

The Highway of Holiness

A Baptismal Guidebook



Volume 1
(Student Version)

David Aguilar

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Introduction – The Need for Christian Education

Character – this is the sole factor that determines one’s destiny. While knowledge and wisdom are useful talents, the Christian acknowledges that they are a gift from Heaven and, by themselves, not enough to make one a spiritual success. While pure doctrines and proper teachings are divine aids to developing the individual soul, they are not ends in themselves, but means to the everlasting result. The Scriptures teach us, “Trust in Yahweh with all thine heart, and lean not unto thine own understanding.” (Proverbs 3:5)

Good works, likewise, may polish and refine an individual already committed to truth, but “by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest any man should boast.” (Ephesians 2:8, 9) Yahshua the Messiah, the Son of the Almighty, revealed that a man may be “known” by his works, (Matthew 7:20) but it is not the works that have made the man what he is.

Character is the last link in the chain between Earth and Heaven over which mankind has a measure of control due to free will. The Scriptures tell us that we must take control of our thoughts, (2Cor 10:5) that we must take command of our actions, (1Cor 9:27) and that we are free (in Christ) to have power over our own habits: “For he that will love life, and see good days, let him refrain his tongue from evil, and his lips that they speak no guile; let him eschew evil, and do good; let him seek peace, and ensue it.” (1Pet 3:10, 11) This is how we define and develop character.



Figure 0.1 – The Chain of Character

We note that in the Judgment works are mentioned, but works are not the deciding factor. Christ declares, “Many will say to me in that day, ‘Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name, and in thy name have cast out devils, and in thy name done many wonderful works?’ And then will I profess unto them, ‘I never knew you; depart from me, ye that work iniquity.’” (Mat 7:22, 23) He does not say, “Depart from me *because* you worked iniquity,” but rather iniquity (committing sinful acts) is the defining characteristic of those who have not achieved the destiny of the saints.

There is a need for education among Adventists regarding the proper relationship between faith and works. Not a single individual should be

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baptized into the Body of the Messiah until he or she is able to understand and, to a great degree, teach others, that we are saved by grace through faith, (Eph 2:8) but that we then become “[Yahweh’s] workmanship, created in Christ Yahshua unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.” (verse 10)

Some have said, “Why is there a need for study of the Scriptures before baptism? Why is there a need for such education in all things Christian, when we find in the Bible examples of men and women being baptized quickly, often knowing little of doctrine or practice?”

This is a legitimate question, and deserves a thorough answer. We may cite the example of the Ethiopian eunuch, who was baptized after a relatively short meeting with Philip the deacon. (Acts 8:26-38) We may consider the case of the Gentile Cornelius, who called for an audience with Peter the apostle, and received baptism after hearing but one sermon. (Acts 10) And then there were those believers from among the Jews, three thousand in number, who were convicted that their nation had committed apostasy in crucifying Yahshua, and were baptized that very day. (Acts 2:14-41)

In the days of the early Church, the followers of Christ were one in spirit and visible unity, “And they continued steadfastly in the apostles’ doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers.” (Acts 2:42) There were no schisms; there were no denominational differences. What was taught was the Gospel of Yahshua in its purity, with no taint of such later errors as salvation in sin, salvation by works, Sunday sacredness, consciousness in death, Trinitarianism, Augustinian predestination, and so on. If one should stand up in that day and declare, “I am a Christian,” they would receive one of two responses. Either the hearers would ask, “What does that mean?” and patiently wait to be educated, or they would have heard of the sect and understood what it *meant*, even if imperfectly.

It was not necessary to define what being a “Christian” meant, beyond explaining the details of which outsiders may have been ignorant. There were no doctrine-based prejudices, unless one counts the pagan and Gnostic opponents of the Cross. If two Christians met they did not need to subject one another to the “Test of Creeds” to see if they were safe to be entrusted with the right hand of fellowship (Gal 2:9) or the holy kiss. (Rom 16:16)

Sadly, such a thing was not to last. Men of authority in the Body betrayed their trust, and doctrinal falsehoods began to seep in, subtly at first, and then more openly. Paul lamented to the elders of Ephesus, even before his work was finished, “I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them.” (Acts 20:29, 30) He warned the Thessalonians, “Let no man deceive you by any means, for that Day [of Yahshua’s return (*cf.*, verses 1 & 2)] shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be

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revealed, the son of perdition who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God. Remember ye not, that, when I was yet with you, I told you these things?

“And now ye know what withholdeth that he might be revealed in his time. For the mystery of iniquity *doth already work*; only he who now letteth will let, until he be taken out of the way.” (2Th 2:3-7)

Some specific errors may be cited: “But shun profane and vain babblings, for they will increase unto more ungodliness. And their word will eat as doth a canker, of whom is Hymenaeus and Philetus who, concerning the truth, have erred, saying that the resurrection is past already; and overthrow the faith of some.” (2Tim 2:16-18)

“And every spirit that confesseth not that Yahshua the Messiah is come in the flesh is not of God; and this is that spirit of antichrist, whereof ye have heard that it should come; and even now already is it in the world.” (1John 4:3)

Today there are more denominations than a man may number, yet they are not united, as a “great multitude” should be. (Rev 7:9) Among them are those who deny the divinity of Christ, and there are those who reject the very freedom that He died to give us. There are those who believe the Law of God has been abolished, and there are those who believe in a Creator who will punish His little children forever in fiery torment for being deceived by men and foul spirits more crafty and experienced than they. But more important than all this... there are those within the kingdom of “Christendom” who have not developed the character of Christ.

If the doctrine they have received has not led them to develop the right character, they may know they have been misled. This is why it is important for Christians to be educated. In the days of Acts, a “Christian” could be trusted to speak the truth in love, and encourage new believers Heavenward. Yet even then, the apostles had much work to do to keep the Body in its right course. Paul, James, John, Jude, and Peter wrote epistles warning the Church against faulty beliefs, and even against particular individuals, so that their work would survive the flames of tribulation and testing. (1Cor 3:13, 14) The Gospel writers recorded and presented the life of Yahshua in order to maintain a record of the most perfect example for humanity.

We cannot be content to say, for example, “What was good enough for Cornelius is good enough for me; take me to water.” Today the members of our own spiritual House have become our enemies, (Micah 7:6) and in these very last days even *Seventh-day Adventists*, those commandment-keeping, Investigative-judgment-believing, health-reforming champions of the Scriptures have fallen prey to the wiles of the Deceiver. Even the spiritual

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sons of the reformers, who have received so bright a light, and so manifest an abundance of blessings, have come short – as a collective people – of that great plan that Yahshua has laid out for His Church.

More details on that particular follow during the course of this book, but the point should be abundantly clear: If we are to know whether or not we are being led in the right direction, our trust must be in the Almighty and His Word, (Psa 18:30) and we must be equipped by those whom Yahweh has placed in the Body to stand against the world, the devils, and the false brethren who would betray us with a kiss. “And He gave some, apostles, and some, prophets, and some, evangelists, and some, pastors and teachers, for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ; till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ.” (Eph 4:11-13)

This is the work of the Church in its entirety: to win souls and to facilitate the perfection of those who are seeking a better Country on the Highway of Holiness. (Isa 35:8)

Some notes follow for the use of this document:

1) This is a Guidebook. It is not a formal statement of CSDA beliefs, nor is it a defense of any particular doctrine or set of doctrines; as such, it may not contain an exhaustive examination of every belief that is held. It is left to the evangelists of the Church to instruct interested parties in the details and proofs drawn from the Scriptures that lend their weight of evidence to our conclusions. It is left to the evangelists to explain our position on some of the details of Adventist prophetess Ellen G. White, and how we utilize her writings. What this book presents is a collection of beliefs that we generally hold to be necessary for baptismal candidates to understand before they are admitted to membership, so that they may properly represent the character and work of the Creator. It provides some verses in support of the positions presented, but in the interest of both space and time does not dwell overly long on any but the most vital. This work is intended for use in conjunction with Bible study and discussion with knowledgeable individuals, and should not be used, on its own, as a Bible commentary.

2) All Bible quotations are from the King James Version unless otherwise noted, with the exception of the Divine names generally being restored to their original pronunciation. Some examples:

a) “God” becomes “Almighty One” or “Elohim,” and “the LORD” becomes “Yah” or “Yahweh” in the Old Testament readings. “The lord GOD” becomes “Adonai Yahweh” as it appears in the Hebrew manuscripts, and “The LORD God,” similarly, becomes, “Yahweh Elohim.”

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b) When quoting New Testament verses, “Jesus” becomes “Yahshua”, “God” may become “Yah,” and “Lord” becomes either “Yah” or “Yahshua” depending on the Subject of the passage.

c) Pronouns referring to the Father, Son and Holy Spirit (“He,” “Him,” “His,” “It,” etc.) are all capitalized in Bible verses. So are certain important terms such as Book of Life, Sanctuary and Woman, when the latter is used in reference to the Church.

3) The word *Church* is sometimes capitalized and sometimes spelled with a small “c.” This is not an inconsistency; where the word “church” is used, it refers to one of the many ecclesiastical organizations claiming that title. When the form “Church” is employed, it is in reference to the spiritual Body of Christ, the Body of believers that is currently (or from the perspective of the timeframe used) being faithful to the Head, which is Yahshua.

4) Brief comments on Bible verses or quotes are added directly into the text in [square brackets]; longer comments and discussions of the verses are recorded outside of the “quotation” signs that enclose the referenced text.

5) Bible verses are not always quoted in full. Generally, only those portions produced by the speaker/author are recorded with the reference given in (brackets) or mentioned before the quote itself. Readers are encouraged to have their Bibles handy to see the original text, unbroken by comments and insertions, in order to get the most meaning out of both the original passages and this material. Instructors who are using this Guidebook as a resource for instructing new and potential believers are encouraged to take students through the entire passages so that the full effect of inspiration’s words may be received.



Instructor Note
This is an example of an embedded text box. The Instructor Notes indicate an instructor has more to share on this topic.

6) This is the Student Version of *The Highway of Holiness*, and as such it does not contain the instructor references. The **Instructor Note** text boxes, such as the one above, indicate that information on the topic being studied can be obtained from a member who may be helping you study. Additional types of text boxes are also used for emphases, cautions, links or suggested activities.

Yahweh bless thee, and keep thee;

Yahweh make His face shine upon thee, and be gracious unto thee;

Yahweh lift up His countenance upon thee, and give thee peace.

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Chapter 1: The First Step

Topics: The Character of Yahweh, The History and Nature of Man, The Nature of Sin, The Atonement

1.1 – The Character of Yahweh

1.1.1 – That They Might Know Thee

One of the simplest, and most fundamental, explanations of what “salvation” truly is may be found in a single verse. We read, “And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent.” (John 17:3) Much may be added to this verse that would enhance our understanding, such as explaining that Bible study and the insight of the Holy Spirit are key to obtaining and increasing this saving knowledge, but underlying all of this must be the answers to the questions that this verse implies. If the Father and Son must be known, what is it we must know about Them? Who are They, and what are They like?

What does it mean to “know” God? We may become aware, by reading the Scriptures, that to “know” someone in the language of the Bible writers means far more than just surface knowledge, or even friendship. To know someone means to have an intimacy with him or her; it means, ultimately, to be as one with the individual that is known.

We read that, “Adam knew Eve his wife; and she conceived.” (Gen 4:1) Those whom the Messiah cannot admit into the Everlasting Kingdom will, many of them, have known of Him. Many will believe that they have accepted Him as their Savior; but if they had truly been intimate with Him, their lives would have naturally reflected that relationship. He will say to such as these, although He likewise knows of them, and cares for them as wayward children, “I never *knew* you; depart from me.” (Mat 7:23)

It has already been mentioned that two of the primary ways to know the Father and Son are Bible study and the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. Let us go into these methods in a little more detail.

1.1.2 – Bible Study

The Scriptures speak of those who have not yet come to know the Almighty in an intimate way. They have not yet come to believe in Him as the Creator and Redeemer, and the apostle Paul gives some details by way of explanation for why this is often true: “How then shall they call on Him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher? And how shall they preach, except they be sent? As it is written, ‘How beautiful

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are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things!’ But they have not all obeyed the gospel. For Esaias saith, ‘Lord, who hath believed our report?’ So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God. But I say, ‘Have they not heard?’ Yes verily, their sound went into all the earth, and their words unto the ends of the world.” (Rom 10:14-18)

Amazingly, the problems facing the early Christians in convincing the world of the Messiah’s love and power are the same as are facing the Church in the last days... many “hear,” for the message has gone around the world, but they have not accepted the words of those who have been sent with the truth. As with some in ancient Israel, “the word preached did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in them that heard it.” (Heb 4:2)

But the solution, as Paul writes, is that “faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God.” It is by familiarity with the things that the Creator has said to us that we develop faith. In the days of the apostle there were few copies of the Scriptures lying around, and those only of what is now called the Old Testament. If one wished to hear the words of the prophets and patriarchs, those “holy men of God [that] spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost,” (2Pet 1:21) they needed to hear the teaching of a Rabbi, or listen to Moses being recited at the Synagogues on the Sabbath days. (Acts 15:21)

Today we have been blessed with Bibles in almost every home. Now it may rightly be said, “Faith cometh by reading,” for the same words that were once read aloud in the congregations (Luke 4:16-21, 1Th 5:27, Rev 1:3) are available to almost everyone at almost any time.

In Chapter 6 we will discuss the details of the Bible, why it is used for doctrine, and *how* it is put to such use; but for now we may accept the words of the apostle Paul “on faith,” and seek to know from its pages this most fundamental thing: Who is God? Who are the Father and the Son?



Emphasis Note

When speaking to non-Christians, it is good to know how the Bible differs from other “sacred texts” in presenting God.

The Scriptures begin by simply making the reader aware that God IS. No explanation is given of His characteristics at first, or how He came to be from any previous state. It says only, “In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.” (Gen 1:1) The author (Moses of Genesis, and ultimately, God Himself) requires that we come with a willingness to be instructed from the very beginning, and to let the Creator reveal Himself in the manner of His choosing.

Immediately we may gather something extremely important, something that is not explicitly stated until much, much later in the sacred record: the Creator may be known by His works. The first thing the Bible presents is

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the creation account – how the Almighty made all things in the physical universe. Indeed, the Bible’s purpose is not to give an explanation for Yahweh, or even an explanation for all that He does, but to simply show us what it is that He *has* done, since this is how He relates to His creation. In this it differs from most “sacred texts” found in other religions.

We cannot, in our humanity, know Yahweh in His fullness. He does not represent Himself, as the pagan gods, by means of animals or forces. Even the prophets, when beholding Him in part, would say, “And above the firmament that was over [the living creatures’] heads was the likeness of a Throne, as the appearance of a sapphire stone; and upon the likeness of the Throne was *the likeness as the appearance* of a Man above upon it. [...] This was *the appearance of the likeness of the glory* of Yahweh. And when I saw it, I fell upon my face, and I heard a voice of One that spake.” (Ezek 1:26, 28)

The closest we can come to describing the Almighty, even in vision, is to say, “This was what the appearance of His glory was like,” as this is how He has revealed Himself. The way in which we come to know Him, then, must be in the things He has done, and what He says about Himself for, although we cannot see Him directly, we, like the prophet Ezekiel, are privileged to hear “a voice of One that spake.”

