

ADVENTISM'S FUNDAMENTAL BELIEF #9: ATONEMENT NOT COMPLETE

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# Proclamation!

FOR FORMER ADVENTISTS  
INQUIRING ADVENTISTS  
SABBATARIANS  
CONCERNED CHRISTIANS

SPRING 2014  
VOLUME 15, ISSUE 1

## FROM DESPAIR TO LIFE

THE RESURRECTION AND THE LIFE

## FALSELY ACCUSED

REMEMBERING THE NINTH ANNUAL  
FORMER ADVENTIST CONFERENCE

## MY MIND WAS OPENED MY HEART WAS BROKEN

SCANDALOUS GRACE

## SPIRITUAL FORMATION: WE MUST BE BEREANS

ANTIOCHUS IV  
EPIPHANES

# IS HE THE LITTLE HORN?



COLLEEN TINKER

## Antiochus IV Epiphanes and the resurrection

This past month has brought suffering and death close to home. First, on March 27, we attended the funeral of Janice Vandiver, the daughter of Gary and Elizabeth Inrig who recently stepped down as the senior pastor and the pastor of women, respectively, at Trinity Church in Redlands, California. We were moved and strengthened as Gary and his son Stephen reminded us that God's promises are sure and His faithfulness never fails, even when we face more than we can stand. Our Father stands with us and holds us up.

Then, on Friday, April 4, I spent the day in the emergency room with my mother who was finally admitted into the cardiac care unit with wildly uncontrolled heart rates and rhythms three weeks

until Jesus is done investigating each person's record, at which point He will place all the confessed sins of the saved on Satan the scapegoat. Satan will then bear those sins into the lake of fire and be punished for them.

This doctrine, of course, makes Jesus the One whose blood defiles the heavenly sanctuary. This Jesus did not complete the atonement at the cross but continues to "apply His blood" in an ongoing atonement during the IJ. This Jesus is not powerful enough to have saved us completely by His work on the cross nor to have broken the bonds of death by the life that was in him.

The Lord Jesus, however, did everything necessary for our salvation on the cross, and He rose from death because He is Life. His victorious, resurrection life is the reason we can be born again and can pass from death to life at that moment. Further, His resurrection guarantees our resurrection when He comes again.

The Lord Jesus shatters the central doctrine of Adventism: His blood never defiles the sanctuary with our sin. His blood always cleanses us from our sin.

Then who did defile the temple requiring its cleansing in Daniel 8:14? Antiochus Epiphanes! Dale Ratzlaff unpacks this historic fact in his article in this issue. Also in this issue Scott Blakey discusses the meaning and the mystery of the resurrection.

Paul Carden shares how he discovered the hidden reality of Adventism, and Martin Carey responds to critics of his spiritual formation articles. Charles Cochran tells his faith story, and we also hear from our regular columnists Rick Barker, Carolyn Macomber, and Chris Lee.

Jesus' resurrection changed all of history. Our mortality is not our identity when we are in Him. We have peace with God; not even death can separate us from His love. He is risen! †

The Lord Jesus shatters the central doctrine of Adventism: His blood never defiles the sanctuary with our sin.

after sustaining a spontaneous fracture of her spine at the T8 level. Three days later I sat with her and with a trusted friend of hers as she decided she did not want to have a pacemaker installed if it were to be recommended.

As I listened to my mother say she was ready to go if it was her time, I thought of Psalm 139:16b: "In Your book were all written the days that were ordained for me, when as yet there was not one of them." There was no drama or fear among the three of us, and I realized that God already knows when He will take my mother home to Himself. If God still has work for my mother to do, He will sustain her with or without a pacemaker.

The suffering and death of our loved ones—and of ourselves—is not meaningless. Because of the Lord Jesus, our lives, including our suffering, are redeemed for His glory and our good. Moreover, because Jesus broke the curse of death by offering the perfect, acceptable sacrifice for human sin, we who repent and believe in Him are guaranteed eternal life in His presence—and we are guaranteed that our bodies will be raised incorruptible!

So where does Antiochus Epiphanes fit into this discussion?

Adventism's central doctrine, the investigative judgment (IJ), teaches that the abomination of desolation which pollutes the sanctuary is the sin of those who profess Christ. This sin, Adventism teaches, has been carried to the heavenly sanctuary by the blood of Jesus, and those sins stay there

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COVER AND PAGE 14 PHOTO: Statue of Antiochus IV of Syria located in the Altes Museum, Berlin, Germany (cover photo altered; background removed from original). User:Jniemenmaa [CC-BY-SA-3.0 (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/3.0/>) or GFDL (<http://www.gnu.org/copyleft/fdl.html>)], via Wikimedia Commons.

# CAN'T YOU JUST LEAVE ADVENTISTS ALONE?

Why do you at Life Assurance Ministries continue to bash Adventists? Can't you just leave Adventists alone?

If you are a regular reader of *Proclamation!* you should know that we seldom mention Adventists by name. We are not hurt or angry—far from it! In fact Carolyn and I have often said that we appreciate much of our Adventist upbringing. The sense of community, the emphasis on health, education, and the moral codes our families instilled in our lives will always be cherished. Most of us had no idea of the depths of error in Adventist theology—especially the gospel—until many months or years after we left. Now we wonder how we were so blind to statements which should have been blinking red lights warning us of error.

True, we at Life Assurance Ministries do point out the errors of Adventist teachings, especially those which undermine the simple gospel. If we are to be true to God's word, then we must contend for the faith that was once for all delivered to the saints. We are to test the spirits and hold fast what is true. Following are a few of the statements that should cause our Adventist readers to see the gross error of Ellen White's writings. Note what she said regarding the people and churches who *rightly* rejected Miller's date setting. My comments are in brackets.

The most devoted gladly received the message [Miller's prediction that Christ would come in 1843, which was false]. They knew it was from God, and that it was delivered at the right time. Angels were watching with the deepest interest the result of the heavenly message, and when the churches turned from and

rejected it, [as they should have] they in sadness consulted with Jesus. He turned his face from the churches....<sup>1</sup>

I was shown in vision, and I still believe, that there was a shut door [of mercy] in 1844. All who saw the light of the first and second angels' messages and rejected that light [which proved to be error], *were left in darkness*. And those

who accepted it and received the Holy Spirit which attended the proclamation of the message from heaven, and who afterward renounced their faith and pronounced their experience a delusion, thereby rejected the Spirit of God, and it no longer pleaded with them.<sup>2</sup>

**IF WE ARE TO BE TRUE TO GOD'S WORD THEN WE MUST CONTEND FOR THE FAITH THAT WAS ONCE FOR ALL DELIVERED TO THE SAINTS.**

In other words, Ellen White clearly said that those who rejected the false message of date setting for the coming of Christ in 1843 were lost. She went on to say that those who once believed in the message of 1843/44 and then saw its errors and rejected it as they should have thereby rejected the Spirit of God and it no longer pleaded with them.

Measured by the word of God, the above statements of Ellen White are gross error. Her vision must have come from another spirit.

But of that day or hour no one knows, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but the Father alone (Mk. 13:32).

For this reason you be ready too; for the Son of Man is coming at an hour when you do not think He will (Mt. 24:44). †

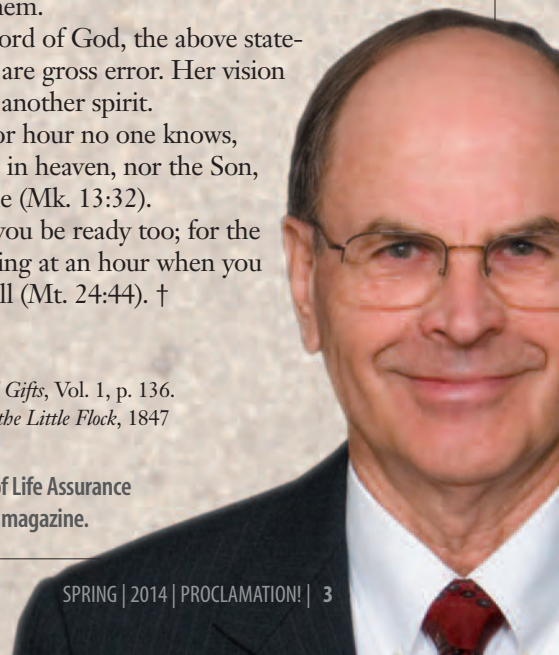


Dale and Carolyn Ratzlaff have authored five books concerning Adventism: *Sabbath in Christ*—a volume that explains new covenant Sabbath rest, *Cultic Doctrine of Seventh-day Adventism*—explores the unique doctrine of a pre-advent judgment that decides eternal destinies, *Truth About Adventist "Truth"*—a 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 [Ratzlaff.com](http://Ratzlaff.com) or by phoning (928) 554-1001.

**Endnotes**

<sup>1</sup> Ellen G. White, *Spiritual Gifts*, Vol. 1, p. 136.  
<sup>2</sup> Ellen G. White, *Word to the Little Flock*, 1847

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



CHRISTMAS ART © ISTOCKPHOTO.COM/DARTOHPKINS

# FROM DESPAIR

CHARLES COCHRAN

I WAS NOT AN UNWITTING,  
BORN-AND-RAISED ADVENTIST;  
RATHER, I WAS ONE WHO  
IGNORED CLEAR, BIBLE-  
CONTRADICTING EVIDENCE  
AND CHOSE THE STRANGE NEW  
BELIEF. TO JUSTIFY MY NEW  
PSEUDO-CHRISTIAN VIEWS, I  
BECAME PHARISAICAL IN  
DEFENDING THEM.

**W**hen I look back, I'm still puzzled as to why I converted from my Southern Baptist upbringing to Adventism. I was born again when I was about 10 years old, was baptized, and knew Jesus personally; I enjoyed this relationship with Jesus into my early 20's until I married an Adventist. But I'm ahead of my story.

As a junior in high school I met a girl who was an Adventist. We were young and in love; neither of us took the fact that we had different religions very seriously. Now, however, I wonder how I failed to see how blatantly inconsistent Christianity is with Adventism when I encountered it, and I realize that anyone who knows both belief systems should be able to see the contradictions.

By the time I was 20 we were married and later had a son and a daughter. The crucial differences between our religions didn't cross our minds for a few years, but the question of how we would raise our children gradually become very disputed. Even though I had married one, I had classified Adventists by that time in the same category as Jehovah's Witnesses, and looking back, I believe I had been accurate.

I knew my Bible pretty well at that time, thanks to my having been raised by my good old Baptist mom to know it. I set out to prove my case for orthodox Christianity, but to no avail—even though Ellen, my wife, could not defend Adventism from the Bible. Exchanging visits at each other's churches was also futile in convincing either of us of the other's beliefs.

One day a lady from Ellen's Adventist church came over to give her Bible studies. It turned out that these "Bible studies" were actually sessions of reading from a book called *The Great Controversy*. I heard them reading, and the latter chapters began to intrigue me with their mystical, fantasy-like themes. Being unlearned about what was really under the hood of this Adventist belief system, I dismissed my cognitive dissonance and suspicions to examine this church and decided that there were no significant differences between it and Christianity. In a matter of months I became a member, and that move broke my mom's heart.

I was not an unwitting, born-and-raised Adventist; rather, I was one who ignored clear, Bible-contradicting evidence and chose the strange new belief. To justify my new pseudo-Christian views, I became pharisaical in defending them.

## Disillusioned rebel

Eleven years later, my first marriage to the Adventist girl ended in bitter, volatile divorce. All of us, including my 11-year-old son and eight-year-old daughter, were torn and hurt, and the ripple effects of those wounds took their toll in each of our lives.

# TO LIFE

For about three years of bachelor life in my early 30's, I was a rebel without a cause and partied in reckless abandon. I had virtually become agnostic in my behavior as I lived out my days, staying single and unencumbered. It was the 70's, and the Bee Gee's song "Staying Alive" was popular then. I identified with that song and with others by icons of the age: The Rolling Stones and Credence Clearwater Revival.

Then one night I was on the dance floor of a nightclub at a singles' bar. Suddenly I found myself looking into the eyes of an other-worldly, angelic woman, and I was verily smitten. My friend and I soon joined her and her friend at their table, and my whirlwind romance accelerated. It was about a week later when I told my mom and dad, "I'm gonna marry this one!" They seemed a little surprised—but relieved. My mom had become worried about my lifestyle and Christian experience. In fact, she would eventually accompany me back to my Adventist church which she detested, just to get me back on track somehow. That was my mom.

## Beginnings and endings

I was married to Joan eight months later in 1974. She was Lutheran by faith. I visited her church and liked it very much and was comfortable there. It should have been a golden opportunity for me to reexamine my beliefs, but I needed far too much deprogramming. Joan agreed to go to my Adventist church at La Sierra University and thought it was "OK"; she went because of my connection to it just to be nice. That's the way she was—too nice for me, probably.

Life was happy for many years—but suddenly it was 9/11. Surely the end of days had come, I thought, and another meteor was headed my way. Then, just weeks later, on December 18, 2001, my Mom died of leukemia after battling it for years. I had gone home for lunch and received the call minutes after I got in the house (I had no cell phone then). I called Joan, then called the school where I taught to take bereavement leave, and we went to see my mom for the last time before they moved her remains.

I had nothing of her left. It was Adventist belief that my mother was non-existent now that she was dead. My despair was intense; yet, like a loyal Adventist, I had an Adventist pastor for the funeral service because that's who I was. It didn't matter to me that my mom was not Adventist nor that she had not believed in "soul sleep". The family would painfully witness this Adventist minister ramble on, making good and sure that my mom was good and dead now that she was gone. Reinforcing that people do not live on in any way after death is often a favorite topic for them at

memorial services. I didn't care much that it bothered others because I knew 'the truth'—or so I thought: one doesn't have a soul; one is a soul, or body plus breath. In other words, in Adventism humans are thought to be a single physical unit like animals are believed to be with no immaterial spirit that survives death.

The next couple of years I roiled in cognitive dissonance, uncertainty, and guilt. I had pleasant dreams of my mom and my dad, seeing them young and gazing at me with looks of expectation on their faces.

In 2003 I retired from teaching and spent a leisurely year waiting for Joan to retire. We then sold our home in the Orangecrest area of Riverside and bought a home in a retirement community in Beaumont in 2004.

Six months later it was discovered that I had prostate cancer, and Joan slept for three days after hearing the news. I pondered life and was not equipped to deal with such tragedy. My faith was weak, and I was not a good loser. I had believed as an Adventist that, if one lived circumspectly, one should need a doctor no more often than a lawyer, as Ellen White taught.

The surgeon explained that the cancer was caught early. It was still encapsulated, and after the surgery he learned that no spreading had occurred; the diseased prostate was removed. My prognosis was considered to be 90% favorable and is increasing over time.

## Recurring dilemma

Years went by and my conflicted worldview was more or less dismissed as I feverishly started to study what scientists had to say about this harsh realm in which we live. I found science to be a firm but friendly place for my tormented mind because, after all, it only discusses facts and probabilities—doesn't it? There was no daring dogma of doctrine, just the amazing progress of technology, and I was once again entertained. Science even had an explanation for human suffering that seemed to be the most reasonable that I'd ever heard: our species has its share of collateral damage as it evolves. It was a simple, impersonal solution. Nonetheless, I couldn't shake the thought: to what end would this perspective lead? What hope could it offer? Even among scientists there is a popular argument that if one doesn't believe in God and is wrong, he loses everything. If, on the other hand, one believes in God and is wrong, he loses nothing. My Christian upbringing seemed to be the trump card, and my dilemma resurfaced: what is truth?

