

# SPECIAL DOUBLE ISSUE!

LIFE ASSURANCE MINISTRIES, INC

# Proclamation!

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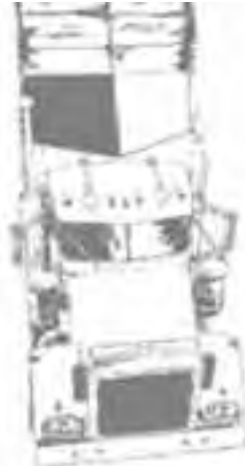
OCTOBER

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2001

FOR FORMER ADVENTISTS • INQUIRING ADVENTISTS • SABBATARIANS • CONCERNED EVANGELICALS



*On being ready*

## Big Gene and the present crisis

I pulled my Freightliner truck and trailer loaded with hay onto Tafoya's truck scale, opened the door, climbed out of the cab and suddenly I was approached by two angry men wanting to fight.

It was late in the afternoon when Big Gene and I pulled off the levy road by the Sacramento

and I believed him. He used to like to show off his strength, especially if there was anyone around to impress. I saw him take a three-wire bail of alfalfa hay weighing between 120 and 130 lbs. and, standing on the ground next to the truck, throw it on the top layer of bails on a nearly loaded truck. He would stand with his back to the truck, pull one end of the bail up to his waist, then with both hay hooks he would snap the bail up over his head, and with a mighty push from his arms the bail went up to the top. I also saw him lift with one hand a 10 x 22 truck tire mounted on a steel rim and put it into the back of a pickup. Yes, Big Gene was big, black and strong. He was a good helper!

The air was still and hot that night when we finished loading, and Big Gene was going shirtless. We drove through the hay field toward the levy road that was considerably higher than the field. The little narrow road that went from the field to the top of the levy was very steep. So I put the truck in the lowest gear and started crawling up toward the narrow, two-lane road on the top of the levy. Just before we reached the top we

CONTINUED ON PAGE 28

*Many of us have grown up with the continual admonition, "get ready, get ready get ready..."*

River a few miles East of Woodland, California, to get a load of alfalfa hay. Before we finished loading the 25 tons of hay we ran out of daylight, but by turning on the clearance lights we had enough light to stack the bails straight. When done, we tied down and started for Woodland where we were to weigh our load.

Big Gene was my capable helper and also drove truck for me on occasion. His real name was Gene Williams, but everyone called him Big Gene. Yes, he was big and black. He must have weighed about 250 lbs., and at night about all you could see was the white of his eyes. He claimed to be able to put 400 lbs. over his head,

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## Life Assurance Ministries (LAM), Inc

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

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

**Message:** "For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is a gift of God; not of works, that no one should boast." Ephesians 2:8,9

# Truth can stand the test of investigation

## Seasons greetings

As we approach another Christmas season our thoughts are directed back to the Christ event. While the world is full of anxiety, we can experience the peace that passes understanding. Because of the birth, life, death and resurrection of Christ, we have been reconciled to God, and

backup outside the computer from September 20. Thankfully, we were able to rebuild all the data from hard copies; however, we did lose the names that were added, changed, or deleted from our mailing lists during this time. Therefore, if you sent in new names, changes of address or cancellations during this time, please re-send them. We apologize for this inconvenience. We now keep two mirror-image hard drives outside the computer that are backed up daily.

***As the world is running here and there seeking to destroy the evil of terrorism, we who have believed can enter His rest.***

there is now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus! As the world is running here and there seeking to destroy the evil of terrorism, we who have believed can enter His rest. "These things I have spoken to you, so that in Me you may have peace. In the world you have tribulation, but take courage; I have overcome the world," John 16:33. It is our hope and prayer that every one of our readers will be drawn into a closer relationship with Christ during this Christmas season. May God bless you!

## Covenant Understanding

Several SDAs, including one SDA pastor, have corresponded with me stating that the position taken by Dr. Reiner in the last *Proclamation* does not represent the Adventist position on the covenants. To clarify this I asked Dr. Bacchiocchi to write a three-page article which would specifically address the following: What is the old covenant? What are the signs of the old covenant? What is the new covenant? What are the signs of the new covenant? What is the difference between the covenants? Which covenant are Christians now under? However, he declined our invitation.

## Response to Greg Taylor's Manifesto

Tens of thousands of people on the Internet have been sent an evaluation by Dr. Bacchiocchi of former SDA pastor Greg Taylor's *Manifesto*. This we believe to be filled with twisted facts and character assassination. Greg decided not to answer the charges. However, I asked him to respond to me so I would know the facts of the matter. He has given me permission to post this. Find it at <http://www.ratzlaf.com/downloads>. We always seek the truth! Truth can stand the test of investigation!

## Double Issue

Because we are late in getting out the September/October *Proclamation* we decided to include the November/December with it in one enlarged issue. Thanks for your understanding.

## Virus Attack

On October 20 we were hit with a nasty virus that completely destroyed our main hard drive, and it also wiped out the back up drive in the same computer. We had to revert to another

## The Good News!

But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid; for behold, I bring you good news of great joy which will be for all the people; for today in the city of David there has been born for you a Savior, who is Christ the Lord." "This will be a sign for you: you will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger." And suddenly there appeared with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying, "Glory to God in the highest, And on earth peace among men with whom He is pleased." Luke 2:10-14



# Proclamation!

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# HAS THE SABBATH BECOME OUR CHRIST?

*(This article was written some time ago while Greg Taylor was senior pastor of Foster SDA Church in Asheville, North Carolina. It was submitted to several SDA publications, but they refused to print it.)*

I was sitting in the large camp meeting auditorium surrounded with a couple thousand congregants for our annual gathering. The featured speaker for this section of the meeting was a young man who was sharing his personal testimony. He enthusiastically told his story of the pain of his addictive life and his rebellion against God. Then with tears in his eyes he told of his conversion experience and His surrender to Jesus. I was moved to tears. I let out a spontaneous “amen”. But to my surprise there were just a few other muffled “Amen’s” in that large crowd. I thought to myself that everyone must be sleepy after the big Sabbath meal. But what happened next came as a shock to me. The man continued to tell his story and told about a friend he had met who shared with him the Sabbath message. He told the congregation how he became convinced of the truth of this doctrine and he started keeping the Sabbath. Suddenly the congregation erupted into hearty “amen’s” and even some cheers. I remember thinking to myself that day, there is something wrong with this picture.

### **Thank you for the Sabbath**

When my family and I have the chance to travel, we love to visit churches. We enjoy observing how others do ministry within their local context. But one thing I have noticed recently that has been typical of our churches ever since my child-

GREG TAYLOR

“DEAR LORD,  
THANK YOU  
FOR THE  
SABBATH...”

hood days is a prayer that starts something like this. “Dear Lord, Thank you for the Sabbath...” I have become increasingly aware of this and have conducted my own mental survey—unofficial of course. Perhaps one time out of ten will I hear at some point in the prayer... “Thank you for sending your Son Jesus...? Is there something wrong with this picture?”

### **More important than anything**

Recently we had a couple of people from unchurched backgrounds who started attending our church. After some time of seeking and discovery they came to the point of surrender to Jesus Christ. What a celebration it was when these people who had formerly been so far from God made public their decision to follow Jesus in the waters of baptism! Shortly after their decisions there was a “Net” evangelism series, and we invited them to attend as an opportunity to deepen their understanding of some of the doctrinal material. I asked each of them after the series was over what their reflections on it were. What I heard hit me right between the eyes. Each of them individually mentioned the fact that there were one or two nights that focused on Jesus and the Gospel of grace, but most of it was on other things especially the Sabbath. One of them went so far as to say, “the last half of the series was almost all about the Sabbath. They seemed to hammer it in night after night. Why is this so much more important than everything else?”

I fumbled around a bit and explained that a lot of our listeners are from other churches with a Sunday tradition. “We spend a lot of time on

that because it is a big issue for them." But I went home that evening having to face the truth that our Sabbath distinctive is often emphasized to the virtual exclusion of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Is something wrong with this picture?

Over the nearly 20 years I have spent in Adventist ministry, I have regularly taught classes to our people in a variety of settings on the subject of evangelism. Again, in my own informal unofficial survey, I have noticed that about a ten to one ratio emerges. When asked to defend the Sabbath doctrine, most good Adventists can put together a simple Bible study with a few texts as to why the Sabbath is important and viable. On the other hand these same people are far less likely to be able to explain the Gospel or give any textual support for how to lead a friend to Christ. Even more frightening, most of these cannot give a clear testimony as to their own conversion experience. There is something wrong with this picture.

### Parallels Judaism

I cannot help but think of the parallel emphasis in Judaism at the time of Jesus. No other institution was as important in Judaism. It was believed to be more critical to the Jewish community than all the other commands of the Torah combined.<sup>1</sup> God's forgiveness was attached to Sabbath keeping. It was regarded as a primary method of witnessing. God's gifts and privileges were attached to it. Above all it was believed that the final redemption hinged on proper observance of Sabbath. Rabbi Simeon Ben Yochai said: "If Israel were to keep two Sabbaths according to the laws thereof, they would be redeemed immediately."<sup>2</sup> To the Jews of Jesus' day, the Sabbath had taken on a salvation significance. The Sabbath had in many respects become their Christ. This Sabbath emphasis had become so all pervasive that they rejected the "Lord of the Sabbath" when He appeared.

It is understandable in light of the Pharisaical views regarding the Sabbath, that they saw Jesus disregard of their Sabbath Halakah (rabbinic tradition intended to protect the Sabbath) as a threat to the whole System of Judaism. They saw Jesus as delaying the coming of redemption even though He came as the divine agent of it. "For this reason the Jews tried all the harder to kill Him; not only was He breaking the Sabbath, but He was even calling God His own father, making Himself equal with God."<sup>3</sup> Sabbath was

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one of the primary reasons for their rejection of Jesus as the Messiah. It had taken the place of Christ in their thinking and practice. The Sabbath had been given as an illustration of grace, but it had instead become the antithesis of grace. The rest that had pointed forward to the rest of redemption, had become an end in itself. In that sense the Sabbath had become for them an Antichrist. What a tragedy!

So today, the Sabbath provides beautiful symbolism of spiritual rest in Christ,<sup>4</sup> but it is not rest in Christ in and of itself. It is a wonderful illustration of salvation by faith, but it is not salvation by faith. It is a glorious picture of the Gospel, but it is not the Gospel. Even though it is one of the pillars of our doctrinal belief system, it is not the foundation. Jesus is the foundation, the chief cornerstone.

While virtually none of us would ever think of putting the Sabbath before or in place of Christ, we must face the reality that at the grass roots level many of our people have gotten the wrong picture. Therefore it is our responsibility as pastors, educators, evangelists, and administrators, to intentionally resist anything that might cause us to communicate or perpetuate the wrong emphasis. The truth of the matter is that many of our people are clear on the Sabbath doctrine and other distinctives, and fuzzy on the gospel. Therefore we must redouble our efforts to keep the Main Thing, the main thing.

### Sabbath emphasis

For example when the name Seventh-day Adventist is spoken or read, the first words are about the Sabbath. I know that we chose the name to clearly distinguish ourselves from other Adventists. The name has served us well. But I know when people ask me what denomination I represent and I tell them, the first question they ask me is about the Seventh-day part of it. I have seldom been asked about the Adventist part. If I am not careful I can get into a little Bible study on the Sabbath in the scriptures and miss the opportunity to talk about Jesus and His literal soon return. I can miss the chance in the distinctive to talk about the main thing.

The same is true with our evangelism. Because of the distinctive nature of our Sabbath understanding, we tend to spend far more time on it and much less time on the Gospel proportionately. We must somehow change this emphasis. Jesus said, "But I, when I am lifted up... will draw

all men to myself.”<sup>5</sup> We must make Jesus Christ and Him Crucified the heart and soul of all we teach and model. We must train our people in the essentials of salvation and then teach them how to take others to the foot of the cross. This is where all the power for life change is found. “Of all professing Christians, Seventh-day Adventists should be foremost in uplifting Christ before the world. The proclamation of the third angels message calls for presentation of the Sabbath truth. This truth, with the others included in the message is to be proclaimed; but the great center of attraction, Christ Jesus, must not be left out. It is at the cross of Christ that mercy and truth meet together, and righteousness and peace kiss each other. The sinner must be led to look to Calvary: with the simple faith of a little child...”<sup>6</sup>

**Keep the Main Thing the main thing**

Recently I spent a few days on a spiritual retreat. I was alone with God and nature for the entire time. In the stillness and quietness of that place reading the Word, praying and journaling, the message that kept coming to me was my own need to know the Lord far more than I do. I must fall in love with Jesus and walk with him as Enoch did so long ago. Then I must lift up Jesus. I must focus on Jesus. I must tell those whom God has trusted to my care how to truly find relationship with Christ and grow in Jesus. Because when I, as a man of prayer and filled with the Holy Spirit, preach Jesus, real life change will take place. It will be contagious. People will be attracted to the one who alone can save and the one who changes minds and hearts. I came away from that retreat with my personal marching orders, much like Paul’s, “For I resolved to know nothing while I was with you except Jesus Christ and Him crucified.”<sup>7</sup> In other words I am to keep the Main Thing the main thing. I must then trust that the Holy Spirit will do His job of guiding His people into all truth. He will bring conviction of sin. He will change hearts.

I want to challenge my partners in ministry. I believe this is from the Lord. Let us intentionally lift up Jesus. Teach the Gospel faithfully. Let us examine and reexamine our ministry focus. Let us diligently, carefully, and prayerfully analyze our methods and our presentations so we truly communicate what is most important. God is faithful. When we put His Son truly in the center, the fruit will come!

In my mind’s eye, I imagine a day when Adventists are known for their love for Jesus

I IMAGINE A  
DAY WHEN  
ADVENTISTS  
ARE KNOWN  
FOR THEIR  
LOVE FOR  
JESUS RATHER  
THAN  
PRIMARILY  
THEIR  
SABBATH...

rather than primarily their Sabbath observance or eating practices. I like to visualize a trained laity that is armed with a clear understanding of Grace and a personal testimony of a saving relationship with Jesus. I see churches that are thriving, caring communities extending the grace they have received to their neighbors and friends. I imagine worship services that are filled with praise and worship because of real life change through Christ and the power of His Spirit; the church of Acts 2:42-47 realized in our generation. I see our communities gathering around and asking us how they too can be saved and enter into such a loving community. Then, I imagine people asking us to teach them everything we know about Jesus and the truths of His word. Is this an impossible dream? No, not at all. Jesus promises it if we lift Him up, and make the Main thing, the main thing.

*Greg and His wife Paula served the Foster church for 8 years. They have two sons, Jordan, 11, and Matthew, 9. Pray for them as they seek new ministry opportunities to proclaim the gospel of God’s grace.*

**Endnotes**

<sup>1</sup>Kenneth A. Strand, Editor, *The Sabbath In Scripture and History*, (Review and Herald, 1982), p 71.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid, p. 71-72.

