Christians have held our view on these subjects *as plainly taught in the Scriptures*. The sanctuary, investigative judgment, health reform, are also matters of sharp disagreement. *While they do not accept Sister White as the Lord’s messenger to this people as we do*, they recognize her to be a true and sincere Christian” (italics mine).

There is not the slightest hint here that the Adventists have any intention of altering their views on anything. To this date, I have not seen any published statement by the Adventists that included a renunciation of any heresy they have ever taught. Of course, they will have to “spell it out,” stating in effect that “whereas we once taught such-and-such, we now renounce it utterly,” giving titles of books, names of authors, chapters and verses, if faith is to be kept with the public. I do not consider it unreasonable to demand such evidence. That would be much more effective than abusing us and accusing us of publishing articles “based upon publications the Adventists have officially repudiated.”



**The Adventist stand has not differed from that expressed in the *Adventist Review and Herald Supplement* back in 1883: “our position on the**

**Testimonies [Mrs. White’s writings] is like the keystone to the arch. Take that out, and there is no logical stopping-place till all the special truths of the message are gone. Nothing is surer than this, that the message and the visions [of Mrs. White] belong together, and stand or fall together.” According to this declaration and that of Mr. Figuhr, we need consult no other books than Mrs. White’s for Seventh-day Adventist doctrine. It is as I have believed always, that Mrs. White is Seventh-day Adventism and ever shall be.**

Mr. Figuhr claims their views are based upon Scripture, and with this we categorically disagree. We will examine their teachings under the lens of Holy Writ, as time and space permit, in this series of articles. Before leaving Mr. Figuhr’s article, note this comment: “Naturally, what is written in these journals is not always worded as we would wish; *nor is the emphasis placed where we would like to see it placed* [italics mine]. This is to be expected. No non-Adventist can even adequately and satisfactorily tell what the Seventh-day Adventists believe.”

It is too bad the *Eternity* editors were not informed of this in advance for it would have saved many “man hours.” I agree to this extent: let the cults speak for themselves in their own words. *What we do not need* is a lot of philosophizing on the part of others as to what these systems teach. Their own official writings—the great mass of literature circulated by them over the years—contain the sum and substance of their creeds.

Note what Mr. Figuhr says about placing the emphasis, for this is important in Adventism. There is *some* truth in Adventism but not *all* the truth, and the emphasis is placed upon the views which deviate from the truth. They believe that they as the “remnant church” have a special message which includes the Sabbath, the sanctuary, and their peculiar teaching in regard to the second coming of Christ. Let us watch for these things as we look at their writing.

### **The Sanctuary Heresy**

It is generally known that the sanctuary heresy grew out of what the Adventists call “the Great Disappointment,” their great blunder in accepting the prediction of William Miller that Christ

would return October 22, 1844. When the Lord did not appear according to their schedule, some of the Adventists such as Miller himself, Himes, Fitch and others admitted they were mistaken. But Elders White, Bates, Holt, and still others, including the 17-year-old Ellen Harmon who later became Mrs. James White, refused to concede that they were wrong. To cover this mistake, Owen R. L. Crosier in 1846 deliberately invented the sanctuary teaching and subsequently Ellen White corroborated it with one of her “visions”. They claimed the date was right—but something else than that predicted had happened!

In a letter to Eli Curtis from Topsham, Maine, dated April 21, 1847, Ellen White wrote: “I believe the Sanctuary, to be cleansed at the end of 2300 days, is the New Jerusalem Temple, of which Christ is the minister. The Lord showed me in vision, more than one year ago, that Brother Crosier had the true light on the cleansing of the sanctuary, etc.; and that it was His will that Brother Crosier should write out the view which he gave us in the *Day Star Extra*, Feb. 7, 1846. I feel fully authorized by the Lord to recommend that

*Extra* to every saint” (*A Word to the Little Flock*, pp. 11, 12). In her vision Mrs. White professes to have witnessed this strange sight: “I have seen that the 1843 chart [upon which the calculations were based] was directed by the hand of the Lord, and that it should not be altered, that the figures were as the Lord directed them; that his hand was over, and hid a mistake in some of the figures” (*Early Writings*, 1882 Ed p. 64).

Thus the Lord Himself was made responsible for their failure to understand and obey His Word which had plainly stated: “but of that day and that hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels which are in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father” (Mark 13:32).

William Miller did not follow along with the sanctuary theory, and Mrs. White writes of him: “At length William Miller raised his voice against the light from heaven. He failed in not receiving the message [that is, the sanctuary theory] which would have fully explained his disappointment and cast a light and glory on the past....God suffered him to fall under the power of Satan, the dominion of death, and hid him in the grave from those who were constantly drawing him from the truth. Moses erred as he was about to enter the Promised Land. So also, I saw that William Miller erred as he was soon to enter the heavenly Canaan” (pp. 257, 258, *Early Writings*, 1945 ed.).

Briefly, the sanctuary heresy is this: the Jewish tabernacle with its two compartments, the holy place and the holy of holies, has its counterpart in heaven; and instead of coming to the earth on October 22, 1844, as Miller had foretold, Christ is represented as making His way from this heavenly “holy place” into the heavenly “holy of holies,” there to “cleanse the sanctuary” by means of “an investigative judgment”—and anti-typical atonement.



Lessons 28 and 29 of the current Bible correspondence course called “Faith for Today”, which is mailed out by the Seventh-day Adventists without their identification, describes this theory exactly as Mrs. White taught it in her book, *The Great Controversy*.

I note that Christ is called Michael (p. 2, Lesson 28); and this explanation appears on page 4 of the same lesson: “Did anything happen in 1844 to convince us of the truthfulness of this prophecy? There surely did. Just prior to that time there was a great religious awakening and ministers of every faith became intensely interested in the prophecies of Daniel. They were all united in one conclusion, that some great event was to happen in the year 1844. The world was stirred with their message, and multitudes mistakenly believed that the world would end in the year A.D. 1844. The world did not end as they had predicted, but instead Jesus began the work of cleansing sin from the heavenly records of forgiven sinners. Those whose names are retained in the book of life will be citizens of the kingdom of heaven.”

Since there is nothing here to indicate that it was this very first group of Adventists who began this, and since these lessons are not marked as Seventh-day Adventist literature, untaught people are being indoctrinated with these teachings without being aware of what they are getting into.

The Adventists loudly proclaim that they believe in a completed, finished atonement. Here is a refutation of this from Lesson 28, page 3 of this same Adventist correspondence course: “It was on the cross that Jesus paid the price of the covenant for our return to God. *Then He entered heaven to complete our atonement with God. It is at the Father’s throne that He makes an end of atonement. This cannot be completed until the last repentant sinner has been justified by the grace and mercy of God through acceptance of Christ as his personal Savior*” (italics are mine).

Uriah Smith, a prominent Adventist of the past, stated in his book, *Looking Unto Jesus*: “Christ did not make the atonement when He shed His blood upon the cross” (p. 237). A former president of the Adventists’ General Conference, C. H. Watson, wrote in *The Atoning Work of Christ*: “It is impossible to conclude that a complete work of atoning for sin was wrought upon the cross....the work of the atonement must continue as long as probationary time shall last” (pp. 95, 113).

I shall reproduce one of Mrs. White’s visions in which the sanctuary is featured at the close of this article. Meantime here are a few sentences from her book, *The Great Controversy*: “important truths concerning the atonement are taught by the typical service. A substitute was accepted in the sinner’s stead; but the sin was not canceled by the blood of the victim. A means was thus provided by which it was transferred to the sanctuary. By the offering of blood the sinner acknowledged the authority of the law, confessed his guilt in transgression, and expressed his desire for pardon through faith in a Redeemer to come; but he was not yet entirely released from the condemnation of the law” (p. 420).

Then she makes the application to Christ and the Christian: “And as the typical cleansing of the earthly was accomplished by the removal of the sins by which it had been polluted, so the actual cleansing of the heavenly is to be accomplished by removal, or blotting out, of the sins which are there recorded. But before this can be accomplished, there must be an examination of the books to determine who through repentance of sin and faith in Christ are entitled to the benefits of His atonement” (pp. 421, 422).

In an excellent tract entitled, “Seventh-day Adventists and Atonement” published by my good friends, Loizeaux Brothers [New York, New York], appears this comment on these words of Mrs. White: “A substitute was accepted in the sinner’s stead, but the sin was not canceled by the blood of the victim,” says Mrs. White. And this in the face of Leviticus 17:11: ‘It is the blood that maketh an atonement for the soul.’ ‘Without shedding of blood is no remission’ (Heb. 9:22), and “The blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin’ (1 John 1:7). ‘A means was thus provided by which it was transferred to the sanctuary,’ we are told. Thus is the precious blood of Christ only a means of carrying sins into the holy of holies—the very presence of God, and not making atonement for them....If this be true, Paul (sic) was quite mistaken when he wrote to the Hebrews about the Lord as High Priest who by His own blood entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us ‘now to appear in the presence of God for us’ (Heb. 9:24).”

My friends, this is not evangelical truth. No matter how much the Adventists protest that they teach the gospel, as long as this



**...let the cults speak for themselves in their own words. What we do not need is a lot of philosophizing on the part of others as to what these systems teach. Their own official writings—the great mass of literature circulated by them over the years—contain the sum and substance of their creeds.**

heresy constitutes a part of their doctrine, there is no possibility of fellowship with them in the work of Christ.

#### **Investigative Judgment**

“The investigative judgment” is the Adventist-coined term used to describe the work now supposedly being performed by the Lord Jesus Christ in this second compartment of the “heavenly sanctuary,” the holy of holies. Indeed, according to this teaching, He has been engaged in this task since October 22, 1844! Of course, it is all fancy without a verse of Scripture to support its absurdities.