Early in 2011 I began searching online for something—anything but Adventist. Thank God for the internet! I found many ex and former Adventist websites, but the lodestar became the Former Adventist Fellowship (FAF) Forum, the online presence of the weekly FAF Bible study based at Trinity Church in Redlands, California. As one who was anorexic for spiritual food, I consumed and inquired—or, as some probably saw it—interrogated them, demanding meat, not milk. Being skeptical, defensive and distrusting, I know that I often was biting the hands that were feeding me, but these people were different from others. They were patient and nice—or maybe they were just tolerant—but I hope they'll forgive me for lashing out at times.

# MY HURT AND ANGER SOON TURNED INTO HATE AND HOT RESENTMENT TOWARD GOD—OR WAS HE A MONSTER? I WANTED TO HURT SOMEONE BACK. I WANTED REVENGE BADLY, BUT AGAINST WHOM OR WHAT?

In June, 2011, I received the magazine *Proclamation!* and was gripped by an article, “The Great Controversy: living in a world-view of deception”. It rocked my world with disconcerting evidence against the organization in which I had believed for so long. In fact, the evidence was unsettling to my pride as well. Would I have to actually admit that I was so wrong for so long?

## Tragedy and triumph

Little did I know that, later that year, I would face the biggest tragedy and breakdown of my life. Joan started having symptoms of something very serious. What was at first suspected to be a heart problem or stroke worsened and was perplexing Joan’s doctors. The symptoms progressed from rapid pulse and sweats to serious imbalance and shock. Eventually she fainted right in front of me before I could catch her. The CT scans earlier had shown nothing indicating the culprit. Finally, when her doctor could not even help her walk steadily down the hall, an emergency MRI with contrast of her head was ordered, and we raced to Kaiser emergency in Fontana where they admitted her. I had just come back from the cafeteria to the ER to see Joan, and I found



**Charles Cochran** retired in 2003 after 33 years of teaching high school. He has a biological son and daughter and three stepdaughters. His beloved late wife Joan has five granddaughters, and he has three grandsons. Transitioning out of Adventism was especially hard for him because he was going through bereavement and terrible grief at the same time. Nevertheless, he was also learning the crucial importance of biblical truth.

her and a doctor both sobbing. Joan said, “Did you hear? I’m going to die.”

I was stunned; I didn’t believe it. Two neurosurgeons, though, showed me the scans on the computer screen, and there it was, like a monster. They explained that the tumor was large, a fact which was obvious, and also extensive and aggressive. They said surgery would be futile, leaving too many deficits, and radiation or chemotherapy would only shortly delay the inevitable. She had Senator Kennedy’s disease—glioblastoma, a primary brain tumor which was the second most rare and most lethal. The only good news about the death sentence was what one of the neurosurgeons told us: it would be painless. They seemed to be awestruck even to see an actual case of it.

Within three weeks, in December, 2011, my wife of 38 years died.

My hurt and anger soon turned into hate and hot resentment toward God—or was He a monster? I wanted to hurt someone back. I wanted revenge badly, but against whom or what? Believing, as the Adventist I was, that Joan was annihilated when she died was devastating, and soon I began to lose weight. I was thinking that now I wanted to die, preferably by the same thing that took her life.

I very soon learned that even in the worst crises, the business of life still had its demands, and I rallied to put things in order. At the same time, I was imagining that it would be a great relief to have a fatal accident or become terminally ill with a decisive and fast killer, as Joan had. Life now consisted of my just going through the motions, but being the patriarch of the family drafted me into responsibility and Christian duty. My loved ones were looking to me, and I simply had to sustain somehow.

Should I also continue pursuing my transition into the Former Adventist Fellowship? Therapists and bereavement groups strongly advised me to be around family and friends as much as possible, so I asked myself, “What have you got to lose?” With some kicking and screaming as I wrestled with a couple of doctrines, I eventually joined Trinity Church and felt at peace about it. Thanks to the incredible kindness of the people in my FAF group, I was now an evangelical.

Eternal life now—what a fascinating new concept. Yet I cannot deny it. John 5:24 says, “Truly, truly I say to you, he who hears My word, and believes Him who sent Me, has eternal life, and does not come into judgment, but has passed out of death into life.”

I’ve asked the Lord Jesus many times to tell Joan things and wonder what’s transpired. Joan believed and was baptized at a young age, and I’ve concluded with clear and redundant Scripture where she is, not just what she was.

Now I no longer have to “get ready”! I am ready to depart and be with Christ or, if He causes me to remain until He comes in glory, I am content.

Death is not the end, and I know I am saved. †

**Fundamental Belief #9.  
Life, Death, and Resurrection  
of Christ**

In Christ's life of perfect obedience to God's will, His suffering, death, and resurrection, God provided the only means of atonement for human sin, so that those who by faith accept this atonement may have eternal life, and the whole creation may better understand the infinite and holy love of the Creator. This perfect atonement vindicates the righteousness of God's law and the graciousness of His character; for it both condemns our sin and provides for our forgiveness. The death of Christ is substitutionary and expiatory, reconciling and transforming. The resurrection of Christ proclaims God's triumph over the forces of evil, and for those who accept the atonement assures their final victory over sin and death. It declares the Lordship of Jesus Christ, before whom every knee in heaven and on earth will bow.

**Comments About The Belief Statement**

This belief statement affirms several critical Christian doctrines:

- That Jesus Christ is the only means for salvation;
- That Christ's death is substitutionary;
- That Christ's resurrection provides assurance for believers' final victory over sin and death;
- That ultimately every knee will bow before Christ.

Unfortunately there are both additions and missing elements that keep this Fundamental Belief from being completely biblical. For example, the idea that Christ's life, death, and resurrection vindicate "the righteousness of God's law" is a concept based on Ellen White rather than Scripture. Instead, Christ's public sacrifice "as a propitiation in His blood through faith" demonstrates God's righteousness and reveals God as both just and the justifier of those who believe (Rom. 3:25-26). His death does not reveal the righteousness of the law. Rather, the law makes us conscious of sin and condemns us (Rom. 7:11-13). Jesus' death fulfills the curse of the law and redeems us from it (Gal. 3:13).

The idea that "the whole creation may better understand the infinite and holy love of the Creator" is also extra-biblical and is drawn from Ellen White's great controversy theme. Scripture says that through Christ, God reconciled "all things to Himself, having made peace through the blood of His cross" (Col. 1:20). Never in Scripture do we find any doubt in all creation about God's infinite and holy love. Instead, Romans 1:20 states that "since the creation of the world His invisible attributes, His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen, being understood through what has been made, so that [those who suppress their knowledge of God by wickedness] are without excuse." Once again, key elements of

**ADVENTISM'S FUNDAMENTAL BELIEF #9**

**LIFE, DEATH, AND  
RESURRECTION OF CHRIST:**

**ATONEMENT  
NOT COMPLETE**

**The public statement hides the reality that Adventist doctrine says Jesus completes the atonement during the investigative judgment.**

Adventist beliefs depend on Ellen White rather than on the Bible alone.

Disturbingly, Fundamental Belief #9 specifically mentions the expiation of sins by Christ, but it is silent about the propitiation (Rom. 3:25, I Jn. 2:2, I Jn. 4:10) accomplished through Christ's death. As a result, this belief ignores a critical component of the death of Christ in reconciling mankind by taking the wrath of God on Himself. Expiation suggests removing guilt from mankind, but propitiation refers to satisfying God's righteous requirements for sin and thus turning away God's anger toward it. Eliminating propitiation results in minimizing the anger of God towards sin.

A final set of observations focusses on the last sentence of the statement. Scripture never states that the resurrection proclaims God's triumph over evil forces. God's sovereignty over evil has never been in question as declared in the book of Job and in statements such as Romans 16:20: "The God of peace will soon crush Satan under your feet."

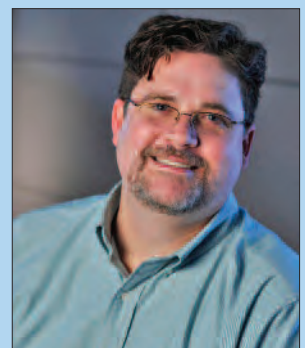
The resurrection broke the curse of death—the curse imposed by God, not by Satan.

Lastly, this statement insists on the phrase "accept this atonement" as the basis for salvation and eternal life. On the surface it is unclear why this phrase was chosen instead of the more Biblically accurate "believe in Christ". In the book *Seventh-day Adventists Believe*, p. 125, however, we discover the reason. The commentary on this statement admits the Adventist belief that the atonement was not completed on the cross but that it continues in the heavenly sanctuary where Jesus "applies the benefits of His complete and perfect atoning sacrifice to achieve the reconciliation of humans to God."

The public statement hides the reality that Adventist doctrine says Jesus completes the atonement during the investigative judgment. Without the investigative judgment, there is no salvation.

Fundamental Belief #9 veils the unbiblical Adventist doctrines of what Jesus' life, death, and resurrection accomplished. †

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



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# THE RESURRECTION AND THE LIFE

SCOTT BLAKEY


**“W**hy do you seek the living One among the dead?” This is the question on which Christian faith hangs. This is the question that separates Jesus from all others, that does not allow us to see Him as merely a great leader or wise teacher. Many great and wise men had come before Christ—men like Abraham, Moses, and David—but when death closed their eyes, they were proven to be mere men. Others (such as Lazarus) would be raised from the dead, but they would also eventually return to the grave. Only Jesus would prove to be the risen One, the “living One,” whom death could not claim or hold. Scripture is clear that if there had been no resurrection, there would be no gospel; the resurrection is the act that affirms Christ’s deity and His power to truly save us from sin and raise us to eternal life with Him. This great historical truth not only provides us with the assurance of heaven, but helps transform us in

this life as well, giving us, as the great old hymn says, “strength for today and bright hope for tomorrow.”

Oddly, this most significant event was met by Jesus’ followers and loved ones with confusion, fear, and doubt. The women who came to the tomb to tend to Jesus’ (presumed dead) body were perplexed to find it empty. When they took the angels’ message back to the apostles, their “words appeared to them as nonsense” (Lk. 24:11). The disciples on the road to Emmaus, broken-hearted because their hope that Jesus truly was the Messiah had died with Him on the cross, did not realize it was Christ himself who walked with them that day, recognizing Him only when He broke bread at the evening meal, at which point He vanished (Lk. 24:13-31). Jesus actually rebuked this doubt as He talked with the disciples on the road, scolding them for not recognizing the teaching of Scripture:

**And He said to them, “O foolish men and slow of heart to believe in all that the prophets have spo-**





**But on the first day of the week, at early dawn, they came to the tomb bringing the spices which they had prepared. And they found the stone rolled away from the tomb, but when they entered, they did not find the body of the Lord Jesus. While they were perplexed about this, behold, two men suddenly stood near them in dazzling clothing; and as the women were terrified and bowed their faces to the ground, the men said to them, “Why do you seek the living One among the dead? He is not here, but He has risen.” Lk. 24:1-6a**

**ken! Was it not necessary for the Christ to suffer these things and to enter into His glory?” Then beginning with Moses and with all the prophets, He explained to them the things concerning Himself in all the Scriptures (Lk. 24:25-27).**

Indeed, Jesus himself had several times explained to the disciples that He would be crucified and raised from the dead (e.g., Matt. 16:21; 17:22-23), a fact of which the angels reminded the women at the empty tomb (Lk. 24:6-7). It is interesting to note, moreover, that the chief priests and Pharisees, of all people, seemed to grasp the significance of His teaching about the resurrection, which led them to request having the tomb sealed and a guard posted, lest the disciples steal the body and deceive people into thinking He had risen (Matt. 27:62-66), and—following the actual resurrection—to bribe the guards to lie about what they had seen (Matt. 28:11-15).

Once the apostles grasped the profound reality of the resurrection, it transformed their lives, their ministry, and all of human history. “Had the crucifixion of Jesus ended his disciples’ experience of Him, it is hard to see how the Christian Church could have come into existence. That Church was founded on faith in the Messiahship of Jesus. A crucified Messiah was no Messiah at all....It was the Resurrection of Jesus, as St. Paul declares in Romans 1:4, which proclaimed Him to be the Son of God with power.”<sup>1</sup> Let us then consider the great, transforming victory of the empty tomb, of the risen Lord and Savior.

### **“As of First Importance”**

The longest, most in-depth teaching on the resurrection in Scripture is found in 1 Corinthians 15. Paul here summarizes the gospel message in this way: “For I delivered to you as of first

**Paul sees the resurrection of Christ as part of the “irreducible minimum” of the gospel message, a truth we see in the teaching of Jesus and the apostles following Pentecost. In fact, he goes so far as to say that apart from the resurrection, preaching and faith are vain and worthless things, and we are still in our sin.**

importance what I also received, that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and that He was buried, and that He was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures” (1 Cor. 15:3-4). The apostle (as did Jesus on the road to Emmaus) shows that this should not be a new or surprising teaching, as Scripture had foretold it. He also offers the empirical evidence of over 500 eyewitnesses, most of whom are still alive and will confirm this teaching. This last point stands as evidence against those who would attempt to “spiritualize” the resurrection, making Christ’s raising from the dead more allegorical than physical. Scripture is quite clear that the risen Christ was a physical being whom the disciples touched and with whom they shared meals (Lk. 24:36-42; Jn. 20:11-29), not a phantom.

Paul sees the resurrection of Christ as part of the “irreducible minimum” of the gospel message, a truth we see in the teaching of Jesus (Mk. 8:31; Jn. 11:25-26) and the apostles following Pentecost (Acts 2:14-36; 3:12-26). In fact, he goes so far as to say that apart from the resurrection, preaching and faith are vain and worthless things, and we are still in our sin (1 Cor. 15:13-19). Paul states that if we follow Christ only in and for this life—a life marked by cross-bearing and self-sacrifice (Lk. 9:23-24)—we are utterly pitiful, a statement that stands as sharp rebuke to those who would have Jesus only as a good teacher or example. The concept that religion in and of itself is good for the soul is seen to be nonsense; there is no power in anything but the true, full gospel.

Because of the resurrection, believers possess not just a better life, but a new nature. Paul illustrates this in a parallel between Adam and Jesus: “For since by a man came death, by a man also came the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ all will be made alive” (1 Cor. 15:21-22). Through Adam’s transgression, all of humanity since has inherited a sin nature (Rom. 5:18-19) and is separated from God and His holiness (Rom. 3:10, 23); furthermore, “through one man sin entered into the world, and death through sin, and death spread to all men, because all sinned” (Rom. 5:12). If Jesus were to remain dead, then sin has defeated even Him; because of His saving power evidenced in the resurrection, we can share in eternal life (Rom. 6:23), inheriting a new nature by being “born again,” or “born from above” (Jn. 3:3, 7).

As new creatures (2 Cor. 5:17), we are not meant for this world alone and are not meant to live for it. History’s greatest saints, those who had such great impact on this earth, had that impact because they had learned to look beyond this life. The great heroes of faith spoken of in Hebrews 11 left their mark because they chose to live as “strangers and exiles on the earth” (Heb. 11:13), desiring “a better country, that is, a heavenly one” (Heb. 11:16) and “a better resurrection” (Heb. 11:35). Our desire is to be for that heavenly place prepared for us and promised to us by Christ Himself (Jn. 14:1-3). Which is not to say that we disregard this world; we are called to lives of service and witness. Indeed, the hope we have because of the resurrection helps us to hold loosely to worldly concerns such as our own reputations or status and better serve others (Phil. 2:1-11). We see this mindset displayed by Jesus as He washes the disciples’ feet, taking the form of the lowest slave, secure in the knowledge that “He had come forth from God and was going back to God” (Jn. 13:3).

