

## Editor's Comments:

# Covenants: why print both sides?

**A** correct understanding of the covenants is fundamental to a correct interpretation of all Scripture and it is absolutely critical for one's view of the Sabbath. In this issue of *Proclamation* we will present two views: One by Edwin Reiner, whose book, *The Covenants*, [Southern Publishing Association] is used in Adventist education. The

*Ministry Magazine* and other Adventist periodicals.

Some time ago, Dr. Reiner contacted Life Assurance Ministries and stated that if we were really open to the truth we would print his view (SDA view) of the covenants in *Proclamation*. We take our motto very seriously. Truth *can* stand the test of thorough investigation and has nothing to fear from facts that are honestly considered. Therefore, our board voted to print Dr. Reiner's article. We thank Dr. Reiner for his desire to make the covenants a central point of study and for presenting the Adventist view. Often, when two views are presented it is easier for our readers to determine which view they believe is the correct, biblical teaching.

This study, perhaps more than any we have presented thus far in *Proclamation*, will challenge the paradigm of truth for many of our readers. Several things need to be made clear before we move to the two studies. First, we must remember to use good hermeneutics. We believe the Bible and the Bible *only* is our source of truth and the standard for all doctrines and reforms.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

**This study, perhaps more than any we have presented thus far in *Proclamation*, will challenge the paradigm of truth for many of our readers.**

## CONTENTS

3

An Adventist writes his view on the covenants

6

The Covenants: the continental divide of biblical interpretation

18

Letters to the editor

20

FormerAdventist.com: Community

second is the view many former SDA pastors have adopted which we believe to be the New Testament view.

Dr. Reiner is a practicing physician in San Diego, California, a graduate of the University of Oregon and the College of Medical Evangelists, now Loma Linda University Medical School. He is a personal Bible student, author of two books, *The Covenants*, and *The Atonement*, and contributes to

## 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

# Covenants: why print both sides? CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

The second thing we ought to consider is our own prejudice or paradigm of preconceived truth. If the Bible *clearly states a fact* that is completely contrary to our theological structure, it is nearly impossible for us to accept that fact. This is true because that fact undermines our whole system of truth—something that most of us have a

***If the Bible clearly states a fact that is completely contrary to our theological structure, it is nearly impossible for us to accept that fact.***

difficult time accepting. We can see this prejudice in others, it is harder to see it in ourselves. Let us, however, seek to be objective even if the facts of our study do not fit our preconceived ideas

If we are looking for some "North Star" to guide our study, it should be the gospel of Christ, not church doctrine. We should allow the New Testament, especially the epistles, to be our chief support. Also, our definitions should be *biblically* based rather than psychologically defined. There should be ample biblical evidence, not speculation, for our conclusions.

I would encourage our readers who want to study for themselves to get both Dr. Reiner's book, *The Covenants* and also my book, *Sabbath in Crisis* and *The Sabbath and the Lord's Day* by H.M. Riggle.

I have extended my article longer than usual to prevent misunderstanding. I have used the NASB and, when quoting from Riggle, the KJV.

We fully intended to print the next segment of Dr. Fred Mazzaferri's article on the Investigative Judgement in this issue. However, because of the length and importance of the covenant article, we will have to wait until the next issue. Those wanting it now may download it from our web site at [www.LifeAssuranceMinistries.com](http://www.LifeAssuranceMinistries.com). Click on "LAM, Inc.," then "Downloads" and scroll down to his article. You will need Acrobat Reader® which is available on a link on our web site.

I want to again express my deep appreciation to the many who have contributed to this ministry. This ministry is totally in the hands of God.

Each month it appears that we will be between \$8,000 to \$10,000 short. Yet, God has thus far supplied the need through the liberality of many of you. If we were to put a price on *Proclamation*, it would be about \$5.00 per issue in the US, \$7.00 in Canada and \$8.00 overseas.

Several of you have written and asked that we take your name off our mailing list but you did not include your name or address! Please do so, it makes it much easier!

A number continue to send in new names to receive *Proclamation*. If you know of "formers" please send in their names.

*The Sabbath and the Lord's Day* is now out of print. However Life Assurance Ministries Publications is happy to announce it is printing 5,000 copies of this book and it should be available by the time you receive this issue of *Proclamation*.

A new Former Adventist Fellowship (FAF) will be starting in Glendale, Arizona (Northwest Phoenix). Please contact Dale and Carolyn Ratzlaff at 623-572-9549 for information. If you know of any "Formers" in this area, please let us know. Dale is currently writing a curriculum to be used by Evangelical Pastors to help them better minister to "Formers." We will be using this in our FAF.

Remember to write separate checks for donations to LAM, Inc. and for purchases of books from LAM Publications. These are two separate entities with different accounting systems. It creates a lot of extra work when checks are mixed. Thanks!

—Dale Ratzlaff

## **"The Christian and the Mosaic Law"**

by Clinton Chisholm

Rev. Clinton Chisholm is an outstanding Evangelical scholar and Apologist. (Rev. Chisholm's bio is on our web site.) His lecture, "The Christian and the Mosaic Law" was given some time ago to a large gathering of Christians in Barbados. It is an insight-rich exegesis of Galatians—the best I have ever heard! His knowledge of Greek and understanding of the issues of law and gospel serve to enhance the application to Christians who are still wrestling with these issues. Chisholm shows, from Galatians, how a Gentile Christian is to develop a life of holiness in a new and better way. On a scale of 10 it is a 12! (Available from Life Assurance Ministries Publications)

## **Proclamation!**

Publisher

**Life Assurance Ministries, Inc.**

Editor

**Dale Ratzlaff**

Designer

**Richard Tinker**

**Life Assurance Ministries, Inc.**

**Board of Directors**

Dale Ratzlaff, president, CFO

Carolyn Ratzlaff, Secretary

Bruce Heinrich

Colleen Tinker

Richard Tinker

© 2001 Life Assurance Ministries, Inc.

PO Box 11587, Glendale, AZ 85318

All rights reserved.

Phone: **623-572-9549**

Website:

**[www.LifeAssuranceMinistries.org](http://www.LifeAssuranceMinistries.org)**

E-mail: **[dale@ratzlaf.com](mailto:dale@ratzlaf.com)**

# AN ADVENTIST'S VIEW: THE COVENANTS

Proclamation!

JULY  
AUGUST  
2001

Edwin W. Reiner

I am indebted to brother Ratzlaff for the opportunity to discuss the covenants in a friendly atmosphere to help us all to arrive at the truth that was given through the covenants when all was lost in Adam. Earth, cut off from communication with heavenly beings, was given a Mediator and the covenants which are the basis of the atonement. No other subject is more important in the Bible than the covenants. As we go into the covenants we will see that there are basic differences in my understanding of the covenants and that of Brother Ratzlaff. Let us look at the presentations in a prayerful and fair attitude with no preconceived ideas that we may arrive at the truth.

Probably the biggest difference has to do with our opposing views of the Decalogue, the Ten Commandment Law and the old and new covenants. Brother Ratzlaff believes that the Ten Commandments were not the eternal law of God exemplified in the character of Jesus, but that they were, as modern Evangelicals believe, part of the ceremonial law and were nailed to the cross. Brother Ratzlaff also holds that those who live by the Decalogue are still living under the old covenant. He additionally contends that we, today, are living under the new covenant in fact and not subject to those old covenant beliefs. My views differ significantly on these important subjects.

"Covenants" is a term the legal profession holds in high esteem. There is probably no other word used in the law that denotes so profoundly the rights and privileges of the individual. Although the word "covenants" has been largely replaced in common usage by "Contracts," it remains the more revered and respected term. These two synonymous words make up half of the great branches of jurisprudence, torts (illegal acts) and contracts. Bouvier's Law Dictionary gives an excellent classification of covenants in a legal and logical manner for jurisprudence or biblical interpretation. Bouvier classifies covenants as being either: 1. Commanded, 2. Promised, or 3. Agreement.

It is important then to determine what kind of a covenant is being dealt with for systematic Bible study. This is important because of the different implications of each whether it is a commanded covenant like the laws of the land, a promise, where one side promises while the other side has the privilege to accept or reject, or an agreement with both sides agreeing to entities they are respectively to perform. All Bible covenants can be classified under this definition of contracts. This study will concern itself with the primary covenants of the Bible, namely (a) "Everlasting or Redemptive covenant between Deity, made before creation, and renewed to Adam, Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Israel (b) the Commanded Covenant, given at Sinai, and (c) the "old" and the "New" covenants.

## THE COMMANDED COVENANT

We have noted that the term "covenant, or contract" are legal terms that are classified in jurisprudence as to being either commanded, promised or agreement. In the Bible or any other relevant instance where covenants are being considered, a clear understanding of covenants is not only desirable, it is imperative. According to Black's Legal Dictionary a covenant under consideration must be classified to determine whether we are dealing with a command as the law, a promise, or an agreement between two parties. The covenant under discussion here is the Commanded Covenant given in a most impressive manner at Mt. Sinai, midst thunder, lightening and earthquake. The entire mountain shook as God himself mightily pronounced His covenant, Exodus 20. This impressive display was not connected with anything else, much less the ceremonial law.

The Ten Commandments were written in stone by the finger of God to indicate their immutability. This contract, a commanded covenant, were orders to observe perfect righteousness in every thought and deed and action. In this dynamic manner it was demonstrated in unmistakable terms how the Commanded Covenant drives the repentant sinner to the atonement as demonstrated in the sanctuary service where Christ is depicted in types and figures as the Saviour of mankind.