**My friends, this is not evangelical truth. No matter how much the Adventists protest that they teach the gospel, as long as this heresy constitutes a part of their doctrine, there is no possibility of fellowship with them in the work of Christ.**

I will let one of the best-known Adventist writers explain it in his own words from his book, *Drama of the Ages* which was recently awarded as a book-of-the-month premium to students of the Voice of Prophecy Adventist correspondence course. I refer to W. H. Branson, a past president of the sect, who was selected by the Adventists to answer Mr. D. M. Canright, a former Adventist, who had renounced the cult, had exposed their errors, and had written some of the best exposés obtainable in such books as *Seventh-day Adventism Renounced* and *Life of Mrs. E. G. White*, etc. No other writer has done so much to help others find the way out of this system, with the exception of Rev. E. B. Jones of the present day whose books are masterful analyses of the system. He, too, was delivered after years of service with the Adventists and like Mr. Canright sees “from the inside” the machinations of the top men and comprehends the Adventist philosophy and strategy. I recommend his books to our readers.

Mr. Branson wrote *In Defense of the Faith* presumably to refute Mr. Canright and so obviously he must be held in the highest esteem by this denomination. He describes the investigative judgment in chapters 21 and 24 of *Drama of the Ages*. I can give but a small portion of it. He declares on page 276: “Whenever a sinner accepts the sacrifice of Christ as the propitiation for his sins, and in contrition and penitence he seeks God for forgiveness through the merits of Christ’s shed blood, his sins are removed from him to the sanctuary in heaven.”

Did you imagine that was what happened to your sins when you came to Christ for salvation? I believe that “As far as the east is from the west, so far hath he removed our transgressions from us”; and that His Word is true when He says, “I, even I, am he that blotteth out thy transgressions for mine own sake, and will not remember thy sins”; and I rejoice in the knowledge that “...thou wilt cast all their sins into the depths of the sea” (Ps. 103:12; Isa. 43:25; Micah 7:19). When God forgives, He forgets, and by Him we “are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses” (Acts 13:39).

The Adventists use the term “justification,” but apparently they do not comprehend it. While we are not discussing the law-keeping heresy of the Adventists in this article but will do so next month, God willing, I would like to mention in passing that this author Mr. Branson, says this with respect to justification: “A man who has never kept the law can be forgiven and justified before God, but he cannot remain justified without keeping it” (p. 139). The Adventist does not acknowledge that by His blood Christ “purged our consciences” and “purged our sins” on the cross.

I continue to quote: “There [in this imaginary sanctuary in heaven] Christ ministers in the sinner’s behalf. He spreads His nail-scarred hands before the Father and pleads that because He Himself paid the penalty, the sinner should go free. To this the Father agrees, and Christ lifts the burden of guilt from the sinner and substitutes His own righteousness instead” (p. 276).

Now this sounds as if the matter of sin were settled, does it not? But immediately it is made clear that the sins are still there! To continue: “The sins are borne into the sanctuary, of which Christ is the priestly minister; and although they are forgiven, the record of them must remain until they are blotted out in the time of the judgment” (p. 276). But John the Baptist declared of Christ: “...Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world” (John 1:29).

Seventh-day Adventism says those sins are in heaven in the very presence of God. Hear what Branson writes: “Those, therefore, who have through the years accepted Christ’s death as a sacrifice for their sins, and who have in penitence turned from them, have by those acts been sending their sins into the heavenly sanctuary for judgment” (p. 277). He goes on to explain that this procedure has only to do with those who have accepted Christ, the sinners having no part in this priestly ministry of Christ’s. Yet it is clear that the Christian can have no assurance of sins forgiven either.

Now we come to the heart of this investigative-judgment teaching: “When sins are confessed and forgiven are they entirely removed from the sinner? Yes, so far as the individual is concerned. But this does not mean that the sins are at the time finally disposed of. Christ removes them from the records in the book of heaven, but they are then charged against Him. He takes the responsibility for the sins and imputes His righteousness to the sinner. The record of sins still remains, only now they stand no longer charged to the one who committed them but to Christ, his substitute. He has become the sin-bearer (Numbers 18:1); but the record of sin, now transferred to the sanctuary, must remain until the judgment.

“Again it may be asked: ‘Why wait until the judgment to blot out and make an end of confessed sins? Why should they not be immediately disposed of?’ We answer, ‘There must first be an investigation of the records’” (p. 277).

You see, this is completely arbitrary. This is the Adventists’ decision. One may not know until Christ comes whether he is saved or not and consequently cannot enjoy the assurance of salvation or the joy or freedom of it.

This is plainly stated in the next sentences: “let us illustrate: Take an individual who accepts Christ as his Savior and humbly confesses his sins to God. By these acts and by His acceptance his sins are transferred to the sanctuary. But they cannot at that time be blotted out. The final blotting out must wait until the end of his life or until probation closes for him. Why? Because he may not continue in the faith... Thus, before the Lord can blot out the sins from the record books, a very careful examination has to be made to see whether those who accepted Christ are still worthy” (p. 278).

If you study Seventh-day Adventism carefully, you will find at the heart of all their doctrines an innate legalism. It is part and parcel of their system. You simply cannot escape it if you go beneath the surface.

This sanctuary and investigative-judgment teaching robs the Christian of his eternal security. Salvation is dependent upon something outside of Christ's redemptive work—whether it be faithfulness, law-keeping, worthiness! The *Eternity* editors claim this is just the same as the Arminianism of such holiness groups as Free Methodist, Mennonite, Nazarene, etc.

I disagree utterly.

While I believe our friends are wrong who teach it is possible to “fall from grace,” that is cease to trust in Christ as one's only Savior after being born again, yet I have never heard any such unbiblical views from them as this: that our sins are still recorded on the books of heaven against us and that Christ has been continuing a work of atonement since He ascended.

All evangelical groups believe that when one comes to Christ for salvation and trusts in His vicarious work on the cross on his behalf, that then and there he is forgiven and justified. “But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name: Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God” (John 1:12, 13). Adventism is a system of probation. One's sins can be held over his head as a threat even after he has believed.

How blessed to come back to such verses as these: “But Christ being come an high priest of good things to come, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this building; Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us” (Heb. 9:11,12).

The fact of the matter is that no such “investigation” as the Adventists have conceived even went on in the Jewish tabernacle. The sinner brought a lamb, identified himself with it by placing his hand upon its head; the priest slew the sacrifice and shed its blood for the sinning Israelite. By faith the believing Israelite looked forward to the true Lamb of God who would in the future appear to die for sinners. Of course, the tabernacle worship was imperfect. It was just a type of the true—shadow of the substance. But Christ's redemptive work was perfect and complete: “And every priest standeth daily ministering and offering often-times the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins: but this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God” (Heb. 10:11, 12).

There was no chair in the Jewish tabernacle. The priest never sat down because his work was never finished. Our Lord Jesus Christ offers a great contrast to this, for when He had finished His work on the cross, He ascended to the Father and sat down. He did not concern Himself with making His way into an imaginary “sanctuary”.

There is no record of His ever again taking up the sins for which He once laid down His

life. All of His redemptive work was done on earth. He hung upon the cross for three hours in agony and blood for your sins and mine, and when He died He cried, “It is finished!” And it was! His vicarious sufferings were over. He could *rest* in His finished work. And so may we! The Scripture tells us, “he ever liveth to make intercession for us,” and that means prayer on our behalf as He prayed for Peter, saying, “...Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat; But I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not...” (Luke 22:31). We can sing with all our hearts, “Love's redeeming work is done, Fought the fight, the battle won, Alleluia!”

The drama of redemption was performed on this earth and no part of it has been transferred to heaven to God's throne. Christ is praying for His own and awaiting the day when He shall return for us. He is not keeping books, looking after files of the sins of Christians who can only remain His children if they are worthy. If He should “mark iniquity, who would stand?” It is done. Ours is not a “do-it-yourself” religion.

Listen to Mr. Branson again: “In addition to the books containing the names of the righteous, God also has books of record, that are kept by the unerring hands of angels. In these books are exact transcripts, faithful records, of each life....From these record books the righteous will be judged. By what is written in these books the Lord will determine who have remained steadfast in their faith in Christ and in following Him. Those who have been ‘faithful unto death’ will be given a ‘crown of life.’ Their names will be retained in the book of life and they will be sealed for heaven” (pp. 280, 281).

### The Scapegoat

Here is where the scapegoat enters the picture. It seems incredible that the entire Seventh-day Adventist teaching with regard to Satan as the scapegoat is based upon a marginal reading of Leviticus 16:8 where the word scapegoat is identified as “Heb. *Azazel*.” Although the etymology of the word is not absolutely certain, the Adventists arbitrarily decided that it referred to Satan, and so forthwith, Satan is the scapegoat sinner! With their imagination, the Adventists need very little upon which to build a system of doctrine. When you realize how the sanctuary idea snowballed into this intricate doctrinal system involving the very atonement of Christ, you can readily see that there is something more than mere human thinking back of the entire movement.



**This sanctuary and investigative-judgment teaching robs the Christian of his eternal security. Salvation is dependent upon something outside of Christ's redemptive work—whether it be faithfulness, law-keeping, worthiness!**

Dr. A. C. Gaebelein, a Hebrew scholar and Bible teacher of note of the last century, emphatically declared *azazel* had no reference whatever to Satan but meant instead, *dismissal, to depart*. Dr. Gaebelein wrote: “it is translated in the Septuagint with *eis teen apompee*, which means *to let him go for the dismissal*. Both goats are for sin-offering. The first goat represents Christ dying for the sins of His people. The second goat, laden with those sins which were atoned for by the blood of the first goat, represents the blessed effect of the work of Christ, that the sins of the people are forever out of sight. It is in blessed harmony with the two birds used in connection with the cleansing of the leper.” But Adventists do not believe our sins are “out of sight.”