### **A call to sacrifice**

The Christian life is not a call to ease but to sacrifice, not to the couch but to the cross; why suffer if this earthly life is the only one we have? Such a life of service and sacrifice, of course, is foolish apart from the promise, hope, and assurance provided by the resurrection. Our good deeds do us no good if this life is all there is. Paul, in fact, argues that we would be wiser to embrace hedonism if there is no life beyond this one, if death erases us completely. “If the dead are not raised, let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die” (1 Cor. 15:32). This is the life lived “under the sun” (meaning purely on the earthly plane) that Solomon writes about so eloquently and heartbreakingly in Ecclesiastes, the life in which he “did not withhold [his] heart from any pleasure” (Ecc. 2:10). This is the life that is summed up by the repeated phrase, “Vanity of vanities! All is vanity” (Ecc. 1:2; 12:8); all is eventually futile, or meaningless (or, as one of my professors put it, all is soap bubbles, things that are shiny and beautiful, and impossible to hold).

Examples of such self-centered hedonism abound—are, in fact, encouraged by such agents as media and social-networking—in today’s society. It is almost impossible to avoid them or

to resist them. Paul addressed the need for wisdom in this area; “Do not be deceived: ‘Bad company corrupts good morals.’ Become sober-minded as you ought, and stop sinning; for some have no knowledge of God. I speak this to your shame” (1 Cor. 15:33-34). Rather than join in the dark pleasures of the world, Christ-followers are to be a light in the darkness (Matt. 5:14-16; Rom. 13:12-14).

“Now I say this, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable” (1 Cor. 15:50). In our “earthiness,” we cannot make any claim for entrance into God’s kingdom; therefore, in the resurrection of believers, we must be transformed. “For the perishable must put on the imperishable, and this mortal must put on immortality” (1 Cor. 15:53). This transformation of our corrupted, earthly bodies to our immortal, heavenly bodies is the fulfillment of the work begun in salvation when our fallen, Adamic nature was replaced by the new, godly nature which came with being born again; the work begun by our justification by Christ will find completion in our glorification with Him. It is then that death will suffer ultimate defeat, and we can rejoice with Paul as he says; “Death is swallowed up in victory. O Death, where is your victory? O Death, where is your sting?” (1 Cor. 15:54b-55).

Death has perplexed and terrified man for millennia. In his most famous soliloquy, Hamlet’s “To be or not to be” speech, William Shakespeare called death “the undiscovered country,” and the fear of what he might find beyond this earthly realm is what kept Hamlet from taking his own life. More modern, therapeutic teaching has tried to soften our picture of death, wanting us to understand it as a “natural” part of life. That, however, is not the picture the Bible presents; Scripture clearly depicts death as the enemy, and that enemy is permanently vanquished by the resurrection. Therefore, we can echo Paul’s words in Philippians 1:21, “For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain.” To borrow once more from English literature, Christians can quote John Donne’s Holy Sonnet X (where he uses language very similar to Paul’s in 1 Corinthians):

**Death, be not proud, though some have called thee  
Mighty and dreadful, for thou art not so;  
For those whom thou think’st thou dost overthrow  
Die not, poor Death, nor yet canst thou kill me....  
One short sleep past, we wake eternally  
And death shall be no more; Death, thou shalt die.**

The life won at the cross and proclaimed by the resurrection is entirely a work of grace. “The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law; but thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ” (1 Cor. 15:56-57). The clear teaching of the New Testament is that we are saved by grace through faith (Eph. 2:8-9). The equally clear teaching is that the law has no such power to save. There is a certain illogic that leads us to believe we can be saved through the law, through our own good works and character, but because none of us has such works or character; “all our righteous deeds are like a filthy garment” (Isa. 64:6). If the law could in any way save us, then it would; instead, it convicts us of our sin (Gal. 3:21-22). To pridefully believe we can save ourselves, in fact,

merely adds to our sin and does not move us one inch closer to God. The purpose of the law was not for us to save ourselves, “lest any man should boast,” but to point toward Christ; “Therefore the Law has become our tutor to lead us to Christ, so that we may be justified by faith” (Gal. 3:24). To try to add our good works to faith actually negates that faith, demonstrating that we believe Christ’s completed work to be insufficient (Heb. 7:26-27; 9:12, 28; 10:10). Paul warned the Colossians that holding on to the old things of the law such as festivals, Sabbaths, and dietary laws was holding on to “a mere shadow of what is to come,” rather than laying hold of Christ, the “substance” (Col. 2:8-25).

While we are not saved by our good works, we are called to bear fruit as evidence of our salvation and new life in Christ. It is with this point that Paul concludes his discussion of the resurrection: “Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your toil is not in vain in the Lord” (1 Cor. 15:58). Paul’s writings follow a consistent pattern of laying out indicatives (theological truths) followed by imperatives (commands based on those truths), connecting them with the word, “therefore.” Knowing these great truths must have a profound, transforming impact on our present, earth-bound lives. The resurrection is not just a great truth we cherish for death but for this life as well.

### **“Walk in Newness of Life”**

“This spiritual renovation of nature in regeneration will infallibly produce a moral reformation of life.... In regeneration, the purposes, designs, and inclinations of the mind are changed. This new creation does not consist in just a new course of action, but in renewed faculties. It is thus called the ‘divine nature’ 2 Pet. 1:4.”<sup>2</sup> New life in Christ, secured for us at the cross (justification), and brought to perfect completion in heaven (glorification), is also evident in this life, as we grow in Christlikeness (sanctification). To be a Christian is to be a new being, complete with new desires and attitudes. “I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me” (Gal. 2:20). To be born again, to take on the new nature, is to be identified with Christ’s death and resurrection in our lives. We must die to our old, sinful lives that we might be made new through Him:

**As Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life. For if we have become united with Him in the likeness of His death, certainly we shall also be in the likeness of His resurrection, knowing this, that our old self was crucified with Him, in order that our body of sin might be done away with, so that we would no longer be slaves to sin; for he who has died is freed from sin. Now if we have died with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with Him, knowing that Christ, having been raised from the dead, is never to die again; death no longer is master over Him. For the death that He died, He died to sin once for all; but the life that**

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**He lives, He lives to God. Even so consider yourselves to be dead to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus (Rom. 6:4b-11).**

It is inconceivable that, having been born again, one would continue in old, sinful ways; “How shall we who died to sin still live in it?” (Rom. 6:2).

In the same way that believers must “put on” the imperishable and immortal at death in order to enter heaven, we are instructed to put on “the new self” (Eph. 4:24; Col. 3:10) in this life. In order to do that, of course, we must “lay aside the old self, which is being corrupted in accordance with the lusts of deceit” (Eph. 4:22). That “old self,” utterly sinful and with no ability or resources with which to become holy, must die and be cast off in order for us to walk in newness of life. We see here some of the tension in the Christian walk between the work of the Holy Spirit in a believer’s life and the work of the believer himself. Just as we cannot put on immortality in our own strength, neither can we make ourselves holy in this life. In fact, the directives to “lay aside” the old self and “put on” the new are not so much imperative commands as they are “infinitives of result,” meaning that—as we belong to Christ—these are things that are already accomplished for us. Of course, we are also commanded to live lives of obedience, to play our part in following Christ, to “work out [our] salvation with fear and trembling; for it is God who is at work in you, both to will and to work for His good pleasure” (Phil. 2:12-13).

There is great courage and boldness that comes with this newness of life and this hope of the resurrection. The gospel is a great victory cry: “If God is for us, who is against us?... Who will separate us from the love of Christ?... But in all these things we overwhelmingly con-

quer through Him who loved us” (Rom. 8:31, 35, 37). Tragically, many do not walk in this confidence and newness because they fail to understand the truth of Christ’s victory over sin and death. The worldly standards of appearance and accomplishment still rule in their lives, rather than submission, surrender, and obedience. Impressed by their good work, they head not toward the blessed resurrection spoken of in Scripture but toward the most terrifying words one could hear from the Lord; “I never knew you; depart from Me” (Matt. 7:23).

In Augustus Toplady’s wonderful old hymn, “Rock of Ages,” he wrote, “Be of sin the double cure; save from wrath and make me pure.” This “double cure” is the essence of the blessed gospel promise; we are saved from both the penalty of sin in hell, as well as sin’s dominion, its rule over our lives now. We are not just the recipients of something taken away, but of something given as well. When Jesus said, “I am the resurrection and the life” (Jn. 11:15), He made a promise only He could make, a promise that came with the terrible cost of the cross where He took our sin in order to give His righteousness. We acquire this gift through no merit of our own—only by grace and faith; we add nothing to Christ’s completed work. As Toplady says, so must we say, “Nothing in my hand I bring; simply to Thy cross I cling.” May we be like Peter, hearing the risen Christ say, “Follow Me!” (Jn. 21:19), knowing that is a call to a new life now and a blessed homecoming beyond.

**Surely goodness and lovingkindness will follow me all the days of my life, and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever (Ps. 23:6). †**

#### Endnotes

<sup>1</sup> H.D.A. Major, *The Mission and Message of Jesus* (New York: Dutton, 1946), p. 213.

<sup>2</sup> John Owen, *The Works of John Owen, Vol. 3: The Holy Spirit* (Carlisle, PA: Banner of Truth Trust, 1966), pp. 219-221.



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# FALSELY

# ACCUSED

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**M**y heart ached with the accusation. It was untrue. I knew what my intentions were. I also knew what I had said. How could things get so twisted? How could I change the minds of those who had falsely accused me or those who had heard the accusation? It hurt deeply, because the truth had become hidden.

Scripture says that the truth of Christ will set us free (Jn. 8:32). In the context of this passage Jesus tells the Pharisees that they will die in their sin unless they believe in Him. They refused to believe that Jesus was fully God and could set them free. They blurted out, “We are Abraham’s descendants and have never been slaves of anyone. How can you say that we shall be set free?” (Jn. 8:22). In that moment the Jews lied. Their ancestors had been enslaved for many, many, years in Egypt. They did not want to admit the truth about themselves.

A dialogue between Jesus and these Jews continued. It ended with a false accusation of Christ. The Jews claimed that their only father was God, that they were not illegitimate children. Jesus corrected them and told them that because they did not believe in Him, the One who had come from God, they were from the father of lies, Satan. He also shared the good news that if they did believe in Him they would never see death (Jn. 8:51). This truth enraged them, and they blurted out, “Now we know that you are demon-possessed! Abraham died and so did the prophets, yet you say that whoever obeys your word will never taste death. Are you greater than our father Abraham? He died, and so did the prophets. Who do you think you are?” (Jn. 8:52-53).

Then Jesus declared the truth about Himself. He told them that His father is the God that they claim and that Abraham rejoiced at the thought of seeing His day (Jn. 8:54-56). Incredulously they responded, “You are not yet 50 years old and you have seen Abraham!”

It is at this point that Jesus speaks volumes, “Before Abraham was, I AM.”

In the midst of false accusations, Jesus continued to speak the truth. Their words accused Him—the One who had cast out demons—of being demon possessed. These Jews could not face the truth of their condition. They could not accept that salvation came through belief in Jesus alone. They believed that because they belonged to the Jewish nation and Abraham was their father, they were already God’s children.

Likewise, when I was a Seventh-day Adventist, I believed that I belonged to the true “remnant church” that kept all of Scripture—

**I am often characterized as having been “wounded” by Adventism and that is why I left. Some think I’m angry. The truth is, I left because Adventist doctrines are unbiblical and untrue.**

especially the fourth commandment of worshipping on the seventh day. I believed my association with the “true church” and the fact that I worshiped on the correct biblical day would grant me the possibility of salvation. Additionally, I believed in Ellen White as a prophet of God. I was like the Pharisees whose father Jesus declared was Satan. I was following the prince of this world and was dead in my trespasses, believing something that was untrue (Eph. 2:1-3). I am thankful for those who shared truth with me. I am now a child of God and a member of His household (Eph. 2:19). I believe in Jesus who was fully God and who paid for my sin (1 Jn. 5:11-13). This gift of mercy is overwhelming to me, and I want others to have it, too.

How does all this relate to being falsely accused? Recently, I was accused of “bashing Seventh-day Adventists” after some acquaintances had watched my testimony on YouTube. That hurt deeply. My heart desires that Adventists who believe as I did would find the true gospel message. My intention was and is not to “bash”, but to declare in love the truth of Christ. That is why I point out the false gospel and errors in the doctrines of the Adventist Church. I am often characterized as having been “wounded” by Adventism and that is

why I left. Some think I’m angry. The truth is, I left because Adventist doctrines are unbiblical and untrue. My desire is not to “bash” but to speak truth. I want Adventists to know Truth and be saved. I also want born-again Christians to reach out to Adventists and share the true gospel or study the Bible with them. I want those still caught in Adventism to know the truth so that they can be free, too. I want them to experience the joy of salvation which is found in Christ Jesus. The truth sets one free, and those whom the Lord sets free, are free indeed! †

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## DANIEL 8:14 STUDIED IN CONTEXT

# ANTIOCHUS THE LI

DALE RATZLAFF

Most of our readers know that I and many other former Seventh-day Adventists left that church because of what we considered to be doctrinal error that undermined the new covenant gospel. We have on several occasions, both in our books and in our presentations and articles, shown that the investigative judgment does not measure up to the biblical test for truth. However, we have not spent much time explaining what Daniel 8:14 does mean in its contextual, biblical and historical setting. We have repeatedly shown the error of the Adventist interpretation but have often been silent on the real meaning of this text which is “the central pillar of Adventism”.

Adventists will do everything in their power to exclude Antiochus IV as the fulfillment of Daniel 8:8-14. If they admit that Daniel 8:8-14 describes the activities of Antiochus Epiphanes, then the “central pillar” of the Advent faith crumbles. My study leads me to conclude that Antiochus IV is in view in this passage for four reasons.

1. The historical account recorded in 1 Maccabees<sup>1</sup> is such a clear fulfillment of Daniel 8 that liberal scholars who do not believe in prophecy date the book of Daniel about 164 BC during the Maccabean Revolt.<sup>2</sup> Conservative scholars who believe in prophecy date this book about 540-530 BC and see Daniel 8 as a prophecy of the atrocities of Antiochus IV.

2. Josephus, the Jewish historian who gives an eye witness account of the horrible destruction of Jerusalem in AD 70, also records other aspects of Jewish history. After describing the events of Antiochus IV and the Maccabean revolt recorded in 1 Maccabees, we find this insightful comment.

And this desolation came to pass according to the prophecy of Daniel, which was given four hundred and eight years before; for he declared that the Macedonians would dissolve that worship [for some] time.<sup>3</sup>

3. Some feel that Antiochus IV was not as great a king as the one pictured in Daniel 8, and therefore Daniel would not have given such space to this “little man”. However, his importance cannot be overemphasized. Left alone, Antiochus IV would have wiped out God’s people, all traces of the law, and Jewish worship.<sup>4</sup>

4. The majority of Bible scholars agree that Daniel 8:9-14 describe the atrocities of Antiochus IV.

Before I left the Adventist ministry I studied the Adventist’s sanctuary doctrine as thoroughly as I could with the resources available to me at that time. The material in this article is my current understanding of this verse in its own contextual setting. My comments—interpretation—inside the biblical quotes will be in brackets. At times I have colored words to show that there is a repeated theme and bolded or underlined for emphasis.

After we have studied Daniel 8:14 in context, we will consider the implications of Jesus’ statement in Matthew 24:15-21.

The first principle of interpretation is to observe the biblical and historical context. Come, let us reason together. We will hit just the high points to bring contextual clarity. We will quote Daniel 8:8-14 to get an overview of the context and then come back to it again after we read what I consider to be the historical fulfillment of these verses, adding additional interpretation.