The commanded covenant, God's law, is as holy as God and is forever. The Ten Commandments are a revelation of the character of God. *Jesus is truly the Ten Commandments in actuality*, Romans 10:4. *He lived the Ten Commandments. "In Jesus," the person of Jesus, we are saved*, Romans 10:9, John 14:6. The Ten Commandments are the basis of the major covenants, but are not part of the "old covenant." With the old covenant God pledged to take Israel to the promised land and to be their king. No one was saved under the old covenant. They were saved just as we today are, under the terms of the everlasting covenant. Adam and Eve were told, Genesis 2:17, that they would surely die if they transgressed God's command. The result is painfully clear today. Transgression of God's law is punishable by death. The Law is so unchangeable that God (Christ) as our substitute for sin, became sin, and was punished as a sinner by a horrible death. The ceremonial law on the other hand was part of the old covenant, the regulatory laws of the land. When the curtain was rent in the tabernacle at Christ's death, Israel as a nation and theocracy was finished along with it the ceremonial law.

Brother Ratzlaff has no trouble with the Ten Commandments being a covenant, but he does desecrate it by dumping this, the character of Jesus, with the old covenant and the ceremonial laws. He even throws in circumcision with this holy law.

God's law is eternal, is a separate covenant as noted over 100 times in the Scriptures, is in truth Jesus, and of course was not ended at the cross. The seventh-day Sabbath being at the center of the Decalogue continues and points to the rest, in Christ, in which the believer ceases his own works and puts his dependence on Christ. We believe, like Abraham, whose faith was accounted for righteousness. Christ has kept the law perfectly for me.

## EVERLASTING COVENANT

There is in the Bible a mystery hidden from eternity that has everything to do with the restoration of man to his Edenic perfection. According to the Scriptures the sons and daughters of Adam were to be not only redeemed but also elevated to a higher state than Adam's. Our first parents were glorified, perfect from the hand of God. God's plan was and is to repopulate heaven with the redeemed from planet earth. This promise, called the Everlasting Covenant, is man's only salvation.

Mankind was a new creation, made in the image of God, a free moral agent on probation to develop a righteous character in tune with the universe of God and heavenly beings. God knew of the risks involved with the creation of mankind. A safety valve was instituted for the plan of creation. The everlasting covenant is such a provision, for it gave Adam and his posterity a second chance, a second probation to vindicate God's law.

The Everlasting Covenant is of the promised type, between members of deity and was entered back in the eons of time. Before creation God the Father pledged to accept the atoning work of Christ in man's behalf. Christ would make an atonement. He would come in the likeness of man, to live a perfect human life and die for the sins of Adam and his posterity. The Holy Spirit will help the human mind to comprehend this atone-

## AN ADVENTIST'S VIEW:

ment. And further more, His law must be vindicated. It must be demonstrated that man, as God created Him, in union with God, could perfectly keep God's law.

Inspiration has recorded the promise of God made before creation to take our sins and to save us. This is the Everlasting Covenant.

"In hope of eternal life, which God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began, Titus 1:2.

"This is my covenant unto them, when I shall take away their sins," Romans 11:27.

"by the will of God, according to the promise of life which is in Christ Jesus" 2 Timothy 1:1.

"...through the blood of the everlasting covenant make you perfect, in every good work to do His will" Hebrews 13: 20, 21.

The Everlasting Covenant was renewed to Adam (Gen.3:15) Noah (Gen. 9:9-17) Abraham (Gen. 12:2,3) Isaac (Gen. 23:3,4) Jacob 35:9-120) Israel (Exodus 19: 4,5) and represents the only means of salvation for mankind.

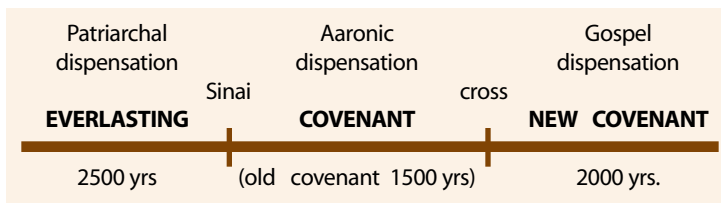
The Everlasting Covenant was promised from eternity, but actually came into being at the fall of Adam which activated the terms of the covenant to save mankind from immediate death. Death had been the promise should they disobey the simple command, thou "shall surely die" Gen. 2: 17 and they did eat. Christ, the mediator from eternity, stepped forward to assume the active role in promise. The sentence was not put aside, but was delayed because the atonement came into being and time, a new entity, was given to work out this problem of sin. The everlasting covenant runs through out the patriarchal, Levitical and gospel dispensations. It is not part of the old covenant but runs parallel to it. With the coming of the True Priest and Lamb of the Levitical dispensation, the Everlasting Covenant becomes the "new covenant" with the wondrous element of grace.

We are now under the new covenant by faith, not in fact. Brother Ratzlaff so glibly affirms that Sabbath keepers are still operating under the "old covenant" and are "under the law," but he and the other Evangelicals are free under the new covenant of grace and not under the law. What does brother Ratzlaff say about Paul's statements in Hebrews 8:10-13 "For this is the covenant that *I will* make with the house of Israel after those days, saith the Lord: *I will* put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts; and *I will be* to them a God, and they *shall be* to me a people. Does this sound like us to day? Do we today actually have the law in our minds and written in our hearts? In 68 AD Paul is here writing in the future tense, "*will put*," "*will write*" indicating the fulfilling of this covenant is in the future, in the new earth. What law is Paul referring to as being written in our hearts, the ceremonial law? Of course not it has to be the ten commandment law. Does that sound like the Ten Commandments have been done away with? Are we then living under the new covenant despite the fact that it hasn't even been pronounced.

Furthermore, if brother Ratzlaff is living under the new covenant, why is he out trying to convert people when Paul and Jeremiah clearly say "they shall not teach...know the lord...for all shall know Him..."

The inevitable conclusion then is that the new covenant today is by faith and the standard of righteousness is today just what it has been from Adam on; perfect righteousness as found in the person of Jesus Christ who kept the Law and all its precepts, including the Sabbath, perfectly for me.

Christ has pledged: "Moreover *I will* make a covenant of peace with them; it *shall be* an everlasting covenant with them: and *I will* place them, and multiply them, and *I will set* my sanctuary in the midst of them for ever more. My tabernacle also *shall be* with them: yea, *I will be* their God, and they *shall be* my people." Ezekiel 37:26



An atonement has been consummated between God and Christ, and all who accept its terms will be saved. Through eternal ages humanity will reign with heavenly beings because of the boundless love of God as exhibited by the provisions of the Everlasting Covenant.

### OLD COVENANT

In the bible are mentioned two covenants variously called the old covenant, the new covenant, the first covenant, the second covenant and the better covenant. All of these names were directed to either the covenant between God and literal Israel at Sinai, commonly called the old covenant, or between God and spiritual Israel, called the new covenant. The old covenant, also called the first covenant because it was followed by the second or new covenant making it "old".

Four hundred thirty years before God delivered Israel from the Egyptians, He had entered into a covenant with Abraham pledging that He would make a great nation of Israel, Abraham's posterity and would give them the promised land, Canaan. The Israel nation once proud and rich in Joseph's time had been reduced to slaves of the Egyptians. But despite their unworthiness and degraded condition God chose to renew the covenant made before creation and renewed to Abraham with these people.

The terms of this covenant, agreement in type, were: God agreed to bring Israel to the land, promised to Abraham 430 years before. He also would be their king under a theocracy. And would dwell among them. Israel agreed to be His people and to obey. This is the old covenant that runs parallel with the Everlasting Covenant but is not part of the Everlasting Covenant.

Forty days after being delivered from Egypt, God, amid thunder, lightning and a terrible earthquake, pronounced the Ten Commandments, a commanded covenant demanding perfect obedience of His subjects. Exodus 20. And the Israelites were afraid for their lives.

With the emergence of the theocracy God quietly gave Moses the ceremonial laws for the health and welfare of the nation. The ceremonial laws also governed the operation of the sanctuary, a grand visual aid with living figures and sacrifices all pointing towards the atoning work of Christ to take place in the new covenant. The commanded covenant was the basis for all of the covenants, including the old covenant.

The old covenant covered a time period of 1500 years beginning at Sinai and ending at the cross. This was a glorious period, never before or since has God condescended to set up a kingdom on earth and to dwell among them. As previously noted, The old covenant runs parallel with the "everlasting covenant" between members of the Deity, but is not part of the everlasting covenant. Believers then were saved just as they are today, through the terms of the everlasting covenant.

Hebrews 13:20-21 "Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead, our Lord Jesus, that great shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, make you perfect in every good work to do His will..."

### NEW COVENANT

With the close of the old dispensation, a new covenant came into being at the cross. Variously called a new covenant, a better covenant,

# AN ADVENTIST'S VIEW:

covenant of peace, a second covenant, it is the dispensation of grace, also repeated to Abraham, Noah, Isaac, Jacob and Israel. It is that part of the everlasting covenant that began at the cross and goes until the second coming of Christ and beyond. Both the old covenant and the new covenants were of the agreement type between God and literal Israel in the old and between God and spiritual Israel in the new. In the old covenant God agreed to take Literal Israel to the promised land, Canaan while God in the new covenant agrees to take spiritual Israel to the Heavenly Canaan. In both instances literal and spiritual Israel accept Him as their King. The old and new covenants are the only covenants with sanctuaries. The old sanctuary was a grand visual aid with living characters and sacrifices telling of the better sanctuary "Heb. 9:11, 23. The old sanctuary service was in type, pictures of the true sanctuary. Type met antitype at the cross with Christ as the true priest and the true lamb.