Branson has this to say of the scapegoat: “Christ the High Priest, will lay aside His priestly garments, will garb Himself in kingly attire, and will come forth from the heavenly sanctuary bearing the sins of His redeemed people. He will roll them back upon the head of Satan, the great instigator of all evil, who is primarily responsible for all transgression the blood of Christ has covered. Just as the scapegoat was led away from the camp of Israel...so Satan will be cast into the ‘bottomless pit’...where he will have to suffer sin’s utmost penalty before he finally perishes



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in the flames. It is in this manner that the sanctuary will be cleansed, and Christ our High Priest will make an end of sin” (p. 285).

So our blessed Lord is not only represented by the Adventists as having to continue dealing with the sins for which He died on the cross, but He is shown as negotiating with His archenemy Satan about our sins and requiring him finally to bear the penalty for the same guilt for which He paid the price. My friends, this is not the gospel! It is not even remotely connected with it.

Can the Adventists continue to claim that they teach truly concerning the vicarious work of Christ as the only sin-bearer?

The sanctuary, investigative-judgment and scapegoat teaching robs Christ of His glory. In His high priestly prayer before He went to the cross as He anticipated His death on Calvary as the Lamb of God taking away the sin of the world, He said to His Father: “...I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do. And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory that I had with thee before the world was” (John 17:4-5). Because He had so limited Himself voluntarily in the incarnation, His special glory as the glorified Son of Man was in a sense dependent upon His completing the redemptive work He had come to accomplish, as these verses seem to imply. He did not fail! He could not fail!

“Crown Him with many crowns,  
The Lamb upon the throne!”

### The Messages of Three Angels

In her book, *Early Writings*, 1945 edition (often repaged, reprinted and revised), Mrs. White describes the various visions, messages and views of the Adventists with regard to the advent of the Lord as “the first angel’s message”, “the second angel’s message”, and “the third angel’s message”.

We are concerned with the last named as it deals with the sanctuary but in passing will quote a few sentences from the beginning of the other two. The “first angel’s message” was William Miller’s prediction that Christ would return in 1844. On page 232 Mrs. White declares: “I saw that God was in the proclamation of the time in 1843. It was His design to arouse the people and bring them to a testing point where they should decide for or against the truth. Ministers were convinced of the correctness of the positions taken on the prophetic periods, and some renounced their pride, and left their salaries and their churches to go forth from place to place to give the message. But as the message from heaven could find a place in but few of the

professed ministers of Christ, the work was laid upon many who were not preachers. Some left their fields to sound the message, while others were called from their shops and their merchandise. And even some professional men were compelled to leave their professions to engage in the unpopular work of giving the first angel’s message.” Note that it is claimed that this false prediction was from heaven although William Miller himself afterwards acknowledged he was mistaken. I have quoted the passage where Mrs. White states he was

judged by God for this and died.

The “second angel’s message” begins on page 237 with these words: “As the churches refused to receive the first angel’s message, they rejected the light from heaven and fell from the favor of God. They trusted to their own strength, and by opposing the first message placed themselves where they could not see the light of the first angel’s message. But the beloved of God who were oppressed accepted the message, ‘Babylon is fallen’ and left the churches.” As we proceed with these articles, I will quote from recent Adventist literature to prove that the sect still believes itself to be the remnant church. There has been no change in that view from the beginning.

Now as you read “the third angel’s message” keep two things in mind: what Mrs. White said of herself and what *Eternity* has declared concerning her. In Volume V of her *Testimonies For The Church* Mrs. White wrote: “In ancient times God spoke to men by the mouths of the prophets and apostles. In these days He speaks to them by the testimonies of His Spirit....Let the testimonies be judged by their fruits. What is the spirit of their teaching? What has been the result of their influence?...God does nothing in partnership with Satan. My work bears the stamp of God, or the stamp of the enemy. The testimonies are of the Spirit of God or of the devil....If the testimonies speak not

according to the Word of God, reject them. Christ and Belial cannot be united” (pp. 661, 671, 691).

So if subsequently her writings be found contrary to the Word of God, what are we to conclude? She herself sets the standard of judgment. Also bear in mind that *Eternity* in the October 1956 issue stated: “She [Mrs. White] has never written anything that is seriously contrary to the simple, plain declarations of the gospel....No one can fairly challenge her writings on the basis of their conformity to the basic principles of the gospel, for conform them most certainly do!” (pp. 38, 39). I contend that they most certainly do not conform...but the only way to find out is to expose these teachings to Bible light.

It was very interesting to me to read the letter from Missionary Herbert S Bird of the American Evangelical Mission in Eritrea, Ethiopia, in the March 1957 *Eternity*. He has reached the same conclusions that we (and all missionaries I have ever met who have had dealings with Adventists on the mission field) have. One of our own graduates on furlough was in the office a month or so ago and told us that there had been no change in the “sheep stealing” tactics on his field. Mr. Bird rightly says: “We most vigorously protest their [Adventists’] right to enter and seek to divide our churches today, and ask us for the right hand of fellowship tomorrow. When they do, they must forgive us if we find their longing for fellowship with evangelicals to have an analogy in the longing of the Russians to ‘cooperate’ with the nations of the West.” I should like to have seen *all* of Mr. Bird’s letter but appreciate fully that for brevity’s sake the ellipsis had to be used.

Now to return to Mrs White’s vision—the third angel’s message, which is only a sample of the kind of experiences she underwent and delivered in writing to the remnant church. This book, *Early Writings*, may be purchased at Adventist bookstores or borrowed from a public library.

### The Third Angel’s Message

I quote sections from pages 254 to 258 as I have not space for the entire chapter: “As the ministration of Jesus closed in the holy place, and He passed into the holiest, and stood before the ark containing the law of God, He sent another mighty angel with a third message to the world. A parchment was placed in the angel’s hand, and as he descended to the earth in power and majesty, he proclaimed a fearful warning, with the most terrible threatening ever borne to man. This message was designed to put the children of God upon their guard, by showing them the hour of temptation and anguish that was before them. Said the angel, ‘They will be brought into close combat with the beast and his image. Their only hope of eternal life is to remain steadfast. Although their lives are at stake, they must hold fast the truth.’ The third angel closes his message thus: ‘Here is the patience of the saints; here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus.’ As he repeated these



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words, he pointed to the heavenly sanctuary. The minds of all who embrace this message are directed to the most holy place, where Jesus stands before the ark, making His final intercession for all those for whom mercy still lingers and for those who have ignorantly broken the law of God. *This atonement is made for the righteous dead as well as for the righteous living* [italics mine]. It includes all who died trusting in Christ, but who, not having received the light upon God’s commandments, had sinned ignorantly in transgressing its precepts. After Jesus opened the door of the most holy, the light of the Sabbath was seen, and the people of God were tested, as the children of Israel were tested anciently, to see if they would keep God’s law. I saw the third angel pointing upward, showing the disappointed ones the way to the holiest of the heavenly sanctuary...It was represented to me that the remnant followed Jesus into the most holy place and beheld the ark and the mercy seat, and were captivated with their glory. Jesus then raised the cover of the ark, and lo! the tables of stone, with the ten commandments written upon them. They trace down the lively oracles, but start back with trembling when they see *the fourth commandment* [italics mine] among the ten holy precepts with a brighter light shining upon it than upon the other nine, and a halo of glory all around it. They find nothing there informing them that the Sabbath has been abolished, or changed to the first day of the week...I saw the incense in the censer smoke as Jesus offered their confessions and prayers to His Father...Many who embraced the third message had not had an experience in the two former messages. Satan understood this, and his evil eye was upon them to overthrow them: but the third angel was pointing them to the most holy place, and those who had experience in the past messages were pointing them the way to the heavenly sanctuary...At length William Miller raised his voice against the light from heaven...If William Miller could have seen the light of the third message, many things which looked dark and mysterious to him would have been explained.”

Next month, God willing, we will deal with the soul sleep, annihilation and the law-keeping heresies of the Seventh-day Adventists. †

This is the end of the second installment in a series of three articles on Adventism by Louis Talbot. This article is reprinted with permission from *The King’s Business*, vol. 48, No. 4, May, 1957, pp. 23–30.

# THE UNDIVIDED LAW

## The law of Moses and the law of God are one

**S**ometimes people ask why we often write about the Sabbath. We have covered this topic many times in *Proclamation!* and in our books, so why deal with it again? We have no argument with those who wish to “keep” the Sabbath. We fully accept Paul’s counsel in Romans 14 that says it is OK to have differing opinions regarding days, and we should each be convinced in our own minds. The problem comes, however, when the Sabbath is made a requirement for salvation, a “testing truth”, or a necessary Christian duty. We would also ask those who want to “keep the Sabbath” if they really keep it according to biblical and/or Ellen White guidelines. Few would want to keep Sabbath that way, and none do.

Transitioning Adventists must come to grips with the Sabbath question, often more than once. It was so deeply ingrained into our paradigm of truth that in conversations with others, new questions often pop up demanding additional answers. As there are continually new subscribers to *Proclamation!* and new readers starting on their journey out of Adventism, we would like for us to consider a silent, unnoticed assumption holding up the whole edifice of Sabbath keeping.