**Daniel 8:1**—In the third year of the reign of Belshazzar the king [of Babylon] a vision appeared to me, Daniel...

# IV EPIPHANES: IS HE THE LITTLE HORN?

**Daniel 8:8-14**—<sup>8</sup>Then the male goat [Greece] magnified himself exceedingly. But as soon as he was mighty, the large horn [Alexander the Great] was broken; and in its place there came up four conspicuous horns [Alexander's four generals] toward the four winds of heaven [the four directions of the compass].

<sup>9</sup>Out of one of them came forth a rather small horn [Antiochus IV] which grew exceedingly great [in comparison to its small start] toward the south, toward the east, and toward the Beautiful Land. [South is the direction of his conquests; the "beautiful land" is the land of Israel<sup>5</sup>].

<sup>10</sup>It grew up to the host of heaven and caused some of the host and some of the stars to fall to the earth, and it **trampled** them down. <sup>11</sup>It even magnified itself to be equal with the Commander of the host and it removed the **regular sacrifice** from Him, and the **place of His sanctuary** was **thrown down**.

<sup>12</sup>And on account of **transgression** the host [God's people<sup>6</sup>] will be given over to the horn along with the **regular sacrifice**; and it will **fling truth to the ground** and perform its will and prosper.

<sup>13</sup>Then I heard a holy one speaking, and another holy one said to that particular one who was speaking, "How long will the vision about the **regular sacrifice** apply, while [durative time] the **transgression causes horror**, so as to allow both the **holy place** and the host to be **trampled**?"

<sup>14</sup>He said to me, "For 2,300 evenings and mornings; then the **holy place** will be properly restored."

## Preliminary Contextual Conclusion

- Daniel 8:8-12 details the activities of the wicked little horn which I believe to be Antiochus IV.
- Daniel 8:13 is a summary of verses 8-12 plus a question (note the colored words which reveal the parallel concepts).

- Daniel 8:14 answers the question asked in Daniel 8:13. We conclude that Daniel 8:14 does have a context.

At this point we turn to the historical record found in 1 Maccabees where this inter-testament history is recorded and then we will come back to Daniel 8 and note the precise fulfillment.

**1 Maccabees 1:8-5**—Each of his [Alexander's] officers established himself in his own region. All assumed crowns after his death, they and their heirs after them for many years, bringing increasing evils on the world. From these there grew a wicked offshoot, Antiochus Epiphanes son of King Antiochus; once a hostage in Rome, he became king in the 107th year of the kingdom of the Greeks. It was then that there emerged from Israel a set of renegades who led many people astray. "Come," they said, "let us ally ourselves with the gentiles surrounding us, for since we separated ourselves from them many misfortunes have overtaken us." This proposal proved acceptable, and a number of the people eagerly approached the king, who authorized them to practice the gentiles' observances. So they built a gymnasium in Jerusalem, such as the gentiles have, disguised their circumcision, and abandoned the holy covenant, submitting to gentile rule as willing slaves of impiety.

**1 Maccabees 1:41-53**—The king [Antiochus Epiphanes IV] then issued a proclamation to his whole kingdom that all were to become a single people, each nation renouncing its particular customs. All the gentiles conformed to the king's decree, and many Israelites chose to accept his religion, sacrificing to idols and profaning the Sabbath. The king also sent edicts by messenger to Jerusalem and the towns of Judah, directing them to adopt customs foreign to the country, **banning burnt offerings, sacrifices and libations from the sanctuary, profaning Sabbaths and feasts, defiling the sanctuary** and everything holy, building altars, shrines

and **temples for idols, sacrificing pigs and unclean beasts**, leaving their sons uncircumcised, and prostituting themselves to all kinds of impurity and abomination, so that they should forget the Law and revoke all observance of it. Anyone not obeying the king's command was to be put to death. Writing in such terms to every part of his kingdom, the king appointed inspectors for the whole people and directed all the towns of Judah to offer sacrifice city by city. Many of the people—that is, every apostate from the Law rallied to them and so committed evil in the country—forcing Israel into hiding in any possible place of refuge.

It is important to note that these atrocities started a short time of unknown duration *before* the abomination of desolation was set up. Now back to the historical record.

**1 Maccabees 1:54—2:1–54**—On the fifteenth day of Chislev in the year 145 the king built the **appalling abomination** on top of the altar of burnt offering; and altars were built in the surrounding towns of Judah and incense offered at the doors of houses and in the streets. Any books of the Law that came to light were torn up and burned. Whenever anyone was discovered possessing a copy of the covenant or practicing the Law, the king's decree sentenced him to death. Month after month they took harsh action against any offenders they discovered in the towns of Israel. On the twenty-fifth day of each month, sacrifice was offered on the altar erected on top of the altar of burnt offering. Women who had had their children circumcised were put to death according to the edict with their babies hung round their necks, and the members of their household and those who had performed the circumcision were executed with them. Yet there were many in Israel who stood firm and found the courage to refuse unclean food. They chose death rather than contamination by such fare or profanation of the holy covenant, and they were executed. It was a truly dreadful retribution that visited Israel.

With these historical events clearly in mind, we now turn back to Daniel 8 and review the immediate context of verses 10-12, inserting additional interpretation and noting the parallel linking topics in color.

**Daniel 8:10-14**<sup>10</sup> It [little horn—Antiochus] grew up to the host of heaven [God's true people] and caused some of the host and some of the stars [true Jews] to fall to the earth, and it **trampled** them down [killed them].<sup>11</sup> It even magnified itself to be equal with the Commander of the host [God—the coins of Antiochus were engraved with the words, *theos epiphanes* meaning “God manifest”] and it removed the **regular sacrifice** [daily burnt offerings] from Him, and the **place of His sanctuary** was **thrown down**.

<sup>12</sup> And on account of **transgression** [of the Hellenistic Jews who sided with Antiochus] the **host** [God's people] will be given over to the horn along with the **regular sacrifice**; and it [little horn, Antiochus IV] will **fling truth to the**

**ground** and perform its will and prosper.<sup>13</sup> Then I heard a holy one speaking, and another holy one said to that particular one who was speaking, “How long will the vision about the **regular sacrifice** apply, **while** [durative time] the **transgression causes horror**, so as to allow both the **holy place** and the **host** [God's people] to be **trampled**?”<sup>14</sup> He said to me, “For 2,300 evenings and mornings; then the **holy place** will be properly restored.”

## Interpretation

- The 2300 days (evening morning) represents a durative time period during which Antiochus decimated the Jews and their worship during the Maccabean period.

- The sanctuary in view is the literal, earthly sanctuary.

Most commentators believe the 2300 days (literal evening, morning) refer to the morning and evening sacrifice and thus only 1150 actual days are in view. There are some who suggest that these refer to the full number of 2300 days. I found it fascinating that both time periods fit the persecution of the Jews under Antiochus depending how one calculates the periods.

If there are 1150 actual days in view, it is my conclusion that this interpretation fits the historical situation perfectly.

The profaning of Israel's religion, including persecution and death for those who did not go along with the proclamation of Antiochus, started some short time *before* Antiochus erected the abomination of desolation (image to Zeus).

On the 15th of Chislev in year 145, the king erected the abomination of desolation.

On the 25th of Chislev in year 145, sacrifice was offered to the abomination of desolation.

Finally, the restoration (cleansing) of the sanctuary is recorded in:

**1 Maccabees 4:36-59**—Judas and his brothers then said, “Now that our enemies have been defeated, let us go up to purify the sanctuary and dedicate it.” So they marshaled the whole army, and went up to Mount Zion. There they found the sanctuary deserted, the altar desecrated, the gates burnt down, and vegetation growing in the courts as it might in a wood or on some mountain, while the storerooms were in ruins. They tore their garments and mourned bitterly, putting dust on their heads. They prostrated themselves on the ground, and when the trumpets gave the signal they cried aloud to Heaven. Judas then ordered his men to keep the Citadel garrison engaged until he had purified [cleansed] the sanctuary. Next, he selected priests who were blameless and zealous for the Law to purify [cleanse] the sanctuary and remove the stones of the pollution to some unclean place. They discussed what should be done about the altar of burnt offering which had been profaned, and very properly decided to pull it down, rather than later be embarrassed about it since it had been defiled by the gentiles. They therefore demolished it and deposited the stones in a suitable place on the hill of the Dwelling to await the appearance of a prophet who should give a ruling about



AS THE LATE ADVENTIST HEBREW SCHOLAR DR. RAYMOND COTTRELL SAID,  
ADVENTISTS HAVE A CHOICE: THEY CAN MAKE CHRIST THE WICKED LITTLE  
HORN WHO POLLUTES THE SANCTUARY, OR THEY CAN TOTALLY DIVORCE  
DANIEL 8:14 FROM ITS CONTEXT. THERE ARE NO OTHER CHOICES.

them. They took unhewn stones, as the Law prescribed, and built a new altar on the lines of the old one. They restored the Holy Place and the interior of the Dwelling, and purified the courts. They made new sacred vessels, and brought the lamp-stand, the altar of incense, and the table into the Temple. They burned incense on the altar and lit the lamps on the lamp-stand, and these shone inside the Temple.

They placed the loaves on the table and hung the curtains and completed all the tasks they had undertaken. **On the twenty-fifth of the ninth month, Chislev, in the year 148 they rose at dawn and offered a lawful sacrifice on the new altar of burnt offering which they had made.**

The altar was dedicated, to the sound of hymns, zithers, lyres and cymbals, at the same time of year and on the same day on which the gentiles had originally profaned it. The whole people fell prostrate in adoration and then praised Heaven who had granted them success. For eight days they celebrated the dedication of the altar, joyfully offering burnt offerings, communion and thanksgiving sacrifices. They ornamented the front of the Temple with crowns and bosses of gold, renovated the gates and storerooms, providing the latter with doors. There was no end to the rejoicing among the people, since the disgrace inflicted by the gentiles had been effaced. Judas, with his brothers and the whole assembly of Israel, made it a law that the days of the dedication of the altar should be celebrated yearly at the proper season, for eight days beginning on the twenty-fifth of the month of Chislev, with rejoicing and gladness.<sup>7</sup>

On the 25th of Chislev in year 148 the sanctuary was restored and sacrifices restarted. The intervening time between the erection of the abomination of desolation and the restoration of the sanctuary was three years and 10 days. In other words, the 1150 days exceeds by 45–70<sup>8</sup> days the three years and 10 days that transpired between the erection of the image to Zeus in the temple and the restoration of the sanctuary. This disparity, however, fits the facts as outlined in 1 Maccabees perfectly, because the desecration of the temple started some time before the abomination was erected.

On the other hand, if one concludes that the 2300 evenings and mornings are 2300 literal days, then we calculate the time period as follows:

We have shown how impossible it is to explain this prophecy otherwise than by Antiochus: the event itself proves this to be its meaning....Christ numbers 2300 days for the pollution of the sanctuary, and this period comprehends six years and about four months. If we compare the testimony of history, and especially of the book of Maccabees, with this prophecy, we shall find that miserable race oppressed for six years under the tyranny of Antiochus. The idol of Olympian Jove [Zeus] did not remain in the temple for six continuous years, but the commencement of the pollution occurred at the first attack, as if he would insult the very fact of God. No wonder then if Daniel understood this vision of six years and about a third, because Antiochus then insulted the worship of God and the Law; and when he poured forth innocent blood promiscuously, no one dared openly to resist him...we see how very clearly the prophecy and the history agree, as far as this narrative is concerned.<sup>9</sup>

The 2300 days are thus, as well as the 1150 days, historically authenticated.<sup>10</sup>

### **Daniel 8:14 the “Central Pillar of Adventism”**

The following comparisons show the contradictions between the contextual teaching of Daniel 8:14 as confirmed by history and the Adventist teaching of its doctrinal “central pillar” as confirmed by Ellen White: [Contextual Teaching (CT), Adventist Teaching (AT)]

#### **Study method:**

CT: Observe the context and historical setting

AT: Daniel 8:14 has no context but is a “contextual island”

#### **The Sanctuary in view:**

CT: Earthly sanctuary

AT: Heavenly sanctuary

#### **The one who pollutes the sanctuary:**

CT: The wicked little horn, Antiochus, by his pagan sacrifices.

AT: Christ’s blood, “our sins are, in fact, transferred to the heavenly sanctuary by the blood of Christ”.<sup>11</sup>

### The 2300 evenings and mornings.

CT: Either 1150 or 2300 literal days.

AT: 2300 years

CT: This is the duration of time during which Antiochus desecrated the Jewish people and worship.

AT: This is a point in time, October 22, 1844, when Christ entered, for the first time, the Most Holy Place of the heavenly sanctuary.

### The Cleansing of the sanctuary

CT: When Judas and his brothers removed the polluted stones upon which pagans had offered unclean beasts, built a new altar, restored the temple furnishing, and restarted the regular morning and evening sacrifices.<sup>12</sup>

AT: When Christ at the close of the investigative judgment places the sins of the righteous onto Satan who will suffer for them in the lake of fire.<sup>13</sup>

As the late Adventist Hebrew scholar Dr. Raymond Cottrell said, Adventists have a choice: they can make Christ the wicked little horn who pollutes the sanctuary, or they can totally divorce Daniel 8:14 from its context.

There are no other choices.

Not only did Cottrell clarify the hermeneutical error of Adventism's central pillar, but Dr. Angel Rodriguez, recent chair of the Adventist Biblical Research Committee, said: "Without 1844 and the doctrine of the Sanctuary—this may sound strong to you, but I have already published it—**there is no reason for us to exist. 1844 provided for us our identity and our mission. And if we are wrong there, then we are simply wrong.**"<sup>14</sup> (My emphasis).

You make the call.

### Daniel 8:14, Matthew 24:15 and Antiochus IV

Some attempt to take the focus off Antiochus by using Jesus' statement in Matthew 24:15.

Therefore when you see the abomination of desolation which was spoken of through Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place (let the reader understand), then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains; let him who is on the housetop not go down to get the things out that are in his house; and let him who is in the field not turn back to get his cloak. But woe to those who are with child and to those who nurse babes in those days! But pray that your flight may not be in the winter, or on a Sabbath; for then there will be a great tribulation, such as has not occurred since the beginning of the world until now, nor ever shall. And unless those days had been cut short, no life would have been saved; but for the sake of the elect those days shall be cut short.

The history of the Maccabean period gives insight to this statement of Jesus. I believe Jesus is making a connection between the destruction of Jerusalem that would come in AD 70 with events surrounding Antiochus IV's abomination of desolation, an idol of the Olympian Zeus, which he erected over the altar of burnt offerings in 167 B.C. These events are recorded in 1 Maccabees. The

first nine chapters of this book are well worth reading. I have listed below a verse or two from the context of Matthew 24:20 with a corresponding section from 1 and 2 Maccabees.<sup>15</sup> At times I have quoted from the historian Josephus, who lived in the first century A.D. Notice the close parallel in wording, ideas, and content between Matthew 24:15-22 and the Maccabean history.

### "Abomination of desolation" in Holy Place

Therefore when you see the **abomination of desolation** which was spoken of through Daniel the prophet, standing in the Holy Place (let the reader understand) (Mt. 24:15).

The King (Antiochus) erected the **abomination of desolation** above the altar (1 Mac. 1:57).

The Jewish historian, Josephus, in commenting on this incident says:

For so it was, that the temple was made desolate by Antiochus, and so continued for three years...And this desolation came to pass according to the prophecy of Daniel, which was given four hundred and eighty years before; for he declared that the Macedonians would dissolve that worship [for some] time.<sup>16</sup>

There is some uncertainty regarding the interpretation of Christ's words, "the abomination of desolation ... standing in the Holy Place". Mark records this statement like this:

But when you see the abomination of desolation standing where it should not be (let the reader understand), then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains. (Mk. 13:14). Luke resolves the matter by saying,

But when you see Jerusalem surrounded by armies, then recognize that her desolation is at hand (Lk. 21:20).