<sup>3</sup>John 5:18. (NIV)

<sup>4</sup>Samuele Bacchiocchi, *The Sabbath under Crossfire*, (Biblical Perspectives, 1998), p.131.

<sup>5</sup>John 12:32 (NIV)

<sup>6</sup>Ellen G. White, *Gospel Workers*, (Review and Herald, 1920) p. 156-157.

<sup>7</sup>1 Cor. 2:2 (NIV)

**Praying For You**

Carolyn and I recently attended a “Praying For You” training session on Relational Prayer Witnessing. We felt it was excellent! The concept is simple, Biblical and it works. Choose from one to three people you want to see come to Christ. Call them and ask, “Is there anything in your life that I might pray for this week?” Pray daily for this need. Include in your prayer (1) that Satan be bound from their lives; (2) that God would create in them a spiritual hunger; (3) that they would respond to the gospel of Christ; and (4) that God would save them by His sovereign grace. Then call them about once each week and ask them how things are going and how you can pray for them the coming week. For more information see: [www.prayingforyou.org](http://www.prayingforyou.org).

# *Seventh-day Adventism's dogma of an investigative* **Cleansing the Heavenly Sanctuary**

DR. FRED MAZZAFERRI

**G**etting right to the point, what of Daniel 9:23: "It was necessary... for the copies of the heavenly things to be purified with these sacrifices, but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these"? Does this pet, Seventh-day Adventist reference prove its dogma of ridding God's heavenly temple of the accumulated pollution from the records of the sins of God's people? By no means!

The context makes it quite clear that a comparison is being drawn between the earthly and the heavenly sanctuaries, specifically in terms of their *dedication before employment*. There is no hint in either the antitype or the type that the sanctuary long in use, is being cleansed of the accumulated sins of God's people. In fact, the reference to remission (forgiveness), 22b, is virtually a parenthesis anticipating 26-28. It does not dictate the meaning of either the typical or the antitypical cleansing.

## **Where did Christ go when he ascended to his Father in Heaven?**

### **What Ellen White Claims**

Ellen White expresses her belief and its important theological implications with perfect clarity:

After His ascension, our Saviour was to begin His work as our High Priest. Says Paul, "Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true; but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us" Hebrews 9:24. As Christ's ministration was to consist of two great divisions, each occupying a period of time and having a distinctive place in the heavenly sanctuary, so the typical ministration consisted of two divisions, the daily and the yearly service, and to each a department of the tabernacle was devoted.

As Christ at His ascension appeared in the presence of God to plead His blood in behalf of

penitent believers, so the priest in the daily ministration sprinkled the blood of the sacrifice in the holy place in the sinner's behalf.

The blood of Christ, while it was to release the repentant sinner from the condemnation of the law, was not to cancel the sin; it would stand on record in the sanctuary until the final atonement; so in the type the blood of the sin offering removed the sin from the penitent, but it rested in the sanctuary until the Day of Atonement.

In the great day of final award, the dead are to be "judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works." Revelation 20:12. Then by virtue of the atoning blood of Christ, the sins of all the truly penitent will be blotted from the books of heaven. Thus the sanctuary will be... cleansed... from the record of sin. In the type, this great work of atonement, or blotting out of sins, was represented by the services of the Day of Atonement—the cleansing of the earthly sanctuary, which was accomplished by the removal, by virtue of the blood of the sin offering, of the sins by which it had been polluted.<sup>29</sup>

Ellen White also offers this spectacular portrait of what she thinks happened in heaven in 1844:

I saw the Father rise from the throne, and in a flaming chariot go into the holy of holies within the veil, and sit down. Then Jesus rose from the throne... Then a cloudy chariot, with wheels like flaming fire, surrounded by angels, came to where Jesus was. He stepped into the chariot and was borne to the holiest, where the Father sat. There I beheld Jesus, a great High Priest, standing before the Father.<sup>30</sup>

That is, she appears to view God's throne before 1844 in the heavenly Holy Place, even though the Shekinah glory dwelt above the ark within the Most Holy Place of the earthly tabernacle, Lev. 16:2! If the details of the earthly structure are to be applied as strictly as she claims in

# *judgment through Ellen White's eyes:*

understanding its heavenly reality, she may have a huge problem here, unless God moved from the Most Holy Place to the Holy Place before 1844. Even her statement that in Isa. 6:1-7 Isaiah viewed God's glory enthroned in the temple's Most Holy Place is of little help in clarifying where she thought his throne was before Calvary, for she clearly identifies this temple as both the earthy<sup>31</sup> and the heavenly!<sup>32</sup>

At very least, then, the clear inference is that she thought God moved from the Most Holy Place to the Holy Place of his sanctuary as soon as Christ rose and returned to his home in heaven.

Ellen White also has much more to say about Christ's actual work in heaven's Most Holy Place:

In the typical service only those who had come before God with confession and repentance, and whose sins, through the blood of the sin offering, were transferred to the sanctuary had a part in the service of the Day of Atonement. So in the great day of final atonement and investigative judgment the only cases considered are those of the professed people of God. The judgment of the wicked is a distinct and separate work, and takes place at a later period. "Judgment must begin at the household of God..." 1 Peter 4:17.

The books of record in heaven..., are to determine the decisions of the judgment. Says the prophet Daniel: "The judgment was set, and the books were opened" The Revelator, describing the same scene, adds: "Another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works" Revelation 20:12.<sup>33</sup>

She quotes several references in support of her confident assertion that the Book of Life records the names of all of those who have ever entered God's sacred service,<sup>34</sup> that the book of remembrance details all of their good deeds,<sup>35</sup> and that human sins are also listed.<sup>36</sup> She then continues:

As the books of record are opened in the judgment, the lives of all who have believed on Jesus come in review before God. Beginning with those who first lived upon the earth, our Advocate presents the cases of each successive generation, and closes with the living. Every name is mentioned, every case investigated.

Names are accepted, names rejected. When any have sins remaining upon the books of record, unrepented of and unforgiven, their names will be blotted out of the book of life, and the record of their good deeds will be erased from the book of God's remembrance. The Lord declared to Moses: "Whosoever hath sinned against Me, him will I blot out of My book." Exodus 32:33. And says the prophet Ezekiel: "When the righteous turneth away from his righteousness, and committeth iniquity,... [sic] all his righteousness that he hath done shall not be mentioned." Ezekiel 18:24.

All who have truly repented of sin, and by faith claimed the blood of Christ as their atoning sacrifice, have had pardon entered against their names in the books of heaven; as they have become partakers of the righteousness of Christ, and their characters are found to be in harmony with the law of God, their sins will be blotted out, and they themselves will be accounted worthy of eternal life. The Lord declares, by the prophet Isaiah: "I, even I, am He that blotteth out thy transgressions for Mine own sake, and will not remember thy sins," Isaiah 43:25. Said Jesus: "He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment; and I will not blot out his name out of the book of life, but will confess his name before My Father, and before His angels."

"Whosoever... shall confess Me before men, him will I confess also before My Father which is in heaven. But whosoever shall deny Me before men, him will I also deny before My Father which is in heaven." Revelation 3:5; Matthew 10:32, 33.<sup>37</sup>

It is beyond the bounds of this brief study to assess all of Ellen White's teachings on the close of the Investigative Judgment;<sup>38</sup> but a final word is apropos. Its work, with the blotting out of sins, is accomplished before the second advent of the Lord. Since the dead are to be judged out of the things written in the books, it is impossible that the sins of men should be blotted out until after the judgment at which their cases are to be investigated. But the apostle Peter distinctly states that the sins of believers will be blotted out "when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord; and He shall send Jesus Christ." Acts 3:19, 20. When the investigative judgment closes, Christ will come...<sup>39</sup>

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## What the Word of God States

### Where Christ Went in Returning to his Father

Our first quest is the location of God's throne. However, the humility and wisdom of Solomon are crucial prerequisites to analysis: "The heavens, even the highest heaven, cannot contain you. How much less this temple I have built!" 1 Ki. 8:27. Moreover, God's throne can be mobile, Eze. 1. Regardless, whatever its reality, Scripture often speaks of God's throne in terms of the heavenly temple, as in Ps. 11:4; Rev. 16:17. Specifically, he is "enthroned between the cherubim,"<sup>40</sup> a manifest reference to the earthly type in Ex. 25:22.<sup>41</sup> In stark contrast, nowhere does it hint that his throne is ever within any Holy Place of his temple above. Likewise, if the earthly sanctuary does teach us anything, it confirms that, whatever may be the heavenly reality of its Most Holy Place, there and there alone is the throne of him whom sinful humanity cannot approach without a Mediator.

Beyond quibble, it follows that, when the resurrected Christ ascended to heaven, he returned to that "Most Holy Place." For the NT repeatedly states that, "after he had provided purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty in heaven?"<sup>42</sup> In fact, it is specifically as our High Priest that Christ "sat down at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in heaven, and... serves in the sanctuary the true tabernacle set up by the Lord, not by man"; Heb. 8:1f. There he is "interceding for us"; Ro. 8:34. And there "he waits for his enemies to be made his footstool," Heb. 10:13.

Even if Christ's sitting down is read as inauguration, as when a delegate is seated at a conference, nothing here even remotely hints that he did anything other than return to heaven to commence his High-priestly service in whatever passes for its Most Holy Place. In fact, Seventh-day Adventism's efforts to read some Holy-place service in such references is just as sterile as a Sunday-keeper quoting Acts 20:7, 1 Cor. 16:2 or Rev. 1:10 against regular worship on the seventh-day Sabbath!<sup>43</sup>

But by no means does the decisive evidence end there. Heb. 6:19 assures us that our hope "enters within the veil, where Jesus has entered..., having become a high priest forever"; NASB. The decisive phrase *within the veil* makes patent reference to the heavenly sanctuary. But which curtain does the author have in mind, the outer or the inner? The most credible answer comes in answering another: How would the initial recipi-

ents of this epistle have grasped these words? There is only one sure answer. They would have recognized them as a specific OT quotation from the Septuagint.

Of more than 40 such quotations in the epistle, the vast majority come from this Greek translation, often precisely or almost so, rather than from the Hebrew original. This is no place to subject my lay readers to the totally unfamiliar Greek text of Scripture. But this point is so important that perhaps I can be pardoned for this single, fleeting comparison, with its relative clarity in lay eyes:

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εις το αγιον εσωτερον του καταπετασματος	Lev. 16:2, Septuagint;
εις το εσωτερον του καταπετασματος	Heb. 6:19.

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There can be no quibble whatever that Lev. 16:2 has the Most Holy Place specifically in mind. It is no surprise, then, that the vast majority of commentators conclude that the apostle has heaven's inner sanctum, not some mere Holy Place, likewise in mind in his close citation assuring his flock that "Jesus... has entered on our behalf"; Heb. 6:20. Seventh-day Adventism's apologist G. W. Rice could not dissent more, and his objections are certainly well worth assessing. However, here I will not burden my lay readers with more than a selection of the higher points of my detailed critique, which I relegate to a distant Technical Excursus, where those who wish may ignore it completely.

Above all, the adverb *esoteron*, used here as a preposition, is very rare, even in the Septuagint. It appears a meager six times,<sup>44</sup> most often with *katapetasma*,<sup>45</sup> the noun for *curtain*. In striking contrast, the preposition *en*, which easily offers the identical sense *within*, occurs around 2,000 times! Can there be even the slightest doubt, then, how the apostle's highly OT-literate flock heard him as he applied *esoteron* as a preposition to the noun *katapetasma*, especially when it is not used as a preposition anywhere else in the entire NT? None at all! They would most certainly have grasped that he was referring to the *inner* sanctum, not merely some Holy Place, of the heavenly sanctuary.

Nor does the fact that the curtain here has no numeral, unlike 9:3, introduce any doubt. For the curtain is likewise unnumbered in 10:20. There the extremely striking metaphor of Christ's sacrificial body as a curtain before *ta hagia* is best understood in terms of the tearing in two of the

**Beyond quibble, it follows that, when the resurrected Christ ascended to heaven, he returned to that "Most Holy Place". For the NT repeatedly states that, "after he had provided purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty in heaven."**



inner curtain of the earthly temple the moment he died. In fact, the noun *katapetasma* appears outside the epistle to the Hebrews when the synoptic Gospels report this detail, and then entirely alone!<sup>46</sup> However, one clear, almost passing, reference hardly excuses me from evaluating by far the paramount evidence in the Book of Hebrews, the protracted, *specific* comparison between the earthly and heavenly sanctuary services, 8-10. But first, the entire scene is very well set by an equally compelling comparison, albeit general, between Christ's heavenly priesthood and the earthly type.

### A Priest Forever in the Order of Melchizedek

The serious student of typology in the Book of Hebrews is warned from the very start that there is no point-by-point likeness between the type, Jesus our High Priest, and the antitype, the earthly priests, even their high-priestly head. The latter, like Aaron, 5:4, were Levites, 7:5; the former is "a priest forever, in the order of Melchizedek"; 5:6<sup>47</sup> of the tribe of Judah, 7:13f. The latter were both sinful, 5:2f, and mortal, 7:23; the former is both sinless, 26-28, and immortal, 3, 16f., 21, 24f. But above all, the earthly priests' constant round of daily and yearly sacrifices was no final solution to the sin problem.<sup>48</sup> In starkest contrast, Christ's once-for-all self-sacrifice<sup>49</sup> is the all-sufficient solution.<sup>50</sup>

Such *contrasts* hardly hint that, in its *specific* typology, the epistle will reveal any close analogy between the heavenly sanctuary and its earthly shadow, in which these respective ministries center.

### Ta Hagia

To read the very esteemed NIV, there is no quibble where Jesus went in returning to heaven: "he entered the Most Holy Place"; Heb. 9:12. Compare the GNB. However, both the RSV and its "off-spring" the NRSV say "the Holy Place," like the NASB, while the NEB simply has "the sanctuary."

Such confusion obtains through uncertainty over the import of *ta hagia*, the Greek adjective employed as a plural noun, which Jesus entered upon his Ascension. While it is completely impossible to do the important subject full justice here,<sup>51</sup> the following survey should suffice for lay readers. This "noun" first appears in 8:2 defining the sphere of service of our High Priest. Here it equates with the true tabernacle (*skene* = tent), in contrast to the earthly tabernacle, exactly as in 9:24. This makes far better sense if *ta hagia* denotes heaven's entire temple instead of its Holy

Place or Most Holy Place, if this temple has more than a single "apartment." Indeed, as it was heaven itself which Christ entered, 24f, there is no hint of any specific Holy-place or Most-holy-place ministry in 8:1f. Moreover, as Jesus' service follows his seating beside his Father, 8:1, the notion of moving from one room to another, or starting a new phase of service, at any later time is foreign to the entire book.