DALE RATZLAFF AND VERLE STREIFLING



Recently the Adventist church has again placed emphasis on the necessity of Sabbath observance for all Christians, emphasizing again the teaching of Ellen White, that the “Sabbath is, and will be, the separating wall between the true Israel of God and unbelievers...”<sup>1</sup>

This statement, repeated again and again in several works of Ellen White, cements into Adventist theology that the Sabbath is, indeed, a requirement for salvation. Newly elected President Ted Wilson has reinforced this theology anew in his first sermon as the General Conference president,

“The observance of the Sabbath is not only a sign of His creatorship in the beginning but will be THE sign of God’s people in the last days in contrast to those with the mark of the beast representing an attempt to keep holy a day which God has not set apart as holy” (Wilson’s emphasis).<sup>2</sup>

Recently, Andrews University Press, Berrien Springs, Michigan, published a book authored by Dr. Ron du Preez, entitled *Judging the Sabbath—Discovering What Can’t Be Found in Colossians 2:16*. Colossians 2:16 is a pivotal text for understanding the Sabbath. Adventists have traditionally claimed that the Sabbath mentioned in this text is one of the “ceremonial sabbaths” and not the Seventh-day Sabbath. This conclusion contradicts the vast majority of Bible scholars. Dr. du Preez’s work relies largely on certain Hebrew structures. He concludes,

“The completing weight of intertextual, linguistic, semantic, structural, and contextual evidence demonstrates that the *sabbata* [Sabbaths] of Colossians 2:16 refers to ancient Jewish ceremonial Sabbaths, and not the weekly Sabbath. Thus, the seventh-day Sabbath of the Decalogue cannot be regarded as abrogated on the basis of Colossians 2.”<sup>3</sup>

I only took one Hebrew class at the seminary, and I would never trust my theology to my knowledge of Hebrew. Many months ago, I asked Dr. Jerry Gladson, who is very proficient in Hebrew, to write a critique of the above book. His carefully studied response is included in the new edition of *Sabbath in Christ*.

Dr. Gladson has responded in a scholarly way showing that du Preez’s conclusion is at best an assumption and that the *sabbata* mentioned in Colossians certainly includes the weekly Sabbath. In addition to the work of Dr. Gladson showing the weakness of du Preez’s conclusions, there is yet another silent, unobserved assumption that, for most sabbatarians and perhaps for many of our readers, goes unnoticed. This unseen assumption also brings Dr. du Preez’s conclusions into question. What is this silent, unobserved assumption? Simply this:

The Law given at Sinai comprises two laws: the eternal moral law of the Decalogue written by the finger of God and the temporary ceremonial law including the “ancient Jewish ceremonial Sabbaths” mentioned by du Preez, and written by Moses. That Adventism from its very inception has taught the two-law theory is clear. Ellen White mentioned “ceremonial law” 86 times. She speaks of the “moral law” 116 times.

In the Adventist Bible doctrines book *Principles of Life*,<sup>4</sup> there is a chapter entitled, “The Two Laws”.<sup>5,6</sup> Question one

directs the student to “distinguish between the law of God, or the Ten Commandments, and the law of Moses.”

The student is directed to a two-column chart with headings for the two laws. Six questions appear under each heading with references designed to support the heading.

THE LAW OF GOD	THE LAW OF MOSES
<b>The Writing of God</b>	<b>The Writing of Moses</b>
<b>On what did God write?</b> Ex. 31:18; 34:1	<b>On what did Moses write?</b> Deut. 31:24
<b>What did God write?</b> Deut. 5:22; 10:4	<b>What did Moses write?</b> Ex. 24:4; Deut. 31:9
<b>Where did Moses put God’s writing?</b> Deut. 10:4, 5	<b>Where did Moses put his own writing?</b> Deut. 31:25, 26
<b>What is the character of God’s law?</b> Ps. 19:7, 8	<b>What is the character of Moses’ law?</b> Lev. 7:37, 38
<b>What was the purpose of God’s law?</b> Eccl. 12:13	<b>What purpose did Moses’ law serve?</b> Col. 2:14, 17; Heb. 9:9; 10:1
<b>How long was God’s law to continue?</b> Ps. 111:7, 8; 119:89, 144; Mt. 5:17, 18	<b>When did Moses’ law terminate?</b> Col. 2:14.

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Chart of information published in the Adventist Bible Doctrines book *Principles of Life*.

Following this chart we read, “Distinction between the two laws is very clear. There can be no question but that God intended that there should be a clear distinction between the Ten Commandments and the laws he gave Moses to write.”<sup>7</sup>

If the Bible does not teach the two-law theory, then the whole edifice of sabbatarianism comes tumbling down. Come, let us reason together. What follows is a condensation of chapter 6 of Dr. Verle Streifling’s e-book, *Bible Answers to Sabbath Questions*. This is a masterful study of this subject and is a real gold mine which, as the title states, gives Bible answers to Sabbath questions.<sup>8</sup>

### One Law

Scripture nowhere speaks of two separate laws, neither are the words “moral law” or “ceremonial law” found anywhere in the Bible. There are many Scriptures that confirm the law given to Israel was one law:<sup>9</sup>

One law shall be for the native born and for the stranger (Ex. 12:49).

There is one law for them (Lev. 7:7).

One law and one manner shall be for you and the stranger (Num. 15:16).

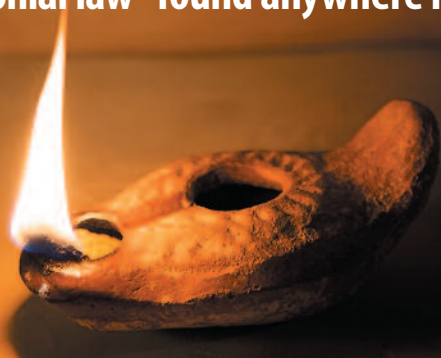
You shall have one manner of Law (Num. 15:29).

You shall have one ordinance for both the stranger and... (Num. 9:14).

One ordinance shall be both for you...and the stranger... (Num. 15:15).

This is the ordinance of the law... (Num. 19:2; 31:21).

## Scripture nowhere speaks of two separate laws, neither are the words “moral law” or “ceremonial law” found anywhere in the Bible.



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That the law as a whole is one law is also evident in Deuteronomy where Moses recites the entire law for the second generation of the Children of Israel before they went into Canaan. Note that in the following references from Deuteronomy where the word “law” is used, it is always singular (italics ours):

“Moses began to declare *this law*” (Deut. 1:5).

“And what nation is there so great, that hath statutes and judgments so righteous as all *this law*, which I set before you this day?” (Deut. 4:8).

“Now *this is the law* which Moses set before the sons of Israel: these are the testimonies and the statutes and the ordinances which Moses spoke to the sons of Israel” (Deut. 4:44-45).

Notice that “this law” includes “testimonies”, “statutes” and “ordinances.” Combined they constitute one law.

Moses recites the Ten Commandments with a different version of the Sabbath commandment (Deut. 5:6-21).

After Moses recited the Ten Commandments, he recited another 25 chapters-worth of statutes and precepts of the covenant. Then Deuteronomy 31:9 records, “he wrote out *this law*” (Deut. 31:9).

“Take this book of *the law* and place it beside the ark of the covenant of the LORD your God” (Deut. 31:26).

“Moses commanded us *a law*” (Deut. 33:4).

They shall teach Jacob thy judgments, and Israel *thy law*” (Deut. 33:10).

We can clearly see that the “Book of the Law” is God’s law, and this one law includes the Decalogue and many other precepts, chapter after chapter. Yet all of these commands are called “one law” and “[God’s] law”—and even “the law of Moses”(Neh. 8:1; 1 Ki. 2:3) throughout the Old Testament. In fact, 187 times it is spoken of as “the law”, “this law”, “my law”, and “thy law”, and every time it is singular. Moreover, neither the Old nor the New Testaments ever refer to the Decalogue as separate or distinct from the whole law in the Book of the Law. There is one law given by God, and Moses mediated that law to Israel.

### Law and Ordinance are often used interchangeably

The words *ordinance* and *the law* are interchangeable—a fact commonly accepted and taught by the Seventh-day

Adventists. When most Adventist evangelists present Daniel 7:25, “He shall think to change times and laws,” in their prophecy seminars, they immediately cite Isaiah 24:5 for added support: “because they transgressed the laws and changed the ordinance.” Using the theology of Ellen White,<sup>10</sup> they claim that the word “laws” in the Daniel passage refers to the Ten Commandments. Simultaneously, they interpret the word “ordinances” in the Isaiah excerpt to refer also to the 10 Commandments, thus claiming that Rome would change the Decalogue which they say is represented by Daniel’s use of “laws” and by Isaiah’s use of “ordinance”.

This argument, however, contradicts their attempt to separate “ordinance” from the Ten Commandments in other contexts. For example, where Ephesians 2:15 states that Christ abolished “in His flesh the enmity, which is the law of commandments contained in ordinances,” most sabbatarians insist that Paul refers to the so called “ceremonial law” and not to the Ten Commandments.

They can’t have it both ways. “Ordinance” and “law” are often interchangeable words for the same thing: the Mosaic law of God which contains the Ten Commandments as well as the 603 other laws that defined Israel’s culture and worship. It is disingenuous to use Adventism’s traditional argument for Daniel and Isaiah while also claiming Ephesians 2:15 does not refer to the Decalogue.

### The spoken Law and the written Law have equal authority

The Adventist Bible doctrines book mentioned above seeks to contrast “the character of God’s law” with “the character of Moses’ law”. By showing that God *spoke* His law and Moses *wrote* his law, the author seeks to prove that the law of Moses is of lesser authority and longevity. This division of the law denies that what Moses wrote by divine inspiration was God “speaking through His servants the prophets”. Thus, what Moses commanded Israel, whether spoken or written, was still God’s command, and what he wrote was God speaking through Moses. In every way the words Moses spoke were equal with the commands God spoke from Sinai and wrote on tables of stone. In fact, Scripture confirms that God commanded the words Moses and other prophets wrote. Nowhere is the weight of authority different for the 10 Commandments than for the rest of the law, or even for any other of the words God gave His prophets:

Remember ye the law of Moses my servant, which I commanded unto him in Horeb (Mal. 4:4).