In this history of His dealings with humanity, Yahweh has revealed many of His characteristics. Some examples of how the sacred record points out the various qualities of the Almighty will be given throughout the chapters of this guidebook, but this brief work cannot, of course, present even a fraction of what may be gathered by individual readers as they study the Bible for truth. What can be done here, however, is to simply take a sampling of what Yahweh says about Himself... what He declares Himself to be, and this will provide a good starting-point for further seeking

Here are a few of the things Yahweh says about Himself, either directly or through the penmen He has inspired:

“He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love.” (1John 4:8)

“This then is the message which we have heard of Him, and declare unto you, that God is light, and in Him is no darkness at all.” (1John 1:5)

“The Spirit of God hath made me, and the breath of the Almighty hath given me life.” (Job 33:4)

The Almighty declares that He is Love, Light and Life itself, the very embodiment of these things. The Son of God, who came to reveal Him to humanity in the clearest possible way, said of Himself also, “I am the way, the truth, and the life; no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.” (John 14:6)

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These are all vital aspects of His character.

“Thus saith Yahweh the King of Israel, and his Redeemer Yahweh of Hosts, ‘I am the first, and I am the last; and beside me there is no God. And who, as I, shall call, and shall declare it, and set it in order for me, since I appointed the ancient people? And the things that are coming, and shall come, let them shew unto them. Fear ye not, neither be afraid; have not I told thee from that time, and have declared it? Ye are even my witnesses. Is there a God beside me? Yea, there is no God; I know not any.’” (Isa 44:6-8)

From this passage we may gather that Yahweh is entirely outside of the boundaries of time, being the first and the last. He is the only God, the Hebrew word, *Elohim*, meaning “the Almighty One,” and we are to be witnesses of this fact by our loyalty to Him. We find that although He is unique in eternity, He is nevertheless concerned with even the sons of men, saying, “Fear ye not,” and comforting them by declaring His protection over them.

Other verses make this even plainer, such as: “For Yahweh your Elohim is He that goeth with you, to fight for you against your enemies, to save you.” (Deu 20:4)

Many people, even those that have some faith in God, are of the opinion that He merely created all things, and then left the system to run itself. This is certainly not what the Bible declares, and indeed, such a concept speaks poorly about the nature of the Almighty, for this would make Him guilty (by neglect) of all the misery witnessed and experienced in this universe.

But Yahweh is intimately involved in the experiences of His creation. Men, whom He is seeking to save from the wages of sin, and His will toward mankind is accurately expressed in very “human” terms in such verses as:

“When Israel was a child, then I loved him, and called my son out of Egypt. [...] I drew them with cords of a man, with bands of love; and I was to them as they that take off the yoke on their jaws, and I laid meat unto them.” (Hos 11:1, 4)

“For Yahweh’s portion is His people; Jacob is the lot of His inheritance. He found him in a desert land, and in the waste howling wilderness; He led him about, He instructed him, He kept him as the apple of His eye. As an eagle stirreth up her nest, fluttereth over her young, spreadeth abroad her wings, taketh them, beareth them on her wings, so Yahweh alone did lead him, and there was no strange god with him.” (Deu 32:9-12)

We read that, “Yahweh is longsuffering, and of great mercy, forgiving iniquity and transgression; and by no means clearing the guilty, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation.” (Numbers 14:18)

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Here we see a balance of mercy and justice, two very important characteristics of God. We note also that it does not read, “He is merciful *but* will not clear the guilty.” No, mercy and justice are not, in Yahweh’s nature, opposite principles – they are complementary. If sin and sinners were allowed to persist, the victims would be eternally miserable, and seek to make others so.

Even toward those that are ultimately lost to sin, Yahweh’s feelings are unchanged, and His own sorrow keen. He will say on the day when some perish: “And my people are bent to backsliding from me; though they called them to the most High, none at all would exalt Him. How shall I give thee up, Ephraim? How shall I deliver thee, Israel? How shall I make thee as Admah? How shall I set thee as Zeboim? Mine heart is turned within me, my repentings are kindled together.” (Hos 11:7, 8) Admah and Zeboim are two cities that were destroyed in the overthrow of their more famous neighbors Sodom and Gomorrah. (Gen 19:24-28) As Jude wrote, this destruction is a fitting example of the final fires, (Jude 1:7) and the parallel in the feelings of the Father of All should be apparent.

But such passages raise very important questions: Why should Yahweh be so interested in men? Even the Bible writers would ask Him, “What is man, that thou art mindful of him? And the son of man, that thou visitest him?” (Psalm 8:4) Also, what is *sin*; why do we need to be saved from its effects? And why, if Elohim is so interested in man’s welfare, is there still suffering? Why was there *ever* such a thing as suffering?

Knowing the answer to these questions is absolutely vital to understanding the character of Yah, therefore we will look at how such answers may be found, and then examine the history of sin and humanity to discover the facts of the matter.

1.1.3 – The Insight of The Holy Spirit

Many people read the Bible. Lots of people teach the Bible, yet “religious scandals” are common themes in news reports and sensationalistic newspapers in our culture. Why? Why is it that not everyone who is familiar with the Scriptures actively seeks to apply its principles to his or her life? Why can some read that Book and come away with their entire lives changed, but others can read it and say, “That’s nothing special at all,” departing untouched? Why is it that some religious leaders, pastors, televangelists, and so on have brought shame upon the name of Christ because their actions did not match the lofty goals set by their words?

The answer is because they do not truly know the Author. They may be familiar with the words on the page, but they have not let Him speak to their hearts by the agency He has chosen, the Holy Spirit.

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The Spirit is the means by which actual changes are made in the lives of humans in response to the knowledge of God. Far from being a New Testament teaching, this was well known in Israel. The one convicted of sin would pray, “Cast me not away from thy presence; and take not thy Holy Spirit from me.” (Psa 51:11) The ones who spoke for the Creator would say, “And the Spirit entered into me when He spake unto me, and set me upon my feet, that I heard Him that spake unto me.” (Ezek 2:2)

Yahshua the Son said, “But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, He shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.” (John 14:26)

In another place He told His disciples, “And when they bring you unto the synagogues, and unto magistrates, and powers, take ye no thought how or what thing ye shall answer, or what ye shall say; for the Holy Ghost shall teach you in the same hour what ye ought to say.” (Luke 12:11, 12)

We see that the purpose of the Spirit is threefold: first, it leads us into “all truth;” second, it allows us to truly “hear” the voice of Yahweh; third, it reminds us of what we have learned from Christ through experience and (in our case) study of the Word. The Spirit is the means by which Yahweh instructs us on a heart-level, and this is the reason why permanently rejecting the Spirit’s influence completely destroys the relationship between God and man, (Mat 12:31) and ultimately results in the destruction of the rejecting individual. The Spirit of Yahweh is life itself, and the presence of the Almighty is our sustenance. (Job 33:4)

Those who seek to get the most out of the study of Scripture, and who wish to apply its principles to their lives and everlasting inheritance, must be as the prophet Daniel, to whom it was said, “I have even heard of thee, that the spirit of the gods is in thee, and that light and understanding and excellent wisdom is found in thee.” (Dan 5:14) Belshazzar, the Babylonian king who paid the prophet such a complement, was certainly not a monotheist (hence his words regarding “the gods”), but he was able to recognize supernatural wisdom when he saw it, and to attribute it to divine origin.

Some may ask, “How can we be like Daniel?” We must remember that God is not a Respector of persons, (Rom 2:11) and we have the words of Yahshua, “If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask Him?” (Luke 11:3) If we will believe this promise, and then ask and receive the insight of the Spirit as we study, we have no need to fear being misled or deceived, “They also that erred in spirit shall come to understanding, and they that murmured shall learn doctrine.” (Isa 29:24)

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Now, some may have an imperfect understanding of that concept and say, “I just need to take my Bible, pray for the Spirit, and then I can go off on my own and learn all there is to know about God.”

This is not a proper conception of Yahweh’s character. He designed that men should learn of His will in a community setting as well as by themselves. (Heb 10:24, 25) The Spirit works with individuals, yes, but speaks “where two or three are gathered” in the name of the Almighty. (Mat 18:20) Even the New Testament prophets were not to hold absolute doctrinal authority, nor to trust that they could attain all knowledge without the corrective influence of the Church. Paul counseled the members, “Let the prophets speak two or three, and let the other judge. If any thing be revealed to another that sitteth by, let the first hold his peace, for ye may all prophesy one by one, that all may learn, and all may be comforted. And the spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets, for God is not the Author of confusion, but of peace, as in all churches of the saints.” (1Cor 14:29-33)

If we do these things, then, study the Word for ourselves, pray for the assistance of Yahweh’s Holy Spirit, and fellowship with those who are also growing in grace and knowledge, we will have the means to understand all those things about Yahweh that He is pleased to have His people know. It is not sufficient to say, “I have prayed for insight, so whatever I learn must be true, no matter what others tell me.”



Activity Note

We have looked at some things Yah has said about Himself. What are some examples of His actions revealing His nature?

This is a violation of the narrow line between faith and presumption, because it neglects the gift of the Church and Its members that Christ has given to His people “for the perfecting of the saints,” (Eph 4:12) and reveals that the Spirit has not really been received by a humble heart. This is one of the factors that results in some people being familiar with the Word on an intellectual level, but unfamiliar with it on the level of the heart where the life is changed and the character made suitable for service on earth and in Heaven.

1.2 – The History and Nature of Man

1.2.1 – The Fall of Mankind

The question of how suffering began, and why it exists in humanity in light of the truth of Yahweh’s love and power, is intimately connected to the history and nature of man. But man’s history began before there were men, because one of the most significant events in the life of mankind, the fall into sin, was orchestrated by one who pre-dated the creation of Adam.

Before there were men, there were angels. The Scriptures speak of divine beings that sang together, and shouted for joy, when the Creator “laid the

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foundations of the earth.” (Job 38:4-7) Among this company of spiritual beings, a controversy broke out. The book of Revelation contains John’s description of the result of this controversy: “And there was war in Heaven: Michael and his angels fought against the dragon, and the dragon fought and his angels, and prevailed not; neither was their place found any more in heaven. And the great dragon was cast out, that old Serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world; he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him.” (Rev 12:7-12)

We know that this casting-out took place prior to the creation of man, because immediately upon the formation of Adam he was told of a “test” that was set in place: “And out of the ground made Yahweh Elohim to grow every tree that is pleasant to the sight, and good for food; the Tree of Life also in the midst of the garden, and the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil. [...]And Yahweh Elohim commanded the man, saying, ‘Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat; but of the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.’” (Gen 2:9, 16, 17)

It is not, however, in the character of the Almighty to create innocent creatures and then “test” them. We read, “Let no man say when he is tempted, ‘I am tempted of God,’ for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth He any man.” (James 1:13) This is one example where understanding the nature of the Creator allows us to discern true doctrine.

Whenever there is a temptation, it is so that a human may overcome an accusation of Satan, who is called, “the accuser of our brethren.” (Rev 12:10) We see this in the case of Job, (Job 1:9-11) we see this in the case of Peter, (Luke 22:31,32) and by these witnesses we learn the principle behind temptations.

Some have objected to this idea, asking, “Doesn’t the Bible say that Satan was in Eden before he fell? This would mean he could not have fallen from grace before the creation of man.” They refer here to the passage reading, “Thou hast been in Eden the garden of God [...] Thou wast perfect in thy ways from the day that thou wast created, till iniquity was found in thee.” (Ezek 38:13a, 15)

Those who raise this objection should keep a number of things in mind. First, this is a passage that applies spiritually to Satan, but using terms that had an immediate application to the human king of Tyrus. (verse 12) Satan is being addressed in parabolic language, therefore “Eden” here is no more literal than the diamonds and emeralds that made up his covering. Second, symbolic language is being applied even to the humans involved. In the chapter before we read of another king a passage that may also be applied to Satan, “The cedars in the Garden of God could not hide him; the fir trees were not like his boughs, and the chestnut trees were not like his branches; nor any tree in the garden of God was like unto him in his beauty. I have

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made him fair by the multitude of his branches, so that all the trees of Eden that were in the garden of God, envied him.” (Ezek 31:8, 9)

Clearly, “Eden” is symbolic of Yahweh’s favor, as even in this earlier passage from Genesis, where Sarah asks concerning her ability to have children, “I am waxed old; shall I have pleasure [Heb: *Eden*], my lord being old also?” (Gen 18:12)

If it is true that Yahweh never brings a test without an accusation, then we must understand that Satan’s fall predated the creation of the Garden of Eden, in which the Tree of Knowledge was formed before Adam was even introduced to that environment.

But now we read of Satan’s activities within the garden after Adam and Eve were placed therein:

“Now the serpent was more subtle than any beast of the field which Yahweh Elohim had made. And He said unto the woman, ‘Yea, hath God said, ‘Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden?’”⁴ And the woman said unto the serpent, ‘We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden, but of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God hath said, “Ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die.”’⁵ And the serpent said unto the woman, ‘Ye shall not surely die, for God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil.’

“And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat; and gave also unto her husband with her, and he did eat.” (Gen 3:1-6)

When this occurred, the dominion over the earth that had initially been given to mankind (Gen 1:26) passed to Lucifer, and he became, “the god of this world,” (2Cor 4:4) and “the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience.” (Eph 2:2)

1.2.2 – The Plan of Salvation

Because of Adam’s sin, his very nature was corrupted. Now, in their “ordinary” or “natural” state, his descendants are incapable of appreciating spiritual things, of even desiring to seek after them. The Scriptures tell us, “in Adam all die [...] the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto him; neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.” (1Cor 15:22a, 2:14) Yet this is not the end of the story.

In their *natural* state men cannot seek Yahweh, “But God commendeth His love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.” (Rom

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5:8) The sacrifice of the Son of Yahweh, the precise nature of which we will examine in a later chapter, dispensed a shower of undeserved favor upon man. Yahshua the Son said, “And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me.” (John 12:32) The apostles pointed out the result of this, “For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world.” (Titus 2:11, 12)

Though the “natural man” cannot seek righteousness, (Rom 3:11, 12) grace teaches us that we should, and faith (the human’s response to grace) gives us the power to do it. Because of grace you are called, “to an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in Heaven for you, who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.” (1Pet 1:4,5) The priest Ezra describes grace as it applied to the building of the physical Temple in the early days, and as it may be applied to the building of the “Spiritual Temple” (1Pet 2:5) in these last days, “And now for a little space grace hath been shewed from Yahweh our Elohim, to leave us a remnant to escape, and to give us a nail in his holy place, that our God may lighten our eyes, and give us a little reviving in our bondage.” (Ezra 9:8)

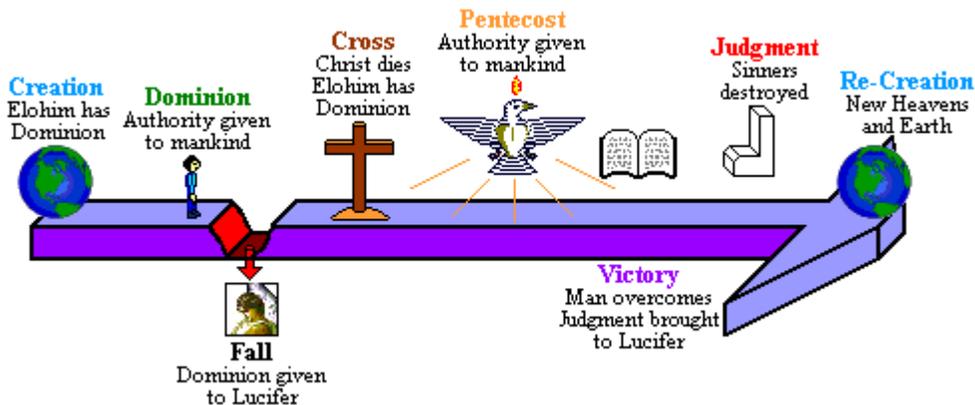


Figure 1.1 – The Spiritual History of The World

Because of grace, men who take advantage of the “liberty,” or freedom we have been granted in Christ, (Rom 8:21, 2Cor 3:17) may indeed seek spiritual things. Great promises are given to them who will do so. “I love them that love me; and those that seek me early shall find me.” (Pro 8:17) “Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you.” (Mat 7:7) “But without faith it is impossible to please Him; for he that cometh to God must believe that He is, and that He is a Rewarder of them that diligently seek Him. [...] But now they desire a better country, that is, an Heavenly; wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for He hath prepared for them a City.” (Heb 11:6, 16)

Grace was poured out when Christ was “lifted up” on the Cross and then went to the Father to give “gifts unto men.” (Eph 4:8) Because of grace, because of faith, men may indeed declare victory over the god of this world,

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and testify, like Christ, “the prince of this world cometh, and hath nothing in me.” (John 14:30) “For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world; and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith.” (1John 5:4)

By living in faith, those who are justified (Rom 1:17) reveal the accusations of Satan to be false, and his course unjustified before the watching universe. Yahweh says to Lucifer, the instigator of this great controversy, “Thou hast defiled thy sanctuaries by the multitude of thine iniquities, by the iniquity of thy traffick; therefore will I bring forth a fire from the midst of thee, it shall devour thee, and I will bring thee to ashes upon the earth in the sight of all them that behold thee.” (Ezek 28:18)

This judgment, and the re-creation of a perfect universe thereafter, (Isa 55:22, 23) is the end of suffering and sin.