On one hand, the *until* of 1:13, the *since that time* of 10:13 and the dynamics of 9:23-28 all imply that our High Priest never leaves his Father's presence once in heaven. Compare the forceful once for all in 9:12, with precisely the same singular nuance as in 7:27 and 10:10. Indeed, he entered heaven specifically "to appear for us in God's presence"; 9:24. On the other, now that access to *ta hagia* has been revealed, 9:8, it is not Christ our great High Priest alone whom we approach freely and confidently, but God the heavenly Father himself, 7:19, 25; 10:22, seated upon his supreme throne of grace, 4:16.

The "noun" *ta hagia* appears above all in 9, with patent typological overtones. In its only singular occurrence (*hagion*) in the entire book, 1, it clearly denotes the whole wilderness sanctuary treated in the remainder of the passage to 10. This is described quite uniquely as "a tent..., the first one,... called the Holy Place [*hagia*];" 2, together with "a tent called the Holy of Holies" [*hagia of hagia*], NRSV. Such specific expressions have their unmistakable genesis in the Septuagint. For example, within the Septuagint, *skene* repeatedly designates the composite sanctuary especially in Exodus, Leviticus and Numbers. Conversely, however, *skene* is never numbered in the Septuagint as it is in Heb. 9. Indeed, Ex. 26:6 specifically declares that "the tabernacle [*skene*] is a unit?" Compare 11.

The apostle seems to be rather more faithful to his sources with his employment of *hagion*. For in Ex. 26:33 the inner curtain serves as a partition "between the Holy Place [*hagion*] and the Most Holy Place of [*hagion of hagia*]" (my translation). However, it is not until 1 Ki. 8:8 that at last we find the Holy Place labeled *ta hagia*, the room in front of *dabir*, which transliterates the Hebrew noun for the inner sanctum of Solomon's temple. Likewise, there is no certain description of the Most Holy Place as *hagia of hagia*, as in Heb. 9:3, until 1 Ki. 8:6, where it is explicitly equated with *dabir*. 'With the wilderness *skēnē* in specific view, like the Book of Hebrews, the Septuagint applies the unqualified adjective *hagion* quite indiscriminately, in the

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singular, to both its Holy Place, as in Ex. 26:33, and its Most Holy Place, as in Lev. 16:2. However, some 30 relevant times, it refers to the full *skĕnĕ*, as in Ex. 30:13; 36:3; Lev. 4:6; Nu. 3:3!. Nu. 4:16 even equates the whole *skĕnĕ* and the *hagion*. Unqualified, *hagia* also means the full sanctuary some 15 relevant times, as in Ex. 36:1, 8; Lev. 10:4; 19:30; Nu. 3:28; 8:19. There are no clear cases of it denoting either the Holy or the Most Holy Place. So no careful exegete will appeal to the Septuagint to claim that *ta hagia* denotes heaven's Most Holy Place. If the Septuagint most moves him, he will opt for the full temple. If the apostle's voice in Heb. 9:2 speaks loudest to him, his vote will go to what passes there for some mere Holy Place.

However, an astute exegete will suspend all judgment till the apostle is through. Having sketched the OT Holy and Most Holy Places, he turns to their services. The first, used day after day, is still called the first tent, 8, while the second, used only once a year, is still called the second (tent), 7.

It is crucial to our appreciation of Christ's High-priestly ministry, then, to grasp the spiritual intent of the earthly services surveyed in 8-10. The chief question is, 'What does the apostle mean by *ta hagia* and first *skene* in 8? Clearly, *ta hagia* is the heavenly temple, but in what form? Leaving the crucial, broader context of the remainder of the chapter aside for now, this depends upon whether he still means by the first *skene* in 8 what he obviously means in 2 and 6. If the immediate context is decisive, we are told that the Holy Place of the OT sanctuary depicted the temporary, deficient services of the first covenant, the subject which launches this entire chapter, 1, while its Most Holy Place depicted the services of *ta hagia* in heaven under the new covenant, 15. It should be appreciated, however, that the topic of covenant con-

trolling this chapter's entire discussion is broached in 7:22, discussed from 8:6 to 10:18, and referred to in 10:29, 12:24 and 13:20. Therefore, the apostle's intent in this entire discussion with both *skene* and *ta hagia* bears heavily upon his meaning in 9:8.

Simply stated, *skene* is applied with no numeral to the entire OT sanctuary in 8:5; 9:21; 13:10. It is equally applied with no numeral to heaven's sanctuary in 8:2 and 9:11. Quite possibly, then, the apostle glides from an atypical spatial nuance of *first* in 9:2, 6 to a temporal sense in 8. If so, he returns here to the meaning that *ta hagia* has when he first utilizes it in 8:2. As noted, he there applies it to heaven's whole temple. In light of his choosing the adjective *true* in 8:2 and 9:24, as well as repeating the former's sentiment, *not by man*, in *made with hands* in the latter (compare 9:11), in 9:24 *hagia* applies to the total OT sanctuary. So here *hagia*, implicit in *true*, means the whole heavenly temple.

The inference is clear enough, then, that at 9:8-10 the apostle is about to expand on his covenant theme that the obsolescence of the old, with its *total* sanctuary ritual, opened the way into the real *hagia*, the *complete* complex of the heavenly sanctuary. In 11:28 he describes the place where Christ has entered to serve since his exaltation as the greater and more perfect *skene*, 11, *ta hagia*, 12, and heaven itself, 24. In such company, the transparent inference again is that *ta hagia* equates with the *entire* heavenly sanctuary not merely some Holy Place or even Most Holy Place of that holy entity.

However, our learned author further clarifies his inspired message with this very forceful *contrast*, not *comparison*, between the earthly high priest, 7, and our ethereal High Priest, 11f., 14. So paramount is this stark contrast in his polemic, in fact, that he both revisits and amplifies it close by in 4-27 (see below).

Earthly High Priest	Heavenly High Priest
The high priest entered the second <i>skĕnĕ</i> = <i>ta hagia</i> once a year with the blood of goats and calves which he offered for himself and for the sins of the people.	Christ as High Priest entered <i>ta hagia</i> once for all by his own blood. He offered himself unblemished.

It is extremely tempting, then, to draw from this pointed contrast that Christ entered the Most Holy Place of heaven's sanctuary at his ascension. This is entirely consistent with the obvious import of both 6:191. and 10:19f., as above. Yet the author equally suggests that he entered this temple as a unit. We appear, therefore, to have a challenging interpretive dilemma on our hapless hands. The strikingly simple solution to this "dilemma" is to realize that the Book of Hebrews says nothing whatever about either distinct apartments in the heavenly temple or separate ministries of Christ because there are neither two rooms in it nor two phases of his ministry. For one thing, Seventh-day Adventism's entire typological apology swings by the perilously slender thread of its pure surmise that in Ex. 25:40 the Hebrew noun *tabnit* denotes a scale model or a plan of the heavenly temple. In fact, it implies merely that Moses studied a "blueprint" of the specific structure he was to raise in the wilderness. It should be scrupulously observed, though, that, even if there are two "apartments" in God's ethereal tabernacle after all, the overwhelming evidence is that Christ ascended to its Most Holy Place.

### Judgment

For another, the Book of Hebrews certainly speaks of looming judgment, starting with the warning, "how shall we escape if we ignore such a great salvation?"; 2:3. But nowhere does it supply even the slightest hint of any pre-Advent scrutiny of the heavenly records of the lives of those who have professed faith, as Seventh-day Adventism insists. Rather, on one hand its closest appeal to a theology of divine scrutiny is its sobering caution: "Nothing in all creation is hidden from God's sight. Everything is uncovered and laid bare before the eyes of him to whom we must give account"; 4:13. That is, *God always knows our true character*. He needs absolutely no books of records to assess us.

On the other, the promised judgment is repeatedly associated with Christ's Return, not with any prior period. For example, the mindful balance of *just as... so*, 9:27f, is a patent invitation to equate the judgment of 27 and *he will appear*, 28. The judgment of 10:27 in context can refer to the Parousia alone, specifically quoted in 37. Compare 12:23, in a context of fiery retribution, 25-29. And with the account to be rendered in 13:17, we are

returned to the precise point from which we commenced.

Indeed, the epistle's first audience was certainly warned to expect Jesus' Return in its day, not beyond 1844. It would surely have identified with the *personal* pastoral appeal of 10:32-34. The conclusive conjunction *so*, 35, builds a bridge from that appeal to the *personal* promise, "in just a very little while, 'He who is coming will come and will not delay'"; Of special note, beyond the potent imminence of *very little while*, is the rare verb *chronizein*. It is used in Hab. 2:3f from which our apostle cited freely. Yet above all, it echoes all but one of its other four appliances, always on Jesus' lips relevant to the delay in his Return.<sup>52</sup> Compare the cognate noun *chronos* used likewise in Mt. 2:19.

In brief, the author of the Book of Hebrews has an inspired interpretation of the delay in the Parousia forecast by Christ. That delay was all but over in his day! There is no room for any future period of scouring heaven's records, let alone almost two millennia of extremely protracted delay until 1844!

### Where Judgment Begins

But what of 1 Pet. 4:17? Ellen White may be citing it homiletically. If not, she is guilty of inept proof-texting. For one thing, context clarifies beyond the shadow of a doubt that the judgment in Peter's mind is in progress in his day, as he speaks: "it is time..." For another, it consists in the trial of the believers' faith by persecution, 1:6; 4:12, not in any scrutiny of any records of their deeds.

### Blotting out Sin

Is Ellen White correct, though, that Scripture times sin's blotting out just before Christ returns? Note the contents of the books. Mal. 3:16 records an obscure detail: "A scroll of remembrance was written in [God's] presence concerning those who feared the LORD and honored his name." This is no replete record of human deeds.<sup>53</sup> For one thing, Malachi does not so describe his scroll, mentioned here alone. The clear inference is that *nothing but names appears*. For another, context clarifies that it only existed in Malachi's day. Moreover, it holds the names alone of those faithful to God at that time. That is, Ellen White has read what is simply not there. She has practiced sheer eisegesis.

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Almost as obscure are two accounts of open judgment books, Dan. 7:10, Rev. 20:12. The dilemma for Seventh-day Adventism's dogma of a pre-Advent judgment is that *only the wicked are judged each time*. Yet it insists that the pre-Advent judgment involves *none of the wicked who have never believed*.

In Dan. 7:11, 21f., 26 it is the fourth beast and the Little Horn who are damned. Nor does a "judgment in favor of the saints" 22, imply their scrutiny. They are "judged" alone in that indicting the beast and Little Horn ends their persecution, allowing them to enter God's Eternal Kingdom. Indeed, Satan does not persecute his own! In Rev. 20:11-15 contrary to Ellen White's timing, the judgment opens after the millennium, before which all of the righteous have received their rewards.

The only remaining quest is the Book of Life's role. This is a manifest record of the names of all who profess faith in Christ and/or his Father;<sup>54</sup> saliently, the only time Scripture speaks of blotting anything from it, it is a *name*.<sup>55</sup> Yet equally saliently, nowhere is the timing revealed. So, once more Ellen White's claim that this is done systematically in a pre-Advent judgment outpaces Scripture.

Conversely, God's blotting out sin never relates to books, let alone to any pre-Advent judgment. Rather, sins are blotted out *as soon as they are forgiven*<sup>56</sup> and cast far away from the genuinely penitent.<sup>57</sup> What, though, of Acts 3:19f? This is a tragic yet instructive case of Ellen White seeing no further than her KJV even though it is mistranslated at this point! Even the NKJV puts it: "Repent... and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, so that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord, and that he may send Jesus Christ." The manifest timing once more is that sins are blotted out completely as soon as they are forgiven. We are not informed here or elsewhere in Scripture precisely what Peter means by the times of refreshing, but this consequence of blotting out does not influence its timing. So Ellen White has done her prophetic credibility no good whatever with her lack of insight here. She makes it perfectly patent that she believes she is explaining precisely what Peter meant. Yet she is blissfully unaware that he is distorted by a translational error. In a maturing article I will soon draw instructive parallels here with Joseph Smith's plagiarism!

## Conclusion

Ellen White has scarcely served her Church well with her repeated assertions that there is a two-apartment, heavenly temple, the prototype of the OT sanctuary. Worse, she is totally astray in her consequent sectarian dogma that, to his intercessory ministry in the ethereal Holy Place since the Cross, our High Priest added a new ministry in 1844, one of pre-Advent judgment in the heavenly Most Holy Place. Rather, Christ returned to his Father's throne, in his heavenly tabernacle that is all Most Holy Place. There is no heavenly Holy Place! Moses was shown only a scale model of the earthly structure he was to erect. And the typology of the Book of Hebrews operates repeatedly in terms of stark *contrasts*, not close *comparisons*, between the heavenly type and the earthly antitype. However, even if there are two "apartments" in God's heavenly tabernacle, the completely over whelming evidence is that Christ ascended immediately to its Most Holy Place. In fact, any mere Holy Place in heaven is so irrelevant in the entire Book of Hebrews that it may as well not exist.

The final nail in the coffin of the dogma of a pre-Advent judgment in 1844, at least in the Book of Hebrews, is that it permits no time for it. Christ is about to return to its pristine recipients! So Ellen White has quite missed the point here. In fact, no systematic blotting out of sins following a judgment is at all necessary. God "forgets" our sins as soon as they are forgiven, Heb. 8:12; 10:17f. That is, Seventh-day Adventism's crucial dogma of a pre-Advent judgment begun in 1844 has no foundation. And a candid inspection of the first and second parts of the "building" exposes its lack of walls or partitions. The final distinct analysis, in which we treat the highly emotive verses at the heart of the birth of the Seventh-day Adventist movement, awaits our equally careful attention.— Daniel 8:14.

**Note:** Those wanting the full text of this article and all the footnotes are encouraged to go to the our web site:

<http://www.ratzlaf.com/downloads.htm>.

# Receiving God's Rest In Christ

DR. VERLE STREIFLING

*"Come unto Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest... and you will find rest for your souls."*

In Matthew 11:28-30, Jesus gave His people a marvelous offer—His rest for their souls. Yet, He extended this to "all who labor and are heavy laden", universalizing it for all at any time, who are striving with their works and burdens. So while in its context the offer was initially for Israel, yet it was certainly for the Gentiles too. Isaiah foretold Christ's rest for all, "And in that day there shall be a Root of Jesse... for the Gentiles shall seek Him, and His rest shall be glorious" (11:10-11).

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

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

## What God's Rest IS NOT

What was God's Rest that they failed to receive? Was it Sabbath keeping? No. We see this many ways. First, Ex 17 was after Ex 16 when God gave Israel the Sabbath. So they already had the Sabbath rest, but they had not received His Rest! Centuries later, in Isaiah, God said "Your New moons and your Sabbaths, My soul hates!" (1:13+14); then asked "Where is the house you'll build Me, and where is the place of My rest" (66:1) showing their magnificent Solomon's temple

and the Sabbath were neither the real temple, nor the real rest He wanted for them.