The Word of the LORD...He spoke by the hand of Abijah the prophet (1 Ki. 14:18).

...to offer burnt offerings unto the LORD on the altar of burnt offerings...written in the Law of the LORD, which He commanded Israel (1 Chron. 16:40).

Found written in the Law, which the LORD commanded by Moses (Neh. 8:14).

The burnt offerings for the morning and evening burnt offerings for the Sabbaths, the New Moons, feasts, as it is written in the Law of the LORD (2 Chron. 31:3).



In fact, on numerous occasions God commands by the hand of Moses.<sup>11</sup>

### The “Law of Moses” was “the Law of God”

We have already shown that “the Law of God” and the “Law of Moses” are really two different names for the same law. As 2 Chronicles 31:3 and 8:13 demonstrate, the burnt offerings for the Sabbath, new moons, and feasts were written in the law of the Lord and in the law (commandment) of Moses—two names for the same law. The New Testament also equates the law of Moses and the law of the Lord. In Luke 2:22-24, 39 Mary and Joseph took Jesus to the temple for circumcision and sacrifices at the time prescribed in the law of Moses, and they did everything “according to the law of the Lord.” Moreover, Hebrews 10:28 states that death was the consequence for breaking the law of Moses, and in Numbers 35:30 and Deuteronomy 17:2-6 we see that the author of Hebrews refers to the consequence for breaking the Ten Commandments. Again, Moses’ law is actually the Law of God. This equation is sustained by many other Scriptures as well:

Keep and do all that is written in the book of the law of Moses (Josh. 23:6).

...written in the book of the law of Moses (Josh. 8:31).

...the Book of the Law the LORD (2 Chron. 17:9).

...as written in the Law of Moses (2 Chron. 23:18).

...as written in the Law of the LORD (2 Chron. 31:3).

This Ezra...was a ready scribe in the law of Moses, which the LORD God of Israel had given (Ezra 7:6).

Ezra the Priest, a scribe of the law of God of heaven (Ezra 7:12).

...bring the book of the law of Moses, which God commanded (Neh. 8:1).

...he read in the book of the law of God...(Neh. 8:18).

...read in the Book of the law of the LORD (Neh. 9:3—same book as in 8:1).

### Highest Moral Laws not found in the Decalogue

For many of us who have held the Ten Commandments to be the high point of morality, it comes as a shock to realize that there are other Old Testament laws that have higher moral value. James shows that violating a law not found in the Decalogue will condemn the transgressor. His case in point is Christians who discriminate between poor and wealthy in church seating:

For if a man comes into your assembly with a gold ring and dressed in fine clothes, and there also comes in a poor man in dirty clothes, and you pay special attention to the one who is wearing the fine clothes, and say, “You sit here in a good place,” and you say to the poor man, “You stand over there, or sit down by my footstool,” have you not made distinctions among yourselves, and become judges with evil motives? Listen, my beloved brethren: did not God choose the poor of this world to be rich in faith and heirs of the kingdom which He promised to those who love Him? But you have dishonored the poor man. Is it not the rich who oppress you and personally drag you into court? Do they not blaspheme the fair name by which you have been called? If, how-

ever, you are fulfilling the *royal law, according to the Scripture, “You shall love your neighbor as yourself,” you are doing well.* But if you show partiality, you are committing sin and are convicted by the law as transgressors. For whoever keeps the whole law and yet stumbles in one point, he has become guilty of all. For He who said, “Do not commit adultery,” also said, “Do not commit murder.” Now if you do not commit adultery, but do commit murder, you have become a transgressor of the law. So speak and so act, as those who are to be judged by the law of liberty (Jam. 2:2-12).

Where is this “royal law” found? It is not in the supposed “moral law” of Ten Commandments but in the “ceremonial law” (Lev. 19:18) which, according to the aforementioned Bible doctrines book, is supposed to be terminated. The law contained many moral principles of higher magnitude than those written on stone. Jesus revealed this fact in His Sermon On the Mount. He speaks of divorce,<sup>12</sup> swearing oaths,<sup>13</sup> abortion and injuries,<sup>14</sup> loving our enemies,<sup>15</sup> and being perfect.<sup>16</sup>

These examples of what Jesus meant by “the law” that He came to fulfill—and the law that would not pass away until He fulfilled it—prove He was not just speaking of the Ten Commandments but of the one whole law!

Another good example of Jesus identifying eternal moral precepts is found in Matthew 23:23 where the “weightier matters of the law” are “justice” and “mercy”—neither of which were in the Decalogue, but they were part of the law. Jesus never implied that “the law” was speaking merely of the Decalogue, nor did any other Bible writer. The following list represents only a sample of what can be considered high moral principles found outside the Ten Commandments:

- You shall not vex a stranger (Ex. 22:21).
- You shall not afflict any widow or fatherless child (Ex. 22:23).
- You shall not follow a multitude to do evil (Ex. 23:2).
- You shall not go as a talebearer among the people (Lev. 19:2).
- You shall not avenge yourselves (Lev. 19:16-18).
- You shall love your neighbor as yourself (Lev 19:16-18).
- You shall not have respect of persons (not discriminate) (Deut. 16:19).
- You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart (Deut. 6:5).
- You shall not pervert justice due the stranger or fatherless (Deut. 24:7).
- You shall not oppress a servant who is poor and needy (Deut. 24:14).
- You must leave gleanings in your harvest for the needy (Deut. 24:19-22).
- You shall be perfect (Deut. 24:17).

Many see the Ten Commandments as representing only minimum requirements. The rich young ruler in Luke 18 said that he had kept the commandments from his youth up, and Paul said of himself, “as to the righteousness which is in the Law, found blameless.”<sup>17</sup>

A person could beat someone within an inch of his life, yet he would not have broken the letter of the law, “You shall not kill.”

**For many of us who have held the Ten Commandments to be the high point of morality, it comes as a shock to realize that there are other Old Testament laws that have higher moral value. James shows that violating a law not found in the Decalogue will condemn the transgressor.**

### Changing the law

The terms “moral law”, “ceremonial law”, and “two laws” are all entirely foreign to the Bible. A picture in a past issue of the Seventh-day Adventist Sabbath School quarterly<sup>18</sup> depicts a scholar meticulously scrutinizing scrolls in a library, searching for a “missing text” to validate “Sunday worship”. It might be more fitting to picture people searching for a text to identify a distinction between a moral and a ceremonial law. In short, this idea cannot be defended biblically.

Adventism needs this artificial division in order to give the weekly Sabbath distinction over the other feasts. If the Decalogue is eternal, they argue, then the Sabbath is an eternal “moral requirement” unlike the other merely “ceremonial” Sabbath feasts which have been abolished. The weekly Sabbath, however, is listed with these supposed ceremonial feasts in both Leviticus 23 and Numbers 28–29. Making a distinction between the weekly Sabbath as moral and the rest of the festal Sabbaths as ceremonial, however, is invalid. All of them are part of the law of God which He commanded through Moses. For Israel to break any of the Sabbaths would have been an equally severe breach of God’s law.

Adventism accuses Rome of changing God’s “times and laws” by renumbering the Ten Commandments, making the Sabbath command number three instead of number four, and by supposedly establishing Sunday as the Christian day of worship instead of Sabbath. Rome, however, did not change the numbering of the commandments; they use the numbering found not only in the Hebrew Masoretic Text of Deuteronomy but also in both Exodus and Deuteronomy 5 in the Latin Vulgate (380 AD), in the Septuagint (c 200 BC), and in *Nash Papyri* (200 BC), the oldest manuscript known to contain the commandments.

To teach a division of God’s law into two parts, calling one “ceremonial” and “temporary” and the other “moral” and “eternal”, for the purpose of making the seventh-day Sabbath an eternal requirement for God’s people comes closer to changing God’s “times and laws” than does the Roman use of an alternate numbering system for the commandments.

Daniel, however, is not speaking of changing the Law (*Torab*) in Daniel 7:25. He uses the Persian word “*dat*” meaning “decree”, not “*Torab*”. Thus, his speaking of a beast who would change times and laws is no reference to the

Decalogue or to God’s law—and certainly the Sabbath is not in view. Moreover, Isaiah’s reference in Isaiah 24:5 to ordinances does not refer to the beast in Daniel, but to Israel’s apostasy.

In other words, Adventism’s interpretation of ordinances and decrees, a beast who will change times and laws, and the claim that Rome has already changed God’s law are straw-man arguments. They cannot be supported from a contextual reading of Scripture using good hermeneutical principles.

### The Sabbath: Not the Greatest of the Feasts

We should not even compare the Sabbath with the other feasts of the Lord listed with it in Leviticus 23 and Numbers 28, 29. To be sure, the Sabbath was the sign of the covenant between God and Israel, but it was not the greatest of these feasts to the Lord. For example, the Day of Atonement was for the expiation of sins, while the Sabbath gave many occasions for offense.

Surely there was no more solemn day than the Day of Atonement. It was preceded with fasting to afflict one’s soul to be sure all one’s sins of the previous year were confessed and covered with the blood of the sacrificial lamb, which prefigured Christ. The Sabbath had none of this solemnity! Thus God called the Day of Atonement *Hemera Megaleb* (the Great Day) in Isaiah 1:13, 14, in the Septuagint.