1.3 – The Nature of Sin

1.3.1 – What is Sin?

All creation is established upon the principle of order. Yahweh is not an arbitrary God, and everything that He made has a purpose, and a place in the universe. Even Lucifer, the angel who started the rebellion, had a place; but because he abused his freedom when he became discontent with his office, he began to say, “I will ascend into Heaven; I will exalt my throne above the stars of God. I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north. I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the most High.” (Isaiah 14:13, 14)

In rejecting divine order, Satan set himself against the “Law” of the Most High. Now, the Law was not something that was written down; before sin there was no need for a codified standard of behavior. As Paul wrote, “It was added because of transgressions.” (Gal 3:19) The Law is simply, at its most basic level, a description of the principle of Love. The apostles taught, “Love worketh no ill to his neighbour; therefore love is the fulfilling of the law.” (Rom 13:10) Christ said, “Thou shalt love Yahweh thy Almighty with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind; this is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.” (Mat 22:37-40)

The Ten Commandments may be a description of the Law that was given, in that structured format, to Moses, and by Moses to Israel, (Neh 10:29) but the people of God always knew what His requirements were by virtue of knowing who He was. (Gen 26:5) Both before and after the cross of Christ, the “law” is the standard by which we may know what “sin” is. In fact, the apostles taught explicitly that, “Sin is the transgression of the law.” (1John 3:4b)

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External Link Note

More on the pre-Mosaic understanding of the Law of God may be found at: <http://csda.us/binary/essays/esinai.html>

Because of this, some have come to the conclusion that, “If I keep the law, I will please God. If I obey all that He tells me to do, He will favor me.” To a degree, Yahweh is pleased by obedience, however the fundamental problem with this is that man, in his natural state, cannot even *seek* righteousness, as we saw before, much less perform it. Those who attempt to keep the law in the strength of their flawed human willpower invariably find themselves frustrated with the process, and become hypocrites, legalists, or apostates.

When, then, must we do to be saved, and escape the fiery judgment that will cleanse the universe of sin?

The first step is to understand what sin truly is. Yes, it is “the transgression of the law,” as John wrote, but there is a deeper understanding that may be found. In the Greek language from which John’s epistle was translated into English, the phrase “transgression of the law” is a single word: *anomia*. It does not literally mean “transgression of the law,” although that is a valid translation, because transgression is the inevitable result of *anomia*; but *anomia* itself is “lawlessness.” Sin, John literally tells us, is a state of being, an experience of hostility toward the Law. It is, as in Lucifer’s case, a rejection of God’s harmonious order, and dis-ease in the soul that causes transgression, or sinful acts.

What the hypocrites and legalists fail to understand, although it would cause them great peace to do so, is that you cannot “undo” a state of being. Of the natural heart the prophet Jeremiah says, “The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked; who can know it?” (Jer 17:9)

But what Yahweh promises His people is this, “A *new* heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you; and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh. And I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them.” (Ezek 36:26, 27)

Notice, when the heart-condition is cured, then “ye shall keep my judgments.” In other words, the actions follow the healing. Mankind does not require more willpower or personal strength; what it requires is a mending of the spiritual being. When a man is whole, righteousness is the result; when he is healthy, he will function as the wise, benevolent child of the Almighty that He was created to be.

We must remember that we have an accuser. The Scriptures say of the one who first fell from grace, “Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the Devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour.” (1Pet 5:8) We must remember that even if we accept this new heart and

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right spirit, we still have a past filled with sorrow and failure. Because of this, the accuser will often hold our works before us and say, “How can you pretend to be a child of Heaven’s King? How can you but err?”

Temptations will come, even to the redeemed. Yahshua Himself, the Son of God, was subject to all the accusations and deceptions that the guilty angels could throw at Him; He “was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin.” (Heb 4:15) If we are to overcome, we must understand the distinction between *temptation* and *sin*.

1.3.2 – Sin vs. Temptation

James writes, “But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed. Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin; and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death.” (James 1:14,15)

It is important to define our terms; the word “lust” in Scripture is not a uniformly negative concept. When the Messiah said, “With *desire* I have desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer,” (Luke 22:15) He was using a form of the same word translated as “lust” in James 1. It is a word that merely means, “desire,” an affinity toward the things an individual happens to want. Naturally, we cannot be truly tempted by the things we do not want, but it is vital to our spiritual health to understand that merely to be tempted by something is not the same as coveting it, and certainly not the same as sin.

It is when desire has “conceived” or been taken in and indulged in the heart, that sin is brought forth. It is only thus that a man will act on a temptation and knowingly commit an act of transgression. Satan, of course, in his campaign to discourage the saints, would have those seeking righteousness believe that to experience a temptation is as bad as giving in, and thus that true godliness is “impossible,” even for the redeemed heart. This is a lie calculated to destroy faith... we may be drawn toward something inappropriate or dangerous, but if we reject that thought, and turn away from it, “Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ,” (2Cor 10:5) then we will remain pure.

1.3.3 – The Meaning of Repentance

Many are of the impression that the word “repentance” means a sorrow for sin. This is only partially correct. The apostle Paul speaks of two kinds of sorrow, a sorrow that is of the world, and a “godly sorrow.” He writes to a congregation that he had sharply rebuked in a previous epistle, “Now I rejoice, not that ye were made sorry, but that ye sorrowed to repentance; for ye were made sorry after a godly manner, that ye might receive damage by us in nothing. For godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of, but the sorrow of the world worketh death.” (2Cor 7:9, 10)

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Repentance, according to Paul, is not the same as sorrow... repentance is that which follows “godly sorrow” and leads to life. Specifically, to repent means, “to change one’s mind for better, heartily to amend with abhorrence of one’s past sins.” [Strong’s Concordance, entry: *metanoeo*] Acceptable repentance involves not a feeling of guilt, but a change of the mind, of the very purpose, and an amendment of one’s past sins, a turning from the error and to the truth.

True repentance is not merely what one does “every time one sins.” John says of this event, “If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.” (1John 1:9) If we deny that we have sinned in the past, or say that we are innocent when we find ourselves convicted by the Spirit of some wrongdoing, (verses 6, 8, 10) we cannot be helped, but if we admit it when we discover a transgression, He will not only forgive us, but also *cleanse* us from the spiritual plague.

The Psalmist writes, “As far as the east is from the west, so far hath He removed our transgressions from us.” (Psa 103:12) If we truly repent of a sin, resolutely turn from it, then we receive forgiveness and cleansing; and “If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed.” (John 8:36)

It is important to understand the distinction that the Scriptures make between willful and ignorant sins. This is a concept widely untaught by the Christian world; most cannot even distinguish between temptation and transgression, much less deliberate and unintended sin.

John, who wrote much of this matter, makes the curious statement, “If any man see his brother sin a sin which is not unto death, he shall ask, and he shall give him life for them that sin not unto death. There is a sin unto death; I do not say that he shall pray for it.” (1John 5:16) Just after that he writes, “We know that whosoever is born of God *sinneth not*; but he that is begotten of God keepeth himself, and that wicked one toucheth him not.” (verse 18)

What can this mean? To understand, we must realize that John is speaking of atonement for sins, and if we allow the Bible to tell us what the Bible means, we must find other places that speak of atonement for sins. We find this in the Old Testament, where the “rules” for the atonement of transgressions are first laid out under the symbolic ministry of the Levites.

Moses wrote, “And if any soul sin through ignorance, then he shall bring a she goat of the first year for a sin offering. And the priest shall make an atonement for the soul that sinneth ignorantly, when he sinneth by ignorance before Yahweh, to make an atonement for him; and it shall be



Emphasis Note

Two very important distinctions regarding this topic are *temptation vs. transgression*, and *willful vs. ignorant sins*.

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forgiven him. Ye shall have one law for him that sinneth through ignorance, both for him that is born among the children of Israel, and for the stranger that sojourneth among them. But the soul that doeth ought presumptuously, whether he be born in the land, or a stranger, the same reproacheth Yahweh; and that soul shall be cut off from among his people, because he hath despised the word of Yahweh, and hath broken His commandment. That soul shall utterly be cut off; his iniquity shall be upon him.” (Num 15:27-31)

We read the prayer of another Bible writer, “Keep back thy servant also from presumptuous sins; let them not have dominion over me, then shall I be upright, and I shall be innocent from the great transgression.” (Psa 19:13)

Sacrifices, as an examination of both the Old and New Testaments will reveal, are offered for only two classes of sins: those which are committed before one comes to a knowledge of the truth, (Heb 10:26) and those which are committed in some degree of ignorance. Christians, those that *have* received knowledge of the truth about Yahweh, are declared to have been set free from the bondage of sin, and thus John writes, “Whosoever is born of God doth not commit [*i.e.*, deliberately do] sin; for His Seed remaineth in him; and he cannot sin, because he is born of God.” (1John 3:9)

We will examine this idea in great detail in a later chapter, but this relates to the character of Yahweh in this way: the Almighty paid an infinite price, suffering and dying through the Person of His Son, (2Cor 5:19) in order to save humanity from (not in) its sins. The very heart of the believer is changed, so that he “doth not commit” known, deliberate sins. When such an individual, within his or her Christian walk, discovers some previously unrealized transgression, he or she is not to feel condemned, (Rom 8:1) but to remember that we have an Advocate with the Father, through whom we may confess this sin and receive cleansing. (1John 2:1 – a verse we shall examine more closely shortly)

Sinful “acts” are confessed when they are discovered; but more than this, if we understand the nature of sin properly, we may also seek to discover what “thought” was there at the root of the action. We may seek out the faulty understanding, or erroneous concept, that underlay the action. In such a way, by eliminating the very cause of the transgression, we may replace that which is faulty with that which is true. We have assurance in Christ that we do not enter into an endless cycle of sin-repent-repeat. Rather, we enter into an upward walk of repent-repent-repent... turning away from sin at every step, and never coming under its power.

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1.3.4 – The Wages of Sin

One of the greatest misconceptions of the Christian world, so great that it bears mentioning in this very first chapter dealing with the first steps of the Christian journey, is the manner in which Yahweh ultimately destroys sin and sinners.

We have already read that sin will ultimately be removed from the universe, and all will be re-created, (Isa 66:22, 23) but what of those who are not saved? Various Christian groups have ideas about this. Many believe that the invisible, conscious “soul” of mankind is naturally immortal, and as such will never truly be destroyed in an ultimate sense. They see hell as a place of eternal suffering, where the conscious essence of sinners will be roasted in a lake of fire for ceaseless ages.

Since we are looking at doctrines from the point of view of Yahweh’s character, and dealing with topics on a “cosmic” scale, we will leave the destiny of individual sinners for the discussion about the state of the dead in Chapter 3. This is necessary, since the verse after those describing the new creation reads, “And [the redeemed] shall go forth, and look upon the carcasses of the men that have transgressed against me, for their worm shall not die, neither shall their fire be quenched; and they shall be an abhorring unto all flesh.” (Isa 66:24) This seems to be saying that the lost are called “worms,” and that although they are carcasses, they will “not die.”

But looking at the plan of salvation with a global perspective, we find these things said of sin:

“And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death.” (Rev 20:14)

“For, behold, the Day cometh, that shall burn as an oven; and all the proud, yea, and all that do wickedly, shall be stubble. ‘And the Day that cometh shall burn them up,’ saith Yahweh of hosts, ‘that it shall leave them neither root nor branch.’” (Mal 4:1)

“Behold, they shall be as stubble; the fire shall burn them; they shall not deliver themselves from the power of the flame; there shall not be a coal to warm at, nor fire to sit before it.” (Isa 47:14)

“But the wicked shall perish, and the enemies of Yahweh shall be as the fat of lambs; they shall consume: into smoke shall they consume away.” (Psa 37:20) This verse is important, because it reveals that the wicked are consumed into “smoke.” In the book of Revelation, which cannot be understood properly if readers do not realize that it consists largely of quotes drawn from previous Biblical books, we read of the lost, that, “the smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever.” (Rev 14:11) The

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the door of the tabernacle of the congregation. And Aaron shall cast lots upon the two goats; one lot for Yahweh, and the other lot for *Azazel*. [1] Then shall he kill the goat of the sin offering, that is for the people, and bring his blood within the veil [...] and sprinkle it upon the mercy seat, and before the mercy seat. [2] And he shall make an atonement for the holy place, because of the uncleanness of the children of Israel, and because of their transgressions in all their sins; and so shall he do for the tabernacle of the congregation, that remaineth among them in the midst of their uncleanness.



Instructor Note

Ask your study partner for further details about the name *Azazel* and the translation “scapegoat.” (Lev 16:8)

“And he shall go out unto the altar that is before Yahweh, and make an atonement for it; and shall take of the blood of the bullock [a previous sacrifice offered for the cleansing of the priest], and of the blood of the goat, and put it upon the horns of the altar round about. [3] And Aaron shall lay both his hands upon the head of the live goat, and confess over him all the iniquities of the children of Israel, and all their transgressions in all their sins, putting them upon the head of

the goat, and shall send him away by the hand of a fit man into the wilderness. And the goat shall bear upon him all their iniquities unto a land not inhabited, [4] and he shall let go the goat in the wilderness.” (Lev 16:7, 8, 15, 16, 18, 21, 22)

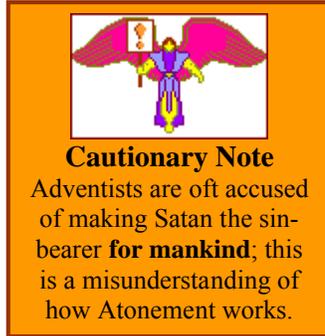
The numbers in [brackets] included with the passage from Leviticus 16 refer to the diagram above it. The daily service, [0] is that process by which sins were transferred from the penitent to the sanctuary (as far as the veil) during the course of the year. (Lev 4:1-6) The Day of Atonement ritual begins with step [1]. Adventists hold that the goat slain at step 1 is Christ, who plays the dual role of both Sacrifice and High Priest. (Eph 5:2, Heb 4:15) [2] By His blood He offered the atonement sacrifice for the Tabernacle in Heaven (Rev 11:19, Rev 15:5) of which the earthly was only a simulacrum. (Exo 25:40, Heb 8:5) [3] The “Altar” in Heaven, representing the place where the prayers of the saints are offered, (Rev 8:3) was also cleansed by the blood of the sacrifice, rendering the petitions of the saints, and the prayers for mercy by those convicted of sin, acceptable to the Most High. [4] At the end of the ritual, the goat that represents *Azazel*, an alternate name for Satan, is sent out into the wilderness to perish, bearing the sins of Yah’s people with it.