### Leave possessions and flee to the mountains

Then let those who are in Judea **flee** to the **mountains**; let him who is on the housetop **not go down to get the things out that are in his house**; and let him who is in the field not turn back to get his cloak (Mt. 24:16-18).

Then Mattathias went through the town, shouting at the top of his voice, "Let everyone who has a fervour for the Law and takes his stand on the covenant come out and follow me." Then he **fled** with his sons into the **hills, leaving all their possessions behind** in the town (1 Mac. 2:27, 28).

Later, there is reasonably good tradition that Christians abandoned the city [Jerusalem] perhaps in A.D. 68, about halfway through the siege.<sup>17</sup>

### Woe to women and babies

But woe to those who are with child and to those who nurse babes in those days (Mt. 24:19).

Her babies have been slaughtered in her streets, her young men by the enemy's sword...Mattathias and his sons tore their garments, put on sackcloth, and observed deep mourning (1 Mac. 2:9,14).

### Pray that it not be in winter or on the Sabbath

But pray that your flight may not be in the **winter**, or on a **Sabbath** (Mt. 24:20).

# DR. ANGEL RODRIQUEZ, RECENT CHAIR OF THE ADVENTIST BIBLICAL RESEARCH COMMITTEE, SAID: “WITHOUT 1844 AND THE DOCTRINE OF THE SANCTUARY— THIS MAY SOUND STRONG TO YOU, BUT I HAVE ALREADY PUBLISHED IT— THERE IS NO REASON FOR US TO EXIST.”

...And many...went down to the desert and stayed there, taking with them their sons, their wives and their cattle...A strong detachment went after them preparing to attack them on the **sabbath** day...“Enough of this! Come out and do as the king [Antiochus] orders and you shall be spared.” But they answered, “We refuse to come out, and we are not going to obey the king’s orders and so profane the **sabbath** day.” The others at once went into action, but they offered no opposition; not a stone was thrown, there was no barricading of the hiding places. They only said, “Let us all die innocent; let heaven and earth bear witness that you are massacring us with no pretense of justice.” The attack was pressed home on the **sabbath** itself, and they were slaughtered, with their wives and children and cattle, to the number of one thousand persons. When the news reached Mattathias and his friends, they mourned bitterly for the victims, and said to one another, “If we all do as our brothers have done, and refuse to fight the pagans for our lives and institutions, they will only destroy us the sooner from the earth.” So then and there they came to this decision, “If anyone attacks us on the sabbath day, whoever he may be, we will resist him; we must not all be killed, as our brothers were in the hiding places” (1 Mac. 1:57; 2:29, 32–41).

The “abomination of desolation” **was set up in winter, on December 8, 176 B.C.**<sup>18</sup>

## A great tribulation

For then there will be **a great tribulation**, such as has not occurred since the beginning of the world until now, nor ever shall (Mt. 24:21).

First Maccabees 1–7 records the terrible war between Antiochus and the loyal Jews. This was a determined attack on the worship of YHWH with the intent of completely wiping out the covenant people and all traces of their worship.

Then the king [Antiochus] issued a proclamation to his whole kingdom that all were to become a single people, each renouncing his particular customs...The king also sent instructions by messenger to Jerusalem and the towns of Judah directing them to adopt customs foreign to the country, banning holocausts [burnt offerings], sacrifices and liba-

tions from the sanctuary, profaning sabbaths and feasts, defiling the sanctuary and the sacred ministries, building altars, precincts and shrines for idols, sacrificing pigs and unclean beasts, leaving their sons uncircumcised, and prostituting themselves to all kinds of impurity and abomination, so they should forget the Law and revoke all observance of it. Anyone not obeying the king’s command was to be put to death (1 Mac. 1:41–53).

Any books of the Law that came to light were torn up and burned. Whenever anyone was discovered possessing a copy of the covenant or practicing the Law, the king’s decree **sentenced him to death**...Women who had their children circumcised were **put to death** according to the edict with their babies hung round their necks, and the members of their household and those who had performed the circumcision were **executed** with them (1 Mac. 1:59–64).

Similarly, the atrocities that took place at the destruction of Jerusalem are unthinkable. I encourage you to read Josephus, *Wars of the Jews*, Books 5 and 6.

## Sabbath keepers at the destruction of Jerusalem

Jesus foresaw there would be many people still observing the Sabbath when Jerusalem would be destroyed. Obviously there would be many Jews who were not Christians keeping the Sabbath. There were also many Jewish Christians who were still observing the Sabbath. We know this from the record in the book of Acts.

But certain ones of the sect of the Pharisees who had believed, stood up, saying, “It is necessary to circumcise them, and to direct them to observe the Law of Moses” (Acts 15:5).

You see, brother, how many thousands there are among the Jews of those who have believed, and they are all zealous for the Law; and they have been told about you, that you are teaching all the Jews who are among the Gentiles to forsake Moses, telling them not to circumcise their children nor to walk according to the customs (Acts 21:20).

There were many thousands of Christians at the time of Jerusalem’s destruction who continued to follow “Moses,” practicing circumcision and living according to “the customs”, which certainly included Sabbath observance.

## Matthew written to Jewish Christians

It is interesting to note that Matthew is the only Gospel writer to include “Pray that your flight may not be in the winter, or on a Sabbath.” Mark simply states, “Pray that it may not happen in the winter” (Mk. 13:18). He includes no mention of Sabbath. Luke’s account of Jesus’ Olivet address does not mention either the Sabbath or winter. Most scholars believe Matthew was written specifically to the Jewish-Christian community.

- The Gospel of St. Matthew was intended for Jewish Christians.<sup>19</sup>
- This Gospel [Matthew] has a strong Judaic background.<sup>20</sup>
- The gospels of Mark and Luke, however, are intended for Gentile audiences.<sup>21</sup>

## Far future fulfillment?

Many Christians also believe that, because of the context of Matthew 24:21-31 which describes tribulation and signs that immediately precede “the Son of Man coming on the clouds of the sky with power and great glory” (v. 27, quoted from Daniel 7:13), there may yet be a future fulfillment of the abomination of desolation and a tribulation “such as has not occurred since the beginning of the world until now, nor ever will be” (v. 21). This view sees Daniel 12:1-3 as foretelling such a time.

## Conclusion

Whether or not one sees a far future fulfillment yet to come, however, Daniel 8:9-14 is a clear reference to the atrocities of Antiochus IV against the Jews, the law, the literal sanctuary, and

worship of God. In Matthew 24:15-18 Jesus warns the Jewish Christians that the soon-coming destruction of Jerusalem will be patterned after the atrocities of Antiochus IV and they should be ready to leave with haste.

There are a number of places in Scripture where there is a prophecy or event which becomes a type of what follows. I believe this is true in Daniel<sup>22</sup> regarding the abomination of desolation and in John regarding antichrist. The same concept is seen in the faith of Abraham which Paul shows to be a type of new covenant righteousness by faith in Romans 4.

The central pillar of Adventism is built on a flawed hermeneutic based on Ellen White’s visions and writings instead of on contextual reading of Scripture confirmed by history. In fact, the only way to find “scriptural” support for the Adventist interpretation of Daniel 8:14 is to use the text of *The Clear Word*:

He answered, “After two thousand, three hundred prophetic days (which represent actual years), God will restore the truth about the heavenly Sanctuary to its rightful place. Then the process of judgment will begin of which the yearly cleansing of the earthly Sanctuary was a type, and God will vindicate His people” (Dan. 8:14, *The Clear Word*).

In context, Daniel 8:14 cannot in any way support Adventism’s “central pillar”. To make Daniel 8:14 apply to the heavenly sanctuary, the 2300 evenings and mornings apply to 2300 years ending on October 22, 1844, and the cleansing of the sanctuary to apply to Christ placing the sins of the righteous on Satan to me is without any biblical support and should be renounced by every believing Christian.†

## Endnotes

<sup>1</sup> 1 Maccabees is not a canonical book, however most scholars believe it is a reliable historical record of the Maccabean period.

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/apocalypse/explanation/bdaniel.html>

<sup>3</sup> Josephus, *Antiquities of the Jews*, Book XII, Chapter 4, verse 6.

<sup>4</sup> For the importance of Antiochus IV see R.D. Wilson, *Studies in the Book of Daniel* (New York, 1917) p. 270-276.

<sup>5</sup> “Then I said, ‘How I would set you among My sons, And give you a pleasant land, The most beautiful inheritance of the nations!’ And I said, ‘You shall call Me, My Father, And not turn away from following Me’”(Jer. 3:19).

<sup>6</sup> Compare Dan. 8:24.

<sup>7</sup> This is the Feast of Lights or Dedication recorded in John 10:22, 23.

<sup>8</sup> Depending how many days were in a year.

<sup>9</sup> John Calvin, [http://www.ccel.org/ccel/calvin/comment3/comm\\_vol25/htm/iii.xi.htm](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/calvin/comment3/comm_vol25/htm/iii.xi.htm).

<sup>10</sup> Keil-Delitzsch, p. 306

<sup>11</sup> Ellen G. White, *Spirit of Prophecy*, Vol. 4, p. 266. See also, *The Great Controversy*, p. 417-422; 425, 479-487.

<sup>12</sup> See 1 Maccabees 4:36-48.

<sup>13</sup> “When Christ, by virtue of His own blood, removes the sins of His people from the heavenly sanctuary at the close of His ministration, He will place them upon Satan, who, in the execution of the judgment, must bear the final penalty.” Ellen G. White, *The Great Controversy*, p. 422. See also *Spirit of Prophecy*, Vol. 4, p. 266.

<sup>14</sup> In a tape given to a group of Adventist pastors at the Ministerial/Evangelism Council, “Answers to Ratzlaff’s Challenges to Adventism”, April 16,

1998, 2:00 p.m. Double Tree Inn, South Center, Seattle, WA.

<sup>15</sup> 2 Maccabees may not be as historically accurate as 1 Maccabees.

<sup>16</sup> Flavious Josephus, *Antiquities of the Jews*, (Kregel Publications, Grand Rapids, MI, 1960), Book XII, Chapter VII, Paragraph 6.

<sup>17</sup> D. A. Carson, *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary*, Vol. 8, p. 501.

<sup>18</sup> See footnote in the Jerusalem Bible at 1 Mac. 1:57. “December 8th, 167.”

<sup>19</sup> Alfred Wikenhauser, *New Testament Introduction*, (Herder and Herder, New York, NY), p. 195.

<sup>20</sup> Everett F. Harrison, *Introduction to the New Testament*, p. 161.

<sup>21</sup> Wikenhauser, *New Testament Introduction*, pp. 169, 219.

<sup>22</sup> Daniel mentions the abomination of desolation or similar concepts several times.



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# HOW I DISCOVERED SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTISM

## MY MIND WAS OPENED

PAUL CARDEN

**A**s Christians, we're commanded to "test all things, hold fast to what is good, and abstain from every form of evil" (1 Thess. 5:21–22). We're also called to "defend the faith once for all delivered to the saints" (Jude 3–4). Sometimes, however, despite our sincerest efforts and best intentions, we may be subject to a type of blindness. I thank the Lord that, while it may be persistent and even profound, that blindness is not necessarily incurable.

I'd like to share my journey out of blindness with you.

### Apologetics changed me

I first became aware of countercult apologetics when I was in high school. On a rainy day I ran across *The Kingdom of the Cults* on a friend's bookshelf, and what it revealed about Mormonism, Jehovah's Witnesses, Christian Science, and other groups changed my life.

Yet I cannot deny that I was anesthetized by its author, Walter Martin—the legendary founder of the Christian Research Institute, the original "Bible Answer Man," godfather of the evangelical countercult movement—for the book contained a 63-page appendix called "The Puzzle of Seventh-day Adventism" in which he sought to explain why Adventism, though problematic, was somehow outside the borders of the theological "kingdom of the cults". Over the years I tried to read that appendix several times. I'm ashamed to admit it, but without fail, each time my eyes glazed over.

Meanwhile, I attended Walter Martin's packed Sunday-morning class at Melodyland Christian Center for about three years before I joined his staff, gobbling up everything he had to say about cults, discernment, and defending the Gospel. At times he'd go out of his way to call Seventh-day Adventists fellow Christians and his personal friends, to talk about speaking in their Sabbath-school classes, and so on. His comments were like a badge of tolerance.

On a more personal level, he credited Adventist physicians with prolonging, if not saving, his life. He even sent me to an Adventist doctor to get all my immunizations before my first trip to Africa in 1981.

Thirty years ago, Adventism was seldom in the news—except for the Davenport Scandal and Walter Rea and *The White Lie*. But even then, the movement looked odd, but not ominous; enigmatic, but not evil. And always I knew this: that in the face of opposition, Walter Martin—the original Bible Answer Man!—had pronounced Seventh-day Adventism not a cult. He had virtually staked his reputation on it. And whatever else Adventism may have been, that declaration was enough for me. I had other theological fish to fry.

Besides, as a cult researcher, I knew of ex-Mormon groups, ex-Jehovah's Witness groups, former Christian Scientists, and ex-Armstrongites, but I wasn't aware of even one actual group of former Adventists. For that matter, I didn't really know any Adventists. Surely that had to mean something.

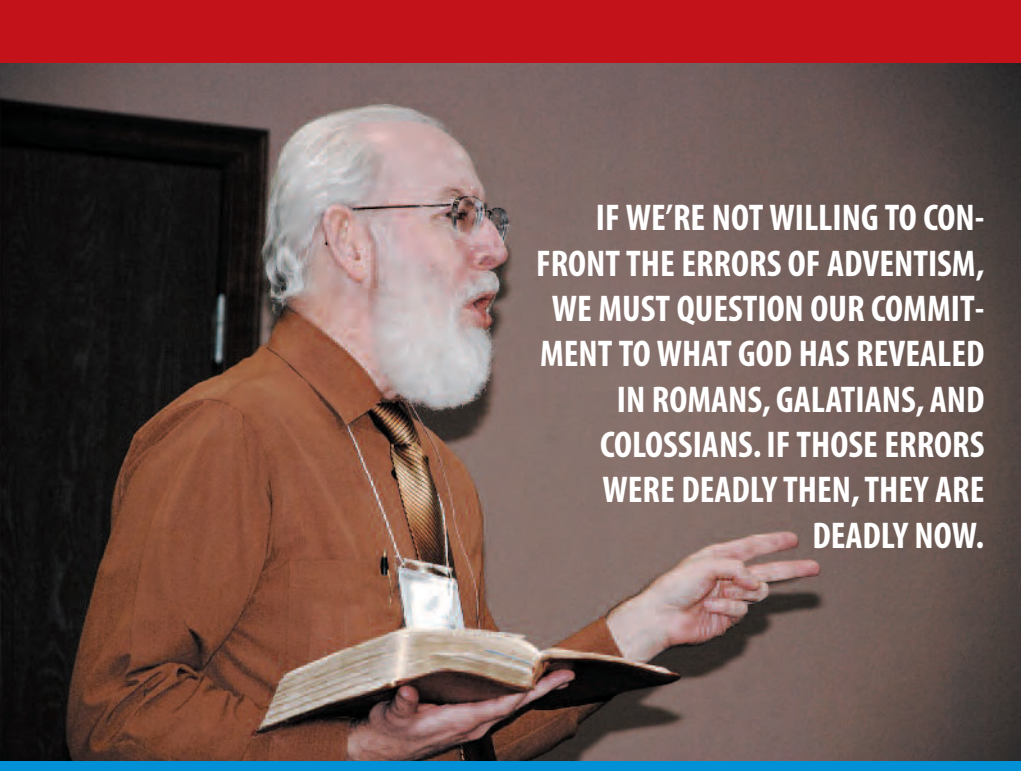
### Adventist comfort food

In the mid-1980s I moved to South America to start a Brazilian counterpart to the Christian Research Institute. To my annoyance, it soon became evident that the staff were fervently opposed to Adventism. I learned that Brazilian Adventists were actively engaged in proselytizing evangelicals, and they boasted openly of trophy pastors they'd converted. I wrote this off as a mutant form of the religion. And, if you can believe it, even though I finally gave in to my Brazilian research staff and let a former Adventist pastor (a Chilean man named Raul) lecture at some of our seminars, I still never quite got the point.