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

Some writers say that since "*sabbatismos*" appears in Heb 4:9, then God's rest is sabbatizing, which is "left behind" for the people of God (4:9). To this, Dr. Ford's Daniel 8:14... relates an exchange of letters in 1957 between F. C. Clifford, then president of Australian SDA,

***We simply believe Hebrews is not the place to try to establish the Sabbath Doctrine."***

and F. D. Nichol regarding the galleys for their *Seventh-Day Adventist Bible Commentary*. Clifford was distressed that the commentary didn't support their sanctuary teaching very well. Nichol confirmed this with advice to stay out of Hebrews when trying to show their sanctuary and investigative judgment doctrines. In closing he also noted regarding Heb 4:9 "If you will look again at the galleys, you will note that we do not believe that Hebrews 4:9 presents a valid argument for the Sabbath. I am sure some folks will grieve over this, and perhaps argue we have weakened the Sabbath doctrine... We simply believe Hebrews is not the place to try to establish the Sabbath Doctrine."

## What God's Rest IS

Their comments regarding Heb 4:9 are lengthy (vol VII p 421-423), stating if Joshua didn't lead Israel into *spiritual* rest would be no reason for Christians to observe the Sabbath; and "to declare that what remains for the people of God is the weekly Sabbath is to

declare that what Joshua failed to lead Israel into was the weekly Sabbath;” and if the conclusion of this passage is that Sabbath keeping remains, then “the writer of Hebrews is guilty of a non-sequitur for the conclusion does not follow logically from the argument”; and cites Ellen White “(It) is the rest of Grace”(GC 253), and “It is the true rest of faith” (*Thoughts from the Mount of Blessings* 1). “Accordingly, the promise and invitation to enter into God’s spiritual rest remains valid (vs6,9).”

So Jesus offered His Rest, but using “*anapauo*” also used for OT “sabbath resting” (*LXX*), and Paul exhorts “Let us labor to enter His rest, lest we fall after the same unbelief;” adding “We who have believed, relied on and trusted (in Christ) do enter his rest” (4:3 *Amplified*), for “He who has entered into His rest, has ceased from works, even as God did from His” (4:10). Here the SDA Commentary adds “has ceased from works (for salvation) as God did from His (at creation)” In using “*anapauo*” of OT Sabbath resting.

## ***When we believe in Christ, to enter His rest, we must put our trust in Him alone for our bridge to God.***

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

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

### **What God’s Rest Includes**

Thus, when we believe in Christ, to enter His rest, we must put our trust in Him alone for our cleansing from all sin. 1 Jn 1:7 says “the blood of Christ keeps on cleansing us from all sin;” and Col 2:13 “(God) has made us alive together with Him (Christ) having forgiven all our trespasses.”

When we believe in Christ, to enter His rest, we must put our trust in Him alone for our bridge to God. In Eph 2:18 we read “For through

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

So too, believing in Christ, to enter His rest, we must rely on Him alone for our justification. In Rom 4:25 “(Christ) was delivered up for our sins, and raised for our justification”... (5:1) “Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God...”

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

Believing in Christ, to enter His rest, we must trust Him alone for our saving and sustaining faith. Eph 2:8 saying by grace you have been saved through faith, adds “and that (faith) is of ourselves, it is the Gift of God.” When Paul said “I am crucified with Christ” he adds, “the life I now live I live by the faith of the Son of God who loved me and gave Himself for me” (Gal 2:20). In Rom 3:22 he says, “the righteousness of God which is through the faith of Jesus Christ... on all who believe;” and vs 26 “that He might be just and the justifier of the one who has the faith of Jesus.” In these texts, the Greek text is in the possessive case (of Jesus) rather than locative (in Jesus).

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

When we believe in Christ, to enter His rest, we must depend on Him alone for our eternal life. Col 3:3-4 reads “When Christ, Who is our life shall appear, you will also appear with Him in glory.” Peter declared “You (Jews) slew Him who is the Prince of life” using the Greek ‘*Arkay*’ meaning ‘source’ of eternal life. And in John 3:16 “God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.”

Believing in Christ, to enter His rest, we must trust in Christ alone for our perfection. After saying Christ is the fullness of Deity in bodily form, Paul adds “and you are complete in Him” (Col 2:9-10); and in 4:12 “...that you may stand perfect and complete in all the will of

God: "Thus, once you're in Christ, there's nothing that you lack in measuring up to God's perfection! Only in Christ alone, can anyone fulfill God's command "Be ye perfect, as I am perfect." And, believing in Christ, we must trust entirely in Him and His finished works on our behalf. In Titus 3:5 it is "not by works of righteousness that we have done, but by His mercy He saved us." And, Paul in Heb 4:10 again, "he who has entered His rest, has himself also ceased from works, as God did from His."

Now that, beloved, is the true rest for our souls! It's "All of Thee, and none of me." It's "Nothing in my hands I bring—only to Thy cross I cling," for Christ is our all in all! It's His blood that cleanses us! It's He who gives us access to God. It's He who gives us peace with God! It's He whose righteousness is given us. It's His resurrection that justifies us. It's His holiness that's accorded to us. It's His faith that saves and keeps us! It's His eternal life that's breathed into us! It's His perfection that completes us; and it's His finished work that ends all of our works for salvation! And this is why John the beloved wrote "God has given us eternal life and this life is in His Son. He who has the Son has life. . . . These things I have written to you. . . . that you may know that you have eternal life." (1Jn 5:11-13). We're also told that we've 'passed from death to life,' we 'shall not come into judgment,' we're now sons of God; if we do sin, 'we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous, and He Himself is the propitiation for our sins,' and 'His blood continues cleansing us from all sin!' All we must do is continue believing in Him!

And that's why Jesus applied the figure of sabbath resting to the rest for our souls, when saying "Come to Me. . . I'll give you rest (*anapauo*) for your souls." For the Sabbath command forbade any and all work—whether good works or not—it was all outlawed! So, now for our salvation, our cleansing, our access to God, our peace with God, our righteousness, our holiness, our faith, our life, our perfection and all our spiritual needs, Christ calls us to come to Himself, and He forbids us to do any works, but tells us to only rest and trust in Him and all of His finished work for us!

Now that ought to make everyone shout "Hallelujah!" for we who formerly had less than nothing to offer God, now in Christ we have more than everything we need because of "Him who loved us and gave himself for us"! Small wonder the Bible says we'll praise Him through eternity! I would, wouldn't you?

## God's TRUE Temple, Worship, and Rest

This brings us back to God's indictment on Israel in Isa 66:1, "Where is the house you'll build Me, and where is the place of My rest?" Quoting this to the Jews in Acts 7, Stephen told them, "God does not dwell in temples built with hands." So where is His Temple? Jesus revealed this to the Samaritan lady in John 4. When she asked "Where is the right place to worship God?" He answered, "The hour now is, when the true worshippers will worship God in spirit and in reality. . . . God is spirit and those who worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth (Gk, '*alethia*') (vs 23+24). Here He ended all the OT externals of worship, pointing out that true, genuine, and real worship must come from within Man's spirit. The old periphery of when, where, how, were all of the past, for God wants reality worship

from the heart, in lieu of the ritual worship as only lip-service which also Isaiah and Jesus decried, "They honor Me with their lips, but their hearts are far from Me." Mere shadow worship is inadequate—God desires genuine substance worship!

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

## *God's true temple is not a building, but man's spirit—a Spiritual temple.*

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

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

Just as He offered Israel His power, His provision, His protection and His presence if they would only place their total trust in Him alone, He has offered the same for us, if we will place our total trust in Him and all He has done for us. He provides more than everything we need, to be completely saved and sealed by the Holy Spirit of promise, that we lack nothing to meet the gaze of the Great Law Giver—God Himself! The Scripture says, "If you confess Jesus is Lord, and believe in your heart God raised Him from the dead, you shall be saved. . . . Whoever puts his trust IN HIM, will not be put to shame!" (Rom 10:9-13).

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

# THE ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH AND THE DECALOGUE

DR. VERLE STREIFLING

**I**t's sad that many today have gone to excesses in denouncing the Catholic church. This is especially true in the way many as the SDAs call her the "Beast" of Revelation; the "man of sin" of Thessalonians and "Little Horn" of Daniel 7, charging her with changing God's Law as in Dan 7:25:

"Says Daniel, of the Little Horn, the Papacy, 'He shall think to change times and the law'. And Paul styled the same power the 'man of sin', who was to exalt himself above God... The Papacy has attempted to change the Law of God. The second commandment forbidding image worship has been dropped from the law... But papists urge, as

**...IF ROME JOINS THE PROHIBITION OF IMAGES TO THE FIRST, HOLDING THEM AS ONE COMMAND, THEN I MAY NOT RIGHTLY CHARGE HER WITH 'TAKING AWAY' FROM GOD'S WORD.**

a reason for omitting the second commandment, that it is unnecessary, being included in the first, and that they are giving the law exactly as God designed it to be understood" (*Great Controversy*, 1888 ed, p. 446, Ellen G. White)

"Prophecy has declared that the Papacy was to 'think to change times and laws'. ...Rome presumed to expunge from the law of God the second commandment forbidding image worship, and to divide the tenth commandment, in order to preserve the number." (ibid 50-51) Here she virtually echoes Uriah Smith, Adam Clark, (I, p.403), and Matthew Henry's Commentary.

## **Objectively Evaluating These Allegations**

Yet, if Rome joins the prohibition of images to the first, holding them as one command, then I may not rightly charge her with 'taking away' from God's Word. Rather I must prove she omits this prohibitive in all her Bibles, catechisms and books of devotion, to rightly thus charge her. But the truth is Rome does tell her people not to worship images of false gods, whether these gods are idols, money, science or popularity, as in the *New Saint Joseph Baltimore Catechism*, p.106. Under the "First commandment of God" they show it forbids worship of images. So too in their *Catechism for Catholic Parochial Schools*, p. 34, (quoted below), and their *Baltimore Catechisms #2* and #3: "The Ten Commandments of God... 179. Which are the Ten Commandments? 1. I am the Lord thy God. Thou shalt not have strange gods before me; thou shalt not make to thyself any graven thing to adore it..."

The *Baltimore Catechism #4* by Rev. Thomas Kinkead cites the whole of vs 2-6 as the first command, as does the *Popular Catholic Catechism* by John A Hardon, S.J. without one word omitted from the verses forbidding false gods and adoring images, but including vs 2 that SDAs omit, though part of the first precept, showing the commands are for Israel. Moreover, in none of Rome's Bibles having the OT, is any part of the ten commands omitted!

Still some say Rome had no right to change the order or numbering of the precepts, so the first two become one, and the tenth is divided. Jamiesson, Fausset & Brown's commentary shows these should have done more home work before shouting, for here we read:



Several Jewish writers—Talmud, Targum, Jonathan, and Maiomides—regard this verse (Ex 20:2) as forming a distinct precept. The Roman Catholic Church and the Lutherans, after the example of Augustine, divide the commandments into duties pertaining to God, comprised of the first three, and those relating to man, contained in the remaining seven. In their view, which is supported

...CLEMENT OF ALEXANDRIA, STATES THAT THE FIRST COMMAND IS AGAINST IDOLATRY; THE SECOND RESPECTS 'THE POWER OF GOD WHICH IS HIS NAME' AND THE THIRD WORD "CONCERNS THE SEVENTH-DAY OF REST"!

by the *Masoretic Text*, the first commandment extends from v.2 to v.6; the second is expressed in v.7; and in order to make up the required number \*they divide v.17 into two...\* ("they" is Catholics and Lutherans, supported by the *Masoretic Text*).

Surprise! While Mrs. White and some Protestants bewail Rome for how she divides the commands, yet she's not alone, and she follows the *Masoretic Hebrew Text*! Did any SDA scholars read the *MT*? If so, why didn't they tell us this? Jamiesson, etc., adds some interesting points as well:

1. The Jews themselves divided the decalogue differently, by making Ex 20:2 to be a separate precept! Yet this goes by unmentioned at all, for with this as another command, then by Protestant reckoning, there's 11 commands! So, why decry Rome for how she divides them, when nothing's said about the Jews making vs. 2 a separate command!
2. Catholics and Lutherans follow Augustine's division. This implies before him, no one followed the Hebrew text in dividing these precepts. *Jamiesson*, etc., aren't alone in affirming this. Yet, when refuting a heretic, St. Augustine shows he found prohibition against images was in the first command, and that taking God's name in vain was the second: "Of necessity these tables are against thee, for the second commandment is 'thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain...' (*Nicene Fathers*, vol. 1, p.216; series 1). And, "For to worship One God is also enjoined on us. 'Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain' is also enjoined on us which is the second commandment." (*Ibid*, vol VII, p.24)

There's another interesting word from Augustine in Vol. VIII, p.65: "And so do men live in opposition to the three and seven, that 'Psaltry of ten strings' Thy commandments O God, Most High are most sweet!" This, 80 years after Constantine, shows the Catholic Bishops loved God's commands. They didn't hate them, trying to hammer them to bits! Augustine didn't begin dividing them into 'three and seven'. Instead, he boldly stated taking God's name in vain violated the second precept—even when dealing with heretics!

But 200 years before him, Clement of Alexandria, states that the first command is against idolatry; the second respects 'the power of God which is His name' and the Third Word "concerns the Seventh-day of rest"! But, here we see the translator played havoc with the text, giving Clement's word 'tritos' as "fourth" to shift the reader to the Protestant division! (*Ante-Nicene Fathers* vol 2, p.512). So Clement shows how the Decalogue was divided in his day, long before Augustine—even a century before Origen!

Still the *Jerome Biblical Commentary* has other significant points to make.

1. re. the ninth and tenth commands (coveting your neighbor's wife; and his goods); in Exodus the neighbor's house is mentioned first, while in Deuteronomy the precept about his wife is first. But the *Nash Papyri* of the second century BC, harmonizes Ex 20 with Deut 5 for in this most eclectic papyri, Ex 20 has 'your neighbor's wife' before his goods, showing this to be the original order. And here we must notice that the *Septuagint*, (LXX) reflecting the more ancient Hebrew texts from before the *Nash Papyri*, supports this harmonization, with his wife before his goods.
2. The decalogue was divided 3 ways: a. "In accordance with rabbinical tradition, the modern Jews divide them thus: the first, 20:2; the second 20:3-6; and the third through the tenth 20:7-17." b. "Following Philo, Josephus, and the Greek Fathers, the Modern Greek and Reformed churches divide them thus: the first, 20:2+3; the second, 20: 4-6; third 20:7; the fourth 20:8-11; and the fifth through the tenth, 20:12-17." c. "In the tradition of the Latin Fathers, Roman Catholics and Lutherans divide them thus: the first, 20:2-6; the second, 20:7; the third, 20:8-11; the fourth through eighth, 20:12-16; the ninth, 20:17 a; the tenth, 20:17 b."