In the fulfillment of [4], Satan bears the ultimate consequence (everlasting death) for the confessed sins of the saints, although Christ bore the penalty for mankind on the Cross. The Messiah died the sinner’s death on the cross, (Isa 53:12) yet the final result, an “eternal damnation” (Mark 3:29) from which there is to be no return, was overcome by His divinity, thus securing eternal life for the sons of men. We read Yahweh’s sentence to Satan, “I bring forth a fire from the midst of thee, it shall devour thee, and I

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will bring thee to ashes upon the earth in the sight of all them that behold thee.” (Ezek 28:18b)

It is important to note that it is Christ who bears the sins of mankind away... but it is not to a desert place. After His death, not before it, He went to Heaven to offer His blood... this is the cleansing of the Altar. If Christ fulfilled the role of the “Scapegoat” as well as the Yahweh-goat as some Christian groups hold, He would have to have offered His blood before going away into a wilderness (which these groups claim is “hell” or the land of the dead). Yet we find in the ritual that both the sins of Israel and the Altar are cleansed “before” the live goat is sent away, and the only parallel for this offered in the Scriptures is the torment of Satan in the lake of fire after the judgment. When demons are cast out into a state of torment, according to the Word, it is likened unto them being driven into “dry places,” (Mat 12:43) a spiritual desert.



Understanding how Yahweh deals with sin, and how He treats sinners, is one of the clearest revelations of His longsuffering, gracious character. The knowledge that He exercises mercy beyond measure, both in the offering of the Son and in the atonement set in place to redeem mankind, is the revelation to our hearts of His love. By faith we know who Yahweh is, and see in Him all that is love, light and life. By His Word we hear His testimony that He is drawing all men unto Himself, while allowing humanity to stand where they will stand.

To know Yahweh, and to exercise our freedom in choosing to give our lives over to Him in the service to the Almighty and our fellow men... this is the foundation of Christianity, and the entrance into a state of peace that the Bible represents by a day known as the “Sabbath.” On the Highway of Holiness, entering into this spiritual rest is the first step of the Journey to the Heavenly Kingdom.

1.5 – Summary

- 1) Knowledge of the Father and Son is eternal life.
- 2) This true knowledge, this unifying intimacy, comes largely through Bible study and the assistance of the Holy Spirit.
- 3) The character of Yahweh is revealed in a dramatic fashion by the way in which He deals with sin, sinners and mankind in general.
- 4) Mankind collectively fell from grace upon accepting the inducements of the fallen angel Lucifer, but the plan of salvation

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promises redemption for individual men, and an end to sin on a cosmic scale.

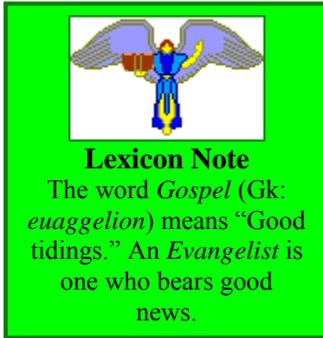
- 5) “Sin” is a condition of the heart that leads to transgressions of the Law of love and order. Salvation is not a cessation of “bad works,” but a healing of the heart and spirit. The natural result is a reform of the life’s tendencies, and a correcting of the outward acts.
- 6) Those who accept cleansing from sin through the sacrifice of the Son of God develop a character that suits them for eternal life. Those who reject it are destroyed in a just sentence designed to purify the universe from all sorrow and suffering.
- 7) The Day of Atonement ritual described in Leviticus 16 provides an overview for the plan of salvation and reveals much about the character of the Creator.

Chapter 2: Finding The Right Path

Topic: The Three Angels' Message

2.1 – The Alpha and The Omega

This Guidebook takes an unusual approach to describing doctrine. Having seen in the first chapter who Yahweh is, and some aspects of His character, we now jump to the very “end” of the story of earth’s history in order to see what it is He requires of this generation. After having done so, we will go back and fill in the details of belief and practice.



We have read of the beginning of the story in Genesis: the creation of man, and the fall into sin. Yet Genesis also records the first revelation of the Gospel (the *Good News*) both in symbol and in divine utterance. Of the symbol, we read that immediately upon Adam taking upon himself the guilt of transgression, “Unto Adam also and to his wife did Yahweh Elohim make coats of skins, and clothed them.” (Gen 3:21)

Though it has received little attention, this is the first death of a living creature in the history of the universe. The word for “skins” in this passage is the specific word (Hebrew: *owr*) for the hide of an animal... therefore some beast, some innocent creature, died for the benefit of guilty humanity. This is but a symbol of the sacrifice of the “Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.” (John 1:29) Even before this event, a promise was given, “And Yahweh Elohim said unto the serpent, ‘Because thou hast done this, thou art cursed above all cattle, and above every beast of the field; upon thy belly shalt thou go, and dust shalt thou eat all the days of thy life. And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her Seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise His heel.’” (Gen 3:14, 15)

This was a prophecy of One who would come, a “Seed of the Woman,” to crush the head of the serpent. The Crusher would be wounded, receiving an injury in His heel, but the blow to the deceiver would be to the head... a fatal strike. A curious thing in Scripture is that when we next read of the Seed of the Woman, the reference is plural: “And the Dragon was wroth with the Woman, and went to make war with the Remnant of Her Seed, which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ.” (Rev 12:17)

The Remnant, or the “last part” of the Seed is referring to a class of people who maintain a pure faith, a true testimony, and right actions, in days of great darkness and apostasy, in the days of the Dragon’s wrath. What are

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we to understand from these quotes, one set from Genesis and the other from Revelation?

The answer, naturally, is found in other passages of Scripture. One in particular truly lays it out for the understanding of all: “For the Kingdom is Yahweh’s, and He is the Governor among the nations. A Seed shall serve Him; *It shall be accounted to the Lord for a generation.* They shall come, and shall declare His righteousness unto a people that shall be born, that He hath done this.” (Psalm 22:28, 30, 31)

Psalm 22, one frequently applied to Christ, (Mat 27:46; Luke 23:35; Mat 27:35; Psa 22:1, 7, 8, 18) speaks of a Seed that will serve the Almighty, and that He will be accounted as a generation. Further, this is not a merely symbolic generation, but an actual group of people, for they then take up a work, and “declare His righteousness” in the world. This prophecy is perfectly fulfilled in the death of Christ – a wound to the heel from which He recovered in His resurrection – and the calling of the Church, a generation of men and women seen before Heaven as the righteousness of Christ, the only begotten Seed, “For [Yahweh] hath made Him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him.” (2Cor 5:21)

It is an astounding statement that we are made the righteousness of God in Christ. It is an unparalleled blessing, and a great work of grace by which we may be counted as Christ is counted, sons of Elohim, the Creator of Heaven and earth. “Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God.” (1John 3:1a)

But this is only the first half of the prophecy: that the Serpent should wound the heel of the Seed. What follows is the crushing of the Serpent’s head, and the redeemed generation’s declaration of the righteousness of God to all mankind. How are these two concepts connected? They are connected in this very sense, that the declaration of the righteousness of Yahweh to mankind, and indeed to the entire universe, is the sign of Satan’s everlasting defeat.

And how is the righteousness of God declared in the earth? How is it that erring, finite mortals may be made the righteousness of God in Christ; and what is it they say to declare this to the cosmos? We need only to read the end of the story that began in Genesis, in the Bible’s final Revelation.

2.2 The Three Angels’ Message: Context & Overview

2.2.1 – The Writing Style of John the Apostle

There are several factors that must be taken into account by the reader who wishes to understand the book of Revelation. The first is the writing style of the author. John the Beloved was a writer who used the technique of

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repetition in order to emphasize a point he considered vital. This may be seen in all of his contributions to the Canon: the Gospel, the Epistles, and the Apocalypse.

In his Gospel he writes, “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by Him; and without Him was not any thing made that was made.” (1John 1:1-3)

In his epistles he writes at various times, “If we say that we have fellowship with [Yahweh] and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth [...] If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us [...] If we say that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar, and His word is not in us [...] He that saith, ‘I know him,’ and keepeth not His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him.” (1John 1:6, 8, 10, 2:4) Some of these very verses are misunderstood in Christendom as teaching that a Christian can never claim to have truly overcome sin; however, all these verses are simply a reflection of John’s style, and they all say the same thing. More on these passages will be provided in the appropriate chapter.

The Book of Revelation is no different from the Gospel and the epistles of John in this aspect: that the same concepts are repeated numerous times, but in different ways, in order to convey spiritual truths that can only be expressed imperfectly in human language. The Seven Seals and the Seven Church ages appear to be parallel events. The Seven Trumpets and the Seven Plagues, likewise, are identical events, but described by means of two distinct sets of symbols.



Instructor Note

Ask your study partner for further details about the style of *Revelation* and how to read it for principle.

In addition, all the visions given to John by the Messiah are laden with images and concepts drawn from previous Books of the Bible. If one wishes to understand the spiritual ideas that Yahshua sought to convey by means of His final canonical prophet, this must be clearly understood. In order to understand Revelation’s teachings about hellfire, (Rev 20:14) the well-adorned woman named “Mystery” riding a strange animal, (Rev 17:5) why dead souls under a holy altar cry out for vengeance, (Rev 6:9, 10) and even the nature of the infamous Mark of the Beast, (Rev 20:4) the places from which these images were drawn must be sought, some as far back as Genesis itself.

2.2.1 – The Summoning of the 144,000

With the two factors described above in mind, we may read a passage describing the work of the last generation of mankind:

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“And I beheld when [the Lamb] had opened the sixth seal, and, lo, there was a great earthquake; and the sun became black as sackcloth of hair, and the moon became as blood; and the stars of heaven fell unto the earth, even as a fig tree casteth her untimely figs, when she is shaken of a mighty wind. And the heaven departed as a scroll when it is rolled together; and every mountain and island were moved out of their places.

“And the kings of the earth, and the great men, and the rich men, and the chief captains, and the mighty men, and every bondman, and every free man, hid themselves in the dens and in the rocks of the mountains, and said to the mountains and rocks, ‘Fall on us, and hide us from the face of Him that sitteth on the Throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb,’ for the great day of His wrath is come; and who shall be able to stand?

“And after these things I saw four angels standing on the four corners of the earth, holding the four winds of the earth, that the wind should not blow on the earth, nor on the sea, nor on any tree. And I saw another angel ascending from the east, having the seal of the living God; and he cried with a loud voice to the four angels, to whom it was given to hurt the earth and the sea, saying, ‘Hurt not the earth, neither the sea, nor the trees, till we have sealed the servants of our God in their foreheads.’ And I heard the number of them which were sealed: and there were sealed an hundred and forty and four thousand of all the tribes of the children of Israel.” (Rev 6:12-14, 7:1-4)

As if in answer to the question, “Who shall be able to stand?” John next sees a hundred and forty-four thousand individuals drawn from the earth and given a special seal of approval by Heaven. We read of these in a later passage, “And I looked, and, lo, a Lamb stood on the mount Sion, and with Him an hundred forty and four thousand, having His Father’s name written in their foreheads [...] These are they which follow the Lamb whithersoever He goeth. These were redeemed from among men, being the Firstfruits unto God and to the Lamb.” (Rev 14:1, 4b)

These selected, faithful witnesses have a Seal in their foreheads that is seen in chapter 14 as equivalent to the “Father’s Name.” Remembering that John’s writing style includes much repetition is helpful in detecting such parallels. But how is it that these individuals come to follow the Lamb so intimately? How is it that they are redeemed as the “Firstfruits,” which has the connotation (from earlier symbolism) as being a choice sample offering that represents an entire harvest? (Numbers 18:12)

We need only to continue reading in Revelation 14 to understand that a particular set of instructions, an “Everlasting Gospel,” is given to mankind to prepare them to stand faithfully by the Lamb even as the Dragon’s final deceptions are unleashed:

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“And I saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven, having the Everlasting Gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people, saying with a loud voice, ‘Fear God, and give glory to Him, for the hour of His Judgment is come; and worship Him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters.’”

“And there followed another angel, saying, ‘Babylon is fallen, is fallen, that great city, because she made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication.’”

“And the third angel followed them, saying with a loud voice, ‘If any man worship the beast and his image, and receive his mark in his forehead, or in his hand, the same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of his indignation, and he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb. And the smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever; and they have no rest day nor night, who worship the beast and his image, and whosoever receiveth the mark of his name.’”

“Here is the patience of the saints: here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus.” (Rev 14:6-12)

This passage, describing the message borne by three angels, is bracketed both above and below with descriptions of a particular set of people. The 144,000, the Remnant of the Woman’s Seed, and “they that keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus” are all linked to these three angelic declarations. From their characteristics, and the parallel descriptions that John gives (plainly seen in such passages as Rev 14:12 and Rev 12:17) we are given to understand that there are not “several” groups of faithful people in the last days, but one group, simply described in slightly different symbols in order to convey the fullness of their dedication, obedience, purity and *unity*. Biblically speaking, though this great and vital truth is not always apparent in latter-day, nominal Christianity, *true, spiritual-minded Christians are never divided in spirit*. (Rom 12:5; Gal 3:28; John 17:11; 1Cor 1:13; Eph 4:13; 1Cor 3:3, 4; 1Cor 1:10, etc., etc.)

We are further told, immediately following the three angels’ message: “*Here* is the patience of the saints: *here* are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus.” In other words, according to John’s vision, the message borne by the angelic evangelists define the 144,000 – the message is what brings them forth, and equips them with the testimony they must bear: to worship God, to declare that “Babylon is fallen,” to avoid something called the “the beast and his image” and a mark of allegiance to this entity. It is the message that provides the means by which it may be said to the observers, “*Here they are!*”

2.3 The Three Angels' Message: Content & Power

2.3.1 – The First Angel's Message

We must now, if we wish to understand the summoning of the 144,000, break the message of the Gospel angels into its constituent parts, and then reassemble it with a detailed knowledge of its inner workings.

The first of the three elements reads: “And I saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven, having the Everlasting Gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people, saying with a loud voice, ‘Fear God, and give glory to Him, for the hour of His Judgment is come; and worship Him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters.’” (Rev 14:6, 7)

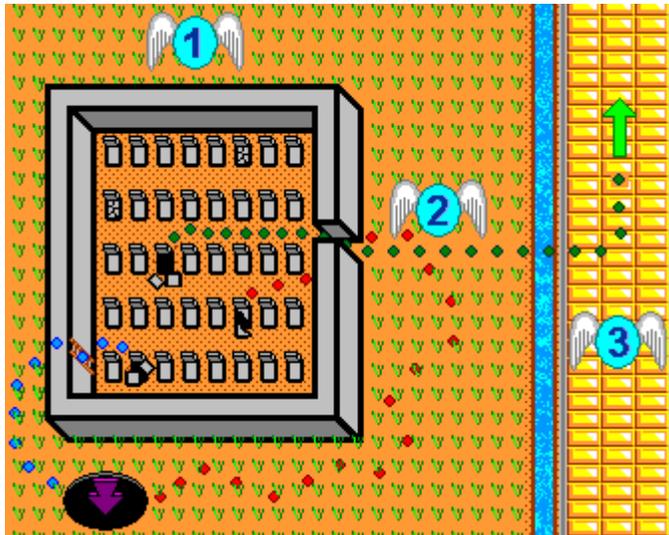


Figure 2.1 – Three Angels and The Highway of Holiness

The diagram above, Figure 2.1, is one that will be referenced several times throughout the discussion of the three angels' message. It shows the progress of a Christian from a spiritual graveyard to the Highway of Holiness.