The old covenant was provisional and existed for 1500 years until the cross, while the new covenant is eternal and everlasting. Today, in the new covenant, the believer is graced with Christ's righteousness *by faith* when he accepts Christ as his Saviour. The apostle Paul in Heb. 8:10 in the gospel dispensation reports that the new covenant is in the future: For this is the "covenant that *I will make* with the house of Israel after those days, saith the Lord...." Paul is using the future tense "*will come...will make.*"

By faith now but in fact when the terms of the covenant are fulfilled at the second coming. Believers will be clothed with immortality when the terms of the new covenant are delivered in fact. Then the law will be written in our hearts. We will be living under the new covenant in Heaven when everyone from the least to the greatest will know the Lord. We are living under the Everlasting Covenant now. Heb. 13: 20, 21

By faith His life of complete obedience to all of God's commands stands in the sinners place, and you are accepted as though you had never sinned. Through the merits of the Redeemer you render perfect obedience to all of God's requirements and under the terms of the new covenant you are accounted righteous before God. But this is all by Faith. Like Abraham "He believed in the Lord; and he counted it to him for righteousness." Gen. 5:6 repeated in Hebrews 11:9, 17

Does Brother Ratzlaff really believe that we are in fact, in actuality, under the new covenant and not by faith? Has the new covenant actually been delivered? Are we in a glorified state? Is God's law actually written in our hearts to day? Are we free from the tendency to sin? Jeremiah 31: 31-35 has something to say about the new covenant:

"Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah: Not according to the covenant that I made with their father's in the day that I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt; which my covenant they brake, although I am a husband unto them, saith the Lord. But this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; after those days, saith the Lord, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God and they will be my people. And they shall teach no more every man his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the Lord: for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more."

Brother Ratzlaff is deceiving you when says he is living under the new covenant in fact. He is contradicting himself. Why is he continuing to attempt to convert people to "know the Lord.." if he is really living under the new covenant? In the new covenant in fact all will know the Lord, no need to convert any longer. He. 8:10, 11

We do not yet have God's law written in our hearts, our righteousness is still as filthy rags, We are not experiencing the fullness of grace and will not until the new earth when the Everlasting Covenant will be

delivered to His people with immortality. Even then grace will not do away with God's law and Sabbath keeping, etc.. This law is the law of the universe and is eternal. We have now righteousness by faith. Our faith is in our divine substitute, our Mediator, Jesus, who has the law written in His heart for us. His law keeping is our law keeping. His life is our life.... When He was born we were born, when He died we died, and we arose forever more when He arose triumphant from the grave...all by faith in our Mediator who kept the law perfectly for me!

The glory of the gospel of grace through the imputed righteousness of Christ, provides no other way of salvation than through obedience to the law of God in the person of Jesus Christ, the divine substitute. Under the new covenant God requires just what He required in Eden, perfect obedience. The believing sinner, through his divine Substitute and Surety, renders by faith obedience to the law of God. !

## THE BETTER PROMISES

| OLD COVENANT PROMISES       | NEW COVENANT PROMISES       |
|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Church and nation under God | Church and nation under God |
| Earthly Canaan              | Heavenly Canaan             |
| Earthly Jerusalem           | Heavenly Jerusalem          |
| Earthly Sanctuary           | Heavenly Sanctuary          |
| Earthly Priests             | Heavenly Priest (Christ)    |
|                             | Eternal Life                |
|                             | Immortality                 |
|                             | Glorification               |

## THE TWO COVENANTS

|            | OLD                        | NEW                        |
|------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|
| Type       | Agreement                  |                            |
| Between    | God and Israel             | God and Israel (spiritual) |
| Benefit to | Israel                     | Spiritual Israel           |
| Duration   | Temporary(1500yrs)         | Changeless, eternal        |
| Terms      | Obey and live              | Obey and live              |
| Basis      | Commanded Covenant         | Commanded Covenant         |
| Sanctuary  | Earthly                    | Heavenly                   |
| Priests    | Human                      | Divine/Human               |
| Reward     | Earthly Canaan             | Heavenly Canaan            |
| Nature     | Faulty(human priests)      | Sinless Priest             |
|            | Animal sacrifices          | Christ                     |
| Testator   | Animals                    | Christ                     |
| Mediator   | Human Priests              | Divine/Human Priest        |
| Law        | Ordinances                 | Foot Washing               |
| Promises   | Of God                     | Of God                     |
| Ratified   | Blood of animals           | Blood of Christ            |
| Purpose    | Clarify new covenant       | Clarify work of Christ     |
|            | Exalt God and His law      | To exalt law               |
|            | Reveal sinfulness of sin   | Reveal sinfulness of sin   |
|            | Teach man his helplessness | Teach man his helplessness |

# The Covenants: The Continental Divide of Biblical Interpretation

DALE RATZLAFF

Studying the covenants is like pouring one's theological water jug out on the Continental Divide. Which ocean of theological understanding one ends up in is determined here. Differences that may seem minor at this point, when run their course down the streams of application will be thousands of miles apart. Therefore, how important it is that we make sure which side of this great divide we choose.

Dr. Reiner and I are, so to speak, only several feet apart on this high divide. His emphasis on the substitutionary death of Christ is to be commended. His stress on faith in Christ and faith in the aspects of the new covenant that have not been fully realized are good. His call to prayerful study and the laying aside of one's presuppositions I endorse wholeheartedly. However, we have major differences that will decide on which side of this interpretive divide we will walk.

Reiner states, "The Ten Commandments are the basis of the major covenants, but are not part of the 'old covenant.'" I believe the Bible teaches otherwise, in fact, just the opposite! I believe the Bible clearly teaches that the Ten Commandments were not given until the time of Moses; that they are, indeed, the very words of the old covenant, and their authority ceases at the cross. This will make a major difference in our interpretation and the shape of our theological paradigm.



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

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

In proving the above statement by Dr. Reiner to be anti-biblical, I am in no way implicating Dr. Reiner's integrity or intentions. I believe he is an honest man and an honest and sincere Bible student. I would

point out, however, that I believe his Bible study is not free from the overlay of Ellen White. Having read Ellen White for many years myself, while reading his article, I sensed he was frequently paraphrasing, at times almost quoting and often following her understandings without biblical support. It was informative to me that in his book, *The Covenants*, Dr. Reiner quotes from Ellen White over 100 times, sometimes whole pages at a time. Yet, there are less than 100 Bible references listed.

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

### The Ten Commands are the very words of the old covenant

The Bible says:

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

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

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

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

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

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

There was nothing in the ark except the *two tablets of stone* which Moses put

there at Horeb, where the Lord made a covenant with the sons of Israel, when they came out of the land of Egypt. And there I have set the place for the *ark in which is the covenant of the Lord*, which He made with our fathers when He brought them out of Egypt (1 Ki. 8:9,21).

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

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

There is no clear-cut division between moral and ceremonial laws in the books of Moses. The terms, "the moral law" and "the ceremonial law" are artificial, unbiblical definitions. While there are moral aspects and ceremonial aspects to the law they are often intermingled. Adventists are quick to call the Sabbath a moral law because it is in the heart of the Ten Commandments. However, it is listed with the feast days and other ceremonial aspects of the law about a dozen times.<sup>2</sup> It finds itself in the center of the Ten Commandments<sup>3</sup> because it is the sign of the Sinaitic Covenant<sup>4</sup> and ancient Near East treaty documents had the covenant sign in the center.<sup>5</sup> If one were to assign "moral" or "ceremonial" to the Sabbath, by virtue of association with other laws it would, by a 12:1 ratio, be a "ceremonial law." When Jesus was asked which was the greatest commandment in the "law" (note one law), His answer was from Deut. 6:5 and Lev. 19:18<sup>6</sup>, not the Sabbath as Ellen White taught,<sup>7</sup> or even the Decalogue. Often those from Adventist backgrounds will immediately associate "law" with the Ten Commandments. Usually Matt. 5:17–19 is quoted to prove the perpetuity of the Ten Commandments when the Ten Commandments are not even in view in this passage.<sup>8</sup> I was amazed to find that by themselves, the Ten Commandments are never called "the law of the Lord," or "the law of God" in Scripture.<sup>9</sup>

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

Again, sacrifices, offerings, sabbaths, new moons, and feasts are all required "in the law of the Lord" (see 2 Cor. 31:3). Scores of texts like this could be cited, where "the law of the Lord" includes sacrifices, circumcision, feast-days, and all the Jewish law. So the law of God is not simply the Decalog, but the whole law of Moses. In Neh. 8:1, 2, 3, 7, 8, 14, 18, they read "in the book of the law of Moses," "the law," "the book of the law," "in the book of the law of God," "the law which the Lord commanded by Moses," "the law of God." The law of God, then, included the whole law of Moses.<sup>10</sup>

One could break the Sinaitic (or old) Covenant by a violation of *any* of the Ten Commandments<sup>11</sup> and many of its "ceremonial-type" laws.<sup>12</sup>

We have now shown that the words of the covenant God made with Israel were the Ten Commandments and this covenant was expanded<sup>13</sup> to include all the laws given by God to Moses and was collectively called the law, the law of the Lord, the law of God, the covenant, etc.