I saw the feature film *Cry in the Dark* about Michael and Lindy Chamberlain, the Australian Adventist couple suspected of murdering their child and accused of being devil-worshippers of some kind, but I knew that was sensationalistic bunk.

Meanwhile, my first two children were born in the Adventist Hospital of São Paulo in Brazil. Moreover, we eagerly bought and

## MY HEART WAS BROKEN



**IF WE'RE NOT WILLING TO CONFRONT THE ERRORS OF ADVENTISM, WE MUST QUESTION OUR COMMITMENT TO WHAT GOD HAS REVEALED IN ROMANS, GALATIANS, AND COLOSSIANS. IF THOSE ERRORS WERE DEADLY THEN, THEY ARE DEADLY NOW.**

ate Seventh-day Adventist peanut butter and honey and not infrequently dined at the *Superbom* Adventist vegetarian restaurant. Again, as an apologist and cult researcher, it always seemed to me that where there's smoke, there's fire; but for the most part I never detected much more from Adventism than a kind of damp, moldy smell. Besides, time had shown that Adventism was a topic on which reasonable people could disagree.

When I returned to the Christian Research Institute in California in the late 1980s, I learned that my colleague Ken Samples had met personally with Adventist scholars and produced two influential articles declaring that Adventism came in three fairly distinct flavors...but it still did not meet the operating definition of a cult. Again I was anesthetized into unconcern.

### **Crossing the threshold**

I left the Christian Research Institute in 1995. Three years later the video *Seventh-day Adventism: The Spirit Behind the Church* was released. I thought it was well made, and parts of it were fascinating and even disturbing. But as I can recall I was still strangely unmoved on a deeper level; certainly nothing stirred me to action.

That same year I went to Chicago to attend the national conference of Evangelical Ministries to New Religions (EMNR). One of the speakers was Dale Ratzlaff. His calm and systematic presentation on Adventism—and the fact that he was himself a former Adventist pastor—forced me to sit up and take notice in a new and different way. I realized that I'd never really begun to understand Adventism.

Some years later I was asked by a foundation to arrange for leaders of other evangelical discernment ministries to make presentations to their staff. I remembered Dale, and I arranged for him and Carolyn and another couple named Richard and Colleen Tinker to speak one morning. Afterwards we all went out to lunch. And that time of interaction set the stage for me to fully cross the threshold.

In 2007 I visited Richard and Colleen Tinker in their home, accompanied by our ministry's Russian director, Pasha Stolyarov.

Richard and Colleen patiently answered my questions, hour upon hour, as I sought to fit Adventism historically, culturally, and theologically into the categories that would help me determine with certainty whether I was dealing with a merely marginal movement or something profoundly deceptive and even destructive. By day's end the verdict was disturbing, but clear: Seventh-day Adventism distorts or denies nearly every central teaching of the historic Christian faith. While its façade is benign, the devil is in the details.

The Seventh-day Adventist church claims to be God's special, end-time remnant church, guided by God's special, end-time prophet, Ellen G. White.

Along with its weird, unscriptural views on the Trinity and the person and work of Jesus Christ, the "Great Controversy" theme and

the Investigative Judgment, and the incredible amount of material that Ellen White simply made up, Adventism...

- confuses law and gospel
- denies the biblical doctrine of hell
- claims that Satan is a sin-bearer for Christians
- denies that human beings possess an immaterial soul or spirit
- employs the deceptive *Clear Word* version of the Bible

If we're not willing to confront the errors of Adventism, we must question our commitment to what God has revealed in Romans, Galatians, and Colossians. If those errors were deadly then, they are deadly now. They're not merely abstractions about which we can politely disagree. If the Bible is to be believed, souls are at stake, and we cannot—we must not—remain silent.

I'm convinced that evangelicals around the world desperately need a straightforward summary of Adventism's toxic doctrines and their impact on the people who follow them.

Individual Seventh-day Adventists need the biblical gospel. Institutional Adventism—which binds them in spiritual chains—must be responsibly exposed and consistently, conscientiously opposed. If we love the truth, we will oppose the errors of Adventism by every available and appropriate means. And if we love the truth, we will love the Adventist people enough to speak the truth to them—with humility, conviction, and compassion.

### **Non-biblical doctrines**

What separates Seventh-day Adventism from biblical Christianity today? There are many areas of serious conflict, but three stand out:

- Ellen G. White. Considered "the Lord's messenger" and the "spirit of prophecy," Mrs. White is central to Seventh-day Adventism. The nature of her role as a "continuing and authoritative source of truth" for the church (as stated in their Fundamental Belief #18) demands that we judge her affirmations by biblical tests of a prophet (such as Deut. 18:21–2). Mrs. White wrote copiously, claiming that God had given her visions of the past, the future, and even the sinless and smiling inhabitants of other planets. Though

she was not always in error, in her revelations she contradicts not only the Bible, but herself. At times she undermines the deity of Christ, indicates that He had a sinful nature while on earth, and declares His atoning work on the cross incomplete. Mrs. White also places an unbearable—and fundamentally unscriptural—burden of righteousness through works on her followers, and labels the teaching that Christ’s imputed righteousness fulfills the law as “gross deception” (*Signs of the Times*, Feb. 25, 1897, par. 7). We now know that she plagiarized vast amounts of material in her supposedly inspired writings—a fact that church leaders have actively sought to suppress.

- **Investigative Judgment.** Right after the “Great Disappointment” of Miller’s failed 1844 prediction, an Adventist named Hiram Edson said he received a vision clarifying the prediction’s true meaning. Instead of Christ’s Second Coming, the completed 2,300-day period of Daniel 8:14 signaled Jesus’ transition from one compartment of the heavenly sanctuary to the next. Adventists explain that He did this to initiate a long-term “investigative judgment” of professed Christians. This convoluted new doctrine—which has no scriptural support—was intended to solve one problem, but instead unleashed a host of others. Serious Adventists live in fear that they will be lost for eternity because Christ will plead their case only if they are found worthy.

- **Remnant Church.** Adventism promotes the elitist view that it is the true church portrayed in Revelation chapter 12. Naturally, this means that other churches are apostate and lack the “full truth”—giving Adventists license to seek converts among evangelicals, often through stealth techniques like “Revelation seminars.”

## Love is not silence

Love is not apathy. Love is not silence. When I did not know, I could not love as I ought; but now that I do know, I have no choice. None of us who recognizes the depth of the deception in Adventism does.

Perhaps your mind and heart are in a place much like mine were for so many years. If you’re at a crossroads, perhaps this article is a long-overdue signpost to guide you to continue your journey.

Brothers and sisters, we need to heed the Scriptures and test all things; we must defend the faith once for all delivered to the saints.

The Lord’s bond-servant must not be quarrelsome, but be kind to all, able to teach, patient when wronged, with gentleness correcting those who are in opposition, if perhaps God may grant them repentance leading to the knowledge of the truth, and they may come to their senses and escape from the snare of the devil, having been held captive by him to do his will (2 Tim. 2:24–26).

**Paul Carden** is executive director of The Centers for Apologetics Research. He has devoted over 30 years of his life to cult-related research and outreach in Latin America, Africa, eastern Europe, and the former Soviet Union. He spent 15 years working with Walter Martin in the Christian Research Institute, spending six years in Brazil and six as co-host of the live radiobroadcast “Bible Answer Man”. He is also the general editor for various apologetics-oriented pamphlets produced by Rose Publishing, and his articles have appeared in a variety of missions and ministry publications. He and his wife Lisa have four children.

Making those teachings and their consequences known—and offering the scriptural antidote—is at the heart of the vital work being done by Life Assurance Ministries (LAM). God used LAM to help me overcome my deficit of discernment—my lack of comprehension and compassion.

It’s taken me time to reconcile the different approaches needed to deal with institutional Adventism and individual Adventists, so my decision to join the resistance movement has been neither sudden nor pleasant. But I’ve had no alternative.

I can appreciate the skepticism of anyone who doubts that the alleged problems in Adventism really amount to much. After all, this is a movement with a vast system of schools, an impressive worldwide publishing effort, and an unrivaled network of medical facilities. Could it be that someone as undeniably admirable as Dr. Ben Carson is a weirdo, or some kind of cultist?

Here, however, is the inconvenient truth: a high regard for Adventism as a system or of the Seventh-day Adventist church as an institution usually corresponds to a low regard for the suffering of the millions of people who are so often and easily damaged by it.

I have reached the conclusion that Seventh-day Adventism—as a system—is deeply heretical and undeniably cultic. It is not a normal church. Nevertheless, Scripture tells us how to proceed.

The Apostle Paul writes to Timothy in his first letter that, in contrast to those who “teach strange doctrines,” “the goal of our instruction is love from a pure heart and a good conscience and a sincere faith” (1 Tim. 1:5).

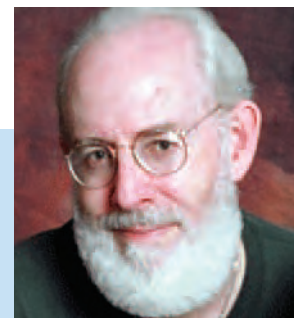
Paul further writes to the Galatians, “I am astonished that you are so quickly deserting the One who called you by the grace of Christ and are turning to a different gospel—which is really no gospel at all. Evidently some people are throwing you into confusion and are trying to pervert the gospel of Christ” (Gal. 1:6-9).

He also writes: “Let us not lose heart in doing good, for in due time we will reap if we do not grow weary” (Gal. 6:9).

Finally, he exhorts Timothy that “The Lord’s bond-servant must not be quarrelsome, but be kind to all, able to teach, patient when wronged, with gentleness correcting those who are in opposition, if perhaps God may grant them repentance leading to the knowledge of the truth, and they may come to their senses and escape from the snare of the devil, having been held captive by him to do his will” (2 Tim. 2:24-26).

May God grant all of us the courage—indeed, the clarity of sight—to act obediently in response to what He has so plainly revealed. †

Adapted from a message delivered at the 2013 Former Adventist Fellowship conference in Redlands, California.



# Spiritual formation: We must be Bereans

MARTIN CAREY

**Editor's note:** We have received several criticisms of Martin Carey's articles on spiritual formation and spiritual disciplines. He answers some of those concerns here.

**“I am astonished that you are so quickly deserting him who called you in the grace of Christ and are turning to a different gospel.” Galatians 1:6**

These were hard words for the Galatian Christians to hear. They were undoubtedly surprised by this rebuke from their leader, and although we are not told how they responded to his discipline, today we can surely learn from their situation. Since Paul's time, believers have been in danger of turning aside from the gospel and repeating the same mistakes. Often the established church has failed to contend for the faith once delivered (Jude 1:3). The gospel and the word are continually under assault, and two millennia have not decreased the threat. For the body of Christ to stay vigilant, we must be *semper reformanda*, always reforming.

Today it is still appropriate to ask, “Who will hold the church accountable?” Paul, the author of this rebuke, felt he was the least personally competent for his calling as an apostle (1 Cor 15:9), yet he says all believers are either the aroma of death to those who are perishing or the aroma of life to those who are being saved. “Who is sufficient for these things?” he asks (2 Cor. 2:15-16). Even though we may be personally incompetent and untrained, as believers we are indwelt by the Holy Spirit and are commanded to guard the two pillars of the Christian faith: the integrity of the original gospel (2 Tim. 1:8-12), and the supremacy of God's word (vs. 12,13).

Distorted gospels most often come as new light, promising reformation and growth at the expense of those pillars. False gospels have this feature in common: they add the works of man to the finished work of Christ. Whenever Christian leaders alter the core of the gospel, all those “good things” they teach about the spiritual life are shaped by that distorted core. A corrupted gospel is a leaven that spreads into the whole lump of dough.

*Proclamation!* magazine's articles on spiritual formation have prompted appreciation along with some critical responses, so this is an attempt to provide clarification. Genuine Christians can disagree, but then we dig deeper into God's word. Testing the spirits is no easy task, and it has not been reserved to the professionals. The lowliest Christians are obligated to examine the most brilliant teachers. Even Dallas Willard's and Richard Foster's numerous endorsements and popularity do not exempt their teachings from



being subject to every Christian's obligation, the Berean test. That is why we dare to challenge their teachings.

So here is an abbreviated summary of the problems with “spiritual formation” as taught by Willard and Foster showing how it departs from the original gospel and God's word.

## Minimize the gospel

First, Willard and Foster's writings minimize or eclipse the core of the gospel—Jesus' propitiation for our sins by his blood—and replace it with a gospel of human experience. Willard and Foster's gospel is focused on what God will do in us—human experience. By this, the cross becomes an inspirational drama, while our internal experiences with God become our gospel in actual fact. For example, here is

Dallas Willard's experiential definition of the gospel: “The Gospel of Jesus is that life in the Kingdom is available to us now. We can experience the Kingdom and live in it by placing our confidence in Jesus for everything...”<sup>1</sup> Some may argue that this definition does describe the reality of the gospel experience, but it is important to understand that this definition is not an out-of-context explanation of the gospel taken from a larger paragraph. This is Willard's official definition of the gospel as given on the website listed in the footnote. He does not describe the gospel as the biblical, historic fact of Jesus' finished work.

The gospel, however, is not an experience. If we use Willard's definition of the gospel, where are we placing our trust? The gospel is the announcement of the unique, perfect work that God has already done *for us* in Christ (1 Cor. 15:3-19), plus nothing. If we proclaim the historical gospel of Christ's death and resurrection and then add the process of discipleship to that gospel, we shift our focus from what Jesus has already done to our own faulty progress. In other words, holiness is not a component of the gospel; rather, it is the fruit of the gospel root.

At the heart of the gospel is the precious truth of justification by faith alone, by which we possess the very righteousness of God, without human works (Rom. 1:16,17; 5:17). We can have access and standing before God only on the basis of faith alone in Christ's dying for our sins and rising from death, not because of our success at imitating His lifestyle. Saving faith has a mighty object outside the self: the perfections of the Lord Jesus. His righteousness is outside our experience or efforts, imputed to us as a free gift, by faith alone. If we work for it to come inside us, it is no longer a gift, but God's obligation to us (Rom. 4:4,5).

However, Willard and Foster overlook imputed righteousness, replacing God's acceptance of us “in the beloved” with His work of



renovation within us. They insist that the traditional Protestant teaching of justification and the forgiveness of sins is just seeking a “ticket to heaven” while leaving out personal transformation.<sup>2</sup> Willard’s sweeping condemnation of Protestantism presents a false choice between the assurance of God’s complete acceptance of us and personal holiness—a straw man argument. Instead of this false choice between assurance in the judgment and personal holiness, Hebrews makes it clear: “For by a single offering he has perfected for all time those who are being sanctified” (Heb. 10:14). Christ’s bloody sacrifice in our place is the solid foundation for our ongoing sanctification today.