The first thing that must be said about the 144,000 is that they are living beings. This may seem quite obvious, but we must understand the term “living” as being used in both a physical and a spiritual sense. Christ declares that some people who believe they are alive simply because their body has breath are spiritually dead, and have no affinity for the life-giving Spirit of God. He declares to certain groups of people, “I know thy works, that thou hast a name that thou livest, and art dead.” (Rev 3:1) These are the “nominal” (in *name* only) Christians; they have an appearance of spiritual life, but no heart-based theology, only doctrine and form. The Scriptures speak in another place of such, saying that there are deceivers

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within Christianity, “having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof; from such turn away.” (2Tim 3:5)

So how are we to know who are alive and who are dead? It is not always possible to know a man’s true heart when it comes to his religious observances, but there are certain outward signs of life that cannot easily be overlooked. The Bible describes men and women who are alive, and they testify of their experience:

“The dead praise not Yahweh, neither any that go down into silence. But we will bless Yahweh from this time forth and for evermore. Praise Yahweh.” (Psa 115:17, 18) “Wilt thou shew wonders to the dead? Shall the dead arise and praise thee? *Selah*. Shall thy loving-kindness be declared in the grave, or thy faithfulness in destruction? Shall thy wonders be known in the dark, and thy righteousness in the land of forgetfulness? But unto thee have I cried, O Yahweh; and in the morning shall my prayer prevent [*i.e.*, be before] thee.” (Psa 88:10-13) “For the grave cannot praise thee; death can not celebrate thee. They that go down into the pit cannot hope for thy truth. The living, the living, he shall praise thee, as I do this day; the father to the children shall make known thy truth. Yahweh was ready to save me, therefore we will sing my songs to the stringed instruments all the days of our life in the house of Yahweh.” (Isa 38:18-20)

While there are certainly some applications in those passages to the status of those who are physically dead, it is the spiritual application that has primacy here: the truly living are the ones praising God in genuine worship. We note that in the scenes revealed to John the creatures that are nearest to the Throne, the beings most constant in their praise of the Creator, are called *Zoa*. This word, unfortunately translated as “beasts” in the King James Version (Rev 4:6, 8, 9; 5:6, 8, 11, 14, etc.) means “Living Creatures.” They are the most vibrantly alive, the most gloriously infused beings of all the creation, for “they rest not day and night, saying, ‘Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come.’” (Rev 4:8)

By contrast, humanity that is not yet redeemed by an acceptance of Yahshua as the “Way, the Truth and the Life” (John 14:6) is considered to be spiritually dead, even if its specimens are physically living.

“And you hath He quickened [*i.e.*, brought to life], who were dead in trespasses and sins, wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the Prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience, among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others. But God, who is rich in mercy, for His great love wherewith He loved us, even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved) and hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Yahshua.” (Eph 2:1-6)

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“Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Yahshua the Messiah, our Lord.” (Rom 6:11)

“And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath He quickened together with Him, having forgiven you all trespasses.” (Col 2:13)

It is the “operation of God” (Col 2:12) that gives life to the spiritually dead, and sets them in place as givers of praise and sources of worship to the One who has brought them to life.

Now, if we look again at the first angel’s message, which is to “give glory to Him [...] and worship Him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters,” it should be obvious how the message begins to prepare the 144,000 – it is telling them to come to life.

Scripture has a number of terms for the saving operation of God; it is called the “Quickening,” (Eph 2:1) the “Translation” into the Spiritual Kingdom, (Col 1:13) and the “Born Again” experience. (John 3:3, 7; 1Pet 1:23)

Paul writes of this experience, saying, “Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature; old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.” (2Cor 5:17) John writes more directly, regarding how it relates to sin, “Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin, for His Seed remaineth in him; and he cannot sin, because he is born of God. We know that whosoever is born of God sinneth not; but he that is begotten of God keepeth himself, and that wicked one toucheth him not.” (1John 3:9, 5:18)

We will examine this concept more deeply in Chapter 4 under the heading, “The Victory Message,” but suffice it to say for now that Creation Seventh Day Adventists take all these verses to be true just as they read. Keeping in mind that the Scripture makes a distinction between willful and ignorant sins, (*cf.*, Section 1.3.3 – “The Meaning of Repentance”) the CSDA Church teaches that one who is born again does not knowingly commit acts of transgression against God’s law.

This is the message born by the first of the three Gospel Angels; one cannot worship God if one is “dead in trespasses and sins,” and one who is truly alive, being “born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible,” (1Pet 1:23) does not knowingly commit wrong acts. A call to worship in the last days, a call to be among the 144,000, is necessarily a call to *come to life*, to accept the gift of Christ: victory over sin: “and thou shalt call His name Yahshua [Yah Saves] for He shall save His people from [not *in*] their sins.” (Mat 1:21)

Looking within the cemetery of Figure 2.1, we see a number of graves. This is the world of men without Christ. Most of the graves we see are undisturbed – some have heard the message but have gone back to sleep,

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and others may not yet have heard it at all. And then there are graves with some cracks in them... these are the Christians who have heard the Victory message and know enough of the Bible, and have enough spiritual understanding, to agree that it is the truth. Yet while they stir in their places, they do not arise to take up the testimony.

These are they who say, “Yes, of course, the Bible says that we can do all things through Christ, and so certainly we will have victory over our sins *someday*... but not yet. Not until He returns, not until the Tribulation begins, not until next week, not until tomorrow...” They show signs of life, but they are still in their sepulchers; they have not yet taken that first breath of Heavenly, sin-free air, putting away all known evils, and allowing the Spirit to show them more and more clearly the pathway of peace.



Emphasis Note

The 1st Angel’s Message may be summarized as, **“Come forth!”** It is a call to *Victory* over sin for rendering pure worship.

Now, there are three types of individuals who appear to respond to the first angel, and declare, “I will arise and serve the Lord.” We see that the Green Dot, the Red Dot and the Blue Dot have come forth from their graves. We also see, however, that only the Green Dot follows all three Angels’ summons to find his place on the golden Highway. Why is this so? We will discover the steps as we look at the other two aspects of the Everlasting Gospel.

2.3.2 – The Second Angel’s Message

“And there followed another angel, saying, ‘Babylon is fallen, is fallen, that great city, because she made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication.’” (Rev 14:8)

This second message is the shortest of the three. It makes only a simple declaration, that “Babylon is fallen,” and gives the reason why: “because she made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication.” In order to understand this, of course, we need to define the symbols based upon the meanings Scripture gives to the words, particularly the words “Babylon,” “fallen” and “fornication.”

The first mention of Babylon in Scripture is in Genesis 10, where it is translated as *Babel* (it is the same word in Hebrew). We read, “And the beginning of [Nimrod’s] kingdom was Babel, and Erech, and Accad, and Calneh, in the land of Shinar.” (Gen 10:10) Nimrod was one of the first great apostates after the global Flood. He was the first in the recovering world to establish a “kingdom” in which a human was the head of the people under him. He called his kingdom “Babel” which, although it means “Confusion” in Hebrew, meant “Gate of God” in Chaldean, which would later become the language of Shinar. We may read some of the characteristics of this kingdom, called “Gate of God” by its citizens:

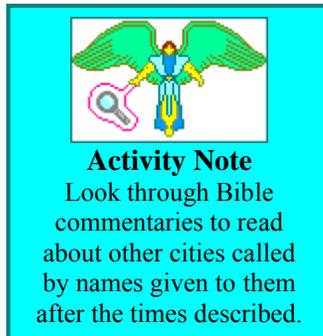
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“And [the residents of Shinar] said one to another, ‘Go to, let us make brick, and burn them thoroughly.’ And they had brick for stone, and slime had they for mortar. And they said, ‘Go to, let us build us a city and a tower, whose top may reach unto Heaven; and let us make us a name, lest we be scattered abroad upon the face of the whole earth.’

“And Yahweh came down to see the city and the tower, which the children of men builded. And Yahweh said, ‘Behold, the people is one, and they have all one language, and this they begin to do; and now nothing will be restrained from them, which they have imagined to do. Go to, let us go down, and there confound their language, that they may not understand one another’s speech.’

“So Yahweh scattered them abroad from thence upon the face of all the earth, and they left off to build the city; therefore is the name of it called Babel; because Yahweh did there confound the language of all the earth: and from thence did Yahweh scatter them abroad upon the face of all the earth.” (Gen 11:3-9)

Before the fall of the Tower of Babel, humanity had one language, and the name “Babel” was not given to the city until after this fall. This means that when Nimrod build his kingdom initially, he did not give this place the name “Babel,” but something that meant what the word *came* to mean in the newly confused language thereafter. Scripture will often use the “modern” name for a city when describing an ancient site so that the locations being discussed can be recognized by the author’s (in this case Moses’) contemporaries. If the “one language” that existed before the division of tongues (Gen 11:1) was something similar to Hebrew, which is likely, since the Scriptures tell us that the regions of the *Gentiles* was divided by tongues and families, (Gen 10:5) then the Chaldean *Bab-El* would be equivalent to something close to the Hebrew *Shahar-El*, both meaning “Gate of God.”



What we find is a city whose residents wished to reach the place of God himself, putting themselves where He is in order to “make a name” for themselves and protect their dwelling-place, that they should not be “scattered.”

The defining characteristic here is pride, for in the attempt to reach Heaven by means of a tower we see the ambition of Lucifer, who once said, “I will ascend into Heaven; I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the most High.” (Isa 14:13a, 14)

What we find the Second Angel describing in Revelation is a people who have the same characteristics: for pride’s sake they seek to appropriate for

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themselves the rightful place of the Creator, and they do so in order to protect themselves from the loss of their identity or their name. They consider themselves to be the “Gate of God,” or a blessed and wise people, but the name Yahweh gives them is “Confusion.”

Although the later kingdom of Babylon under Nebuchadnezzar and his descendants have much to do with the history of Israel, we read from John’s vision that we must truly go back to this first incarnation of Babel in order to obtain the characteristics for the last. The Revelator tells us of these confused ones of the last days, “her sins have reached unto heaven, and God hath remembered her iniquities.” (Rev 18:5) This second declaration of the fall of Babylon (Rev 18) will be described in greater detail in Chapter 4, but it should be noted for now that even during the later history of the city, during the Israelite kingdom, the prophets continued to point out that it had the same character as in its earliest days: “‘Though Babylon should mount up to heaven, and though she should fortify the height of her strength, yet from me shall spoilers come unto her,’ saith Yahweh.” (Jer 51:53)

The first and defining characteristic of Babylon has always been this pride, this reaching-after the Heavens for unjust reasons. The citizens do not wish to reach Heaven in order to worship the Creator, but in order to secure their own interests.

What does it mean that Babylon has fallen?

We read of the “fall” of cities in the Scriptures: “Babylon is suddenly fallen and destroyed: howl for her; take balm for her pain, if so be she may be healed. We would have healed Babylon, but she is not healed; forsake her, and let us go every one into his own country, for her judgment reacheth unto Heaven, and is lifted up even to the skies.” (Jer 51:8, 9)

The parallels should be too plain to miss, but we shall see that this is a general principle, not specific to any one city. When speaking of the fall of Jerusalem, even the blessed capital, the same prophet said, “He that abideth in this city shall die by the sword, and by the famine, and by the pestilence; but he that goeth out, and falleth to the Chaldeans that besiege you, he shall live, and his life shall be unto him for a prey.” (Jer 21:9)

In Revelation we are told that this is precisely the instruction of Heaven for the people of the last days: “And I heard another voice from Heaven, saying, ‘Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues; for her sins have reached unto heaven, and God hath remembered her iniquities.’” (Rev 18:4, 5) When a city falls, it is time to leave. But note this subtle point: people are never told to leave Babylon. Daniel, the Hebrew captive, was given great authority in the city of Babylon under Nebuchadnezzar and his successors. (Dan 2:46-48) Jeremiah actually told the fleeing Hebrews to seek refuge *in* the pagan city, to escape the fall of Jerusalem. (Jer 21:9 as quoted above)

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No one is to leave a city (or a religious organization, which is its spiritual parallel – Isa 52:1, Heb 12:22) simply because it incorporates error into its worship or teachings.

The Scripture is plain in its application of this principle: When a city has incorporated pagan concepts into its rituals, it is time for a return to righteousness, but no command is given to depart. When a city *falls*, however, there is a clear choice given: remain within its walls and perish, or flee and be spared the just sentence of Divine wrath. From Jeremiah's words we see that even if the holiest of cities should enter a Babylonian state and then fall, it is to be abandoned by those who would remain in favor with Yahweh.

Finally, now that we have defined Babylon and seen briefly how it applies to religious systems, and now that we have seen what the response of the faithful must be to the declaration that such systems have “fallen,” we must consider how it is that Babylon falls.

The Angel declares that Babylon is fallen “because she made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication.”

Fornication is defined as inappropriate intimate relations. For humans this covers such concepts as pre-marital sexual contact, homosexuality and adultery, among others. How is it that a city, or a religious system, can commit intimate acts of an inappropriate nature?

We read, “Thou [Jerusalem] hast built thy high place at every head of the way, and hast made thy beauty to be abhorred, and hast opened thy feet to every one that passed by, and multiplied thy whoredoms. Thou hast also committed fornication with the Egyptians thy neighbours, great of flesh; and hast increased thy whoredoms, to provoke me to anger.” (Ezek 16:25, 26)

“And it shall come to pass after the end of seventy years, that Yahweh will visit Tyre; and she shall turn to her hire, and shall commit fornication with all the kingdoms of the world upon the face of the earth.” (Isa 23:16)

““And thy renown went forth among the heathen for thy beauty, for it was perfect through my comeliness, which I had put upon thee,’ saith Adonai Yahweh. ‘But thou didst trust in thine own beauty, and playedst the harlot because of thy renown, and pouredst out thy fornications on every one that passed by; his it was.’” (Ezek 16:14, 15)

From these and other passages, we see that if a nation has committed fornication, specifically adulterous acts with the “kings of the earth,” it has gone after the ways of the nations around it, uniting with them in worship and methods. It has joined with the “world,” and forsaken the way of its

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first Husband, which Yahweh considers to be Himself in relation to His people. (Jer 31:32)

Incorporating the symbols, we see that although the second Angel's message is brief, it means much, as much as that which was borne by its predecessor: A nation has become corrupted through pagan errors, and in this state has learned the ways of the world. In uniting with the world and taking on its practices, it has "fallen," and from this accursed system those who wish to be faithful to the Creator, continuing in what they have gained under the First Angel, must flee.

From the words of the prophets, we understand that no nation, no religious system, is immune to this state if it does not protect itself from worldliness and pagan deceptions. Creation Seventh Day Adventists apply this principle as it was meant to be applied: broadly. We see in the Second Angel's message the reason why the Apostolic Church was drawn out of Judaism, because those who had the headship of the Jewish religion committed to their trust betrayed the Almighty by saying, "We have no king but Caesar," (John 19:15) and uniting with the Roman civil law to execute the Messiah.

We see in the Second Angel's message the reason why the Reformation drew faithful Christians out of the Roman Catholic system, which had turned to pagan errors and, in this state united with the secular authority of soldiers and armies in order to secure the "name" and power of the papacy.

We see in the Second Angel's message the reason why the Great Awakening (which led up to the Seventh-day Adventist movement) drew men out of Sunday-keeping Protestantism, which was still steeped in Romanist doctrines, and which would soon unite with the United States civil government in the 19th century in an attempt to enforce a "Sunday law" that would compel the conscience of Christians, and ultimately persecute the Messiah in the person of His saints.

We now see in the Second Angel's message the reason why the Creation Seventh Day Adventist Church has been called out of Seventh-day Adventism, for the latter body has returned to pagan errors and learned the ways of the world. In such a state, it has united with the United States civil government in an attempt to enforce a "Trademark law" that would compel the conscience of Christians, and ultimately persecute the Messiah in the person of His saints. The names may have changed, but the principles of Heaven are eternal.