Clearly Ex 20:2 merely introduces to the decalogue as a whole and the first precept in particular.

so it's not a separate precept. Thus both Rabbinical and modern Jews considered the command against strange gods and forbidding images as two parts of a one and same command, as in the *MT*. Herein, the Jews upheld the Catholic and Lutheran mode of division. But their point of separation was they held the two commands against coveting as only one, to keep the total of 10, (because of having 20:2 as a separate command), while the Catholics and Lutherans saw and kept these as two distinct commands. The church saw man's wife as a free moral agent, and thus could not be a part of his chattel as appeared from the Jew's mode of reckoning, for God gave these in two precepts as in the *MT*, *Nash Papyrii* and the *LXX*.

*The Lutheran Cyclopedia*, p.225 concurs the decalogue was divided these 3 ways. Kiel & Delischz call it two, but show it was also these 3 ways.

So desperate for truth we turn to the *Catholic Commentary on the Holy Scriptures* which tells us:

Origen, who introduced this (Orthodox & Reformed) view, attests to the previous existence of a different view in which two precepts forbidding evil desires were recognized, and one and the same precept forbade the worship of images and of strange gods. (p. 218)

Thus we see that prior to Origen, the Catholic and Lutheran view was there, and it was Origen who introduced a new view to the Eastern

## THERE IS QUESTION THEREFORE NOT OF A SEPARATE COMMANDMENT WHICH FORBIDS THE WORSHIP OF ALL IMAGES BUT AN APPLICATION OF THE PRECEPT FORBIDDING WORSHIP OF STRANGE GODS.

church, while saying there was the previous view. And his telling the previous view existed, is congruous with the writing of Clement, and his division, based on the Hebrew text and *LXX*!

The reader may see the decalogue as in the *MT*, for himself, in the *Inter-linear Bible* by Green, or the *NIV Triglott*, which shows the *LXX* in Exodus concurs with Deuteronomy, giving the command against coveting neighbor's wife as the 9th, and his goods as the 10th as *Nash Papyri* shows. But the *LXX* reflects Ancient Hebrew mss supporting the Catholic and Lutheran division of the decalogue! So to harangue with them, indicts God who gave it so!

*The Catholic Encyclopedia* adds reasons for fol-

lowing the Deuteronomical order (vol V, p.5). Re. the 9th and 10th precepts we read:

In Exodus a man's wife is ranked with his servants and his animals as part of his "house" i.e., his possessions... In Deut 5:21 the commandment has a more elevated moral sense: the wife is considered first, and separately, followed by a prohibition against the desiring of another's property. The use of two separate verbs to achieve this separation, naturally lends to an apparent increase in the number of commandments.

So two separate verbs make these two separate commands. Why weren't we told?

*The Catholic Commentary* adds more:

The intrinsic reasons in favor of Deuteronomy and two precepts of desire are still stronger. As two acts of adultery and theft are forbidden in two separate precepts, and as adultery precedes theft in all texts, versions and New Testament allusions, so we expect the two corresponding desires to be mentioned in the same order and to be forbidden in two distinct precepts... The passage of Exodus moreover contains further evidence of textual corruption in the omission of "his field" found in Deuteronomy and *Papyrus Nash* and required by parallelism of pairs house and field, manservant and maidservant, ox and ass.

The case of the first precept is very different. Only images of "strange gods" were prohibited, as appears not only from the words "Thou shalt not adore them; thou shalt not serve them" (Ex 20:5a; Deut 5:7) but also from the cherubim (Ex 25:18) and the brazen serpent (Numb 21:8) which Yehweh ordered to be made, and from the mural decorations of the Jewish synagogues in the early Christian period as excavations abundantly attest. There is question therefore not of a separate commandment which forbids the worship of all images but an application of the precept forbidding worship of strange gods. The Latin division of the commandments is thus more likely to be original.

From the *MT*, the *LXX*, the above exegetical and theological points, there are many reasons to hold the Catholic mode of dividing the precepts original:

1. The *MT* divides it thus, with spaces between each precept.
2. It also has double accentuation marks using the Heb "*setuma*" or "*phetuca*" dividing the precepts.
3. In Deuteronomy, all precepts after "do not murder" are connected with the Hebrew *copula* "and". This divides "do not covet your neighbor's wife" from "do not desire your neighbor's goods".

4. The *Nash Papyri* supports Deuteronomy having the neighbor's wife first.
5. The *LXX* also supports the *MT* in this as well as having it thus in Exodus.
6. Other intrinsic reasons in the *Catholic Commentary* ... Holy Scriptures:
  - a. Adultery and theft are separate commands, so then coveting the wife and his goods must also be distinct.
  - b. Parallelism of pairs shows "field" omitted from Exodus, so it's corrupted
  - c. "The Lord" (Ex 20:11) is inconsistent with "Jehovah your God" throughout the Decalogue.
7. Threat and promise of Ex 20:5-6 combines strange gods and images in the first command.

2. Ex 20:11 is a third person interpolation from 31:17 where God speaks in first person (I, me, etc.) throughout the decalogue.
3. The reasons and threats of the first command are in the first person, but 20:11 is third person.
4. The reason of the Sabbath command in Deuteronomy is in concord with their cultural setting of leaving Egypt and entering the promised land.
5. Also words of Deut 5:14b-15 are in concord with Ex 20:2 proving they should be in Ex 20:11 instead of what is there today.
6. Moses himself states the words of Exodus 20:11 were not part of the original Sabbath command as God spoke it from Sinai. In Deut 5:22, immediately after reciting the ten commands, he unequivocally states, "These are the words the Lord spoke to all your assembly... he added NO MORE. And He wrote them on two tables of stone and gave them to me." So, Ex 20:11 was not on the stones!

## THE STATEMENTS IN THE CATHOLIC COMMENTARY REGARDING TEXTUAL CORRUPTIONS IN EXODUS ARE EVIDENTLY TRUE.

8. The Palestinian Jews held strange gods and images as one command.
9. In Exodus 20:11 the decalogue shows interpolations and corruptions.
10. Man's wife is not chattel, as in Exodus. Deuteronomy shows her in higher esteem.
11. A reason for each of the first 4 precepts shows Ex. 20:2-6 is only one.
12. "Jehovah your God" in each of first 4 precepts shows Deut 5 is original.
13. Origen, who introduced the "reformed" view of division, testified the other was there first.
14. The Sabbath reason in Ex 20:11 is incongruous with Deut 5:14, 15 & 22.
15. Two different verbs in Deut 5 separates coveting the wife from desiring his goods.
16. The servants and things in Ex 20:17b. are part of his house of 17a., showing Exodus corrupted.

The statements in the *Catholic Commentary* re. textual corruptions in Exodus are evidently true. Thus it's apparent that Ex 20:11 "for in six days the Lord made... therefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day and hallowed it" is also an interpolation later appended in from Ex 31:17 and Gen 2:2, as we have it today. This is evident because:

1. The threat and promise in the first command is in both Exodus and Deuteronomy, but 20:11 isn't.

SDAs also acknowledge such later additions or interpolations in the Pentateuch, as seen in their *Sabbath School Quarterly*, 3rd Qtr, 1985, p.7, where they cite such examples as the account of Moses' death (Deut 34: 5-6); and "updating" as the inclusion of "Dan" in Gen 14:14, that wasn't called Dan at that time (Jdg 18:29). Thus they willingly acknowledge, such amendments and interpolations do exist in Moses' writings. Consistency demands they accept Ex 20:11 is such a later interpolation. Willy Rhordorff, in his book *Sunday*, p.48-52, shows this interpolation was effected by the Jewish Priests after Israel returned from Babylonian captivity.

Ex 20:11 not being a part of the original Sabbath command forever eliminates from this precept the idea that it contained "the Seal of God", as well as that this verse teaches the Sabbath was an ordinance of creation. At the same time, Deut 5:12-15 being original, means this wasn't just a "special reason for Israel" to observe the sabbath as *Bible Readings for the Home* promotes (p.310, 1963 ed). But *Bible Readings'* spin off from Deuteronomy now returns to haunt them. They taught "Since Egyptian bondage is illustrative of the bondage of sin, everyone who has been delivered from sin may regard himself as having the same reason for keeping the Sabbath..." (*ibid*). Their inconsistency is they've spiritualized the reason for the Sabbath, but not physical rest as spiritual rest on the "day of deliverance"—Sunday, when Christ rose from the dead!

Their July 2001 *Canadian Adventist Messenger*, p.2 notes that the Catholic Encyclical “*Deis Domini*” of 1998 (on the internet by that title), gives a Bible basis for celebrating Sunday, the Lord’s Day, which includes Deut 5:12-15 pointing out that “if you keep Sunday as the Lord’s Day, then you are celebrating the deliverance Jesus gives from the slavery of sin.” The article asks “How does one respond to such logic for Sunday keeping?” Any rebuff that’s given will also negate *Bible Readings!* Yet *Messenger* tries to evade this by referring the reader to Ex 20 “where God spoke the Ten Commandments...the original declaration by God”. As shown in this article, Deut 5:12-15 was God’s original declaration, foiling their effort to evade Deut 5, and the other Bible bases for the Lord’s day in the “*Deis Domini*”.

While Sabbatarians erroneously claim that Rome changed the Decalogue and the Sabbath, yet it real-

20:17; Dt 5:21; and in placing the part that He used at the close of the commandments Ex 20:5b-6, Dt 5:9b-10).

So Luther began this, following NT Precedent! SDAs acknowledge abbreviations of these commands in the NT. In their *SS Quarterly*, 3rd Qtr, 1972, they say “Only three of the ten commandments are repeated verbatim in the New Testament: the sixth, seventh, and eighth.” (p.48) Canright showed that 109 times the nine moral commands of the decalogue were alluded to in the NT. As only three of the nine are repeated verbatim, we see it’s normative for NT Christians to use simplified quotes of these precepts without being charged for “taking away from God’s Word”. If someone is so charged it must first be the NT writers—even the Holy Spirit who inspired them, who would be the first in line for indictment!

SDA’s *Bible Readings* p.324, ‘63 condemns Rome abbreviating the precepts in their *Convert’s Catechism*. Below, we see the NT precedent for these: 1. (Matt 12:30; 1 Jn 5:21); 2. (Matt 6:9; 5:33-37; 1 Tim 6:1); 3. Sabbath (repudiated. Col 2:14-16); 4. (Eph 6:1+2); 5. (James 2:11); 6. James 2:11); 7. (Eph 4:28); 8. (Col 3:9; James 3:14); 9. (Matt 5:28; Rom 7:7; 13:9); 10. (Lk 12:15; 2 Cor 9:5; Rom 13:9)

To prove Rome is the “beast”, seventh day sects allege the Pope wears a name on his vesture and miter, “VIC ARIUS FILII DEI”, which in Roman numerals adds to the number 666 of Rev 13. But to their calculations, Dr. John R. Rice notes “But to do so, notice you have to count ‘U’ as ‘V’ and have to violate all the rules of Roman numerals. You have ‘IC’ to mean 501 when it would clearly mean 499 in Roman numerals. You have ‘IV’ in the second word (ARIVS) to mean 6 when it always means 4. Roman numerals are never calculated that way. Always if smaller numbers are before larger ones, it means the larger number less the smaller. IV means one less than five, for example.” (*False Doctrines* p.179 -180).

From this study we’re faced with some heart-searching questions to be answered in fear of God and truth:

1. Will I still repeat such false charges against Rome, about the decalogue?
2. Am I willing to humbly see my errors in making such charges?
3. Since the Catholic church has upheld the decalogue as God originally spoke it, won’t I get off the band wagon of accosting her?

It’s amazing that after laying such charges on Rome for 150 years, the SDAs themselves have changed every precept in the decalogue, in their 1994 *Clear Word Bible!*

## WHILE SABBATARIANS ERRONEOUSLY CLAIM THAT ROME CHANGED THE DECALOGUE AND THE SABBATH, YET IT REALLY WAS JEWS BEFORE CHRIST WHO FIRST CHANGED THE COMMAND...

ly was Jews before Christ who first changed the command, by eliminating Deut 5:14b-15 and adding Gen 2:2 & Ex 31:17 to the text of Ex 20:8-11. But, no one cries about them changing the Sabbath precept, while there arises such a howling when Rome holds the decalogue as originally given By God Himself, as seen from Deut 5! From this they raise more charges against Rome, that she’s taking away from God’s word by only abbreviating the precepts, instead of quoting the whole of each command in her catechisms. Seventh day Protestants assuming the decalogue is the foundation of God’s government, affirm no one has authority to abbreviate these, but must always quote them in their entirety!

Amazingly the *Lutheran Cyclopedia* p 225 says:

Luther following the New Testament precedent (cf Matt 19:18+19; Mk 10:19; Eph 6:2-3; Col 2:16+ 17) omitted ceremonial elements (the word “Sabbath” and ceremonial commands of the 3rd commandment), the mention of Iconolatriy (1st command), and the threat attached to the 2nd commandment, and made other changes (eg. in the 10th commandment, Ex

# Righteousness Beyond the Law

DALE RATZLAFF

Several people have communicated to me what they consider to be the main reason for *not accepting* the understanding of the covenants presented in the July/August *Proclamation* "The Continental Divide of Biblical Interpretation." These people are sincere, their questions are valid, and they deserve a thorough, biblical answer. Their reasoning goes something like this. Christ lived in perfect obedience to the Law. Christ died for those who have the broken law. Thus, Christ's righteousness, which is imputed to the believer, is perfect obedience to the law, including perfect Sabbath keeping. Therefore as Christians we are

1. Christ did not keep the law as interpreted by the Rabbis, but He did keep all the biblical laws.  True  False

2. If Christ did not perfectly keep the biblical laws, He could not be my Savior.  True  False

3. Christ kept the spirit of the law but broke the letter of the law.  True  False

4. Christ died for the broken law.  True  False

5. Christ's righteousness is perfect law-keeping.  True  False

6. If Christ broke the Sabbath, then He could not be my Savior.  True  False



***Why would Christ have died for the law***

***and then done away with it?***

to pattern our lives after Christ which is, in essence, perfect obedience to the law. This obedience includes Sabbath keeping. Therefore, the law, including the laws regarding Sabbath observance, could not have come to a functional end at the cross. Why would Christ have died for the law and then done away with it?

It is very tempting to immediately cite texts in Romans, 2 Corinthians, Galatians and Colossians, etc. which clearly state that the law did come to a functional end with Christ; however, I will not allow myself that luxury until we study the Gospel records to discover Christ's attitude toward the law. To bring the issue into focus, respond to the following true and false quiz.