The gospel of the cross of Christ is further weakened when we seek fellowship and access to God through mystical experiences—altered states of consciousness. This is the central experience of “contemplative prayer” as taught by spiritual formation teachers, such as Willard, Foster, Pennington, Merton, and others. Mystical knowledge of God separated from Scripture and the gospel of Jesus’ doing and dying makes the reconciliation of Jesus’ atonement unnecessary. D.A. Carson said it well:

To pursue unmediated, mystical knowledge of God is to announce that the person of Christ and his sacrificial work on our behalf are not necessary for the knowledge of God. Sadly, it is easy to delight in mystical experiences, enjoyable and challenging in themselves, without knowing anything of the regenerating power of God, grounded in Christ’s cross work.<sup>3</sup>

### Deny Scripture’s sufficiency

Secondly, they claim the Reformation principle of *sola scriptura*—Scripture is God’s supremely authoritative revelation—but they deny Scripture’s sufficiency. We do not, however, need lesser authorities to supplement what the Bible may seem to lack. As Adventists, we also claimed the supremacy of Scripture, but were taught that our prophet, Ellen White, was the “lesser light that leads to the greater light.” This belief meant that, along with “the Bible alone,” we needed White’s writings as a “continuing and authoritative source of truth”<sup>4</sup> for God’s church in the last days. For Adventists, Scripture may be “supreme,” but it is insufficient and needs a lesser authority to supplement and interpret it.

Psalms 19 asserts the complete sufficiency of God’s words for restoring our souls and making us wise (Ps. 19:7-12). The Bible claims thoroughness in teaching spiritual matters, especially the way of salvation (2 Tim. 3:15,16). “His divine power has granted to us all things that pertain to life and godliness” (2 Pet. 1:3,4).

Some readers objected that I quoted Talbot Seminary professor J.P. Moreland as an example of an evangelical leader who does not uphold the sufficiency of Scripture. The quote was from a talk he gave in 2007, discussing the problem of evangelicals’ “over-commitment to the Bible.”<sup>5</sup> I needed to be clearer about this. Moreland is a prominent apologist who has strongly defended the Christian faith against secularism and relativism and has challenged the evangelical church’s “withdrawal from the broader world of ideas.”<sup>6</sup> Moreland and Biola University’s faculty have stood up for Intelligent Design when other Christian universities have buckled. These are accomplishments to admire, and I also agree with Moreland that some evangelicals are anti-intellectual and too suspicious of general knowledge.

However, in his article, Moreland urges evangelicals also to accept the following as being authoritative and binding on the consciences of believers: personal words from God, mystical encounters, prophecies, tongues, etc.<sup>7</sup> With so many voices now claiming to speak words from God, however, we are expected to discern which words are His and which are merely human noise. Moreland also believes that because the spirit world is another aspect of knowledge that is accessible to the human mind, we can benefit from the systematic study of spiritual entities outside of Scripture.<sup>8</sup>

I find these beliefs and practices to be disturbing and outside Christian orthodoxy, and for these reasons, I question Moreland’s confidence in the sufficiency of Scripture.

### Foreign to God’s word

Along with such ancient mystical traditions, we also must reject religious practices that are foreign to God’s word. We declare the Bible to be insufficient when we use texts like Psalms 46:10 to support “silence and solitude” and numerous unbiblical practices of the Counter-Reformation mystics. Foster admits, moreover, that the Bible does not fully teach his disciplines, yet he insists they are essential for godliness.<sup>9</sup> Religious disciplines are never spiritually neutral, for they carry the theology and worldview—like spiritual DNA—of their religions of origin. Non-biblical religious disciplines may transform one’s faith, but they may not do it by the word of God.

Then how are we transformed by the gospel? Jesus said, “If you abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you” (Jn. 15:7). It is the word of God falling on good soil (Mt. 13:23) and finding a permanent home in us that produces the fruit of faith and holiness. He sanctifies us through His truth, found only in His word (Jn. 17:17). That “word of truth” is the “gospel of your salvation” (Eph.1:13). We know those words will produce fruit because they are God’s words, which never return to Him empty (Is. 55:11). Then what has He commanded us to do?

“And this is his commandment, that we believe in the name of his Son Jesus Christ and love one another, just as he has commanded us.” (1 Jn. 3:23).

As for the early church’s example of living regular disciplines, we have these four:

“And they devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers” (Acts 2:42). †

### Endnotes

<sup>1</sup> Willard, Dallas, “Resources, Willard Words,”

<http://www.dwillard.org/resources/willardwords.asp>

<sup>2</sup> Willard, Dallas, *The Divine Conspiracy*, p. 36,37.

<sup>3</sup> Carson, D.A. *Spiritual Disciplines*, Themelios, p. 36, par. 3.

<sup>4</sup> The White Estate, “The Seventh-day Adventist Church’s Understanding of Ellen White’s Authority,” <http://www.whiteestate.org/issues/scripsda.html>

<sup>5</sup> Moreland, J.P., “How Evangelicals Became Overcommitted to the Bible and What Can Be Done About It,” [http://www.kingdomtriangle.com/discussion/moreland\\_EvangOverCommBible.pdf](http://www.kingdomtriangle.com/discussion/moreland_EvangOverCommBible.pdf)

<sup>6</sup> Moreland, *ibid.*

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>9</sup> Foster, Richard, *Celebration of Discipline*, Harper Collins, San Francisco, 1988, p. 3.

**T**he ninth annual Former Adventist Fellowship weekend conference at Trinity Church in Redlands, California, convened on Valentine's Day with a welcome from Trinity's pastor of community Steve Springsted and worship led by Jonathan Winn with Roy Tinker. The opening talk by keynote speaker Gary Inrig was entitled "The Promise of the New Covenant" and showed how, through Deuteronomy, Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel, God progressively revealed that He would eventually establish a new, unconditional covenant that would supersede the Mosaic covenant. It would involve a suffering Servant, and it would include gentiles.

The next three of Gary's sessions were entitled "The Glory of the New Covenant", "The Paradox of the New Covenant", and "The Center of the New Covenant". His teaching was profound and powerful as he opened Scripture and shared how the reality of the New Covenant was comforting and strengthening him right then as he walked through his daughter's suffering from glioblastoma multiform, a particularly aggressive brain tumor.

### New speaker from CFAR

Tim Martin from The Centers For Apologetics Research (CFAR) joined our conference for the first time this year. He delivered the Friday night talk, "Adventism: Roots, Shoots, and Those In Cahoots", at our open-to-the-public session. He shared his research of the adventist Millerite movement and showed how it branched into two main divisions: the Sunday and the Sabbatarian branches. Each of these two divisions spawned many shoots and offshoots. The largest Sunday shoot is the Jehovah's Witness organization, and the largest Sabbatarian shoot is the Seventh-day Adventist organization. Many smaller offshoots have proliferated over the past 150-plus years, but in spite of their differences, all of

these groups, both Sunday-keeping and Sabbatarian, share the same roots and the focus on Jesus' second coming.

Central to all of these, Tim said, is their common revised definition of the gospel: "The Lord is coming; pack your bags!" Additionally, common throughout both the Sunday and Sabbatarian shoots are the beliefs in conditional immortality, no hell, a strong Arian or semi-Arian tendency, and a love of conferences and the publishing of books and periodicals, among other things. All of these groups, Tim clarified, are correctly classified as "adventists" because they all share the Millerite root and continue to have an eschatological focus that causes their members to "get ready" and even, in some cases, to set new dates for Christ's return.

Tim also gave the Saturday morning devotional message as well as a breakout session entitled "The Word-Faith Movement". This session was particularly powerful and clarifying as he explained that this movement depends on its definition of "faith". While most evangelical Christians understand "faith" to be about confidence in God, the often-unspoken but clear meaning of "faith" within the Word-Faith movement has three elements. First, one must believe in spite of the evidence (for example: believe you're healed in spite of the evidence, or believe you're a millionaire in spite of the evidence). Second, belief plus words equals power to produce results. In other words, spiritual power is released in words. Joyce Meyer, for example, says that "Words are containers for power." The belief of this movement is that our prayers give God permission to exercise His power in given situations.

Finally, in this movement "faith" is sometimes called "positive confession" or "the power of the tongue (or of words)". The definition of "faith", therefore, is what drives and sustains this movement. If this definition is wrong, however, the movement completely fails.

PHOTOS BY SHARON CAREY



1. Gary Inrig, keynote speaker; 2. Carolyn and Dale Ratzlaff, presenter, founders of Life Assurance Ministries; 3. Richard Tinker, conference coordinator; 4. Roy Tinker, worship team; 5. Jonathan Winn, worship leader; 6. Lisa Winn giving her testimony.

# MER ADVENTIST CONFERENCE IN SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

The principle that drives this movement is the same as “the law of attraction” behind the popular 2006 book called *The Secret* by Rhonda Byrne and popularized by Oprah Winfrey. This principle of “positive thinking” is pagan; it is the same as magic.

## More gospel-grounding

Dale Ratzlaff presented a general session examining the Messianic Hebrew Roots movement as contrasted with the finished work of the new covenant. Colleen Tinker talked about how to become anchored to truth through contextual, inductive Bible study in order to protect ourselves from subtle pulls toward gospel deviations as we orient ourselves in the sometimes confusing sea of evangelical Christianity after we leave Adventism. Carolyn Macomber encouraged us through the story of Daniel and his three friends to trust God. His faithfulness and His promises fulfilled in Jesus protect us as we walk away from the Adventism that used to be all we knew and choose to follow Him.

Paul Carden, executive director of CFAR, presented a short talk entitled “Visions and Vanity” at the Friday evening meeting. He compared the visionary revelation of Hiram Edson and the supposed movement of Christ into the Most Holy Place after Jesus failed to come on October 22, 1844, with the 1913 vision of Pentecostal John Schaepe that revealed to him that the true baptism was in the name of Christ only, not in the names of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. This revelation caught the attention of Australian Pentecostal minister Frank Ewart who championed this idea—known as “Jesus Only” or the “Oneness” doctrine, and he launched the “Oneness Pentecostal” movement that tore the Assemblies of God apart. Paul stressed that we are to test the spirits, never believing simply because someone claims their ideas are revealed directly from God.

Breakout sessions during the weekend were conducted by Dale Ratzlaff, Jim Valentine, Martin Carey, and Tim Martin. Lisa Winn, Mary Seeley Stockler, and Charles Cochran shared their faith stories, and Carel and Nicole Stevenson oversaw time for conversation and debriefing with the teens who attended.

Jon Rittenhouse spoke about our New Covenant security on Saturday afternoon before we enjoyed a meal of tri-tip catered by local steakhouse Mill Creek Cattle Company. Finally, Gary led us in communion, and we closed the last day of meetings with a time of praising God for His mercy and faithfulness.

Attendees hailed from Ontario and Manitoba, Canada, and from Florida, Ohio, Arkansas, Kentucky, Texas, Michigan, Pennsylvania, Arizona, and California.

Comments from attendees included, “I have been fed; I will attend again.” “I am SO happy to be here; I have so much to learn.” “Thank you for the songs; they ministered to me.” “I have felt alone; it’s wonderful to be with others who understand.”

We are grateful to Trinity Church for hosting the conference, and we extend thanks to Pastor Steve Springsted and to his assistant Ann Mixon for their help with hospitality and facilities. We also thank the volunteers who prepared and served us snacks and meals throughout the weekend under the leadership of LynnRae and Doug Dupree and Thais Kanold. Many thanks also to Kit Satre for providing the clubhouse at her housing complex for our Sunday lunch. We are grateful to Cheryl Granger for centerpieces and decorations, to Paul Mirra for doing the lighting, and to Nathanael Tinker for designing the worship and announcement slides. Finally, we thank our entire local FAF group for helping to set up, organize, transport, prepare, and pray for every detail of the weekend.

We praise God for a powerful, worshipful weekend filled with truth from His word and encouragement from one another. †

PHOTOS BY SHARON CAREY



1. Nicole Stevenson co-led the teen program with her husband Carel (not shown), with Kathleen Bertrand; 2. Jon Rittenhouse, presenter; 3. Tim Martin led the Friday evening community meeting, with Paul Carden, both from CFAR, shown participating in the Q and A; 4. LynnRae Dupree with Thais Kanold, the Trinity “church ladies” that fed us well; 5. Mary Stockler and Colleen Tinker, presenter, with Joe Cornell, the sound technician for the conference, in the background.

**Excellent article**

Even though I subscribe to your magazine, I somehow lost the issue that has Martin Carey's article "Contemplating Prayer" (Spring 2013). Is there any way you could send this to me? By the way, his last article on spiritual formation was excellent.

MIDDLETOWN, CT

**Judgmental, contemptuous, and hateful**

I have read your articles and readers' letters in the Winter, 2013, edition of your magazine. I'm writing in response to a few issues raised.

1. The Law in Galatians: it is quite evident that Paul is referring to the Levitical law that the Jews used to put a burden on Gentiles, such as, you have to be circumcised before you become a good Christian....

2. In Romans (mostly chapters 3-8) Paul is talking about the Law given to Moses at Sinai, also known as the Ten Commandments. These laws, though keeping them does not save or justify us, are still relevant to the Christian in revealing and reminding us of God's will. Paul states that "The law is holy, and the commandment holy and just and good" (Rom. 7:12)....

3. God expects us to abide by His commandments; all of them. He has never changed His mind

since giving them at Sinai... We cannot honestly claim to be saved by grace and have faith when we commit adultery, steal, murder, etc. and still expect that we will be justified and escape God's judgment. And the same God who said, "Thou shalt not commit adultery..." is the one who said "Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy..." and also said to "Love your neighbor as yourself." These are not Adventist statements; rather, they are directly from the Bible, and it'd be interest-

**During the six months I spent reading nothing but Scripture and praying for the Holy Spirit to show me His truth, I came to see Jesus and the gospel in a new light. Praise The Lord!**

ing to know if your Bible says something different.

I do not believe it is legalism to respond to God's grace and love in obedience as He requires. Otherwise, we are preaching the doctrine of predestination, where God is responsible for saving those who get saved and for the loss of those who don't.

4. It is a pity that Mr. and Mrs. Hosillos of Prineville, Oregon,

should spend 108 years in the church and not understand what the Bible says about the Sabbath....

Your magazine *Proclamation!* is overly judgmental and contemptuous of Adventists. It appears like your organization exists only for that purpose, and if there were no Seventh-day Adventists, you'd cease to be; you would never have existed to begin with. If you do have a great Christian message to share, then share it in a more Christ-like way. More people may accept it better that way. As it is

sition" and appreciate the reminders that the view of the gospel that I grew up with is not compatible with Scripture. I was neither angry nor hurt by the actions of anyone within the Adventist church but was an active member for many years, teaching in the Sabbath Schools and participating in the worship programs. It was the ache in my heart that could never seem to be soothed by the teachings of the church, though, that brought me to question everything and led me to beg God to show me Himself without any "religious" influence. During the six months I spent reading nothing but Scripture and praying for the Holy Spirit to show me His truth, I came to see Jesus and the gospel in a new light. Praise The Lord! I have never felt more joy or peace in my life. Thank you for your ministry to those of us who have dared to question "the church".

CRESTLINE, CA

now, you are too hateful to appeal to a majority of reasonable people. RIVERSIDE, CA

**Thank you for your ministry**

Please add me to your mailing list. I found your magazine in my (Adventist) mother's home and ended up reading it cover to cover. I am three years out of the Adventist church, but there are days I still consider myself "in tran-

**Not appreciative**

I have been a baptized Adventist for 58 years. As an adult, many organizations, including yours, have sent me anti-Adventist literature. I am not appreciative of this unsolicited material. My Jesus is everything to me, and I believe He has raised up the Seventh-day Adventist church for a specific mission. It is my great privilege to be a member of this movement.

**THANK YOU FOR BEING A PART OF THIS MINISTRY**



Thank you for your amazing generosity at year's end. Because of your commitment to this ministry, we ended the year "in the black". That fact was a gracious provision from God through you! As we enter the middle of the year, we ask those of you who might not be donors at this time to prayerfully consider whether God might be asking you to become part of the support of Life Assurance Ministries. Costs of printing and mailing are rising, and we depend on your participation to make this magazine a reality.