The weekly Sabbath, on the other hand, was a recurring sign demonstrating that Israel was continuing to accept the terms of the covenant God had made with them at Sinai. It had immediate value as a weekly reminder that any success they experienced came about not because of their hard work but because God accomplished their success for them. They rested one day in seven, but God kept working on their behalf, blessing them while their pagan neighbors wore themselves out and sacrificed their children trying to please their gods. The weekly Sabbath was directly related to the terms of the Sinai covenant and reminded them of their release from slavery (Deut. 5:15) and of God’s promise of rest in His finished work on their behalf (Ex. 20:11).

### Love encompasses all the moral laws of the Old Testament.

All morality—wherever it is expressed in the Old Testament—is summed up in the one New Covenant Commandment: “And this is His commandment, that we believe in the name of His Son Jesus Christ, and love one another, just as He commanded us” (1 Jn. 3:23).

### Summary of “law” facts

We can summarize our overview of God’s law as presented in the Old Testament with some succinct sentences:

- There is only one law, not two: the Law of God written by Moses.
- “Law” and “ordinance” are often used interchangeably.
- The spoken Law and the written Law have equal authority.
- The “Law of Moses” is “the Law of God”.

- Many of the highest moral laws are not found in the Decalogue but in the so-called “ceremonial” law.
- The Decalogue contains at least one ritual law, the weekly sign of the Mosaic covenant: Sabbath.
- Changing the law could apply to Adventists more correctly than to Catholics.
- Love encompasses all the moral laws of the Old Testament.

### Colossians 2:16

Colossians 2:16 and a host of other Bible references clearly show that the ritual laws of the Old Testament given by God to Israel which pointed forward to Christ are no longer binding on Christians.<sup>19</sup> This text reads,

“Therefore let no one act as your judge in regard to food or drink or in respect to a festival or a new moon or a Sabbath day things which are a mere shadow of what is to come; but the substance belongs to Christ.”

As du Preez states in his book, “throughout the history of the Christian church Colossians 2:16 has been regularly regarded as a text which teaches that the seventh-day Sabbath was abrogated and therefore is no longer binding on Christians.”<sup>20</sup>

The vast majority of scholars believe the “Sabbath days” mentioned in this text refer to the Seventh-day Sabbath, because Paul has already referred to the annual feast days by the term “festival”. To conclude “Sabbaths” also refer to the annual feast days makes Paul redundant. Also, the terms used here follow a known Old Testament pattern of seasons, months, and days where “days” refer to the weekly Sabbath.<sup>21</sup>

### Conclusion

We now come back to the two quotes from Adventist sources. The first is from General Conference President Ted Wilson:

“The observance of the Sabbath is not only a sign of His creatorship in the beginning but will be THE sign of God’s people in the last days in contrast to those with the mark of the beast representing an attempt to keep holy a day which God has not set apart as holy”

The second is from Ron du Preez:

“The completing weight of intertextual, linguistic, semantic, structural, and contextual evidence demonstrates that the *sabbata* of Colossians 2:16 refers to ancient Jewish ceremonial Sabbaths, and not the weekly Sabbath. Thus, the seventh-day Sabbath of the Decalogue cannot be regarded as abrogated on the basis of Colossians.”<sup>22</sup>

However, this study conclusively shows that there is only one law given by God, written by Moses—the Law of the LORD.

Thus, the conclusions of Dr. Ron du Preez as well as the statement of Elder Ted Wilson are brought into question because they are based on the unobserved and faulty assumption that there are two laws: one ceremonial, containing the “ancient Jewish ceremonial Sabbaths”—and the other moral, containing “the seventh-day Sabbath of the Decalogue”.

God’s law is one law. His commands are all moral. If we cling to ritual laws that pointed to the Lord Jesus when He has already fulfilled them, we break those laws by refusing to accept God’s reality to which they pointed.

Jesus is the Lord of the Sabbath. †

### Endnotes

<sup>1</sup>Ellen G. White, *Early Writings*, p. 33; *Life Sketches*, p. 101 (Published in 1915). *Word to the Little Flock*, p. 18; *Review and Sabbath Herald*, 1851-07-21.012; *Supplement to Christian Experience and Views of Ellen White*, p. 3.

<sup>2</sup>Ted Wilson, The General Conference Sabbath Sermon, July 3, 2010.

<sup>3</sup>Du Preez, *Judging the Sabbath*, p. 148.

<sup>4</sup>*Principles of Life From the Word of God—A Systematic Study of the Major Doctrines of the Bible*, Prepared by and Published for The Department of Education, General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, (Pacific Press, Mt. View, CA 1952.)

<sup>5</sup>*ibid.*, ch. 46.

<sup>6</sup>*ibid.*, p. 170.

<sup>7</sup>*ibid.*, p. 171.

<sup>8</sup>This is one of the most in-depth Scriptural studies on the Sabbath and many related topics. It is available from LAM Publications, LLC as an E-book.

<sup>9</sup>Some of the following references may be from different translations but represent the original.

<sup>10</sup>Ellen White used this text and associated reasoning some fifteen times even late in her life. For example, see *Testimonies for the Church*, Vol. 9, p. 14, 1909.

<sup>11</sup>See Lev. 26:37,46; 9:23; 10:13; 15:23; 16:40; Num. 27:23.

<sup>12</sup>Mt. 5:31, 32.

<sup>13</sup>Mt. 5:33-37.

<sup>14</sup>Mt. 5:38-42.

<sup>15</sup>Mt. 5:43-47

<sup>16</sup>Mt. 5:48.

<sup>17</sup>Phil. 3:6.

<sup>18</sup>*Adult Sabbath School Lesson Quarterly*, 3rd qtr, 1972, p. 37.

<sup>19</sup>It is beyond the parameters of this article to fully show this truth. Please see *Sabbath in Christ* by Dale Ratzlaff for a complete study of this subject.

<sup>20</sup>Du Preez, *Judging the Sabbath*, p. 4. See also p. 56.

<sup>21</sup>Ratzlaff, *Revised Sabbath in Christ*, p. 165-177.

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

**Dale Ratzlaff** (right) is the founder of Life Assurance Ministries, Inc., and owns LAM Publications, LLC. He served as an Adventist pastor for 13 years, seven 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](http://LifeAssuranceMinistries.com).



# Resource on Adventism now available

**W**e are excited to announce that Rose Publishing has just released a brand-new product: *10 Questions & Answers on Seventh-day Adventism*. This brochure is one of the latest additions to Rose's well-known Bible and apologetics charts and maps sold in most Christian book stores as well as online.

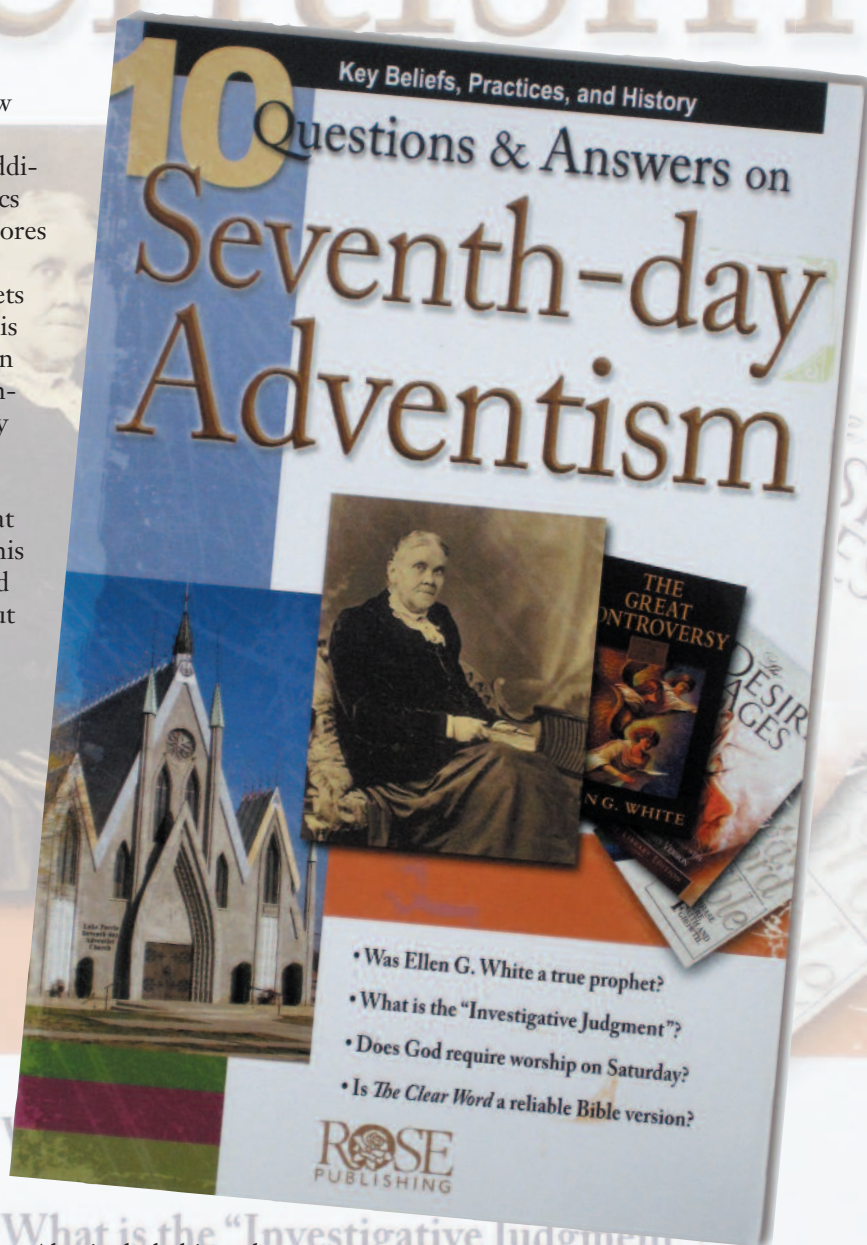
Rose Publishing already has similar pamphlets about Mormonism and Jehovah's Witnesses; this piece on Adventism, however, is a bold move on their part since Adventism has usually been considered to be part of the evangelical community since Walter Martin's conversations with the Adventists in the 1950's.