Before we get to the actual study of the Gospels we must lay a foundation. If we are going to be biblical in our study, we must conclude that the Mosaic Law is one law, not two or three. True, there are moral, ritual and societal aspects of the law, but they comprise one law.<sup>1</sup>


Let us first examine Christ's attitude and actions toward the ceremonial or ritual aspects of the Mosaic Law. Then we will investigate Christ's disposition and conduct toward the moral aspects of this law. Lastly we will tie down a number of loose ends regarding our subject.

### **Christ and Ritual Law**

As the gospel record advances from the beginning of Christ's ministry to the end, we will see a development in our topic. At first there are inferences, then we will see some evidence, and then hard evidence. We start with Mark.

And a leper came to Jesus, beseeching Him and falling on his knees before Him, and saying, "If You are willing, You can make me clean." Moved with compassion, Jesus stretched out His hand and touched him, and said to him, "I am willing; be cleansed." Immediately the leprosy left him and he was cleansed. And He sternly warned him and immediately sent him away, and He said to him, "See that you say nothing to anyone; but go, show yourself to the priest and offer for your cleansing what Moses commanded, as a testimony to them." Mk. 1:40-44

If Jesus could heal by a word of command,<sup>2</sup> why did He choose to heal this unclean leper with a touch? Why did Jesus sternly warn this man to say nothing to anyone about this healing? The answer was obvious to the original readers of Mark's gospel



## ***If Jesus could heal by a word of command why did He choose to heal this unclean leper with a touch?***

who knew the law and its interpretation. By touching this leper, Jesus made Himself unclean. While there is no specific biblical law stating that someone touching a leper becomes ritually unclean, it is nevertheless, clearly assumed in the passage below.

As for the leper who has the infection, his clothes shall be torn, and the hair of his head shall be uncovered, and he shall cover his mustache and cry, "Unclean! Unclean!" He shall remain unclean all the days during which he has the infection; he is unclean. He shall live alone; his dwelling shall be outside the camp. Lev. 13:45-46

This explains Mark 1:45;

But he went out and began to proclaim it freely and to spread the news around, to such an extent that Jesus could no longer publicly enter a city, but stayed out in unpopulated areas; and they were coming to Him from everywhere.

It is evident that the reason Jesus was forced to say out in unpopulated areas was that He was considered unclean because of His contact with the leper.

For the next example of Christ's relationship to ritual law we turn to the episode of the healing of Jairus's daughter in Mark 5:21-43. Jesus is

approached by a synagogue official who implored Christ to come and heal his daughter who was "at the point of death." As Jesus and the crowd that followed Him were on their way, a ritually unclean woman touched His garment. This was against the custom and was understood to make Jesus ritually unclean.<sup>3</sup> At this point some people from the synagogue official's home announced that the girl was dead, to which Jesus responded, "Do not be afraid any longer, only believe."

When they arrived at the home, Jesus said, "Why make a commotion and weep? The child has not died, but is asleep." And they began laughing at him. Then Jesus taking only his three closest disciples and the child's mother and father went into the room where the girl was.

Taking the child by the hand, He said to her, "Talitha kum!" (which translated means, "Little girl, I say to you, get up!"). Immediately the girl got up and began to walk, for she was twelve years old. And immediately they were completely astounded. And He gave them strict orders that no one should know about this... Mk. 5:41-43

Again, we note that Jesus took the girl by the hand; and the Gospel writer, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, chose to record this fact. We see nearly the same instruction given to the parents as to the leper, "And He gave them strict orders that no one should know about this." In this incident, we now have moved from inference to fact. Note the following:

The one who touches the corpse of any person shall be unclean for seven days. That one shall purify himself from uncleanness with the water on the third day and on the seventh day, and then he will be clean; but if he does not purify himself on the third day and on the seventh day, he will not be clean. Anyone who touches a corpse, the body of a man who has died, and does not purify himself, defiles the tabernacle of the Lord; and that person shall be cut off from Israel. Because the water for impurity was not sprinkled on him, he shall be unclean; his uncleanness is still on him. Num. 19:11-13

According to this biblical law, Jesus made himself unclean by touching the dead girl. Further, according to this law, "He defiled the tabernacle of the Lord" and should have been "cut off from Israel."

Some will argue that the girl was not really dead because Jesus said, "She is not dead, but sleeping." However, this is the same term Jesus used when he described Lazarus who clearly was dead.<sup>4</sup> In Luke's account we read, "he took her by

the hand and called, saying, Child arise!” and her spirit returned...” indicating the girl had come back to life.

In Mark 7:14–23 Jesus moves from doing things that were contrary to ritual law to teaching things contradictory to biblical ritual law.

After He called the crowd to Him again, He began saying to them, “Listen to Me, all of you, and understand: there is nothing outside the man which can defile him if it goes into him; but the things which proceed out of the man are what defile the man. [“If anyone has ears to hear, let him hear.”] When he had left the crowd and entered the house, His disciples questioned Him about the parable. And He said to them, “Are you so lacking in understanding also? Do you not understand that whatever goes into the man from outside cannot defile him, because it does not go into his heart, but into his stomach, and is eliminated?” (Thus He declared all foods clean.) And He was saying, “That which proceeds out of the man, that is what defiles the man.” “For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed the evil thoughts, fornications, thefts, murders, adulteries, deeds of coveting and wickedness, as well as deceit, sensuality, envy, slander, pride and foolishness. “All these evil things proceed from within and defile the man.” Mk. 7:14-23



***This verse could be correctly translated, “He was continually destroying the Sabbath.”***

The statement, “Thus he declared all foods clean,” is in the best manuscripts and therefore, should not be treated as some late scribal insertion. This teaching is in direct contradiction to the food laws in Lev. 11 but in harmony with new covenant understanding.<sup>5</sup>

We now turn to the well-known incident of the healing at the pool of Bethesda in John 5. Jesus sees a man who has been a cripple for 38 years lying on his pallet. There is no indication in the record that this was an emergency. Jesus instructed the man to pick up his pallet and walk. This happened on Sabbath, and the Jews immediately accused Jesus of breaking the Sabbath.

For this reason the Jews were persecuting Jesus, because He was doing these things on the Sabbath. But He answered them, “My Father is

working until now, and I Myself am working.” Jn. 5:16-17

“Was doing,” in the sentence above, is in the imperfect continuous tense in Greek and could be translated, “was continually doing these things.” If the actions of Jesus were within the biblical Sabbath law and he was supporting obedience to the law, we would expect Jesus to explain to the Jews why His actions were within Sabbath law. However, His answer is shocking. “My Father is working until now, and I Myself am working.” John now records the following loaded sentence.

For this reason therefore the Jews were seeking all the more to kill Him, because He not only was breaking the Sabbath, but also was calling God His own Father, making Himself equal with God. Jn. 5:18

Again, “was breaking” is in the continuous tense in Greek. The root word used here for “breaking,” is the same for “destroy” and is often translated that way. This verse could be correctly translated, “He was continually destroying the Sabbath.”

While there are many more examples we could examine,<sup>6</sup> we can now make some general conclusions.

1. Jesus *always* let the moral considerations of a given situation dictate his actions whether or not his actions were in violation of Rabbinical or even biblical ritual law.

2. At times it seems that Jesus purposely went out of His way to violate ritual law. He would often heal by a word of command when a touch would have been appropriate. Yet when a touch would make Him ritually unclean, He often chose to heal in that manner. Again, He could heal by a word, yet on the Sabbath he chose to heal by “making mud”<sup>7</sup> and telling a man to “pick up his pallet and walk.” When confronted by the Jews regarding his questionable Sabbath keeping His answer was, “My Father is working until now and I, Myself, am working.”<sup>8</sup>

Some of our readers may feel very confused at this point. Please continue to read, because what now appears confusing will become crystal clear very soon!

### **Christ and Moral Laws of the Mosaic Code**

What was Christ’s attitude to the moral laws in the Mosaic Code? Probably the best examples are found in His Sermon on the Mount in Matthew 5. Space limitations permit only a few examples.

“You have heard that the ancients were told, ‘You shall not commit murder’ and ‘Whoever commits murder shall be liable to the court.’ “But

I say to you that everyone who is angry with his brother shall be guilty before the court; and whoever says to his brother, 'You good-for-nothing,' shall be guilty before the supreme court; and whoever says, 'You fool,' shall be guilty enough to go into the fiery hell." Mt. 5:21-22

Here Jesus refers to the sixth commandment. This is not an exact quote because "shall be guilty to the court" is not in the O. T. Scripture yet is appropriate and was true in Jewish law. Note how Jesus modifies and expands this moral law by showing that the evil passions of anger and



## *Jesus modified and expanded the moral laws of the Old Testament*

angry, insulting talk are sins that when committed bring guilt worthy of fiery hell.

In Matt. 5:27, 28 Jesus does the same thing with the seventh commandment. He modifies and expands the act of adultery to include even the look and thought of lust.

Of special interest is Matt. 5:33–37 where Jesus refers to the law of vows found in Num. 30:2; Deut. 23:21–23. I list this in the "moral law" section because making a vow (promise) to God is certainly a moral act and should be seen as an expansion of "You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor" which, by itself, is a very narrow law.

"Again, you have heard that the ancients were told, 'You shall not make false vows, but shall fulfill your vows to the Lord.'" "But I say to you, make no oath at all, either by heaven, for it is the throne of God, or by the earth, for it is the footstool of His feet, or by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the great King. "Nor shall you make an oath by your head, for you cannot make one hair white or black. "But let your statement be, 'Yes, yes' or 'No, no'; anything beyond these is of evil. Mt. 5:33-37

Granted, the Jews of Jesus' day were abusing vows; however, a careful reading of the above statement compared with the Old Testament law indicates that Jesus is condemning something permitted, even approved, in the Law. But how did he change it? He modified it and expanded it in

such a way that it would correct the abuse the Jews were making of vows which were within the letter of the Mosaic Code.

In Matt. 5:43–48 Jesus said,

"You have heard that it was said, 'You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.'" "But I say to you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, so that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven; for He causes His sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous. "For if you love those who love you, what reward do you have? Do not even the tax collectors do the same? "If you greet only your brothers, what more are you doing than others? Do not even the Gentiles do the same? "Therefore you are to be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect."

While Scripture does not say, "hate your enemy," we should not be too quick to condemn the Jewish leaders for teaching this, for it could be implied from other portions of the law. There are many statements in the law that show a distinction in the moral and ethical nature of how an Israelite was to treat a fellow Israelite compared to how he was to treat a foreigner. For example,

You shall not charge interest to your countrymen: interest on money, food, or anything that may be loaned at interest. You may charge interest to a foreigner, but to your countrymen you shall not charge interest... Deut. 23:19, 20

Therefore, when Jesus speaks about loving our enemies, He modifies and expands the Mosaic moral law beyond ethnic boundaries to include (foreign) enemies who persecute us!

It may be of interest to many of our readers how Ellen White interpreted this verse (loving our neighbors) as she was "shown by God" in vision. See <http://www.ratzlaf.com/downloads.htm>.

While there are many other examples that could be given, we can now make a generalized summary of Christ's attitude toward the moral laws in the Mosaic Code.

1. Jesus modified and expanded the moral laws of the Old Testament, raising their moral and ethical considerations beyond that of the written law.

2. Jesus modified and expanded the moral laws of the Old Testament, changing them from legal rules to moral and ethical principles.

3. Jesus modified and expanded the scope of the moral laws of the Old Testament, moving them beyond laws for Israel alone to ethical and moral principles for every nation, tongue, and people.<sup>9</sup>



## Righteousness Beyond the Law—New Testament Agreement

Some have defined righteousness as “perfect obedience to the law.” This may be true for old covenant righteousness, but it falls far below that presented in the new covenant. Note how the following New Testament references associate law and righteousness.

But now apart from the Law the righteousness of God has been manifested, being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets, Rom. 3:21. For the promise to Abraham or to his descendants that he would be heir of the world was not through the Law, but through the righteousness of faith. For if those who are of the Law are heirs, faith is made void and the promise is nullified; Rom. 4:13-14. What shall we say then? That Gentiles, who did not pursue righteousness, attained righteousness, even the righteousness which is by faith; but Israel, pursuing a law of righteousness, did not arrive at that law. Rom. 9:30-31. For not knowing about God’s righteousness and seeking to establish their own, they did not subject themselves to the righteousness of God. For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes. Rom. 10:3-4. “I do not nullify the grace of God, for if righteousness comes through the Law, then Christ died needlessly.” Gal. 2:21. You have

for the light to turn green. Suddenly, I realized my friend was walking into the red light. He said to me, “You are still under law. I am under grace.” While his statement may not fully apply, nevertheless it was instructive. The law of red and green lights was designed to prevent accidents. However in our case there was no chance to get hit by a passing car as none was in sight. It was therefore appropriate to violate the letter of the law as long as it did not violate the principle of safety—as long as no legalistic cops were watching!

The other day I was at the busy post office getting LAM’s mail. A mother was there with two small girls. As they approached the parking lot she said, “Now you must take Mommy’s hand as there are many cars here.” This was a very good law for two little girls; however, don’t put your 16 year old boy under the same law! Rather, as soon as he is old enough, teach the principle of “safety first”! That principle will serve him well the rest of his life no matter what the circumstances.

I believe this is the way we should consider the old covenant laws. They are holy, just and good for the conditions and people to whom they were given. Now, however, life in the Spirit moves us to live beyond the letter of the law to follow the principles taught by Christ and written on our heart by the Holy Spirit. We are no longer children; we are sons and daughters of God.



***We are no longer children, we are sons and daughters of God.***

been severed from Christ, you who are seeking to be justified by law; you have fallen from grace. Gal. 5:4. . . .and may be found in Him, not having a righteousness of my own derived from the Law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which comes from God on the basis of faith. Phil. 3:9.

### Personal Illustrations

When I was a seminary student I worked nights at the YMCA in Benton Harbor, Mich. About midnight one cold winter night, I was crossing the street with the manager of the YMCA. We came to an intersection where the facing light was red. There were no cars in sight in any direction. However, I, a good law keeper, stood there waiting

### Biblical Teaching

But before faith came, we were kept in custody under the law, being shut up to the faith which was later to be revealed. Therefore the Law has become our tutor to lead us to Christ, so that we may be justified by faith. But now that faith has come, we are no longer under a tutor. For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus. Gal. 3:23-26; But when the fullness of the time came, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the Law, so that He might redeem those who were under the Law, that we might receive the adoption as sons. Gal. 4:4-5. But now that you have come to know God, or rather to be known by God, how is it that you turn back again to the weak and worthless elemental things, to which you desire to be enslaved all over again? You observe days and months and seasons and years. I fear for you, that perhaps I have labored over you in vain. Gal. 4:9-11

### Righteousness Beyond the Law—Moral vs. Ritual

New covenant Christians must be diligent here. It is human nature to give moral significance

to established ritual customs. I was taught that the communion bread must be made out of whole-wheat flour and olive oil. I was almost scandalized when I visited a church that used white flour! It was instructive to me that a detailed recipe was given in the old covenant law for the bread of the presence and how it should be laid out as an “everlasting covenant”<sup>10</sup> In the new covenant, however, no such details are given. New



## ***New-covenant Christians have a much higher model to pattern after than the old covenant law.***

covenant righteousness deals with heart issues, not rituals. Some argue over which way to baptize: forward, backward, three times, in the name of Jesus only or in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. We could even extend it to sprinkling or immersion.<sup>11</sup> Again, the most important thing is our commitment to Christ, inviting Him to be Lord and Master of our lives! Anytime rituals become the important thing, the moral and ethical nature of new covenant righteousness is compromised.