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

The author of Hebrews describes the "first covenant" and specifically mentions "the tables of the covenant"—an unmistakable reference to the Ten Commandments as being included in this "first covenant"—a term even Dr. Reiner associates with the old covenant.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

I quote from Riggle,

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

The very wording of the law proves that it was designed only for them. The Decalog is introduced thus: “I am the Lord thy God, which brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage” (Exod. 20:2). To whom is that applicable? Only to the Israelite nation. Neither angels, Adam, nor Gentile Christians were ever in Egyptian

bondage. Then, the law was not addressed to them. Paul plainly states to whom the law was given. “Who are Israelites; to whom pertaineth the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law” (Rom. 9:4). It was given to Israel. In Mal. 4:4 it is clearly stated that the law given in Horeb was “for all Israel.”

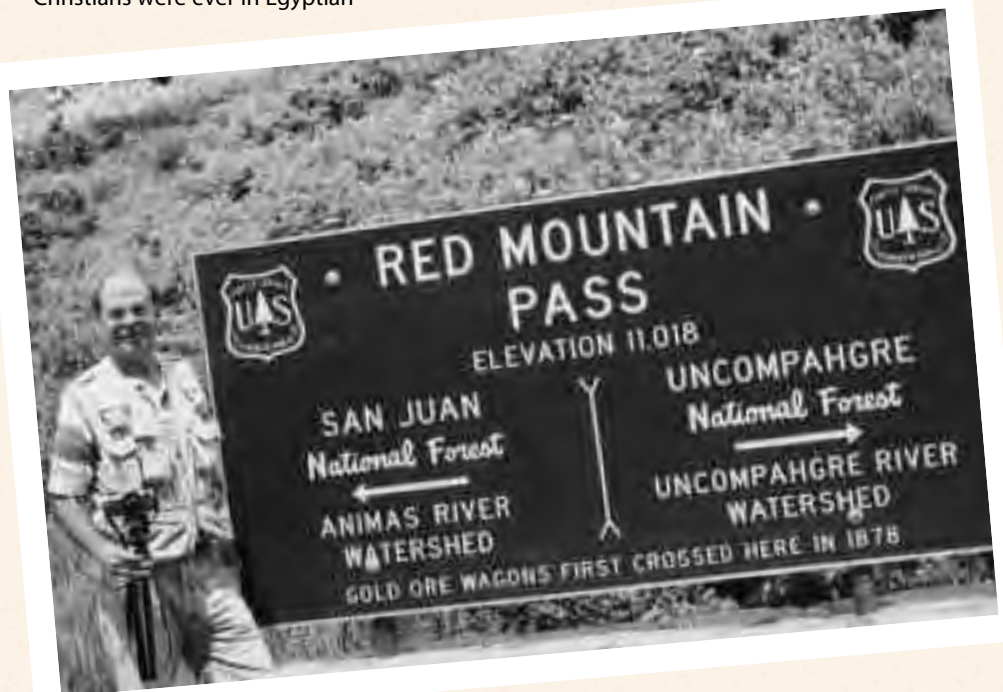
All these things show that this was a national law worded to fit the condition of the children of Israel at the time.

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

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

**T**ake another drink and a five-minute break to catch your breath in this high altitude, then let’s continue our hike on this trail of Scripture.

I quote from Riggle,



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

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

**A**fter reading the above statement you will want to sit down by the trail and look at the scenery here in the beautiful Rocky Mountains. We have now come to a major theological watershed. You *must* decide which way you will go. Are you going to continue to follow the trail marked "Scripture"? Or, are you going to opt for the trail marked, "Ellen White"? You *cannot* go both ways. Take your time here in prayer and contemplation because the outcome of this decision will have major consequences to your future life *no matter which way you go*. Why

not get out the maps—all three of them—and let's do some carefully study? Let's determine now which is the right way!

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

The map of Adventist doctrine before 1980<sup>18</sup> stated that the Scriptures were the "*all-sufficient* revelation of His will to men, and the *only* unerring rule of faith and practice."<sup>19</sup> Even after 1980 it still read, "...The Holy Scriptures are the infallible revelation of His will. They are the standard of character, the test of experience, the authoritative revelation of doctrines, and the trustworthy record of God's acts in history."<sup>20</sup>

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

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

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

lical evidence that supports the proposition that the whole old covenant, including the Ten Commandments, came to a functional end at the cross.

I quote again from Riggie,

Adventists are continually crying, "God's law [meaning the Sinaitic code] is unchangeable." But Paul contradicts them, boldly stating "that there is made of necessity a change also of the law" (Heb. 7:12). "The law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ" (John 1:17). "He taketh away the first, that he may establish the second" (Heb. 10:9). Two laws could not stand in the same dispensation. Therefore to establish the gospel—grace and truth, which came by Christ—the law was "taken away." The manner in which it was taken away is thus explained in Christ's own words: "Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: [note that the "law" here refers to the whole law of Moses<sup>22</sup>] I am not come to destroy, but to fulfill. For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled" (Matt. 5:17, 18). This text clearly states that when the law reaches its fulfillment it will pass away. It will not pass till fulfilled. So it is not eternal, but when fulfilled it was to reach an end. Then, the Lord points to himself as the fulfillment of the law and prophets—"For Christ is the end of the law" (Rom. 10:4). "The law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ" (Gal. 3:24). Since Christ is come "we are no longer under a schoolmaster" (vs. 25) "not under the law, but under grace" (Rom. 6:14). This nails the matter fast, and utterly refutes the Adventist plea for the perpetuity of the law.<sup>23</sup>

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

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

The epistles are in agreement here:

When He said, "A *new covenant*," He has made the *first obsolete*. But whatever is becoming obsolete and growing old is ready to disappear. Heb. 8:13. Then He said, "BEHOLD, I HAVE COME TO DO YOUR WILL." *He takes away the first [covenant] in order to establish the second [covenant]*. By this

will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all. Heb. 10:9-10

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

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

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

Here, in contextual teaching, Paul calls the Law our tutor, then says we are no longer under a tutor. In other words he is saying that the *old covenant law no longer has authority over the life of a Christian*. But

can we be sure this is what Paul really means? Yes. Note carefully his powerful allegory.

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

The following chart will help us understand this passage:

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

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

1. "Cast out the bondwoman" means that we are to cast out the old covenant.
2. Cast out "her son." Means that we are to cast out [not accept the teaching of] those who promote the old covenant.
3. "For the son of the bondwomen shall

not be an heir with the son of the free woman." This means that the terms of covenants are *mutually exclusive*.

4. "We are not children of a bondwoman" means that we not under the old covenant.

5. We are [present tense] children "of the free woman" means that Christians are now under the new covenant.

Here, in clear contextual teaching over several chapters in Galatians, Paul states in three specific ways that Christians are not under the authority of the old covenant.

(1) The Law was given 430 years *after* Abraham and was in effect *until* the coming of Christ. (2) With the coming of Christ we are no longer under the Law. (3) Christians are to "cast out" the old covenant and those who promote its being kept.

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

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

It is important to note that Paul is *not speaking about the condemnation of the law*, from which the Christian is also free,<sup>26</sup> but rather he is speaking about Christian service. In other words Paul is telling the Christians in Rome that the law no longer serves as a guideline for Christian living.<sup>27</sup> Notice also how Christians serve in the newness of the Spirit, a clear reference to the new covenant, in *contrast* to the oldness of the letter, a clear reference to the Sinaitic Covenant<sup>28</sup> which resulted in bearing "fruit for death." *Those who want to be joined both to Christ and to the law are committing spiritual adultery.*<sup>29</sup>

Remember, I told you this was not an easy trail! Nevertheless, it is well marked,

see the sign "Scripture" is still there! In fact, it is a well-worn trail as millions of Christians have walked this way before!

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

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

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

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

was with glory, much more that which remains is in glory. 2 Cor. 3:6-11

### 2 Corinthians 3:3-18:

| Old Covenant:              | New Covenant:              |
|----------------------------|----------------------------|
| written with ink           | written with the Spirit    |
| on tablets of stone        | on tablets of human hearts |
| inadequate (implied)       | adequate servants          |
| of the letter              | of the Spirit              |
| letter kills               | Spirit gives life          |
| ministry of death          | ministry of the Spirit     |
| came with glory            | abounds in glory           |
| ministry of condemnation   | ministry of righteousness  |
| glory fades                | glory surpasses it         |
| now has no glory           | remains in glory           |
| veil remains unlifted      | veil removed in Christ     |
| veil lies over their heart | veil taken away            |
| bondage*                   | liberty                    |
| unable to change heart*    | being transformed          |
| *implied                   |                            |

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

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

What is Paul saying here? First, the people with the veil over their faces are those who accept the old covenant as it reads, or read it through old covenant eyes. Paul is saying that to understand the old covenant correctly we must see it from the new covenant perspective. This is a

very important principle of interpretation. The new covenant, which is a better and more nearly complete revelation of truth,<sup>31</sup> must be allowed to interpret, modify or transform *all* old covenant statements in a Christ-centered way.

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

I now quote again from Riggie,

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

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

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

stead. To go back to Moses is to reject Christ.<sup>33</sup> To go under the law is to ignore the gospel.

Christ taught the people “as one having authority” (Matt. 7:29). The precepts he taught are his law. We are under the “law of Christ” (1 Cor. 9:21)... His law is the truth (John 1:17). The law of Moses gendered to bondage (Gal. 4:24), while the truth makes men free (John 8:32). We obey and walk in the truth (3 John 3). The law of Christ is the standard of conviction to sinners. When guilty souls fall at the mercy-seat for pardon, the law of Sinai never enters their minds. They consider only how they have grieved the Spirit of Christ, and broken his law—the New Testament.