The foundational truth about Adventism that shapes its worldview is accurately outlined in this pamphlet, and each Adventist belief is answered with an explanation of what the Bible says about the subject.

The ten questions are:

- How did the Seventh-day Adventist Church begin?
- Was Ellen G. White a prophet of God?
- What about Jesus and the Trinity?
- What about man and the state of the dead?
- What is the "Great Controversy Theme"?
- What is the investigative judgment?
- Does God require us to observe the Seventh-day Sabbath?
- Is the Adventist Church God's unique "remnant church"?
- What is *The Clear Word*?
- What else does Seventh-day Adventism teach?

The last question overviews the "health message" and the Adventist position on abortion. Also included is a glossary of Seventh-day Adventist terms and an extensive list of resources and citations.



## Get your own copy now!

We are giving this pamphlet as a gift to all those who have contributed to Life Assurance Ministries during this past year. We will also be giving a free copy of *10 Questions & Answers on Seventh-day Adventism* to every new donor who sends a gift of \$50 or more postmarked by January 31, 2011. Please use the envelope stapled in this issue of *Proclamation!*

With the economy in its current slump, we have fallen behind our budget and urge you to consider becoming a monthly supporter of Life Assurance Ministries.

We thank God for you who have helped make *Proclamation!* and related websites possible by your gifts. And please pray that this new brochure from Rose Publishing will help advance the kingdom of Jesus. †

**Indoctrination goes deep**

“Ransomed by Truth” (*Proclamation!* July-Sept, 2010) by Ane Edwards really struck a chord! The indoctrination in the Adventist church goes so deep. It was true in my case, and I see it in my family members.

I am so thankful for the Holy Spirit who gently nudged me to search for truth, and the part you played in making the transition easier!

CLEARLAKE, WA



made decrees that may have influenced early Christians to change their Sabbath day from Saturday to Sunday. One historical event was when the Roman emperor, Constantine, proclaimed Sunday would be a day of rest. The other event was when a Church council met in Laodicea in AD 363 to declare "... a seventh-day Sabbath was prohibited by Canon 29...."

Since the Christians living prior to 360 A.D. were from generations to have known Jesus directly and therefore have had first hand knowledge of his teachings, they would logically honor Jesus' teaching with greater knowledge. Why would they have continued to honor the Sabbath as directed by God's ten commandments, or if you think they didn't, why is there not a direct mention

Bible. Please give me an example in the Bible where God has kept his desire for His children hidden or obscured.

WEST BEND, WI

I am a pastor in Columbia, SC. I have recently read your book *Sabbath in Christ* and wanted to write you a quick email to let you know how it has affected me. Let me give you a brief background, not for bragging rights but to let you know just what happened as a result of reading your book.

I hold a B.S. in Bible and Secondary Education/English from Baptist Bible College in Pennsylvania. Before I started work on my Masters of Divinity I joined a local synagogue to learn the Hebrew language. Years later I enrolled at Southern Evangelical Seminary, where I currently study, to earn an M.Div in Biblical Studies/Languages. I am a ferocious reader and this past year alone I have purchased well over 200 books, reading many of

**God have mercy on you**

I have never read such garbage in my whole life. I have studied what the Seventh-day Adventists believe for almost 30 years. More importantly, I have compared these beliefs with the Bible. I have not found one thing they are wrong about. You must want to be leaders very badly. You have no new light but are determined to have a following. May God have mercy on you.

The Seventh-day-Adventist church appears to fall, but it won't. It is going through to the end. God's true people will stay true to Him. We are not worshipping a day; we worship a Creator and obey His word—His 10 Commandments, including the fourth. There is no truth in your magazine, just slander against the truth and God's word. Please, don't send me and my family any more of your venomous magazines. God have mercy on you.

ROCHESTER, MN

**Refreshing and edifying**

I found a past issue of your magazine in the recycle bin at our local post office and I have really enjoyed reading the articles during some of my more mindless tasks. I have no past association with the Adventist church, but as a Christian who feels the true gospel is very often taken for granted (if not worse!) in a lot of Christian literature, I found the reading very refreshing and edifying. Thank you. Would you please add my name to your subscriber list?

GLENALLEN, AK

**Two responses to Ratzlaff's *Sabbath in Christ***

I ordered your revised *Sabbath in Christ* book today, but just wanted to know if your book reviews non-biblical history as to why the early Church members, prior to 363A.D., continued to honor the Sabbath on Saturday even after Jesus' resurrection. According to non-Biblical research, I have found two man-

**Your book by far and away was the best book I have read this year and stands atop as one of the best books I have ever read outside of the Bible. *Sabbath in Christ* challenged me in so many ways and cleared up so many things that I cannot begin to tell you how thankful I am in the Lord Jesus for what you did.**

of the reason in the Bible? Also, why would the Church feel compelled to make Saturday an illegal Sabbath and not just reason it out as you have done in your book? I realize there are passages in the Bible that show the Apostles meeting and breaking break on Sunday, but these events seem to be a very obscure way for God to reveal his desire for us to honor the Sabbath on a different day other than Saturday. God gave us the Bible as a means to understand his desires for us, and God has always made it very clear in the Bible what His desires are for us. I have not found a reason or an example in the Bible where He would make it difficult for us to understand His desires for us. Also, the early Christians were filled with the Holy Spirit, who would have influenced their actions and words accordingly. For such a profound change to the Biblical doctrine as honoring the Sabbath on the first day of the week instead of the last, God would surely have given us a clear explanation for it in the New Testament. Why would God make this change obscure and practically hidden within the Bible? It's hard for me to follow why God's direction for us would not be more clearly indicated in the

them. Your book by far and away was the best book I have read this year and stands atop as one of the best books I have ever read outside of the Bible. *Sabbath in Christ* challenged me in so many ways and cleared up so many things that I cannot begin to tell you how thankful I am in the Lord Jesus for what you did. If that book impacted no one else, at least know that it got my attention and has opened

**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

my eyes and made me look at the Scriptures in a new, Christ-centered way. I have now purchased several copies and am having my interns go through it with me throughout the course of a semester, and will do so with every new intern that works under me—I believe this book is that important!

I always believed that we were no longer bound to keep the Sabbath but never had a good answer. Now, because of your book, I do.

studies! That religion helped to ruin my son's belief in God.

My ex-husband was a lay-elder, and I was his abused (physically and mentally) wife.

A few years ago I started reading the Bible for myself. God really opened my eyes, and now I have a relationship with Him, serving Him in Spirit and in truth!

God bless you all!  
WEST MIFFLIN, PA

overcome in the strength of Christ (Phil. 4:13)...Talbot uses the argument that because God cannot sin, therefore Jesus (who is God, of course) could not sin. In His divinity that makes sense, but as a human He could have sinned, otherwise He was not tempted in all points as we are...Dr. Talbot uses James 1:13 to prove that Jesus could not be tempted, because God cannot be tempted. But, to use Dr. Talbot's logic, then neither could He die, since God is immortal and cannot die. But Jesus did die. What died? His human nature, of course. In the same way, in His human nature, He could be tempted and could have sinned...We must therefore conclude that in His human nature He was subject to the same trials and tribulations that come to all mankind; that, like us, He could not do anything of Himself, including the resisting of temptation; but, through the power of Holy Spirit, He could be, and was victorious over temptation. Talbot has created a worse problem than the one he set out to solve. Unless of course he doesn't believe that Jesus was fully human and fully divine.

**I'm deeply sorry about your publication; it reminds me of the country western song, "Sittin' At Home Diggin' Up Bones." I know one thing; I would not want to be in your shoes if what Adventists teach turns out to be the truth. And rest assured we are all going to know the answer to that question in a very, very short time.**

**You've committed the unpardonable sin**

I'm deeply sorry about your publication; it reminds me of the country western song, "Sittin' At Home Diggin' Up Bones." I know one thing; I would not want to be in your shoes if what Adventists teach turns out to be the truth. And rest assured we are all going to know the answer to that question in a very, very short time. Here is one thing I do know. Your publication comes across as very demonic in spirit. If that is true, then you have lied to the Holy Spirit who will be sealing us very soon. I do think that you have committed the unpardonable sin against the Holy Spirit which at some point in the near future will dawn on your consciousness in sheer terror.

A Faithful & True Witness (Rev. 3:14)  
VIA EMAIL

**Appreciation**

We appreciate your magazine so much. It has enlightened us and taken away the guilt we have long endured. Thank you.

YUBA CITY, CA

**Jesus could have sinned**

Dr. Talbot (*Proclamation!*, July-October, 2010) says that Jesus could not have sinned. If that is the case then His 33 years of life and His death on the cross proved nothing. The fact that a Being who was incapable of sinning lived a sinless life is meaningless (sort of like a mortal being dying), and gives us no hope of ever overcoming temptation. But if One who could have sinned, instead resisted temptation and lived a sinless life, now that is astounding, and it gives hope to mankind that sin can be

I never was able to tell when Paul was using the phrase "Law" to mean the civil, ceremonial, or moral Law—now I know! And I never understood the purpose of the ritual laws, as they seemed so obscure ("do not wear clothes mixed with wool and linen"), but now, because of your work, I do. Thank you so much, brother.

I believe your book was saying that all of the ritual laws were "tutors" that lead us to Christ, is that right? So, laws such as not cutting the corners of the beards, not yoking different animals, and leaving the corners of the field untouched all point to Christ? I have begun to examine each and every one of the laws with a Christ-centered perspective and have been greatly overjoyed to see how He fulfills them all...