More will be said on this in Chapter 4; for now it is enough to understand the principle involved, that the Second Angel is calling a people who have been brought to life to an experience of separation from the principles of the world, from the impurities of false doctrines. It is leading them to the strictest adherence to the ways of Heaven. Those who obey the Second

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Angel will flee from any system that, while teaching pagan errors, will take the position of the world: that a religion must be protected or promoted by the authority of the “kings of the earth,” (the spiritual descendants of Nimrod) that force is an acceptable alternative to evangelism in securing its “name” before Heaven. This was the error of the first incarnation of Babylon, and this is why the final Babylon has fallen in the last days.

Now when examining the spiritual application of the Angels’ messages, we must note that those who come forth from their graves have a tendency to go back into them if they remain in the Cemetery of Sin. If they obey the First Angel, but remain in corruption, remain in the confusion that “Babylon” truly is, they are lulled back to sleep. Their graves may show signs of having been disturbed at one point, but the corpse within is just as dead as if he had never come up. In fact, he may have so exhausted himself in the efforts of his previous Quickening that he has slipped into a more profound slumber than ever before!

It is written of such as will return to their graves after hearing the Gospel of freedom and victory, “But these, as natural brute beasts, made to be taken and destroyed, speak evil of the things that they understand not; and shall utterly perish in their own corruption; Having eyes full of adultery, and *that cannot cease from sin*; beguiling unstable souls: an heart they have exercised with covetous practices; cursed children. For if after they have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Yahshua the Messiah, they are again entangled therein, and overcome, the latter end is worse with them than the beginning. For *it had been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness*, than, after they have known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered unto them. But it is happened unto them according to the true proverb, ‘The dog is turned to his own vomit again,’ and ‘The sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire.’” (2Pet 2:12, 14, 20-22)

These are hard words, but underscore the importance of heeding the Everlasting Gospel borne by the three divine messengers. If any would say, “We cannot cease from sin,” the Bible declares them to be cursed children. If any would say, “We can cease from sin, but not quite yet,” they are settling right back into the earth from which Yahweh sought to draw them. If they begin to live the life of righteousness, but do not flee from the fallen systems of which they may have been a part, they will find themselves covered again with the dust of the ground.

Yahshua taught, “Some [seeds] fell upon stony places, where they had not much earth; and forthwith they sprung up, because they had no deepness of earth. And when the sun was up, they were scorched; and because they had no root, they withered away [...] But he that received the seed into stony places, the same is he that heareth the Word, and anon with joy receiveth it, yet hath he not root in himself, but dureth for a while; for when tribulation

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or persecution ariseth because of the Word, by and by he is offended.” (Mat 13:5, 6, 20, 21)

There is a way of disobeying the Second Angel that is worthy of note. The Blue Dot in Figure 2.1 appears to be obeying this second message and fleeing the graveyard, but he is not doing so in the direction the Angel is calling. The Second Angel is calling those who have come to life out of the cemetery and into freedom, but it is calling them into freedom through a “narrow way.” It is a way that requires humility to navigate, a way that does not permit room for spiritual baggage.

Some will say, “Oh, the church (whatever church it happens to be in that generation) teaches pagan errors? Well, I am out of here!” They build up their own standard of righteousness; they erect a ladder of their own devising over the fence and do not unite with those who are seeking to walk in the narrow way. They go off on their own, disconnected from anything resembling the Body of Christ, and the result is a spiritual plague upon the earth: the Independent Ministry.



Instructor Note

Your study partner can provide Adventist writings regarding the error of independence in ministry.

While Adventist prophecies speak of the saints in the last days being gathered together in small, geographically diverse locations, these same writings emphasize that there will be a unity of heart and doctrine among such groups. These writings uniformly and forcefully speak against individuals who seek to operate outside of the revealed Church of Christ. Yet while this information is set forth clearly by SDA authors, the principles behind this doctrinal position are

drawn directly and unmistakably from the Bible. “For ye are yet carnal; for whereas there is among you envying, and strife, and divisions, are ye not carnal, and walk as men?” (1Cor 3:3) Anyone who has had contact with independent ministries, without or within Adventism, knows well the strife and disunity that exists among them. The Bible says that this is because they have been following carnal, rather than spiritual, tendencies. The true Church of Christ is composed of individuals who are “members one of another.” (Eph 4:25)

Yahshua prayed among His disciples, saying, “Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word; that they all may be one, as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us; that the world may believe that thou hast sent me. And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one: I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me.” (John 17:20-23) If this drawing-together is not at the heart of a ministry, it is not the ministry ordained by Heaven. If a would-be reformer sees anything, any imagined doctrinal

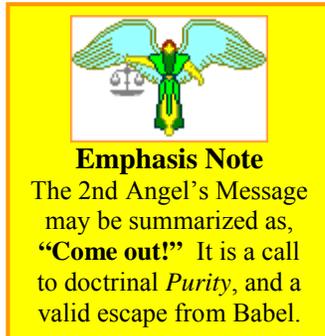
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error, any failure to meet his personal standards of purity, as more important than the unity of the saints in Victory and peace, he has entered the field through some other means than the doorway established by Christ.

In seeking to do their own thing, and avoid the narrow way of humility and service, those represented by the Blue Dot show themselves to be deceivers and distractions. “Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that entereth not by the door into the sheepfold, but climbeth up some other way, the same is a thief and a robber. But he that entereth in by the door is the shepherd of the sheep. And a stranger will they not follow, but will flee from him; for they know not the voice of strangers.” (John 10:1, 2, 5)

What is the difference between an independent ministry and the latest calling-forth of the true Church? For one thing, the Church of Christ is obedient to His messengers: they obey the Three Angels as they are understood in the light of Scripture. They teach victory over sin, and they do not leave the established ecclesiastical systems for any reason but the “fall” of a Babylonian church through its unions with the earthly potentates. They understand the distinction between a church in a state of error, which they are honor-bound to reform from within, and a church in a state of error that is *also* in a state of collapse, which they are honor-bound to abandon.

We see, then, why the Blue Dot does not make it to the Highway of Holiness. He has awakened from a spiritual sleep, and has avoided the error of remaining in a place that would lull him back into his grave; but he has not understood the principles that lead to a legitimate departure from the former religious system. Thus he stumbles out into the grass, fails to find the narrow way through the foliage, does not develop doctrinal purity or the character that attends a truly intimate knowledge of the Father and Son, and ultimately tumbles into the abyss.



2.3.3 – The Third Angel's Message

Here is the lengthiest of the three messages: “And the third angel followed them, saying with a loud voice, ‘If any man worship the beast and his image, and receive his mark in his forehead, or in his hand, the same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of His indignation, and he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb. And the smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever; and they have no rest day nor night, who worship the beast and his image, and whosoever receiveth the mark of his name.’” (Rev 14:9-11)

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If one already understands the two elements of the Everlasting Gospel that came before these verses, the Third Angel's message may actually require the least amount of explanation to understand, despite its length in the text. We have already seen that a victorious life, free from sin and compromise with the world, is a characteristic of the 144,000. We have seen that they will understand the need to remain free of error, and they will recognize the voice of the Almighty when it declares a religious system fallen, and the necessity to depart from its walls.

But now the third angel speaks of a beast, an image of a beast, and a mark that may be taken in the forehead or the hand that would identify an individual with these two powers. It also says that great destruction will come to those who consent to receive the mark of the beast and his image; and it employs words of warning that are among the direst of all Scripture.

What is a "Beast" in Biblical symbolism? This is an easy one to answer. From Daniel's visions we learn: "These great beasts, which are four, are four kings, which shall arise out of the earth." (Dan 7:17) "Thus he said, 'The fourth beast shall be the fourth kingdom upon earth, which shall be diverse from all kingdoms, and shall devour the whole earth, and shall tread it down, and break it in pieces.'" (Dan 7:23)

That this is a symbol for general application may be confirmed by other books:

"Thus saith Adonai Yahweh: 'Behold, I am against thee, Pharaoh king of Egypt, the great dragon that lieth in the midst of his rivers, which hath said, 'My river is mine own, and I have made it for myself.' [...] Son of man, take up a lamentation for Pharaoh king of Egypt, and say unto him, 'Thou art like a young lion of the nations.'" (Ezek 29:3, 32:2a)

"And the fifth angel poured out his vial upon the seat of the beast; and his kingdom was full of darkness; and they gnawed their tongues for pain." (Rev 16:10)



External Link Note

Uriah Smith's *Daniel and The Revelation*:

<http://ourworld.compuserve.com/homepages/clt4/dtoc.htm>

In various symbolic prophecies, kings are considered as diverse kinds of animals, based on their characteristics, and in Revelation we are specifically told that the beast has a "kingdom," making him some kind of an earthly ruler. Adventists, through a study of the books of Daniel and the Revelation, have come to agree with the early Protestant position that the first Beast mentioned in Revelation (13:12) is the papal office of the Roman Catholic church.

They have further concluded that the second Beast that appears like a lamb but speaks as a dragon (Rev 13:11) is the United States government, which is founded on good (lamb-like) principles, but in policy has come to be a

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persecuting power when combined with ecclesiastical notions. In addition, an “image” of the beast would be yet another earthly power that, though different in organization and other visible factors, will nevertheless “reflect” the papist principles founded by the first (and espoused by the second) Beast.

Yahshua the Messiah is described as “the express image” (Heb 1:3) of the Father, and may be known through Him. (John 14:9) The image of the beast is an organization or religious system through which the principles of the papacy and, thus, the Dragon originally, are revealed to the world.

Religious history reveals that the principles of the papacy, as distinguished from Bible Christianity, boils down to two main issues:

- a) The arbitrary authority of the Church to regulate the religious observances and dogmas of its people. For example:
 - i. Giving the papacy the authority to alter the commandments of God as they are observed by Roman Catholics
 - ii. Giving individual human priests the authority to unilaterally absolve sins
 - iii. Holding (for centuries) religious ceremonies in a language that was largely arcane from the standpoint of the common worshipper
 - iv. Seeking to oppose the translation and distribution of Bibles to individuals, wishing to reserve the privilege of Bible study and interpretation strictly for the elite among the clergy

- b) The tendency to resort to civil power and military force when opposed or threatened. For example:
 - i. The crusades
 - ii. The inquisition
 - iii. The “Christian” conquest of foreign lands

We find that the Second Beast, the United States government, was raised with the principles of Protestantism firmly ingrained in its structure. Thomas Jefferson wrote, “I contemplate with sovereign reverence that act of the whole American people which declared that their legislature should ‘make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof,’ thus building a wall of separation between church and State.” [*Letter to the Danbury Baptists*, 1802, quoting the “Establishment Clause” of the First Amendment to the United States Constitution]

We note that the founding fathers of the United States did not prohibit displays of religion, or even government acknowledgment of free worship; the idea was that the government should not seek to control the church, nor the church the governmental system.

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While such a “wall of separation” has been maintained with greater or lesser degrees of success throughout the country’s history, the last days witness a rise of secularism that displays a great degree of intolerance for many aspects of the exercise of religious freedom. In the 1800s, the Blair Sunday Rest Bill sought to make and enforce a mandatory observance of Sunday as the “Christian Sabbath.” While this bill was overturned (largely due to the influence of some prominent Seventh-day Adventists of the day) the principle of papal domination has remained coiled around the heart of the lamb-like beast, seeking another opportunity to rear its serpentine head.

In 1981, this opportunity again presented itself. A summary of the details that will be further explored in Chapter 4 entails the following points:

- a) In 1981 the General Conference Corporation of Seventh-day Adventists sought and secured a Trademark on their name in order to protect it from “misuse” at the hands of individuals they considered heretics.
- b) In order to set precedent for the case, they sued an 11-member church in Kona, Hawaii, imprisoning its minister, one John Marik.
- c) They subsequently went after Kinship International, the original target of the Trademark that was secured, but lost that case.
- d) Since that time the Conference has been seeking by the use of this civil authority to subdue any organization that claims to be “Seventh-day Adventist” while remaining separate from what they consider an apostate ecclesiastical body. The “offending” organizations or individuals are taken to court and, if they do not submit to the church/state union’s decree, have their property confiscated, their work destroyed, and their freedom forfeit.

Creation Seventh Day Adventists see in this process the precise spirit of control and protection-by-force sought by the papacy, and by the earlier city of ancient Babylon. Based on the Bible’s words and a vast number of quotes from Adventist writers, the Church has concluded that any religious organization that seeks to control the spiritual and civil freedoms of individuals for a purpose that is religious in nature has followed in the footsteps of the Dragon, essentially making an “image” to the Beast, a reflection of the Adversary’s throne on earth.



Instructor Note

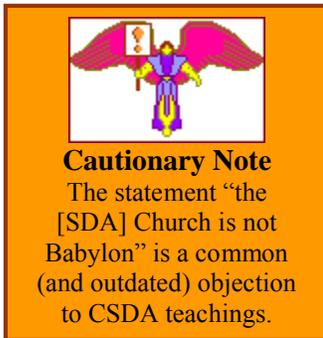
Your study partner can provide Adventist writings regarding the formation of the image of the beast.

The message is a hard one, particularly for Adventists, to accept. It is a very strong testimony, but in this it merely reflects the force of the Third Angel that bears it. The message is also very subtle, and easily missed, if the hearer is not familiar with the principles of Protestantism, the history of the papacy, and the things that Adventists once taught about unions of Church and state. CSDA evangelists have discovered, additionally, that it is

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almost *impossible* to accept this teaching if one has been indoctrinated in modern Adventist traditions to the point that the *interpretation* of the principles overshadows the importance of the principles themselves.

For example, Adventist tradition, based on strong prophetic commentary (for we, like other Adventists, consider the writings of Ellen G. White to be inspired) believe that the Mark of the Beast will be a Law formed by the second beast through its image (apostate Protestantism) to enforce the keeping of Sunday and a rejection of the 7th day Sabbath. Creation Seventh Day Adventists also believe that this same principle, that of following a papal decree rather than obedience to the Bible, has manifested itself in the Trademark Law. We believe that the Sunday Law prophecies, like ALL prophecies given to a particular set of people in Scripture, were conditional on the continuing faith of that people. An entire section of this Guidebook is dedicated to explaining the principle of conditionality when dealing with prophecies, and Scripture itself is consistent that if a message is given to a people who later reject their calling, *the fulfillment of that prophecy is invariably altered*.



By way of a second example, Seventh-day Adventists who discover our protest of the Trademark Law, and our invitation to those still within that and other corrupt institutions to depart and join the Remnant Church, will disagree on the grounds of Ecclesiastical Persistence. In other words, they will say, “We believe that the Seventh-day Adventist Church can never fall, but will go through to the end.

We believe that our prophet once said that the SDA Church is ‘not Babylon,’ but what you are teaching makes the Church just another part of the Babylon described in Revelation.”

It is true that over a century ago, Adventist writer Ellen White said that the SDA Church was not Babylon, and that anyone who attempted to call individuals out of the Adventist Church by calling it by that name were working for the enemy of souls. *Ellen White was perfectly correct*. When that statement was written, the SDA church had not imbibed pagan errors, was actively reforming its doctrines and practices and (most importantly) was not united with the world for the purpose of protecting itself and persecuting those it considered heretics. The current state of the church constitutes *the very definition* of Spiritual Babylon in the Bible, and to deny that the Adventist Church of the 21st century is a very different animal than the Adventist Church of the 19th century is to live a pious fraud. It would be equivalent to a Protestant denying the spiritual fall of Judaism or Roman Catholicism because of the promises once made to these systems while they were yet faithful. Yahweh demands faithful service *now*; what do the spiritual state of affairs over a century ago have to do with what He asks of His saints today?