The New Testament is a much higher law than the old. It not only condemns all manner of sin, but lifts up a standard of holy living far above the stone-table law. The grandest lessons of moral and religious truth ever spoken to men were given in Christ’s Sermon on the Mount. The New Testament condemns sin in every form, lifts up the standard of righteousness and holiness in life and experience, and offers life and salvation to all. It is “the perfect law of liberty” (Jas. 1:25), “the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus” (Rom. 8:2). To break Moses’ law—the Sabbath, etc.—was to be stoned to death. The penalty was temporal. But to break Christ’s law is to be worthy of eternal damnation. In the day of judgment the Decalog will not be our standard of judgment, but “the word that I Christ have spoken, the same shall judge him at the last day” (John 12:48). “When the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God,” punishment will not be meted out to those who disregard the letter of the law as written in the tables of stone, but punishment will then be given to those “that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ” (2 Thess. 1:7-9). The law of Christ—the gospel—will be the standard by which we shall be judged in that day. To disobey the precepts of Christ is to sin. And to sin against his law is to make ourselves liable to eternal judgment and punishment. Obedience to Christ is what the New Testament enjoins (2 Cor. 10:5; Heb. 5:9). But not once in all the New Testament—the law of Christ, that law by which we shall be judged in the last day—are we com-

manded to keep the seventh-day Sabbath. We can observe every precept of the law of liberty, stand clear in his sight, and yet never observe the seventh day, which was one of the shadows of the law dispensation.<sup>34</sup>

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

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

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

New covenant righteousness comes “apart from the law.”<sup>40</sup> The new covenant promise made to Abraham, and Abraham’s righteousness did not come by law.<sup>41</sup> The moral requirement of the law<sup>42</sup> is fulfilled in those who walk in the Spirit.<sup>43</sup> The Holy Spirit does not come through the works of the law.<sup>44</sup> The person who seeks righteousness by observing the law will be held accountable for *all* the requirements of the law.<sup>45</sup> Christ is the *end of the law* for righteousness.<sup>46</sup> If righteousness came through the law, Christ died needlessly.<sup>47</sup> Paul kept the law “blamelessly” yet, he compared this righteousness to rubbish (dung, KJV).<sup>48</sup> The law is not made for a righteous person, but for those who are lawless and rebellious, for the ungodly and sinners, for the unholy and profane...<sup>49</sup>

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

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

pared it to trying to mix water and oil.

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

can expect to experience peace of spirit and see major results in your life-transformation process.

I believe the Spirit-led Christian does have the law of Christ—the law of love—perfectly written in his spirit (table of his heart).<sup>52</sup> In his spirit the Christian is a new creation.<sup>53</sup> This all happens the moment we are saved—yes, the Bible teaches we can be saved and know it now!<sup>54</sup> However, our soul (*psuche*)<sup>55</sup> is being saved by a

law.<sup>62</sup> We *now* have been released from the law!<sup>63</sup> We *now* serve in the newness of the Spirit and not in the oldness of the letter!<sup>64</sup> There is *now* no condemnation [NONE] to those who are in Christ Jesus!<sup>65</sup> We have *now* received the spirit of adoption!<sup>66</sup> We *now* overwhelmingly conquer though Him who loved us!<sup>67</sup> We are *now* sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise!<sup>68</sup> We are *now* saved through faith!<sup>69</sup> We are *now* the dwelling of the Holy Spirit!<sup>70</sup> We are *now* chosen in Christ.<sup>71</sup> We *now* have redemption through his blood.<sup>72</sup> God is

*now* at work in us to will and to do His good pleasure.<sup>73</sup> We are *now* qualified to share in the inheritance of the saints in Light.<sup>74</sup> We have *now* been transferred to the kingdom of His beloved Son.<sup>75</sup> We have *now* entered His rest.<sup>76</sup> We *now* have each received a spiritual gift.<sup>77</sup> The Spirit *now* helps our weaknesses.<sup>78</sup> We have *now* been predestined to be like Christ.<sup>79</sup> And this is just the beginning! Do you see why the gospel is “good news”? One cannot work righteousness from the outside in—that was the old covenant way and it *never* worked. Rather, in the new covenant God creates or regenerates our spirits. We are born of

God.<sup>80</sup> We have the divine DNA, God’s life living in us and that life is perfect.<sup>81</sup>

Some will answer, “I don’t believe all these things are true in my experience.” This is because our mind, emotions and will have been programmed to sin and we are accustomed to accepting the lies the devil has been feeding us. Now that we are “in Christ,” we are to go to the word of God for truth. The path of transformation is not trying to become what we are not—as in the old covenant. Now transformation is becoming who we now are—a new creature in Christ Jesus! We are not to



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

Now it is time to take another rest here by the lake. Notice the beaver home reflected in the still, clear waters. In the background are tall Colorado Blue Spruce trees next to the grove of Aspen trees close to the lake. In the distance are majestic 14,000-ft. peaks shadowed by billowing clouds building for an afternoon thunderstorm. What follows is only one frame in the art gallery of new covenant understanding. Yet, when this one frame is comprehended *and* put into practice you

transformation process.

Now here is where we see the “betterness” of the new covenant over the old covenant of Ten Commandments.

Rather than focusing on the Ten Commandment law, one goes to the New Testament and *focuses on Christ and what the New Testament says is now true for the believer!* Wow! What a difference! We *now* have eternal life!<sup>56</sup> We *now* have peace with God!<sup>57</sup> We *now* have been reconciled to God!<sup>58</sup> Our old self (man) was crucified with Christ!<sup>59</sup> We are *now* to consider ourselves to be dead to sin!<sup>60</sup> We are *now* freed from sin!<sup>61</sup> We are *now* dead to the

work *in* righteousness from the outside, but allow the Holy Spirit in union with our spirit and the Word of God to work *out* the righteousness that our spirits already possess! The life of God is alive in our regenerated spirits!<sup>82</sup>

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

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

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

Real transformation cannot take place in an atmosphere of "probation"<sup>84</sup> as Dr. Reiner and Ellen White teach, but in a milieu of *full acceptance*. Here the "central pillar"<sup>85</sup> of Adventism stands in the way of spiritual progress. Adventists teach that *only* those who have accepted God come into the scrutiny of the investigative judgment where even forgotten, unconfessed sins stand against the Christian.<sup>86</sup> This means that they must have a law/judgment focus. However the Bible is clear that if we have accepted Christ *we do not even come into judgment*.<sup>87,88</sup> The judgment passages Adventists apply to Christians, the Bible applies either to the forces of evil<sup>89</sup> or to the judgment of rewards, not salvation.<sup>90</sup> Could it be that the SDA doctrine of the investigative judgment *requires* the (false) teaching

that postpones the blessings of the new covenant to the Second Coming? According to SDA theology, the fulfillment of "I will remember their sins no more," cannot take place until the investigative judgment is finished shortly before the Second Coming of Christ<sup>91</sup> when Satan becomes the sin-bearer.<sup>92</sup> However, the Bible makes it clear that the "blotting out of sins" takes place at conversion/repentance/forgiveness.<sup>93</sup> The new covenant picture of God is vastly better than the old covenant concept because it is a more accurate revelation of God's grace and love in Christ.<sup>94</sup>

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

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

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

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

The book of Galatians is written to bring the people who had been disturbed by Judaizers and had opted to go back under old covenant law, back to the new

covenant. After Paul's convincing arguments showing that the Christian is not under the law, he goes on to answer an assumed question. "Paul, if we are not under law, then how do we live?" His answer is insightful showing how the Spirit takes the place of law.

For you were called to freedom, brethren; only do not turn your freedom into an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another. For the whole Law is fulfilled in one word, in the statement, "YOU SHALL LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF.... But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not carry out the desire of the flesh.... But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the Law.... But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law."<sup>99</sup>

## The new covenant is about relationship with Christ

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

The old covenant partners were God and the "sons of Israel." The new covenant partners are the Father and the Son. Christ is the one who rendered perfect obedience to His father. We enter into the blessings of that covenant when we place our faith in Christ! Over and over again we hear Jesus saying, "My food is to do the will of him who sent me and to finish his work.... I do not seek my own will, but the will of Him who sent Me.... I have kept My Father's commandments."<sup>102</sup> On that Friday afternoon when our Covenant Keeper was dying on the cross for our sins, His last words were, "It is finished." Just before these triumphant words we read these insightful remarks by the Gospel writer, "Jesus, knowing that *all*

*things had already been accomplished...*<sup>103</sup> Then with keen, Holy-Spirit insight the Gospel writer records, "And Jesus uttered a loud cry, and breathed His last. And the veil of the temple was torn in two from the top to the bottom."<sup>104</sup> This divine intervention was to show that the old covenant had come to its end.

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

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

Dr. Reiner makes a distinction between the "everlasting covenant" and the "new covenant." Yet he states that "the new covenant is eternal and everlasting." I have no problem with the term "Everlasting Covenant." It seems to me that a better, and more biblical, way of expressing the plan of salvation would be the new covenant in promise<sup>108</sup>—before the cross, and the new covenant in reality—after the cross.<sup>109</sup> The term, "everlasting (or eternal) covenant" is used in Scripture in *various* ways. It is used for the covenant of circumcision<sup>110</sup> which the New Testament clearly says is abolished.<sup>111</sup> The term "everlasting covenant" is used with meat offerings the Israelites offered to the Lord<sup>112</sup> in connection with the Sinaitic Covenant which is abolished. It is used for the Davidic Covenant.<sup>113</sup> It is used in future, Israel-centered prophecies.<sup>114</sup> Jeremiah uses this term in a similar context to the way he uses "new covenant."<sup>115</sup> The term "eternal [or everlasting] covenant as used in Hebrews 13:20 seems to be identical, or at least similar, to its usage in 12:24 when referring to the new covenant. The writer

of Hebrews is reinforcing what has been taught throughout the book by showing the "betterness" of the new covenant over the old by stressing its eternal nature.<sup>116</sup> Could it be that Dr. Reiner's arrangement is simply a reflection of Ellen White and her extra-biblical theology?