We thank God that He is sovereign and that He has provided for *Proclamation!* even in the darkest times when it looked like there was no way out. We thank you for praying with us that God will keep us faithful and provide for Life Assurance Ministries for His glory and for the proclamation of His gospel.

**Richard and Colleen Tinker with Dale and Carolyn Ratzlaff.**

Thank you for removing me from your subscription list.  
COLUMBIA, MD

#### Dead bones to live

Thank you for all the work you are doing in proclaiming the truth. When I started reading the Bible about 30 years ago (I am now in my late 60s), I knew something was wrong with the teachings of my youth in the Adventist church and school I attended. The dead bones of the Adventist church will hopefully become alive with the *Proclamation!* you folks are providing.

VIA EMAIL

#### Apologize for the blasphemy

Once you let self go, you will apologize to God for the blasphemy you have caused. God have mercy on you. And may you awaken before it's too late.

VIA EMAIL

#### Saved every *Proclamation!*

I was so angered by the narrow-mindedness of some of the letters to the editor in the last issue that I had to send a check and tell you that the truth will get to those who are seeking with all their hearts. Keep up the good work. We have saved every *Proclamation!* that we have ever received and enjoy reading them over and over.

PARADISE, CA

### 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

#### Adventists fully accept Paul

I appreciate LAM sending me *Proclamation!* It is very interesting to read your perspective on the Adventist beliefs and practice. Much of what is presented in *Proclamation!* as Adventist belief and teachings I have not heard taught in my 60 years of attending Adventist churches and schools. I wonder if you check with knowledgeable leaders in the church to make sure the doctrines that are being rejected are even believed by mainstream Adventists....

It is not just Adventists who accept the New Testament's teaching that we are drawn to the gospel by the work of the Holy Spirit, and

attacks it, and then thinks he has refuted Adventist doctrines. Adventists do not believe that anyone is saved by works of the law. We are saved by grace alone.  
TUCSON, AZ

**Editor's response:** Would you risk losing your salvation if you gave up the Sabbath? Would you risk opening yourself to demonic deception and ultimately to loss of your salvation if you believed people have an immaterial spirit that survives the body at death?

If the answer to those questions is "yes", or even if it is uncertain, then you do not believe that salvation is entirely the work of God

## Would you risk losing your salvation if you gave up the Sabbath? Would you risk opening yourself to demonic deception and ultimately to loss of your salvation if you believed people have an immaterial spirit that survives the body at death?

we receive God's gracious gift by accepting it (see Jn. 3:16). It was not clarified, but I'm wondering whether all Life Assurance Ministries followers are Calvinists. I hardly think that the only choice we have is 1) no choice in the matter at all—we are predestined to eternal life or eternal damnation or 2) a faith and works theology. And may I hasten to add that Adventists fully accept Paul's teaching that we are saved by faith alone without works of the law [any law]. Adventists do not believe that human works play any role in our justification or sanctification. Adventists do believe that those who are "in Christ" will allow Christ to live out His life within them. I do not believe Adventists would have any opposition at all to Barker's "Recapitulation" (p. 21, vol. 14:4). It seems Rick Barker sets up a straw man theology (that Adventists don't believe) and

without any human participation. One cannot be saved by grace alone through faith but lost by wrong beliefs or practices. One is either spiritually dead, in the domain of darkness, or spiritually alive, having passed already from death to life by believing in the Lord Jesus (Jn. 5:24; 3:18).

Salvation is not about maintaining obedience; it is about being alive. Adventists simply do not believe this biblical fact. Jesus said to Nicodemus that one must be born of the Spirit to enter the kingdom of heaven. There is no other requirement. When you begin to unpack the underpinnings of Adventist theology, it becomes clear that the words Adventists say publicly have different definitions than those words have within Scripture. Adventists do believe that their Sabbath-keeping will be the mark of their readiness for salvation. They do believe that sin is behavior that can be overcome by

the help of the Holy Spirit—or at least it can be progressively eliminated. They do believe man does not possess an immaterial spirit. These beliefs stem from a profound misunderstanding of Scripture.

I know that many denominations hold a synergistic view of justification and/or sanctification, and this fact does not make them heretics. Nevertheless, the Adventist and the Catholic views are not the same as Protestant synergistic views. Adventism and Catholicism both believe that a person must continue to do the things that they deem to be the evidence of salvation in order to be truly saved. For Adventists, the Sabbath is the primary evidence of salvation, and the belief in annihilation is a close second.

We are saved only when we repent of our intrinsic, natural spiritual death. We cannot avoid sin by prayer and persistence. We can only be made alive by repenting and receiving the blood of Jesus as the propitiation for our natural identity as a child of wrath (Eph 2:3; Rom. 3:21-27).

#### What a blessing!

I just received your last issue, and what a blessing it is to read a magazine that is so well balanced, well-prepared, and well-prayed. The letter from Fred and Rochelle Hosillos was concentrated and to the point. Yes, the truth hurts sometimes, but, we must put our own feelings aside and "obey God before men" when lovingly exposed to truth. Love you guys; this kind of truth set me free! Praise God!

VIA EMAIL

#### So much hatred

Please terminate the *Proclamation!* magazines being delivered to my home. I'm not interested in reading them anymore. I would normally just sign my name now and send this letter off; however, someone needs to know how this magazine came off to me. I have never read any magazine filled with so much hatred. Even Adventists don't slam, con-

demn, or accuse other beliefs. I'm probably right to say that not any other religious group does either to the extent *Proclamation!* does. It's rude and not out of love. A lot of the articles I read were critical and mean. Most times the magazine just made me mad or angry. I mean, really—if someone wants to convince another of who's right or wrong, he doesn't start shooting them down with accusations. That's not nice, right?...

In all honesty, I'm not in my heart an Adventist. I'm not mad. I'm not vegetarian. I don't believe EGW. However, this congregation is the closest I've found to my current beliefs.

I understand that many people have left Adventism. Maybe that's a good thing. Maybe it's not. I don't know. What I do know is that everyone must believe what they feel and know is right for them. Adventists don't have all the truth, and neither does anyone else.

I do believe in Saturday as being the Lord's appointed holy day. Satan has been attacking God's special day forever! Think about it. Why would Satan be so concerned if it no longer matters? And if you don't think it matters, why devote so much energy into making a point of it? If we all love and are worshiping Him, then we are where we need to be.

See you in heaven.  
MANCHESTER, MI

**Editor's note:** Jesus identified Himself as "the Truth": "I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father but

through Me" (Jn. 14:6). There is one work of God that we are commanded to do: "This is the work of God, that you believe in Him whom He has sent" (Jn. 6:29).

We are saved, not by deciding what is right for us, but by believing in the Lord Jesus and trusting His shed blood as the payment for our depravity. No day will be credited to our account if we keep it. Only Jesus' righteousness will be credited to our account—and that only if we repent and believe, trusting in His death, burial, and resurrection as the completed requirement for atonement and for our reconciliation with God.

When we believe, we are sealed with the promised Holy Spirit who

Once you let self go, you will apologize to God for the blasphemy you have caused. God have mercy on you. And may you awaken before it's too late.

is a guarantee of our eternal life (Eph. 1:13-14). At that moment we pass from death to life (Jn. 5:24).

The energy we spend at Life Assurance Ministries is not for the sake of tearing down a day or a church. Rather, we desire that our Adventist friends and loved ones will not miss Jesus because of a day. We want them to be saved.

#### What about Isaiah 66?

I am a former Adventist and would like to know if there is an explanation of the text of Isa. 66:23

where it states that from one Sabbath to another we will come to worship.

VIA EMAIL

**Response from Dale Ratzlaff's Sabbath in Christ, p. 360-361:** "First, if it is to be argued that the Sabbath should be kept today because in an Old Testament prophetic description of the new earth the inhabitants are said to bow down before the Lord from Sabbath to Sabbath, then it must also be argued that new moon celebrations should be observed today for they too are said to be observed in the new earth. It is not a valid method of interpretation to use only half of the data in a text while ignoring the other half...the fact

that Sabbath and the new moon celebrations are mentioned together in Isaiah only reinforces the fact that old covenant prophets described the age to come using old covenant terminology.

"Second, if the activities described in these verses [Is. 66:17-25] are to be observed now, then we could argue that the Levitical priesthood should also be observed now....

"Third, even if a certain practice may be observed in the new earth it does not, in and of itself, mean that it should be practiced now...it is not a currently recommended practice to pasture wolves and sheep together! Nor would we advise zookeepers to feed their lions straw!"

#### Dishonest to stay

My husband and I are facing the reality that it is dishonest for us to remain in the Adventist church. We no longer believe in Ellen White, the Adventist interpretation of Daniel 8:14, the Adventist interpretation of the Scripture about alcohol and meat, the perpetuity of the

law, or the covenants, among other things. We are still studying about the Sabbath (definitely don't believe it is any kind of end time test) and have many other things we need to learn. We are life-long Adventists educated in Adventist schools through university, did all the Adventist things like Pathfinders, mission trips, summer camps, camp meetings, literature evangelism—you name it. Our families include Adventist pastors, former conference officials, missionaries and university professors, and many very active laypeople. We are very active in our local church. We have always given 20%. All of our close friends are Adventist....

We have young children, and a major reason this is weighing on me so heavily is that I know the longer we stay, the harder it will be for our kids when we leave. I know we can't put them in Adventist schools where they will be taught a legalistic, works-based false religion. There have been a lot of tears and sleepless nights here. Sometimes I am scared, and sometimes I am angry. I feel like I somehow tripped and fell into a strange alternate universe. Sometimes I wish I could go back and forget all this information and go back to being the perfect Adventist family.

I know that Jesus is leading us out of Adventism. I have a greater love for the beautiful pure Bible and a deep sense of gratitude for God's free gift of salvation! I know that this pain is for our spiritual good. I want my kids to grow up free of legalism and safe in the knowledge that they are saved! I believe good will come out of this in the end, but I'm still grieving the loss of my "perfect" life... I have watched all the YouTube videos and hope you will be posting last weekend's conference soon.

VIA EMAIL

**Note:** They are all online here: [www.FormerAdventist.com](http://www.FormerAdventist.com).

You are invited to

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Come and bring a friend; all are invited. No one will be asked to read or pray aloud who does not wish to do so.

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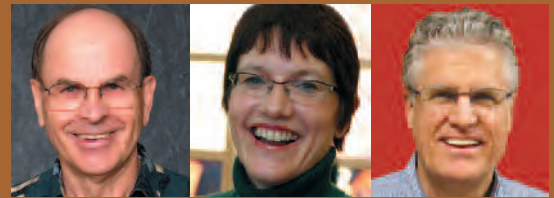
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FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 26, 2014

- 9:00 Session 1
- 10:10 Session 2
- 11:25 Workshop 1
- 1:30 Session 3
- 2:35 Session 4
- 3:50 Workshop 2
- 6:30 Session 5

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 27, 2014

- 9:00 Session 6
- 10:10 Session 7
- 11:25 Workshop 3
- 1:30 Session 8
- 2:35 Session 9
- 3:50 Workshop 4
- 6:30 Session 10
- Questions and Answers: Panel

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 28, 2014

- 9:00 Adult Bible Fellowship: The Chapel
- 10:35 Worship Service: The Chapel
- 12:00 Fellowship Lunch: Restaurant (no host)
- 2:30 Beach fellowship: Lake Michigan

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THE LIFE AFTER WITH CHRIS LEE

Just when I think I've exorcised all the theological baggage of the past, something hits me, confirming that the renewing of my mind isn't a complete work. It happens to me all the time. I'll have some deeply engrained belief that I assume to be biblical, but upon scrutiny, it turns out not to be. That's when it suddenly strikes me that I'm really not over all the misperceptions I picked up along the way. Sometimes that revelation is quite startling.

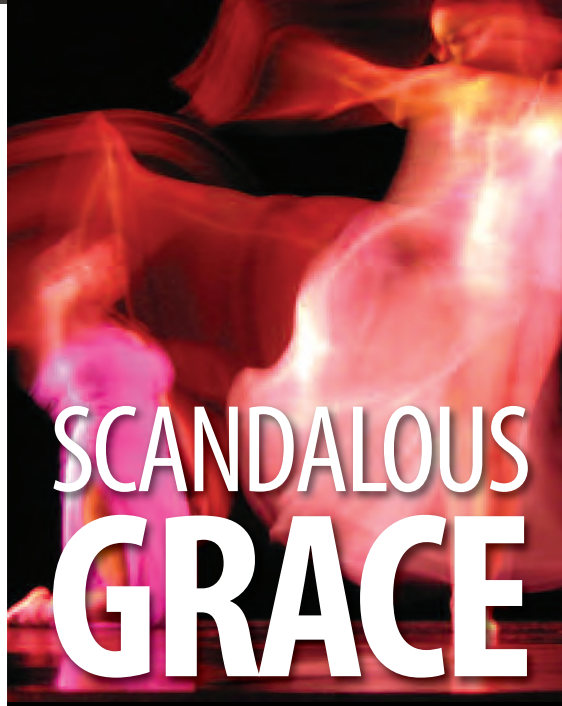
Bryan Clark, the senior pastor of Lincoln Berean Church, has recently been preaching through Galatians, available on the web at [sermons.lincolnberean.org](http://sermons.lincolnberean.org). I've been enjoying the series immensely, but I wasn't really expecting to glean anything brand new. After all, Galatians is one of my favorite books. I've read it dozens of times, own a couple of commentaries on the book, have been through some study guides, and had already heard Pastor Clark teach Galatians several years ago. What new gem could possibly be unearthed in a path so well trod?

I like to think I get the grace thing. I get that there is nothing I can ever do to make myself more acceptable to God. I get that I am saved completely apart from anything that I do or don't do. I get that I am eternally secure because it's all about grace from start to finish. However, I think I've never realized just how scandalous grace really is. The "scandalous" nature of grace is a theme Clark has emphasized throughout his exposition of Galatians and the immediately preceding series on the book of Romans. Maybe it's hearing these two books taught back to back that has helped



me see a blind spot in my understanding of grace.

Here's the thing; I mess up, a lot. I make all kinds of bad choices and decisions on a daily basis. I know my actions are offensive to God. Sometimes I even realize this fact



**On my worst day I am invited into the light room to dance with Jesus! That's scandalous grace.**

sin and yes, I should confess my sin. However, I should never forget that on my worst day, in Christ, I still stand perfectly righteous before God. On my worst day, rather than retreating to the dark room, I should be running into the light, into the arms of Jesus. On my worst day I am invited into the light room to dance with Jesus! That's scandalous grace. In human terms, it takes time and effort to rebuild a relationship after a betrayal, if it's even salvageable. Grace runs counter to everything we know. Grace means I am loved just the same even when I am unfaithful. God's acceptance isn't contingent on my actions; it's all about who I am in Christ. The relationship I have with God is a perfect finished work in Christ. That means when I sin, the dark room isn't the answer; dancing even closer with Jesus is. Scandalous. †

going in, but I choose to sin anyway. I hate this about myself. I spend a good deal of time beating myself up about wrong choices. My failures make me miserable and depressed. I can't understand how I can want to be godly so badly and yet keep messing up so horribly. I feel wretched and wonder what's wrong with me. It's in these times that I pull away from God the most. Sure, I pray for forgiveness, sometimes desperately, but I've always had this sense that there must be some penance required. I must go through a time of solitary suffering in order to prove my grief. As Clark puts it, I go into "the dark room" and I stay there until I feel I've somehow atoned for my sin.

Withdrawing to the dark room isn't consistent with a message of grace. Yes, I should experience godly sorrow for my

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

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