### **Righteousness Beyond the Law—Found Only In Christ**

New-covenant Christians have a much higher model to pattern after than the old covenant law. There is nothing in the new covenant or “living under grace” that opens any door to willfully living in sin. Rather, new covenant morality is above and beyond that of the law. When we say this there are two considerations that must be emphasized lest we misunderstand the good news of the gospel. The first is motive. When living under the law there is a motive to try to perfectly keep the law so that we can be accepted. This, as many of us can testify, is continually frustrating if we take the law seriously, be it the biblical law or the writings of Ellen G. White. There are many who instruct others to “keep the Sabbath” when there are few—probably no one—who have kept it according to the biblical law, let alone Ellen White’s numerous laws regarding Sabbath keeping.<sup>12</sup> However, the new covenant motive is differ-

ent. Our sanctified living is not done from the motive of trying to be good enough to be accepted. Rather, it springs from the fact of acceptance! We live like sons and daughters of God because that is who we are! Our goal is to live like the kind of person we now are in Christ!

The second consideration we must understand is that new covenant righteousness is found only in Christ! We look to Him and Him alone as our Representative and Substitute! If we are Christ’s then we, with the Apostle Paul may say,

More than that, I count all things to be loss in view of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them but rubbish so that I may gain Christ, and may be found in Him, not having a righteousness of my own derived from the Law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which comes from God on the basis of faith, Phil. 3:8-9

Hopefully, we have answered the questions regarding the “righteousness of the law” for the sincere seekers of truth. We believe that the New Testament teaches that the law came to a functional end with Christ. Now we have moral and ethical principles above and beyond that of the law. We have life in the Spirit that empowers us to follow after the example of Christ. We can by faith claim Christ’s righteousness which far surpasses the righteousness of the law. Yes, we can enter true rest in Christ, the rest that remains for those who believe.

### **Endnotes**

<sup>1</sup>See Riggle, *The Sabbath and the Lord’s Day*, p. 51-61 for the biblical support for this statement.

<sup>2</sup>See Mark 1:25.

<sup>3</sup>See Lev. 15:19–25.

<sup>4</sup>John 11:11.

<sup>5</sup>Acts 10, 11; Rom. 14:14.

<sup>6</sup>See Alan Watson, *Jesus and the Law* [University of Georgia Press, 1996] for many more examples.

<sup>7</sup>John 9:6.

<sup>8</sup>Note the stress on “working” in John 5:17; 9:3–6.

<sup>9</sup>See Matt. 28:18–20.

<sup>10</sup>Lev. 24:5–8.

<sup>11</sup>As a pastor I have always baptized by immersion as I think this is the biblical model and more fully follows the symbol of the reality. We must, however, keep ritual in its place and not allow it to take precedence over the ethical and moral commitment of the person being baptized.

<sup>12</sup>See Ratzlaff, *Sabbath in Crisis*, pp. 57–59; 306–309.

# FormerAdventist.com

Former Adventist Fellowship  
 ONLINE LINKS  
 FORUM STUDY STORIES

## A website for former Adventists by LAM, Inc. board members Richard and Colleen Tinker

**FormerAdventist.com** is a website dedicated to helping those struggling with Adventism to find truth, fellowship, and prayer support.

Central to the site is a live forum on which people can ask questions, talk about their experiences and doubts, and receive others' support, input, and prayer.

The site also features first person stories of many who have left the Adventist church. They vary from deeply personal accounts to scholarly studies outlining the biblical research of several who discovered the reality of the New Covenant. Email to the webmaster tells how the sto-

ries provide insight to those who are seeking to understand Adventism and affirmation to those who are struggling to leave.

Also available on the site are the weekly Bible studies our Redlands, California, group of Former Adventist Fellowship is studying. Included are studies on the books of Galatians and 1 Corinthians as well as most of the book of Hebrews. Our group is currently studying Hebrews, and the studies on our website will be complete in just a few weeks since we post the studies as we progress through the book. Following Hebrews we will begin to study 2 Corinthians.

We have dedicated this site to one cause: lifting Jesus up. Every day we pray for the Holy Spirit to be present. We ask God to bless each person who visits the site with truth, support, peace, and assurance. We praise God for his faithfulness to us and for his promise to complete the work he begins in us. (Philippians 1:6)

"I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes..." (Romans 1:16, NIV)

Following are examples of email sent to the webmaster at formeradventist.com. Pray for these seekers of truth.

"We are thrilled to find you guys. My wife and I were both raised Adventist. We have been in turmoil for years with these issues and had no one with whom to talk about it from the Adventist perspective. Right now I know of maybe 10 Adventists locally that are in the process of coming out. My wife's cousin (an Adventist pastor) is leaving the church in search of another Christian ministry. He and his wife spent the last five days with us studying and praying about all the issues, and we feel we must leave the SDA church. Thanks for the web site; it is really helpful."

"I just came across this web site today. I couldn't have found it at a better time. I didn't go to church for a few years because I was recovering from a lot of guilt that I had been suffering from being an Adventist. I pretty much thought that I would not get into heaven no matter what I did, so why go to church at all? Eventually [my husband and I] found our home church we are at now. We have been here

two years and it feels so much nicer than the Adventist church we had belonged to.

"I started running with an old Adventist girlfriend of mine... I have been going to things with her and doing her studies with her, thinking it wouldn't hurt... I am falling back into those feelings of 'what if they are right [and] I am going to lose my salvation?'

I don't know why I wrote all this. I just wanted to voice this to someone who probably knows where I am right now. The Adventist church leaves very strong holds on a person once you have been a part of them."

"What a shame you let liberalism creep into your religious life and destroy your relation with Jesus. You need to review your thinking and follow Jesus in everything, not just the Fords, the Ratzlaffs, and other so-called theologians.

"I belong to the S.D.A. church but have always had problems with some of the

things in the church [such as] E.G. White. I was raised as a Baptist and became a member of the S.D.A. church about 35 years ago. Today I and my family went to the church that I went to as a kid and enjoyed it very much. I feel guilty for feeling this way, but it was so good to hear those songs of childhood again. I sit and wonder if I did wrong and [if] I got the mark of the beast because I enjoy this church family so much."


"Kindly advise if you know of any former Adventists in [an African country]. I need to make contact with someone/anyone who can be of help to me as I have just started discovering stuff, and I need to move on from here with more studies. Is it possible to send me a link to start a good Bible Study with my family? I've been downloading stories from former Adventists and am intrigued and encouraged knowing that others have gone through what we are now experiencing. We are still a long way off—only discovered all of this about 3 months ago."

"I think you guys are a bunch of the Devil's instruments out there to deceive the world. I'm sure the only reason you left the church was because of your evil natures that couldn't let you fellowship with the church. You yourselves know that you are preparing the world for the times of trouble that are spoken of, and I'm not scared of you devils."

"I just ran across this web site, and the stories here have been so helpful to me. Having been raised Adventist all of my life, I can identify with many of the stories, and even though I continue to respect [Adventist] beliefs and ways of worshipping God, they continue to try and persuade me to accept their special 'truth'. It leaves little room for relationships. Have any of you ever been separated from your families as the result of leaving Adventism?"

"I need support as I no longer call myself an Adventist. I no longer believe in the doctrines and teachings."

## Big Gene and the present crisis CONTINUED FROM FRONT



could see by the lights that a car was coming down the levy road. However, I did not want to stop to let the car go by because to do so I would have had to stop on the steepest part of the hill—something no trucker wants to do. So I kept going and the car, which had plenty of time, stopped for me. After we gained our speed and came to a straight section of the road, I expected the car to pass. However, instead of passing, he pulled just a little to the left and shined his high lights into my mirror. He kept this up during our ten mile ride into Woodland. “Just some crazy driver.” I thought.

When we got to the scale we had a routine we always followed. The driver would get out of the truck and go into the scalehouse and give the weighmaster the needed information so he could make the weight certificate. The helper—we called him the

“swamper”—would take the “cheater bar” and thump the tires to make sure they were all properly inflated. Our cheater bar was made from a hard, steel axle shaft and was a little over two feet long. Big Gene took the cheater bar and began thumping the tires on the passenger side of the truck. I climbed out of the cab and was getting ready to go into the scalehouse when I noticed the car which had been following us drove into the scalehouse yard. Now I could see it was an old pickup and it stopped by the side of our trailer. Just then two angry men jumped out and came up to me, ready to fight. “What’s the idea of pulling out in front of us?” they demanded. I was in the prime of my life, but I was never a fighter, nor was I about to start a fighting career that night with these two husky, angry men. There were lots of lights around the scalehouse, but the weighmaster could not see what was going on because the truckload of hay blocked his vision, so he was of no help to me. As Big Gene rounded the back of the truck he immediately took in the scene and stealthily crept up behind the men. With steel cheater bar in his raised and outstretched right hand, he came to my side and said, “You guys want something?” The large muscles of Big Gene’s arms and chest glistened in the lights—A picture etched deep in my memory I will never forget. There was a moment of intense silence as the two men comprehended the situation. Then, without a word, they quickly turned, jumped in their old pickup, and drove away, never to be encountered again.

Today, our country faces terrorist enemies bent on our destruction. We are also told that our real enemy—the devil—goes about as a roaring lion seeking whom he may devour. Perhaps these two enemies are closely allied as terrorists. Satan seems to have the same goal of destroying as many people, even innocent people, as possible.

The question that comes to us is, “How do we live in these times?” Should we run to the hills for our own safety? Or should

we stay and work for the salvation of others, even in the dangerous and wicked cities? Many are fearful of the possible events looming on the horizon, wondering how to evaluate what is going on.

Meditating on my experience with Big Gene and the truths of Scripture has led me to two main conclusions regarding the current events. First, we must remain engaged in life and continue in our everyday jobs, unless God directs otherwise. We are to live for him every day no matter where we are or what we are doing. The parable of the talents teaches us that we are to stay engaged in life and commerce. Jesus commended the servant who was occupied in business, not the one who withdrew for fear and hid his talent. In these dangerous times, we may find ourselves in harm's way, as did the New York Fire Fighters. But let us, like them, think more of the salvation of others than of saving our own physical life. Let us each be found doing our duty when Christ comes.

Second, we are not to fight the enemy directly, but our job is to stay close to our "Big Gene"—our Lord and Master who can fight the enemy for us. Herein lies our safety. "Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I fear no evil, for You are with me; Your rod and Your staff, they comfort me. Psalm 23:4 That night Big Gene did not have a shep-

herd's rod, but for the occasion, nothing was more comforting to me than to see that steel cheater bar in Big Gene's outstretched right hand!

It is at times like these that our faith is tested. Do we really trust Christ? We say we trust him for the next life, but how can we do that unless we trust Him in this life? When we know the truth of the gospel we are set free—free from condemnation and guilt, free from the fear of death, free from the fear of life and what it may bring, free to serve in newness of life and free to live "life in the Spirit".

Paul learned this as he faced hardship and suffering. Listen to his words, "For we do not want you to be unaware, brethren, of our affliction which came to us in Asia, that we were burdened excessively, beyond our strength, so that we despaired even of life; indeed, we had the sentence of death within ourselves so that we would not trust in ourselves, but in God who raises the dead; who delivered us from so great a peril of death, and will deliver us, He on whom we have set our hope. And He will yet deliver us." 2 Cor. 1:8-10 "But in all these things we overwhelmingly conquer through Him who loved us. For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor any other created thing, will be able to

separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord." Romans 8:37-39

Yes, "There will be signs in sun and moon and stars, and on the earth dismay among nations, in perplexity at the roaring of the sea and the waves, men fainting from fear and the expectation of the things which are coming upon the world; for the powers of the heavens will be shaken. Then they will see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with power and great glory. [Now note how we are to live] But when these things begin to take place, straighten up and lift up your heads, because your redemption is drawing near." Luke 21:25-28

Many of us have grown up with the continual admonition, "get ready, get ready get ready," but we never experienced the assurance of being ready because we were trusting partly to Christ and partly to ourselves. Yet Jesus taught that we could be ready, "You too, be ready; for the Son of Man is coming at an hour that you do not expect." Luke 12:40 Therefore, our present duty is first to continue to live for Christ in whatever place we may find ourselves and not withdraw in fear. Let our witness be a life free from fear and full of assurance. Second, let us lift up our heads knowing that we can face these difficult and uncertain times because our "Big Gene" is by our side, and He will win the battle!

## Jesus and Mosaic Ritual Laws

It appears that Jesus always let the moral and ethical considerations of a given situation dictate his actions regardless of whether or not his actions were a violation of the Mosaic Ritual Law. Not only that, but it evident that on certain occasions Jesus actually went out of his way to violate some of these ritual laws. Why did He do this? There are several good reasons. Many of the ritual laws in some way dealt with sin. Jesus was sinless; therefore, some of these laws did not apply to Him. Various Mosaic Ritual Laws were shadows of grace and pointed forward to the life, death and resurrection of Christ and the Salvation purchased for us. Therefore, in many of the controversies regarding Christ's observance of ritual laws, and specifically the Sabbath laws, as recorded in the Gospels, His goal was to move the people away from the ritual laws to Himself. Now that He had come, the shadows of grace which were useful in pre-Christ days, actually kept the Jews from accepting their Messiah. We, too, must be careful not to let the shadows of Christ keep us from accepting the risen Son and the free, unmerited, grace of God!

### Letter "through" the editor

Dear "SDA Pastor," You take me harshly to task in *Proclamation*, May/June. Space is limited, so here my brief reply is selective. First, I am grateful to Dale for hosting my essays, especially as I do not accept his organization's every viewpoint. He need never have offered had your leaders and even scholars whom I first approached heeded Ellen White's repeated plea, *CWE* 33-51, against Pharisaism in ignoring let alone ridiculing anyone who differs on doctrine—even your *Fundamentals*, 44! Even if he or she is sincerely astray, "Beneath an appearance of hatred and contempt... may be hidden a soul that the grace of Christ will rescue," *MB* 130.

Secondly, the Spirit of truth, *Jn.* 14:17; 15:26; 16:13, moves no one to erect then demolish men of mere straw. Ellen White's genuine devotee will faithfully "treat every man as honest," *6T* 122. It amazes me that even Decalogians who chide other converts over God's Fourth Commandment can abuse his Ninth so recklessly. The least of it here is your ludicrous claim that I know nothing about Scripture or the Ellen White corpus. The worst of it is your virtual, inane charge of sheer mendacity.