I also do not see *any Scriptural evidence* for the Ten-Commandment law in the time of Adam, Noah, Abraham, Isaac, or Jacob, to say nothing of the institution of a covenant based upon the Ten Commandments before Sinai. The Bible references listed do not mention the Ten Commandments. Let's look at them. Unless the cited reference supports the stated conclusion it is nothing but a ploy that may result in deception. Gen. 3:15 is a shadowy statement of a coming Savior at best. Nothing is mentioned about law. Gen. 9:9–17 Speaks about God's covenant with Noah in promising not to send another flood. I see nothing here that could be construed to be the Ten Commandments. Gen. 12:2,3, speaks about God making a covenant with Abraham regarding the *land* of Canaan and his future posterity. Again, there is nothing about law here. It is true that God said that "Abraham obeyed Me and kept My charge, My commandments, My statutes and My laws"<sup>117</sup> Yet he lied<sup>118</sup> and committed adultery,<sup>119</sup> therefore we must, it seems to me, interpret these commandments and laws that Abraham "kept" to be the *specific instructions* God gave to Abraham which he did keep.<sup>120</sup> If we read into Scripture that these laws are the Ten Commandments, then we make Scripture untrue. Abraham did *not* keep the Ten Commandments. To break one is to break them all.<sup>121</sup> Could it be that Dr. Reiner is reading the teachings of Ellen White into Scripture? She supports *all* these *unbiblical* concepts.

Dr. Reiner places much emphasis on whether the covenant is "commanded" or "agreement" in type. He states that the Ten Commandments are a "Commanded Covenant" and the old covenant is an "agreement covenant." However, we have shown conclusively that the Ten Commandments are part and parcel of

the old covenant. Therefore, his distinctions seem to be of no value here. There are also a number of references that disprove his assertion.

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

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

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

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

In 2 Kings 21:8 we read,

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

Notice here the *whole law* is what God commanded, not just the Ten Commandments. Therefore, I see no valid application of Dr. Reiner's distinction. Rather, these Scriptures reinforce our conclusion that the old covenant is the *whole* law of Moses.




## Conclusion

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

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

7. The new covenant Law of Christ is much better than the old covenant law of commandments.
8. Many of the principles of the new covenant are now operating in the life of the Christian.
9. The Ten Commandments are not now God's tools to promote righteousness—there is a better way!
10. The new covenant is about *relationship* with Christ.
11. We must be careful not to read into Scripture the unbiblical concepts of Ellen White.

In this hike we have not explored many of the side trails that give needed perspective to this subject. However, I believe we have given our readers enough to study for the next two months! Re-read these two articles on the covenants, including all the footnotes. Get Dr. Reiner's book, *The Covenants*. Get *Sabbath in Crisis* and *The Sabbath and the Lord's Day*. Then study these books. Compare them to Scripture. It is my prayer that every reader will prayerfully study God's Word on this important subject.

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

## Endnotes:

- <sup>1</sup> Ex. 40:20; Deut. 10:5,8.
- <sup>2</sup> See Lev. 23:2,3 noting the rest of the chapter; 1 Chron 23:31; 2 Chron. 2:4; 8:12,13; 31:3; Ez. 45:17; 46:1–7; 2 Ki. 4:23; Neh. 10:33; Isa. 1:13,14; 66:23; Col. 2:16.
- <sup>3</sup> In Hebrew if one counts words from the beginning and end of the Ten Commandments, one will find that the central phrase is "remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy".
- <sup>4</sup> Ex. 31:13–18. See also *Sabbath in Crisis*, pp. 40–43 for a detailed comparison between the Sabbath sign in Ex. 31 and the circumcision sign in Gen. 17.
- <sup>5</sup> Meredith G. Kline, *Treat of the Great King*, pp. 13,14,18,19,59.
- <sup>6</sup> Matt. 22:37–40.
- <sup>7</sup> Ellen G. White, *Early Writings*, p. 33.
- <sup>8</sup> See *Sabbath in Crisis*, pp. 219–234, where a whole chapter is dedicated to this verse.
- <sup>9</sup> See *The Sabbath and the Lord's Day*, pp. 59,60 for more biblical support.
- <sup>10</sup> *The Sabbath and the Lord's Day*, p. 61.
- <sup>11</sup> See *The Sabbath and the Lord's Day*, p. 30ff. for biblical examples of each of the Ten Commandments.
- <sup>12</sup> Gen. 17:14; Ex. 31:14; Ex. 12:15; Ex. 30:33; Ex. 30:38; Lev. 7:20,21,25,27; 17:1–4; 18:6–18,19,22,23; 19:1–8; 20:3,6; 23:29; Num. 9:13.
- <sup>13</sup> See *Sabbath in Crisis*, pp. 36, 37 where abundant evidence is given to show that the "other laws" interpret and apply the Ten Commandments to the life situation of the Israelites.
- <sup>14</sup> See *Sabbath in Crisis*, p. 79ff. for additional material on this point.
- <sup>15</sup> See *Sabbath in Crisis*, p. 187–218 for a discussion of this statement with supporting material.
- <sup>16</sup> *The Sabbath and the Lord's Day*, p. 61.
- <sup>17</sup> 2 Tim. 3:16–17
- <sup>18</sup> When the Fundamental Beliefs of Seventh-day Adventists were last revised.
- <sup>19</sup> *Seventh-day Adventist Church Manual*, 1976, p. 32.
- <sup>20</sup> *Fundamental Beliefs of Seventh-day Adventists*, No. 1.
- <sup>21</sup> Ellen G. White, *The Great Controversy*, p. 595
- <sup>22</sup> See *Sabbath in Crisis*, p. 220ff.
- <sup>23</sup> *The Sabbath and the Lord's Day*, p. 72.
- <sup>24</sup> Rom. 2:14.
- <sup>25</sup> Rom. 2:15; 2 Cor. 3:2–6.
- <sup>26</sup> Rom. 8:1.
- <sup>27</sup> This does not mean that the Christian will steal, kill, lie and commit adultery, etc. Rather, it means that there is a better guideline for service which is the Holy Spirit in the life focusing on the present realities of who we are in Christ helping us to live out what the Holy Spirit has put in. We are a new creation in Christ Jesus. 2 Cor. 5:17; Gal. 6:15.
- <sup>28</sup> *Sabbath in Crisis*, p. 198.
- <sup>29</sup> Rom. 7:1–4; *Sabbath in Crisis*, p. 198ff.
- <sup>30</sup> See *Sabbath in Crisis*, p. 75–87; 173–233 for many more insights regarding the two covenants.
- <sup>31</sup> Heb. 1:1–3.
- <sup>32</sup> *Sabbath in Crisis*, p. 85.
- <sup>33</sup> See John 9:28 and *Sabbath in Crisis*, pp. 127–138.
- <sup>34</sup> *The Sabbath and the Lord's Day*, p. 104–106.
- <sup>35</sup> See, for example, Rom. 3:21; 6:22; Eph. 5:8; Gal. 3:25; Heb. 8:6; 9:26; 12:26; 1 Pet. 2:10, 25.
- <sup>36</sup> Rom. 2:15; Gal. 3:2.
- <sup>37</sup> Paul in Romans 7 likens this to spiritual adultery.
- <sup>38</sup> See *Cultic Doctrine*, p. 225–240 for a number of EGW