As I sit in my study with your book on my desk, I thank God for you and hope your work gets into many hands.

COLUMBIA, SC

**Send it to Satan**

I'm all for Sister White and the Bible; I don't belong to any church, but I keep the seventh-day Sabbath and love the Lord with all my heart. I spend one hour every night reading the Bible and sister White. She is right on.

I put all your papers in the trash can. Send it back to Satan where it belongs.

COALMONT, TN

**Thank God for rescuing me**

I thank God each day for rescuing my family and me from Adventism. That 38 years was enough for me! To think that I went to Oakwood University and even gave Bible

**Editor's response:** The Adventist view shaped by the Great Controversy requires Jesus to be a human example showing us how to resist temptation and keep the law. This view is not biblical. Hebrews 2 explains that only a perfect human could qualify as the sufficient sacrifice to pay for all human sin. Jesus was that perfect human.

Moreover, His perfection did not depend upon resisting temptation; it depended upon the fact that He was born spiritually alive, conceived by the Holy Spirit. He was never an object of wrath (Eph. 2:3) requiring being born again. Because He was God—never giving up any of His divine attributes (Col. 1:19; 2:9)—He was perfect and had spiritual life from conception. Because He was human He qualified to pay for human sin.

We cannot explain how this hypostatic union works; we only know the Bible declares this singular mystery to be true. Jesus did not come to demonstrate we can resist sin; we are never expected to be perfect in our mortal flesh. Rather, Jesus came to be our Substitute and to pay for all our sin, and we are counted righteous and faultless before God when we place our faith in Him because God credits Jesus' personal righteousness to us (2 Cor. 5:21; Phil. 3:9; Rom. 3:21-31; 5:10-11).

MAIL LETTERS TO THE EDITOR TO:  
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**Redlands, CA 92373**  
OR EMAIL EDITOR: [proclamation@gmail.com](mailto:proclamation@gmail.com)

# 6TH ANNUAL FORMER ADVENTIST FELLOWSHIP WEEKEND

**YES, I WANT TO REGISTER** for the Former Adventist Fellowship weekend at Trinity Church in Redlands, California, February 18–20, 2011. Does not include transportation or lodging.

Number attending \_\_\_\_\_ X \$65 (each person) = Total amount enclosed \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Vegetarian?  YES (number) \_\_\_\_\_  NO (number) \_\_\_\_\_

**Please return with check or money order in included envelope (space limited to 150).**

NAME #1 \_\_\_\_\_

NAME #2 \_\_\_\_\_

NAME #3 \_\_\_\_\_

NAME #4 \_\_\_\_\_

# CHOOSE WHOM YOU WILL SERVE

## SCHEDULE (New this year...meetings all day Friday!)

### FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 18, 2011, 9:00am–9:15pm

- 9:00–10:10 Unmasking the Sabbath "proof-texts"
- 10:25–11:20 What about the rapture?
- 11:35–12:30 What happens when we die?
- 2:00–2:55 When is the judgment?
- 3:10–4:05 Heaven and hell: are they both eternal?
- 7:00–7:40 Worship and testimony
- 7:40–8:25 Keynote: "Choose whom you will serve"
- 8:25–9:15 Panel: Your questions answered

### SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 19, 2011, 8:00am–9:15pm

- 8:00–9:15 Worship, testimony & devotional
- 9:45–10:45 How to choose your church
- 11:00–12:00 Breakout sessions (five options)
- 1:10–2:15 Choose your mountain (study in Galatians)
- 2:30–3:30 Breakout sessions (five options)
- 3:45–4:45 No compromising with security
- 7:00–7:30 Worship and testimony
- 7:30–8:25 The New Covenant (Communion)
- 8:25–9:15 Testimonies

### SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 20, 2011, 8:00am–4:00pm

- 8:00–9:15 Devotional (to be announced)
- 9:30–10:45 Worship with Trinity Church (host church)
- 12:00–4:00 Fellowship lunch

## FEATURES

- Friday meetings focused on major doctrinal challenges
- Breakout sessions with issues former Adventists face
- Food and fellowship time, and sales area
- Communion, prayer, and testimonies Saturday evening
- Sunday lunch with the afternoon open for fellowship

## ARRIVAL/DEPARTURE TIMES

- Begins Friday, February 18, 2011 at 9:00 am **NEW!**
- Ends Sunday, February 20, 2011 at 4:00 pm

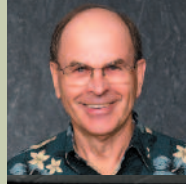
## TO REGISTER (SPACE LIMITED TO THE FIRST 150)

- \$65 per person, must register before February 1, 2011
- Sign up online or use coupon above.
- Fee includes meetings, handouts, lunch on Friday, three meals on Saturday, lunch on Sunday, and snacks. Scholarships are available!
- You must make your own lodging/transportation arrangements.
- A limited number of local church member's homes are available for those with financial challenges. Call for more information.

## TO SIGN-UP ONLINE

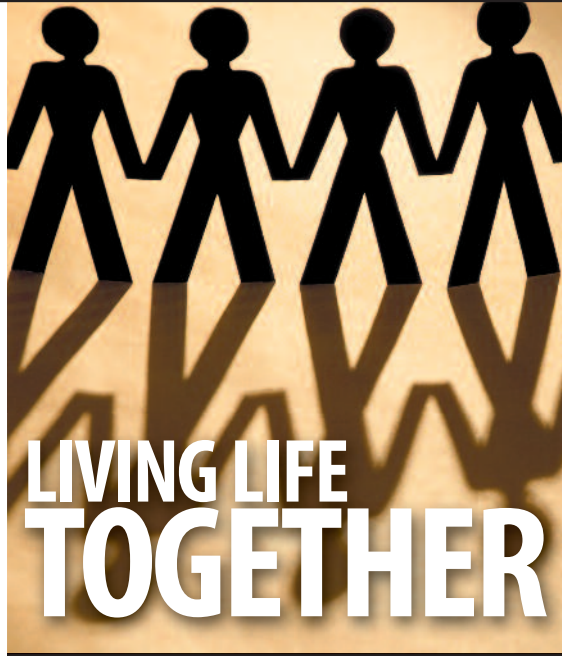
Go to [www.FormerAdventist.com](http://www.FormerAdventist.com) and follow the links.

**FOR MORE INFORMATION: Phone (877)-349-6984**



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The life A F T E R with Chris Lee



**T**he wind howled in a sustained blast as it tore through crevices in the mountain. With gale force it dislodged mighty boulders causing them to crash down the mountainside, smashing and collecting more rocks as they went. The combined cacophony of rending stone and storm was deafening in its intensity. When it ceased, the abrupt silence was at first jarring, then ominous. The man tentatively tested returning to the mouth of the cave that had sheltered him. He felt faint vibrations in the soles of his feet. As the tremors built, a mounting rumble accompanied the shaking. With growing violence the bedrock heaved, forcing the man to his knees. The earthquake ceased as suddenly as it had come, and there was again silence. Without warning the world fanned into flame as fire swirled around the mountain licking at the entrance to the cave. The terrified observer pressed himself back into the cavern. When the fury of the fire had burned itself out, all that was left was the sound of a gently blowing wind. The man wrapped his face in his clothing and again cautiously approached the entrance of his shelter. A voice spoke, “What are you doing here Elijah?”

It’s a good question. Elijah was just coming off a huge victory on top of Mount Carmel. Working through Elijah, God had demonstrated the futility of idol worship and had defeated 850 false prophets. In a dramatic conclusion God brought a heavy rain storm to the drought-parched land and then empowered Elijah to outrun the king’s chariot back to the city. One would think that Elijah would be on an incredible spiritual high rather than hiding in a cave, depressed, despondent, and alone. Then again, maybe it’s not so hard to understand.

Remember when you were first on the journey out of Adventism? God was showing you something new every day. You could feel the

palpable presence of the Spirit all the time. The Bible was coming alive before your very eyes, and Jesus was manifesting Himself in every aspect of your life. Huge changes were occurring in the way you thought, acted, interacted, and worshipped. It was a time of joy, excitement, and passion. You were on a spiritual high. Then day to day life set in. There were bills to pay, kids to raise, and various frustrations. Some of those frustrations came in the form of friends and family who didn’t want to hear about

your experience, leaving you feeling alone and isolated. Then came the blues.

Big highs are often followed by big lows, but sometimes God speaks to us in the lows in ways we could never hear otherwise. It was in Elijah’s lowest moment that God reminded him that no matter how alone he felt, there were actually many other faithful believers out there. In fact, the very next thing God did was to connect him with Elisha who ministered to Elijah. Over the last few columns I’ve talked a great deal about the need to be an active part of a healthy, well-balanced church, but it doesn’t end there. We also need to develop authentic relationships. Joining a Bible study or other small group is one good way to get to know other Christ-followers.

It’s normal to have highs and lows in your Christian experience. When God blesses you with high moments, you can bless those with whom you are in relationship. It is in the lows that others will bless and minister to you. I think that’s how God intended the Church to work. It wasn’t supposed to be just about coming to a service on Sunday. It was supposed to be about doing life together.

It’s time to start living life together. It’s time to begin the life after. †



**Chris Lee** lives in Lincoln, Nebraska with his wife, Carmen, and daughters, Ashlyn and Alyssa. They attend the Lincoln Berean Church. Chris is a self-described “theology junkie” whose mission is to proclaim the unfathomable grace of Christ in a clear, understandable, and Biblical way. He leads a Life Group Bible study for former Adventists at Lincoln Berean. You may contact Chris by email at [ambulator@gmail.com](mailto:ambulator@gmail.com).