Thirdly, although it is a very minor detail, I accept your correction, via Holy Writ, that the sanctuary bread was renewed each Sabbath, not day by day. But why do you multiply mere words in the far weightier matter of the atoning blood, day by day, for the sins of common individuals on which is founded your entire dogma of an investigative judgment of individuals since 1844? *Lev.* 4:27-35 is perfectly clear in this matter. Nor is there any other path for the day-by-day sins of any common individual to pollute the earthly Holy Place!

No important doctrine ever hangs upon the obscure interpretation of this or that lonely Bible reference! It is taught clearly, explicitly and repeatedly. Indeed, as I watch the desperate gymnastics of SDAs to bolster their crucial belief, I can but ask, If God really wished such sin to register day by day within that Holy Place, why not precisely the same extremely simple procedure as for a priest, 5-7, or the entire nation, 16-18? The very fact that there is a stark contrast between the blood manipulations of the two groups of sacrifices is eloquent testimony that the SDA Church is striving to obliterate a patent distinction which God himself established!

However, despite my comprehensive research, I could still be mistaken, and am only interested in the truth. I therefore have a sincere offer for you. If you can persuade Dale to devote some space on his web site, if not his journal, to a civil discussion, not a debate, strictly on this single foundational point, I am prepared to meet you over the open Bible for a few brief exchanges. Nor should the subject deter you. For

Ellen White even admits: "If the pillars of our faith will not stand the test of investigation, it is time that we knew it," *CWE* 44.

I am not your conscience. So I expect nothing of you, even if the very foundation of your 1844 dogma lacks support in "sound arguments, that... will bear the closest and most searching scrutiny," 40.

But if your stance obviously passes the Berean Test, *Acts* 17:11, I make this solemn pledge before thousands of readers: I will settle down with some competent Bible teacher to work through this doctrine, so crucial to the *raison d'être* of the SDA Church, with a view, should there be no genuine doctrinal obstacles, to baptism.

Either way, my offer gives you the opportunity to demonstrate the veracity of your vigorous objections and the sincerity of your profession of allegiance to both sacred Scripture and Ellen White's writings.—*Fred Mazzaferri*

### Hard questions

Dale, I have a few questions: If one had enough faith would he have to pray? Does a little child have to plead with his parent to feed and support him? As one's faith grows should the substance of one's prayer change... If man had not sinned would we know about God's grace and mercy? Was it necessary for God to contain the attributes of grace and mercy when they were not needed? Will the most forgiven be the happiest even with less reward?

### Praying for spiritual wisdom

I have been praying to God for a long time for the spiritual wisdom of knowing the Lord's will in how I should view the Big 10, as a Christian, living by grace through faith in the Son of God. I have had some difficulty receiving the visions of Ellen White that add to the word of God. I have had questions in my spirit about the cleansing of the Sanctuary teaching in 1844. I accept the first time vision, in Daniel, that takes us to Christ and seems to be perfect. The investigative judgment I have some doubts that raise questions. We preach that righteousness is by grace through faith and then we turn right around and say we have to keep the whole law or we will be out of here. I have stepped down from serving as an Elder in my church in \_\_\_ to have more freedom to receive from the Holy Spirit some answers to these questions that have been troubling me...

### The Devil loves to try to shake the confidence of believers

I found Jerry Gladson's article entitled "Re-thinking Life After Death" (*May/June*, 2001) interesting and informative, yet somewhat troubling. It showed a good deal of study. He is correct in saying that "the differentiating teachings, such as

the Sabbath, the three angel's messages, and the state of the dead, became symbols of identity.... Adventists still cling to these points of identity...." It is true that "soul sleep" is one of the SDA "identity factors" which, along with the Sabbath, was borrowed from other Christians. It is also correct that the intermediate state is not always clearly defined in Scripture. It is only made clear in Christ. He should be our emphasis, and if He is, Christ will draw all men who hear his voice unto him, and into his "one fold,"... What troubles me somewhat about Gladson's review of the Scriptural and historical evidence relative to the whole subject of the intermediate state is that he does not seem to clearly differentiate between merely earthly traditional and cultural beliefs on the one hand, and inspired heavenly teachings from above on the other, especially holding up the teachings and example of Christ. He appears to give tradition and inspiration equal billing, which seems directly contrary to Christ's teachings and example. On this subject Gladson seems confused himself, and he projects not clarity but confusion to others. Naturalism and Supernaturalism are indiscriminately given consideration without clear distinction, and the effect is distortion, doubt, and perplexity rather than trust, faith, and hope. Christ spoke with authority, not as the Scribes and Pharisees, because he knew the Scriptures and the power of God, which he told them they did not know... Thankfully Gladson's article ends on a triumphant note: "my salvation doesn't depend on having all the answers. It depends on Christ, who said, 'I am the resurrection and the life...'"

### Spoke to a packed crowd of 600

You might be interested to know that I spoke to a packed crowd of 600 here in Goroka on the Sabbath vs. Sunday and some of the erroneous beliefs of the SDA Church last Sunday night, and also showed the film, with a very good response. Last night on the campus of the University of Goroka I did the same thing again, as there is currently a tremendous amount of interest and confusion on these things. Your books have proven invaluable to me as I have studied and prepared!

### Devil's spirit behind your efforts.

The tenor of your publication makes clear what spirit is behind your efforts. The devil loves to try to shake the confidence of believers. He failed with Jesus and by His grace it will fail with me.

### Made the Christ-centered life quite realistic.

Dear Colleen (Tinker), I enjoyed your front page article. It was well written, and made the challenge of transition from Adventism to the Christ-centered life quite realistic. The whole magazine was excellent! Keep up the good work!

**Disappointed with Dr. Reiner's view as the SDA view.**

I was disappointed that *Proclamation* presented Dr. Reiner's view of the covenants as if it was the SDA position. While there are variant views among Adventist on some aspects of the covenants, just as there are among evangelicals, Dr. Reiner's concepts are much different from the general view. For example, Reiner's position that the law has not yet been written in our hearts is quite contrary to the Adventist's position, and based on your response to Dr. Reiner, it is not your view either. For Dr. Reiner to state the Ten Commandments are not part of the "old covenant" is not the general Adventist position, nor is it yours, according to your response. We could go on with the discrepancies in Dr. Reiner's article and the general SDA position. I wish a more representative source had been chosen for your publication.—*From a SDA pastor.*

**Another excellent issue!**

Thank you for another excellent issue of *Proclamation!* [We] enjoy this publication very much and look forward to each issue. Friends of ours, who also receive it, are equally impressed. You and your staff and the authors you select do a first class job for a quality publication.

**I always get encouraged by reading it**

Thank you for *Proclamation*. I always get encouraged by reading it. May [the] Lord bless you and give you strength for the work you are doing. I am praying for you and LAM.

**You are a lost person according to the Bible**

We hope and pray God will cause you to have a pure heart and change your terrible destruction of people who you are misleading in your magazine. God used to strike people down in the Old Testament and New when they withheld God's money, etc.!! You are a lost person according to the Bible. Read Rev. 21, Rev. 22:14-18, Rev. 12:17, Isa. 66:23. Take us off your list!

**A lot more soul satisfying**

I particularly enjoyed reading your Editor's Comments page and your article on "Paul and the Afterlife in 2 Corinthians 5:1-9." I related well to what you wrote and am thankful that you brought it to my and your readers' attention. I have read this and other similar passages many times, and have never dared take them at face value before. They did not fit the conservative SDA conditionalist position on the afterlife, so I passed over without daring to think for myself what Paul really meant. The negative comments from some of your readers are always very hurtful, offensive and rude and I always wish I had not read them. I am glad that most comments are positive and supportive

of your ministry. Just like most others who have left the SDA church, we find ourselves somewhat cut off from our former friends. The gap widens with each passing year. We wish they would read and study Scripture and books by a host of other Christian authors, for themselves, without having some conservative party-line SDA theologian interpret for them. Members of our family, our own siblings, are reluctant to read anything that isn't printed and published by an SDA church-owned and governed publishing company. We know because we have sent them copies of books we have read in the hopes they will read them, and if for no other reason, understand why we are no longer members of their church. Rather, they choose to challenge and warn of the consequences of our position, particularly at our age when we should be strong in the "faith"... Certainly "the good news of the new covenant gospel of grace in Christ" is a lot more soul satisfying than "the errors of legalism and false religion," but each one has to find that out individually, under the conviction of the Holy Spirit.

**Spoke so accurately of our own experience**

Colleen Moore Tinker's "How I discovered the Bible" was excellent, and spoke so accurately of our own experience. Along with your many, many supporters, we also pray for the success of your unique ministry with its unique mission to those who have chosen to walk in grace rather than legalism.

**What does that tell you!!!**

I do not appreciate receiving your paper, and what it says about the church I work with. Do you have anything else to say except derogatory comments about the Adventist church? Just remember God has blessed this movement abundantly. What does that tell you!!!

**Steer Bible believing Christians back to the truth of the Gospel**

Several months back I was introduced to your book, *Sabbath in Crisis*. Your book has been instrumental here the U.S. Virgin Islands to steer Bible believing Christians back to the truth of the Gospel of Christ. The U.S. Virgin Islands is heavily populated by Seventh-day Adventists, especially St. Thomas.

**Start a "Former SDA Congregation"**

Thank you for the Informer Pack that you have sent... I have been a SDA worker since 1958 until I retired at the age of 65. I have served the Lord in the SDA organization in the following capacities: Ministerial Intern, Church Pastor, District Pastor, Mission Departmental Director, Academy Principal, and College Professor, The highest position I held in the SDA denomination,

except being an ordained minister, was \_\_\_ in \_\_\_. Never in my life have I come across the reading materials like what you have sent me except this time... Initially, I plan to bring all of these materials to the \_\_\_ that I could share them to the SDAs there to start a "Former SDA Congregation".

**Satan must surely be blessing**

Satan must surely be blessing your ministry since your pamphlet looks quite professional. There is no doubt in our minds that God has nothing to do with your ministry... your literature goes directly into the garbage...

**How can we share the gospel of Jesus effectively to the SDAs?**

... You may know Mark Finley... was here in Port Moresby recently (July 9 -22) and ministered their "gospel" which was also broadcast live on satellite TV. Many thousands predominantly SDAs converged on the main stadium. Although the event was peaceful following the political crisis a few days back, the message was heard by many but as usual caused a lot of disturbances in other denominations. The SDA saw the opportunity to declare their church as the true remnant church in the daily papers and declared all others as false. As a result over 2,000 were baptized into the SDA church. Brother, how can we share the gospel of Jesus effectively to the SDA followers and prevent them from being misguided from the truth by people like Finley?

**Astounding admissions concerning EGW**

Dale, Just wanted to drop you a note and say thanks again for the books. We have already read them more then once. I have been dialoging a good bit with Dr. \_\_\_ at the Adventist Seminary. He has made some astounding admissions concerning EGW but all of them in his opinion are not "enough" to throw her out. I have posted my testimony on ellenwhite.org and have gotten some good responses, it's in the "what's new" section.

**Thank you for helping me understand truth.**

Dear Dale, After three years of research, study and prayer, my husband and I have requested our names be removed for the SDA membership. We truly enjoy reading the articles in *Proclamation*. They are so uplifting in contrast to the articles in the *Adventist Review*... Please use our gift to continue to send to the addresses currently on your mailing list.

**Mail letters and donations to:**

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

# Looking at the past, present and future of LAM, Inc.

DALE RATZLAFF

## History

About a year ago I resigned from the pastorate of Christian Community Church so that I could devote more time to Life Assurance Ministries. My associate pastor, Tom Tomforde, took over the church, and it is doing well. Because of my experience and training, I feel God has uniquely called me to this aspect of ministry. There are many thousands—some estimate as many as a million—former Seventh-day Adventists. Many of these people are not involved in a healthy, Christ-centered church. They need help in working through the many doctrinal questions that all “formers” have before they can become spiritually free and well.

Prior to my resignation several people had indicated a willingness to help support LAM if we could form a non-profit corporation so their donations would be tax deductible. Therefore, I separated Life Assurance Ministries into two entities: LAM Publishers that oversees the book ministry of LAM, and LAM, Inc. which is a non-profit corporation with a 501(c)(3) designation from the IRS and controlled by a board of directors. Our initial plan was to send a simple, little newsletter to the approximately 3,000 names then on LAM's mailing list. The goal was to encourage these people in their walk with Christ and help them “work through” Adventist issues. However, after seeing the first

newsletter that I had ready, Richard Tinker suggested that he format it. Wow! What a difference! After the first issue was sent out, we received many requests from our readers to add names to our mailing list, and it soon ballooned to approximately 13,000.

The purpose of *Proclamation* is to minister primarily to former or inquiring Seventh-day Adventists as well as other transitional sabbatarian groups like the Worldwide Church of God. However, many of the names sent in to us are currently members of the SDA church. We have received hundreds of letters from those on our mailing list, including a number of SDA pastors and some administrators. Most—not all—have responded very positively to *Proclamation*.

## Present

The expense of adding the additional names has been huge. In addition to the extra printing costs, we now send hundreds of *Proclamations* to other countries with mailing costs of from \$2.30 each to \$2.60 each. We also send numerous copies of *Proclamation* to Canada with postage costs of \$1.10 each. Each month it appears that we will not have enough money to print and send out the next issue. Several times key donors, without our request, but in answer to our prayers, have helped meet our expenses with large donations of six to ten thousand dollars. If you are receiving your *Proclamation* free, it is

because God has led someone else to send in the funds!

To date no one has received any salary from LAM, Inc. with the exception that I did receive several thousand dollars from a donor to help print *The Sabbath and The Lord's Day*. However, this did not go into my pocket, but into inventory that may take a number of years to sell. We have not paid the contributing writers to *Proclamation* nor have we paid Richard Tinker, who does such an outstanding job designing each issue. We all, without exception, see our work as ministry.

## Future

Some of you are supporting this ministry very liberally. We thank you for your liberality. We would ask all those receiving *Proclamation* to pray for this ministry. We have had so many answers to prayer that we know this ministry is God's will! Many hundreds of people have written or called thanking us for helping them to place their faith in Christ alone, in His Word alone, and to trust His grace alone through faith!

We hope LAM, Inc. will be able to sponsor a “Former SDA Pastor's Summit”—a weekend of meetings where each pastor could give his “story” and share his discoveries. Several have indicated a desire to do this. Tapes could be made of these presentations and these would be a powerful ministry tool.

We have several more former SDA pastors, and others as well, who want to contribute articles to *Proclamation*. We feel there are many more subjects that need to be developed.

Please join us in prayer that we will make the good news of Christ simple, clear and central in all we do.

## Life Assurance Ministries, Inc.

PO Box 11587  
Glendale, AZ 85318.