- references.
- <sup>39</sup> 2 Cor. 3:7,9.
- <sup>40</sup> Rom. 3:21.
- <sup>41</sup> Rom. 4:13.
- <sup>42</sup> This does not mean that the Christian is under the old law of Ten Commandments, rather it means that the morality of the new covenant fully meets the moral principles upon which the Ten Commandments were based.
- <sup>43</sup> Rom. 8:4.
- <sup>44</sup> Gal. 3:2,3.
- <sup>45</sup> Gal. 5:3,4.
- <sup>46</sup> Rom. 10:4.
- <sup>47</sup> Gal. 2:21.
- <sup>48</sup> Phil. 3:7-9.
- <sup>49</sup> 1 Tim. 1:9.
- <sup>50</sup> I define "Historic Adventists" as those who accept all 27 "Fundamentals" and believe the writings of Ellen White to be inspired of God.
- <sup>51</sup> Anyone who has read deeply into Ellen White will know the enormity of the weight of instruction and guilt she lays on her readers. Just read the nine volumes of the Testimonies and you will see! See also, *Cultic Doctrine*, p. 210-214.
- <sup>52</sup> 2 Cor. 3:2-18.
- <sup>53</sup> 2 Cor. 5:17; Gal. 6:15.
- <sup>54</sup> See *Cultic Doctrine*, p. 228ff.
- <sup>55</sup> This refers to the "self"—the mind, emotions and will. It is the "exalted self" for fallen man. God designed the psuche (soul) to be in subjection to the spirit of man which in turn is to be in subjection to the Holy Spirit. Adam and his posterity, however, exiled their psuche and came out of this subjection. While our spirits are regenerated (saved) at conversion and are given eternal life (zoe) the psuche (soul) is being saved. Jesus came to undo what Adam had done. That is why we find that He did nothing without his Father's approval. It was the psuche (soul-life) that Jesus laid down, not his zoe life. We, too, are to put our psuche under the control of our spirit, which, in turn, is to be in subjection to the Holy Spirit. This is the process of sanctification which is worked out by the power of the Holy Spirit in our lives.
- <sup>56</sup> Jn. 6:47.
- <sup>57</sup> Rom. 5:1.
- <sup>58</sup> Rom. 5:10.
- <sup>59</sup> Rom. 6:6.
- <sup>60</sup> Rom. 6:11.
- <sup>61</sup> Rom. 6:18, 22, 1 Jn. 3:8,9..
- <sup>62</sup> Rom. 7:4.
- <sup>63</sup> Rom. 7:6.
- <sup>64</sup> Rom. 7:6.
- <sup>65</sup> Rom. 8:1.
- <sup>66</sup> Rom. 8:15.
- <sup>67</sup> Rom. 8:37.
- <sup>68</sup> Eph. 1:13.
- <sup>69</sup> Eph. 2:8.
- <sup>70</sup> Eph. 2:22.
- <sup>71</sup> Eph. 1:4.
- <sup>72</sup> Eph. 1:7.
- <sup>73</sup> Phil. 2:13.
- <sup>74</sup> Col. 1:12.
- <sup>75</sup> Col. 1:13.
- <sup>76</sup> Heb. 4:3.
- <sup>77</sup> Rom. 12; 1 Cor. 12; Eph. 4.
- <sup>78</sup> Rom. 8:26.
- <sup>79</sup> Rom. 8:29.
- <sup>80</sup> Jn. 3:3-5.
- <sup>81</sup> 1 Cor. 6:19; Rom. 8:9-12, 1 Cor. 2:12; 1 Cor. 3:16;
- <sup>82</sup> For a train load of insights relative to this teaching, I highly recommend a cassette tape set by Dutch Sheets entitled, "Becoming Who You Are," available from Life Assurance Ministries.
- <sup>83</sup> Heb. 4:12.
- <sup>84</sup> Probation is not a biblical term but is one used frequently by both Adventists and Mormons.
- <sup>85</sup> Ellen G. White, *The Great Controversy*, p. 409. See also, *Spirit of Prophecy*, Vol. 4, p. 258.
- <sup>86</sup> Ellen G. White, *The Spirit of Prophecy*, p. 331.
- <sup>87</sup> John 3:18; 5:24.
- <sup>88</sup> See the chapter "I've Been Acquitted" in *Cultic Doctrine* for a thorough study of the good news of Judgment.
- <sup>89</sup> See *Cultic Doctrine*, p. 216-219.
- <sup>90</sup> Matt. 25:31-46.
- <sup>91</sup> *Cultic Doctrine*, pp. 152-165.
- <sup>92</sup> Ellen G. White, *The Great Controversy*, p. 422. See also *The Spirit of Prophecy*, Vol. 4, p. 267.
- <sup>93</sup> See Ellen G. White, *Spirit of Prophecy*, Vol. 4, p. 308,
- where she says that sins will not be blotted out after the close of the investigative judgment. The Bible says otherwise, Ps. 51:1-2, 9; Isa. 44:22 kjv; Isa. 43:25. Heb. 8:12; Jer. 31:34. 1 Jn. 1:9. See also *Cultic Doctrine*, pp. 208-210.
- <sup>94</sup> Heb. 1:1-3.
- <sup>95</sup> 1 John 2:27.
- <sup>96</sup> See R.C.H. Lenski, Commentary on the New Testament, *Hebrews*, p. 268, 269.
- <sup>97</sup> Acts 4:31; 6:3,8; 8:29,39; 9:17,31; 11:28; 13:4,52.
- <sup>98</sup> Eph. 3:20.
- <sup>99</sup> Gal. 5:13,14,16,18,22,23.
- <sup>100</sup> Isa. 42:6; 49:8; Jn. 6:47.
- <sup>101</sup> Heb. 8:6.
- <sup>102</sup> Jn. 4:34; 5:30; 15:10.
- <sup>103</sup> Jn. 19:28-30.
- <sup>104</sup> Mk. 15:37,38.
- <sup>105</sup> Jn. 6:29.
- <sup>106</sup> Mt. 11:28-30.
- <sup>107</sup> Jn. 5:24.
- <sup>108</sup> Rom. 4:13,14,16,20,21; 9:8; Gal. 3:29; 4:23,28.
- <sup>109</sup> Recognizing that some aspects of the new covenant promise are not fully experienced until the Second Coming of Christ.
- <sup>110</sup> Gen. 17:13.
- <sup>111</sup> Gal. 5:1-4.
- <sup>112</sup> Num. 18:17-19.
- <sup>113</sup> 2 Sam. 23:5.
- <sup>114</sup> Isa. 61:8; Ez. 37:26.
- <sup>115</sup> Jer. 31:27-34; 32:40.
- <sup>116</sup> "It [the everlasting or new covenant] is the covenant or testament that was received by Abraham. It was first promised, but this promise was duly fulfilled by Jesus, namely 'in connection with this blood,' the expiatory power of which is permanent, eternal. The testament that was brought to Israel by Moses was only a temporary addition; Israel has lost its promises. The eternal seal upon the expiation of Jesus is his resurrection, when God brought him again 'from the dead'" R.C.H. Lenski, *Hebrews*, p. 494.
- <sup>117</sup> Gen. 26:5.
- <sup>118</sup> Gen. 20.
- <sup>119</sup> Gen. 16.
- <sup>120</sup> Gen. 12, 17, 22.
- <sup>121</sup> Jam. 2:10.

## Tired of stock market fluctuations? Need a lifetime income?

Life Assurance Ministries, Inc., through an association with the Charitable Alliance Foundation, can now offer you a Gift Annuity, a very valuable resource that is a "win-win" for you and LAM.

- Receive a steady, predictable income stream for life!
- Your income will NOT fluctuate with the stock market ups and downs!
- Contributions are partially tax-deductible!
- Income is partially tax-free!
- Higher payout rate than current rates for CD's!
- Avoid capital gains taxes!
- Based on one life or two lives!

For more information call LAM at 800-355-7073 or email [dale@ratzlaf.com](mailto:dale@ratzlaf.com)

### Clarity of message

I read Proclamation Vol. 2, Issue 2 with much interest. I'm impressed with the clarity of the message. God bless you as you continue the good work. It's fascinating how some SDA's either really approve and see light in what you say, or else think it the work of the devil. Brainwashing does wonders doesn't it? Yet, I remember when I was in those same boots. I wonder how many more blind spots I may still have and not know it? Let's pray for one another.

### Found God's grace and rest

From what I've read on your site, and others, I believe this is a movement that has long been needed. I was part of a group of 30 people that two years ago started a Grace oriented SDA church. But the more we studied the more we realized it couldn't be done under the SDA umbrella. Now we are a group of 10-15... that has truly found God's grace and rest.

### Pity for you

Dear Dale, It is becoming fashionable to question and doubt. Unbelief is the natural outgrowth of the unrenewed heard and is strengthened as it is encouraged. Many SDA Christians have a problem they cannot conquer, so they excuse themselves with the simplest way out—grace covers it all. You question EGW's validity. She has stated that the unbelief indulged, the doubts expressed, the darkness cherished, encouraged the presence of evil angels and open the way for all of Satan's snares. I wonder how she knew her writings would be ignored and negated at the end time unless God told her? And also where she states the problem would come from within the church by former SDAs! Apparently you reject her because you have a rebellious streak (like Cain) and she steps on your toes. But, do remember, you are rejecting, not a sick women, but God last words to us! I feel only pity for you and your fanciful interpretations of Scripture. Reading the articles and letters in your magazine—one readily detects all the rebellion in their hearts—no genuine humility—"I just want to do my own thing my way!" And grace covers it! And you encourage miserable company. My concern is to pray for your repentance and turn around before it is too late—like Satan. Pray much.

### Wife is ex Adventist

Dear Dale, I am a Pastor of a Non-Denominational Evangelical church in \_\_\_\_\_. My wife is an ex Adventist who studied herself out of the SDA church almost 25 years ago. Although she loved the Lord and had a desire to serve Him, she was "gun shy" to attend any other church for fear of being deceived again. Throughout the years we had often talked about her experience and the fate of others who left the church—many of whom turned their back on Christianity all together. A few years ago we ministered to my wife's three sisters and gave them each a copy of your book, Sabbath in Crisis. They, along with their spouses, have left the SDA church and are actively involved in other fellowships. It is our desire to reach and minister to ex-Adventists who are hurting and "floating" as my wife once did. From your experience, what is the most effective way to reach these people? May the Lord continue to bless your ministry.

### Satan is tricking you

I will pray for you. It seems to me that Satan is tricking you in your Bible interpretation. Anyone who believes that the vision of Samuel that was presented to Saul was really Samuel and not one produced by Satan is being tricked by the Devil.

### Breath of fresh air

Coming across your publication was a breath of fresh air. You are providing a needed service to all questioning Adventists who are searching for something better and does not smother one's intelligence with Ellen White's paranoid hockey puck (Trying to keep it clean).

### Keep holding the fort

Grace to you, brother! You remind me of Paul and the slack he must've gotten as a renown Pharisee turning "soft" on "Truth" as his fellow Jews must've thought. But what joy he had because he knew "Jesus and Him crucified." What a privilege it has been for me to have the veil removed. I say as I look back on my own leaving, I owe to you a debt of gratitude for sharing your story and boldly sharing the wonderfulness of the New Covenant, and the exposure to false doctrine in "Cultic Doctrine." That book was a lifeline to know that a former SDA pastor wrestled

with the same stuff I was wrestling with, and Sabbath in Crisis I only decided to read because I realized I had to at least look at another standpoint without fear of being "tainted." I had no idea it would change my whole outlook on life literally, and fill me with such joy in knowing Jesus. Thank you! "We are persecuted but not abandoned." Praise God for that! Your offer to send the Carson book is much appreciated. I'd love to read it... For some reason I am reminded of a song we sang at Camp AuSable when I was a teen..."Hold the fort for I am coming!!!" Keep holding the fort, Dale. Thank the Lord He is coming soon!