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The Bible's prophecies may be conditional, but its principles certainly are not. The Scripture teaches that: "neither shall *any* woman stand before a beast to lie down thereto; it is confusion." (Lev 18:23)

To merely insert the symbols of the Bible: "Neither shall **any** woman (a Church: Jer 6:2) stand before a beast (a representation of earthly authority: Dan 7:23) to lie down thereto (commit fornication); it is confusion (Heb: *tebel*, derived from *babel*)." Babylon in the last days, Mystery Babylon, (Rev 17:5) is a union of Church and state – specifically, it is a Church system that has rejected the protection of Christ, the true Husband, to commit adultery by seeking and obtaining the protection of human power, human authority, human might.

What the Third Angel is saying is, "Now that you are awake, now that you are seeking doctrinal purity, and looking for the Remnant, *avoid, avoid, avoid*, any Church that claims to be Christ's while united with the state government for protection or promotion of its doctrines." If you do not do this, you take the mark (a sign of ownership or loyalty) of the beast (kingdom) because you either actively agree with it, or go along with it by default.

Remember, the Mark of the Beast (the sign of earthly civil authority in opposition to God's principles) can be taken in either the forehead (where decisions are made – Jer 3:3) or the hand (by which one is led about – Heb 8:9)... but the Seal of God, the alternative, the sign of approval by Heaven, the distinguishing mark of the 144,000 can only be taken in the forehead, can only be actively chosen. (Rev 7:3) No one will get into Heaven "by default," because no one can obey the Three Angels' message passively. No one can protest the intrusion of papal principles into Christianity by going with the flow; it takes a conscious decision to stand for Yahweh and be numbered among the saints.

We read, "Then Moses stood in the gate of the camp, and said, 'Who is on Yahweh's side? **Let him come unto me.**'" (Exo 32:26)

Notice, Moses was not in the middle of the apostate Israelite nation calling for reform. He had taken his place at the border of the camp, showing that he was not approving of what was taking place, and he called – with the authority of Yahweh – for an active decision: Choose whom you will serve. For those who chose to serve the Almighty, they were not to stand where they were. No, they were to *remove* themselves from the company of those who had gone after the foreign gods, and to *unite* with others in protesting the work of evil. This is what led to the reform that was necessary.

This and similar examples constitute Scripture's only and enduring roadmap for reform: Remove and Unite. A tremendous wealth of Scriptures point this out:

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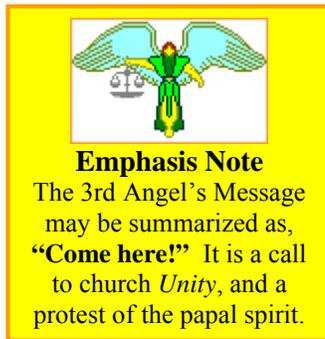
“Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye *separate*,” saith Yahweh, ‘and touch not the unclean thing; and *I will receive you*.” (2Cor 6:17)

“And with many other words did [Peter] testify and exhort, saying, ‘Save yourselves *from this untoward generation*.’ Then they that gladly received his word were baptized; and the same day there were *added* unto them about three thousand souls. And they *continued stedfastly in the apostles’ doctrine and fellowship*, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers.” (Acts 2:40-42)

“And I heard another voice from heaven, saying, ‘*Come out of her*, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues. [...] And I heard as it were the *voice* (singular) of a great multitude, and as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of mighty thunderings, saying, ‘Hallelu-Yah; for Yahweh Elohim omnipotent reigneth.’” (Rev 18:4, 19:6)

The italicized words in the small sample of Scripture above points out the consistent pattern of reform: the faithful separate from the unwilling, and then unite in true worship, standing victorious over the Beast and His Image, refusing to take the Mark and upholding the true Protestant ethic regardless of the consequences men and evil angels threaten to exact upon them. In every generation there is a spirit of force and error to be withstood, and a message that directs people to the truth, because the Creator “left not Himself without witness.” (Acts 14:17) It is the Third Angel that represents this process: to avoid the Mark, and to stand forth in solidarity to protest the rejection of the light from Heaven.

The error of the Red Dot in Figure 2.1 may now be easily understood. He has awakened to serve the Master, he has fled from the apostate system, but he has not united with the saints in protest, he has not stood for the values of Bible Christianity. He has rejected the principles that would lead to an understanding of the Mark of the Beast, captive to the subtlety with which Satan has hidden his workings in the activities of men. Thus, the Red Dot’s wanderings toward eternal life have become erratic, and he finds himself in the same pit, ultimately, as the Blue Dot who rejected the Second Angel’s message.



2.4 – The Everlasting Gospel and You

We are called to be Green Dots; we are called to be among the 144,000, who hear and obey the Everlasting Gospel as presented by the three Angels described above. There is a procedure to follow in order to ensure that we do not misunderstand the Angels’ Messages; there is a way we can know

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for certain. Some have said, “How is it that any can be saved, if it takes such an intimate knowledge of these symbols, and these prophecies, in order to find the truth?”

Those who have formed this opinion are missing the forest for the trees, as they say. It is not always the individual symbols that are important, or an understanding of every detail – although the details are vital for explaining Christian principles to others. But, as this Guidebook began by saying, the chief thing is character, character formed by wisdom, and wisdom by the knowledge of God. The Scriptures declare, “Wisdom is the principal thing; therefore get wisdom: and with all thy getting get understanding.” (Pro 4:7) Yet it is not an earthly wisdom that is being promoted in this verse, it is not a secular understanding; it is a wisdom that comes from contact with the divine, an understanding that is the result of the Creator’s blessing.

The Scripture teaches, “If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him.” (James 1:5) What is important is that we ask Yahweh to reveal to us those things that lead to a development of the character of Christ.

For those who know the Messiah, and who have loved and imitated His character, it should be *obvious* that we are to live without committing acts of treason against our Heavenly Father. Victory over all known sin would be the most obvious doctrine in the world, were it not for the well-ingrained traditions of men. The Bible lays it out plainly, “Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin.” (1John 3:9a) Only those who love sin seek out ways to avoid the solid impact of this teaching by resorting to other, poorly understood, verses and passages of Scripture or, even worse, the teachings of those who have never known this experience, or worst of all, their own past experiences and attempts (in their own power) to be righteous. The First Angel’s Message is merely a statement of the obvious for those who love Yahshua.

For those who know the Messiah, and who have loved and imitated His character, it should be *obvious* that a system imbibing pagan errors and uniting with the world is no longer serving Heaven’s interests, but its own. Once this principle is understood it is merely a matter of educating individuals regarding what those pagan errors happen to be, whether they are occult holidays, the Trinitarian model of the Godhead, or the papal Sabbath. The Second Angel’s Message is merely a statement of the obvious, (especially to those familiar with Christian practices as opposed to pagan ones) for those who love Yahshua.

For those who know the Messiah, and who have loved and imitated His character, it should be *obvious* that seeking to enforce the religion of Christ by resorting to state and human authority is a direct contradiction to the gentle, meek methods of the Master. The Third Angel’s Message brings a most stern warning, because those who need a divine revelation to believe

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and accept such a thing are in great danger of missing the character of Christ that is to be formed within. Once it is understood that Christ's Church is to be a "chaste Virgin," (2Cor 11:2) and not a Woman who was ever once married to (or intimate with) the kings of the earth, they will seek a Church that has committed itself to rejecting the use of worldly force for the work of maintaining its faith and its name. The Third Angel's Message is merely a statement of the obvious, for those who love Yahshua.

Those who pray for wisdom from Heaven, and those who understand Christianity, and Protestant Christianity in particular, will understand, and they will not doubt that they are indeed set on the path to life by the Three Angels of Revelation 14.

So what does this mean to us as individuals? Even the educated, devout Hebrews, who heard Peter's teaching that their leaders had rejected Yahweh by uniting with Rome to persecute a "heretic" that turned out to be the Son of God, did not know precisely what to do about it. "Now when they heard this, they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, 'Men and brethren, what shall we do?'" (Acts 2:37)

They had repented (in the sense of feeling sorry for the error), and they had believed... there was only one thing left for them to do: "Then Peter said unto them, 'Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.'" (Acts 2:38)

Baptism was to be the "visible" sign of their repentance and faith. There are three steps any individual must follow in order to be obedient to the Three Angel's Message. In fact, these three steps may be seen as merely a re-statement of the Message's elements as described above. To unite with the people of Yahweh, the three steps are a) Repentance, b) Faith and c) Baptism.

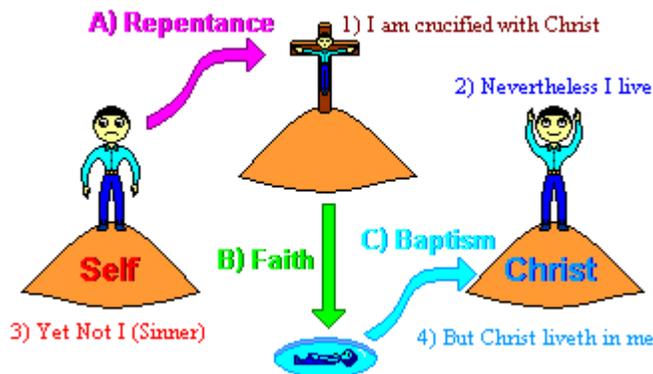


Figure 2.2 – The Process of Conversion

Paul, in various places of his testimony, speaks of these steps. He writes to the Galatians, for example, saying, "I am crucified with Christ, nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me; and the life which I now live in the

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flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave Himself for me.” (Gal 2:20)

In entering the crucifixion of Christ, spiritually speaking, Paul has seen his guilt before the violated Law of God, (Rom 7:7) acknowledged his sinful estate, (1Tim 1:15) and allowed the penalty to have its way (death). Realizing his guilt before Yahweh, Paul not only acknowledges that he *should* die, but goes so far as to consider himself truly dead to the life of sin that was his before the Cross. He does not say “I should be crucified with Christ,” but rather, “I *am* crucified with Christ,” accepting this as a fact. This is a statement of his complete repentance from the life he once lived.

As Figure 2.2 shows, acceptance of this fact is an invitation not only to accept the death of the Messiah, but also His resurrected life. Paul writes, “That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised Him from the dead, thou shalt be saved.” (Rom 10:9) And why are we saved if we believe that Yahweh raised the Son to life? Because “we are buried with Him by baptism into death that, like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. Now if we be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with Him.” (Rom 6:4, 8) This is the second step, faith.

Having confessed to a life of sin, and having faith in Yahshua as the Savior, Paul is not content merely to acknowledge this. Like a marriage, true conversion requires a declaration, for the 144,000 overcome the Beast and his Image by, among other things, “the word of their testimony.” (Rev 12:11) After Paul’s dramatic experience on the road to Damascus, during which he was temporarily blinded by the glory of the Almighty, we read, “And immediately there fell from his eyes as it had been scales; and he received sight forthwith, and arose, and was baptized.” (Acts 9:18)

In entering into the death of Christ, both spiritually and symbolically by repentance, faith and baptism, Paul considers himself a “new creature,” (2Cor 5:17) and goes forward as a representative of the Son of Yahweh, a living vessel of His Spirit. By believing in the resurrection as applied to himself, Paul is not the same “Paul” that died on the cross, but it is “Christ in [him]” that lives, as he writes to the Galatians.

Paul has described obedience to the Three Angels as they were applied in his time. The First Angel issues a summons to Victory and worship. Paul acknowledges that he has failed at this in his past life, and offers *Repentance*. The Second Angel demands purity of doctrine, and an understanding of the fall of false systems. Paul acknowledges that Pharisaic Judaism, of which he was a member, (Acts 23:6) is no longer the holy nation it was intended to be, having fallen by uniting with Rome for the persecution of Christ and His saints. In believing this, that Yahshua was truly the Messiah, and that He had forgiven him, he has developed true

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Faith. The next logical step was to protest his former errors, and in so doing unite with the “heretical sect” that was standing against the religious leaders in Judaism. He followed the Third Angel by making an open declaration of his change in loyalty by submitting to *Baptism*, and refusing to take the mark of loyalty to the beast in that 1st century incarnation: the union of the Jewish church with pagan Rome.

No less is required of the saints in these last days if they wish to follow the Lamb and be among the chosen of Israel. The names may have changed; the Dragon may have attempted to disguise his works, but he can never disguise his character, and this is how he might be known regardless of the mask he happens to wear. Today, those who would find life are required to follow the leadings of the Three Angels: to accept Victory, to have doctrinal and organizational Purity, and to come into Unity with others protesting the current Beast-power in the world today. This is accomplished, as it was two thousand years ago, by the requisite steps of Repentance, Faith and Baptism – this is the path of obedience to the Everlasting Gospel, and the way to find one’s way from the Cemetery of Sin to the Highway of Holiness.

2.5 – Summary

- 1) This Guidebook takes the approach of showing the beginning, then the end, and then filling in the particulars.
- 2) Revelation, the last book of the Bible, may only be properly understood if John’s style of writing, and an understanding of the symbols he employs from previous Books of the Scripture, is taken into account.
- 3) Heaven’s requirements for the saints of the last days are expressed as a message borne by three angels called the Everlasting Gospel.
- 4) Anything less than obedience to all three steps outlined by the Everlasting Gospel will lead to errors and ultimately result in apostasy and spiritual ruin.
- 5) The First Angel’s Message is a call to awaken from the grave of sin and come into a life of Victory. This is accomplished by *Repentance* from one’s former life of failure and transgression.
- 6) The Second Angel’s Message is a call to doctrinal Purity, and a rejection of the errors characterized by “Babylon fallen.” It is a call to genuine, Biblical Christianity, and is accomplished by *Faith* in the untainted message of salvation.
- 7) The Third Angel’s Message is a call to Unity in protesting the Mark of the Beast and his Image. It expresses the need for a visible, united stand for the principles of Christianity and against the papal

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intrusions into genuine religion, and it is accomplished by *Baptism* into the genuine Body of Christ.

Chapter 3: The Signposts

Topic: Doctrinal basics – The 7th Day Sabbath, Faith and Works, the Sanctuary Doctrine, the Investigative Judgment, the State of The Dead and the Doctrine of Hell, Biblical Symbolism, Types and Antitypes, Michael the Archangel, the Adventist Lifestyle

3.1 – The 7th Day Sabbath

3.1.1 – An Enduring Commandment

This chapter, one of the longest of this guidebook (in both volumes), deals with the doctrines held in common by both mainstream Seventh-day Adventists and the members of the Creation Seventh Day Adventist Church. One of the most obvious similarities is declared in the very name that we hold in common: the Seventh Day.



Instructor Note

Your study partner can provide a comparison of the modern vs. the original Adventist statements of belief.

The fourth commandments reads, “Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days shalt thou labour and do all thy work, but the seventh day is the Sabbath of Yahweh thy Elohim. In it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy manservant, nor thy maidservant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates; for in six days Yahweh made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day, wherefore Yahweh blessed the Sabbath day, and hallowed it.” (Exo 20:8-11)

So important was this commandment to the people of Yahweh that He said of the Sabbath, “Moreover also I gave them my Sabbaths to be a sign between me and them, that they might know that I am Yahweh that sanctify them.” (Ezek 20:12)

The Sabbath was the “sign” or “distinguishing mark” (it is the same word in Hebrew) of the people of Yahweh; but some have misunderstood this and other statements, and have concluded that Judaism was a system founded on “works” rather than faith. This is an utter misunderstanding of both the Sabbath commandment, and Judaism in general. The book of Hebrews, chapter 11, in describing the heroes of faith, speaks praise of the Old Testament saints under the Old Covenant. They, as we, are saved by faith.