### People the same

I find people the same in whichever group I belong to. The finger pointing/shame and blame. I believe this is the human condition where one could stay if one chooses. Freedom is a gift God gives. God bless us on our journey to true faith.

### No turning back

Thank you for continuing to send me your great little magazine, *Proclamation*... I am undertaking this journey out of Adventism all on my own. It is a lonely journey, but there is no turning back. I have just finished reading a marvelous book that I can recommend to your and your readers. It is not new, as it was first published in 1922. The title is *Grace—An Exposition of God's Marvelous Gift*.

### Recovering from brain washing

Find enclosed my gift of \_\_\_\_\_. It is the best I can do to keep you rescuing believers out of the bondage found in SDAism. I have been out and my husband and I are recovering from the brain washing. God bless your ministry.

### I know my Jesus

Dear Dale, My pastor gave me your "Truth Book" yesterday. I was amazed, shocked, to find more errors. I never dream it to be so controversial. Thanks for your help to expose the truth. Five years ago I volunteered to lay tile and do other work at a new SDA cathedral. I didn't know much about their doctrine at that time. But when the building was finished... they attacked me with the words, "you will burn in the last days." I was

hurt, but sad for them, for I know my Jesus! I started writing [short articles] and handing them out in the parking lot at their Sabbath meetings. I believe God inspired me to bring this to them. Thanks for your book, May we see them turn to God's gift of love and His salvation.

## Message from Sinai—silence!

The CWB [Clear Word Bible] first came to my attention through posts to SdaToday (SdaNet). I bought a copy from the Adventist Book Center at \_\_\_\_\_. It was clear the book was being promoted, and used, for preaching, so I wrote to the local Conference about my concerns, and the Executive agreed to withdraw the book from sale. That lasted for a few months, I think until the revised title was published. What was most alarming about the whole episode was the lack of interest (it seems) by most of the hierarchy and the congregations. From then on, I have felt that it is possible to get away with just about anything... I do not suggest that readers of CWB are likely to be idolaters, but there is a prevailing climate of inability to assess things critically, and an attitude of the-end-justifies-means. It did not surprise me that Folkenberg had to resign, since his name was top of the list to acclaim Blanco's abomination. Your *Sabbath in Crisis* is a forceful set of arguments based on excellent scholarship. To me, the first argument for freedom from Judaic law is Galatians. Paul went to Arabia (Gal. 1:17) shortly after his conversion. He tells us that Sinai is in Arabia (4:25). Why did Paul go to Arabia if not to make pilgrimage to Sinai? And the message from Sinai—silence!

## More interesting

Dear Life Assurance Ministries. *Proclamation* is becoming more interesting than Adventist Today. I got on my husband's computer and read

## Question/Answer Corner

After reading *Proclamation*, some of you may have questions that come to your mind. Why not send them in and we will do our best to answer them in the next issue? As iron sharpens iron, so does dialogue—a free, open, honest discussion of issues that matter.

Tinkers & Pecks stories. Wow! Also read Israel Damen Story. Wow!! Beginning to understand the covenant better...

## Never comfortable with E.G. White

Dear Mr. Ratzlaff, I want to thank you for the book *The Cultic Doctrine of Seventh-day Adventists*. I felt like I was among the very few. Since I was in my late teens and being baptized into the SDA church somehow I was never comfortable with E.G. White. I worked at the 1949 campmeeting to pay my way and read (also bought) a lot of her books... I found things didn't coincide with the Bible, much to Mom's horror, why would Jesus come being such a Mighty King (Creator of all things) for just a few SDAs and why do we have to wait until the second coming to find out if by change we might be saved! When the Bible says, "Believe in me and you shall be saved." Or "Believe Him who sent Me has eternal life." But I kept searching and reading, plus lots of prayer till I was comfortable enough with it, and shared it to Mother and sisters, Mom left the SDA belief just a few years before she died at 82. My sister is also a Christian believer now.

## Former pastor liberated

Hi, I want to thank you for sending the latest edition of *Proclamation*. I would very much appreciate being on your regular list if such is possible. I also appreciate the miniseries of LAM and similar X-SDA groups out there. Practical assistance is being given to those SDAs (and other interested parties) who may be reconsidering their beliefs and looking at the possibility of moving on in their spiritual journey. I was liberated from SDA (I'm a former pastor) 35 years ago. At that time there was no "support." It's good to know others have come to the same conclusions as oneself independently. Just \_\_\_\_\_ warning me "the angels could come to my name any minute now; they've been at it since 1844..."

## Mail letters and donations to:

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

# Pastor studies his way out

CONTINUED FROM BACK

points to a Person (Jesus) as the true Sabbath, not a day.

## Problems with Ellen White

For us, the biggest problem with Ellen White is the effect she has had on the SDA church. There is still wide misunderstanding of the gospel of grace in Adventism. In our years of service this has been an enormous barrier in helping people find assurance. It is not that she did not teach grace. She did teach it beautifully at times, but she also taught perfectionism. Adventists are still basically confused as a people about the very core of the Christian faith. It is so difficult for most Adventists to grasp the Gospel because of these statements. We have never seen an Adventist church truly dedicated to applying the writings of EGW that is a vibrant, alive, growing, happy church community.

As I write this, I do not know what the future will hold. I do not know what will happen to us financially. I must say that there was a real sense in which I had to face a dark part of my own personality in this struggle. I valued being a respected SDA pastor and having people think well of me. To think that others whom I had known and served in Adventism might lose respect for me was incredibly difficult for me to accept. I had to, in a very real sense, repent for having loved the praise of men more than the praise of God. Now I am resolved that "as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord." We will find our rest and security in Him. And we will look forward to the seeing how God leads us and how he leads all of you in the months and years that follow. Our prayers are with you and we solicit your prayers for us.

# North Carolina pastor studies his way out of Adventism

**Greg Taylor**

*Greg Taylor was senior Pastor of the 500 member Foster Seventh-day Adventist church in Asheville, North Carolina. The following is a highly condensed and edited summary of Pastor Taylor's "Manifesto", the full text (32 pages) of which may be downloaded from our web site at: <http://www.ratzlaf.com/news.html>.*

People have often asked me, "How can anyone ever leave the Seventh-day Adventist Church?" Right now, more and more people are leaving Adventism and actually becoming more devoted to Christ in the process.

A couple of my friends in similar ministries left Adventism to start non-denominational churches. However, shortly thereafter they moved away from the seventh-day Sabbath to a Sunday worship format. This discredited them in my eyes and in the eyes of most of the SDA church community I told them how I felt. They were both gracious to listen to my concerns, shared a few of their ideas, and were Christian gentlemen toward me.

## **Closest church to truth**

When these pastor friends left Adventism and later the Sabbath, I went through a time of study. My primary reason for being an Adventist was the Sabbath. I had believed up to that point that Adventism was the closest church I had ever encountered to teaching Bible truth. For this reason I was solidly an Adventist by

conviction, in spite of my concerns regarding Ellen White, the Investigative Judgement and the remnant church teachings. I was convinced that Sabbath was God's special day. My sermons during this time were clearly direct on this issue.

I studied the materials that my friends, who had left the denomination, recommended. I also poured over materials written by Adventist theologians including Samuele Baccocchi, the Church's foremost authority on the Sabbath. In addition, I consulted two of our denomination's most respected professors and writers with a passion to prove where my friends were wrong.

## **Visited many churches**

During a summer vacation we traveled around the USA visiting Adventist churches on Sabbath and other churches on Sunday. While the Adventists were sincere, there was such a dearth of life it was depressing. It was almost as if they were just going through the motions of "doing church". The Sunday churches were the other way around. With the exception of one church we visited, all of them had such life and joy that it was contagious. We would rejoice when we were in these churches of various denominations or independent communities. When we would visit the SDA churches, we would get so sad and depressed. I remember praying, "Why, Lord, if the Sabbath is so significant and part of your

moral law that is binding on all Christians, why are you clearly blessing other churches, while the Adventist churches are, at best, maintaining?"

Nothing could have prepared me for what happened next. I got a call from a friend that I know is in love with Jesus like few others in my life. I have great respect for his walk with the Lord and commitment to following Him no matter the cost. He opened up to me and shared that he had been studying the Sabbath and was not sure our SDA position was biblically based on the New Testament. Several others of my friends that I know are sold out to Jesus were all simultaneously dealing with the same issue. That began an intense time of study for me. I went back to the materials I had studied to argue with my former Adventist colleagues, and this time I decided to study them with an open Bible and an open mind. Perhaps God was trying to tell me something. What I learned from God's word has literally upset my world. At the same time it has been the most liberating and soul-satisfying study I have ever embarked on. True to His promise, God has radically transformed my way of thinking. Paula, my wife, has been blessed deeply by this study also. We have come to an understanding of the Bible in a whole new and powerful way.

## **New Testament Sabbath**

I was amazed to discover that the New Testament does not teach Sabbath the way I thought it did. I learned from Colossians 2:16-17, Galatians 4:10, Romans 14:5-6, and Hebrews 3-4, etc., that Sabbath was an institution that pointed forward to Jesus and therefore was no longer binding on Christians. The New Testament

CONTINUED ON PAGE 19

**Life Assurance Ministries, Inc.**

PO Box 11587  
Glendale, AZ 85318.