So what does it mean that the Sabbath was the “sign” of Yah’s people? It means that it is one of the outward means by which they were known to the rest of the world. Even the heathen people had commandments. Many ancient systems of law forbade stealing, murder, and adultery... but none dedicated a period of time to Yahweh the Creator. In other words, any

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“moral” person of the ancient world could keep all nine of the commandments; but by the fourth, by one being a Sabbath keeper, an individual was known to be a worshipper of the Creator.

Keeping in mind that this book is not intended to give thorough apologetics for any particular doctrine, here are a few verses that speak of the perpetual nature of the Sabbath:

“And on the seventh day Elohim ended His work which He had made; and He rested on the seventh day from all His work which He had made. And Elohim blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it, because that in it He had rested from all His work which Elohim created and made.” (Gen 2:2, 3)

To bless something means to make it joyous, and to sanctify means to set it aside for holy use. Some have said, “We do not read explicitly of a Sabbath being kept by humans until the time of Moses.” This is true, but it does not change what is written, that Yahweh made the *day itself* a special day, regardless of whether or not men are recorded as keeping it holy. The blessing was placed on the period of time, not directly on whosoever might keep it. Further, when we read of the Sabbath as it applied to men (before the 10 commandments were given – Exo 16:23) we read just a few verses later, “And Yahweh said unto Moses, ‘*How long* refuse ye to keep my commandments and my laws?’” (verse 28) If we believe, based on the character of Yahweh that we have been studying, that He is longsuffering, and “slow to anger,” (Psa 103:8, Joel 2:13) it is not reasonable to assume that He is chiding them for misunderstanding an instruction given just a brief time beforehand.

In addition, Exodus 16 is not the first mention of the Sabbath in the original language of the Bible. We actually read of it in chapter 5, except that it is not translated. In complaining about what Moses was inciting the people to do, “Pharaoh said, ‘Behold, the people of the land now are many, and ye make them rest [Shabbat] from their burdens.’” (Exo 5:5) Ultimately, the first appearance of the word *Sabbath* is not even in Exodus at all, but right there in Genesis 2:2, where it says the Almighty “rested” (a form of the same word: *Sabbathed*) from His burdens. This is a particular word for “to keep a Sabbath,” and is not the common Hebrew word for ordinary rest.

We later read, “‘for as the new heavens and the new earth, which I will make, shall remain before me,’ saith Yahweh, ‘so shall your seed and your name remain. And it shall come to pass, that from one New Moon to another, and from one Sabbath to another, shall all flesh come to worship before me, saith Yahweh.’” (Isa 66:22, 23)

This reveals that the Sabbath is a perpetual ordinance. It was instituted in Eden, by name and by description, and it is mentioned as being an element of the New Creation. As such, the Sabbath both pre-dates and post-dates the entrance of sin into the physical universe, and therefore is *not subject to*

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change at the Cross – that which occurred specifically in order to set aside sin’s power. This is a very important concept; to say that the Sabbath was abolished at the cross, or at Pentecost, as many Christian groups contend, is to say that sin has or had the power on its own to permanently and negatively affect something eternal, an idea that Adventists heartily reject.

Many Christian groups indeed teach that the New Testament instructs Christians to set aside the commandment regarding the 7th Day Sabbath. This is entirely untrue. In fact, the only verse of the Bible in which the words “Sabbath” and “commandment” occur together is in a description of Christians keeping it holy after the death of Christ! “And [the women attending Yahshua’s body] returned, and prepared spices and ointments; and rested the Sabbath day according to the commandment.” (Luke 23:56)

Critics of those who continue to keep “the Sabbath day according to the commandment” have proven themselves to be inventive in their arguments. The important element, however, is “inventive.” Scriptural support for the abolishment of the Sabbath must be entirely manufactured in the minds of those who wish to discard something they consider a burdensome yoke; while the Sabbath, properly kept, is a gift to mankind. As the Messiah said, “The Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath.” (Mark 2:27) The word he uses for “man,” *anthropos*, is the Greek word for “mankind,” all men, and the Savior itself echoes Moses’ declaration that there is to be “one law” for both Jews and the Gentiles who were joined to them, as is the case in both the Old and New Testaments. (Num 15:29, Eph 2:11-13)

The verses used to advance the position that the Sabbath was set aside are few and poorly understood. For example, one reads that Christ, “abolished in His flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances; for to make in Himself of twain one new man, so making peace.” (Eph 2:15) There is no way that an objective and context-sensitive reader can come to the conclusion that this is referring to the Sabbath, or any of the other elements of the Decalogue. What Ephesians 2 is discussing, specifically, are the laws that the Hebrews had used to distinguish themselves from the Gentiles, leading to enmity and hostility. These were not Yahweh’s laws! These were the Pharisaic additions such as washing hands before eating after contact with Gentiles, (Mat 15:2) and being unable to enter the house of a non-Jew. (Acts 10:28)

In Acts 10, Peter says it is “unlawful” for a Jew to keep company with a Gentile – he is not here referring to the 10 Commandments, obviously, when he speaks of the “law;” therefore it is vital to understand the different ways in which that term is used in the Bible. The laws of the Almighty were intended to draw Gentiles into covenant *with* Him, not to erect a wall of separation. The separation was to be between Jews and those Gentiles who would not surrender their pagan practices – but individuals from other nations were always free to accept the worship of Yahweh and unite with

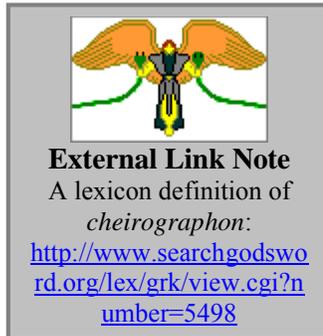
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the people of God. (e.g., Ruth, Rahab, Uriah the Hittite, and many Persians during the events described in the book of Esther – Est 8:17)

Another verse commonly employed is in Colossians, in which Paul says that Christ blotted out, “the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to His cross.” (Col 2:14) Some say, “Look; the ordinances of God are against us, and if you keep respecting the Sabbath, you are entering into a covenant of death that has ordinances against mankind.” Yet if men knew Yahshua, the Lord of the Sabbath, (Mat 12:8) they would not say such things. A careful reading, even of the English translation, reveals that it is the “handwriting” that “was” against us, not the “ordinances” that “were” against us. Here is yet another example where understanding the character of Yahweh prevents an acceptance of erroneous doctrine.

Christ taught of His Father, saying, “Or what man is there of you, whom if his son ask bread, will he give him a stone, or if he ask a fish, will he give him a serpent? If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father which is in Heaven give good things to them that ask Him?” (Mat 7:9-11)

Has Yahweh ever given His people something that was against them? Has He ever given a gift for harm and not for healing? No Christian should be able to say, “yes,” to this, yet many, in rejecting the Sabbath based upon their understanding of Colossians 2, are implying precisely that. It is the *handwriting* that is against us; this is a Greek word that appears only in this verse in the New Testament, but we may obtain knowledge of its use from the lexicons of the language and other contemporary uses. We find that by use a *cheirographon* is a receipt, it is a note that indicates someone owes another a debt or payment. In the apocryphal book of Tobit, a *cheirographon* was used to indicate the amount of a loan to be repaid.



What Yahshua nailed to the cross is precisely what a *cheirographon* means; He eliminated the debt we owe because we *violated* the Law; not because the Law exists, but because of our disobedience. Nothing in this verse suggests, nothing in the Scriptures suggest, that the Law is anything but permanent, and the eternal standard of right and wrong.

Even in the New Testament the “Law” is the standard that defines sin and righteousness. (Rom 4:15, 1John 3:4) The Sabbath commandment, specifically, is the most mentioned commandment of the ten. Some Christian groups will claim, absolutely incorrectly, that every commandment but the fourth is repeated in the New Testament. This is simple ignorance: it is the third commandment that is not mentioned by

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name (but may be implied from statements against “blasphemy”) in the New Testament. The Sabbath appears constantly, frequently, and never in a negative light except when describing the burden that human traditions have imposed upon it. Yahshua came, as He said, not to abolish the Law, but to fulfill it; He made it honorable, and declared that the principles upon which the Law hangs is one that is to bless all nations, and not just the Jews.



Activity Note

Use an electronic Bible with a search function to locate the number of times the word “Sabbath” appears after Malachi.

Colossian 2, in fact, confirms that Christians, even Gentiles, were instructed to keep the Sabbath and other “Jewish” holy days. We read in the King James Version, although this is merely for convenience, “Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holyday, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath [days], which are a shadow of things to come; but the Body [is] of Christ.” (Col 2:16:17)

I have deliberately left the words [days] and [is] in brackets to indicate that even the King James has “added” to the words of the Apostle. It may be instructive here to mention that Adventist doctrines do not require a particular translation of the Bible for use in study, but it is often relevant to note where the various versions have deviated from the received texts.

Without the translators’ help, the passage actually reads, “Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holyday, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath, which are a shadow of things to come; but the Body of Christ.” (Col 2:16:17)

Now this makes sense in light of the history of the Colossian settlement. The Colossians were Gentiles, and they, while being instructed in the things of Christianity, (which were almost identical to the things of Judaism in the early days, including the Sabbath – Acts 15:21) were being criticized because of their acceptance of things considered “Jewish.” This may be verified from the historical statements provided below, showing that even Gentile Christians of the early Church were indeed Sabbath keepers.

What Paul was saying, as we may read directly from the verse, is that no man was to judge the Colossians “in” these matters “but” (this is the Greek word for *except for*) the Body of Christ, the Church. In other words, the Church is distinguished from “men;” and the Church IS capable of laying out guidelines for the behavior of its members, as other parts of the Bible explicitly confirm. (1Cor 6:2-5, 1Cor 5:12) The Sabbath, along with the holy days, New Moons and dietary instructions *are* (not were) a shadow of things *yet* to come, and as such continue to have instructive value for Christians in the New Covenant. The New Covenant, early Bible students knew, would indeed include the Sabbath, since it is founded on the same principles, and the same Law.

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“Behold, the days come, saith Yahweh, ‘that I will make a New Covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah. But this shall be the Covenant that I will make with the house of Israel: After those days,’ saith Yahweh, ‘I will put my Law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people.’” (Jer 31:31, 33)

3.1.2 – The Spirit of The Sabbath

The Law is not used to establish righteousness; we have that through faith in the Messiah, (Rom 10:4) and attempting to keep it does not lead to salvation, (Gal 2:21) as some who have accused Adventists of legalism will contend that we believe. This is something that will be discussed further in the next section; but salvation, being brought into harmony with Yahweh and Yahshua, necessarily means being brought into harmony with the Law, for the Godhead is the embodiment of *agape* (divine love) of which the Law is merely a transcript, a manifestation. (1John 4:8, Mat 22:37-40)

Finally, it should be noted that the Law of God, including the Sabbath, consists of two components, a letter and a spirit. Paul writes that, “the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life.” (2Cor 3:6) This does not mean that obeying the letter leads to death; obviously men *benefit* by not stealing, murdering or committing adultery. What Paul means is that keeping the letter by itself leads to legalism, narrowness of spirit, and ultimately to death. The Scriptures, particularly the teachings of Yahshua, declare that each commandment is truly deeper than the mere letter that was delivered to Moses on Sinai. (Neh 10:29)

It should not be understood, incidentally, that since the Scriptures call the Decalogue a part of the “Law of Moses” it did not pre-date him. Anything that Moses recorded in the first five books of the Bible is considered “the Law of Moses,” regardless of the fact that it describes events and instructions that preceded him by thousands of years. For example, circumcision is considered “the law of Moses,” (John 7:23) although it was given to Abraham long before. (Gen 17:10) If this idea is understood, the argument quoting verses that indicate Moses “gave” or “received” the law (thus implying it is temporary, or only for Jews) is shown to be invalid.

Of the spiritual components of the Decalogue we read Christ teaching, “Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, ‘Thou shalt not kill,’ and whosoever shall kill shall be in danger of the judgment; but I say unto you, That whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment.” (Mat 5:21, 22a)

“Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, ‘Thou shalt not commit adultery.’ But I say unto you, That whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart.” (Mat 5:27, 28)

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The apostles continued this trend, indicating that a spiritual concept such as a false doctrine may become an idol, (1John 5:20, 21) that being a slave to appetite is akin to serving another god, (Phil 3:19) and so on.

The Sabbath is certainly no exception, and the book of Hebrews expands the meaning of the blessing placed on the day, reading, “For [Yahweh] spake in a certain place of the seventh day on this wise, ‘And God did rest the seventh day from all his works.’ And in this place again, ‘If they shall enter into my rest.’ Seeing therefore it remaineth that some must enter therein, and they to whom it was first preached entered not in because of unbelief, again, He limiteth a certain day, saying in David, ‘To day, after so long a time; as it is said, To day if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts.’”

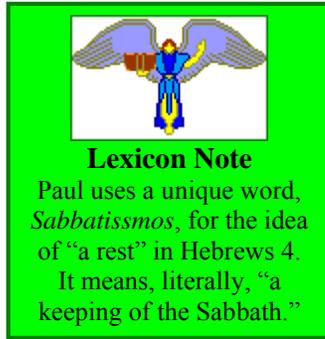
“There remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God; for he that is entered into His rest, he also hath ceased from his own works, as God did from His. Let us labour therefore to enter into that rest, lest any man fall after the same example of unbelief.” (Heb 4:4-7, 9-11)

The author writes that although the Hebrews (to whom the Epistle is addressed) are careful to keep the 7th day holy in letter, there “remaineth” a rest into which they must enter, and that not by works, but by faith. If they enter into this rest by faith, they cease from their own labors to be righteous and justified, and find the true Sabbath.

The Sabbath is a state of spiritual rest, a daily surrender of life’s cares and concerns to the Master as one goes about his activities. Even as we labor we may rest, and it is to the true Sabbath that such verses point:

“Great peace have they which love thy law: and nothing shall offend them.” (Psa 119:165) “I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content. I know both how to be abased, and I know how to abound; everywhere, and in all things, I am instructed both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need. I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.” (Phil 4:11-13)

True Sabbathkeepers speak in this manner; false Sabbathkeepers can nail a man to a cross because of their own fears and discontent, and hurry home before sunset on Friday evening. This is what it means that “the letter killeth,” for if the letter is kept without the spirit, there is no barrier between ourselves and the very worst kinds of sin – the Law means nothing to those who do not use it spiritually, who do not use it “lawfully,” (1Tim 1:8) and indeed does more harm than good.



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There are some in Christendom who say, “Since we have the spirit of the Law now, we can do away with the letter.” This is a great error, and can be shown as such by looking at any of the commandments: If we keep the spirit of the law but not the letter, we may kill if we do not hate, we may steal if we do not covet, we may worship other gods as long as we do not otherwise disrespect Yahweh, we may commit adultery if we do not lust. Obviously, this is absurd; to truly keep the spirit of the Decalogue is to manifest love in thought and deed – to “fulfill the Law” in *every* sense.

If one attempts to keep the “spirit” of the Sabbath without the letter, he loses the very blessing placed upon the day (and that seventh day in particular) – the very blessing designed to instruct us about the spiritual rest into which we are to enter. In the case of each of the commandments, the letter is designed to lead to the spirit, and when we worship in spirit and in truth, we find that we naturally become obedient to all the particulars of the New Covenant, which (as Jeremiah wrote) is founded on the very same Law that was given to mankind from the beginning.

Some have said, “I do not see what is so special about the seventh day specifically. Can’t we just keep one day in seven, and let that be our Sabbath?” The Bible declares that Yahweh blessed “the” seventh day, and He did so for reasons both symbolic and spiritual. Those who do not understand the symbols or spiritual importance are not given permission to set it aside for ignorance’s sake. A parent’s instructions to his or her child are to be obeyed regardless of whether or not the infant fully understands every detail of the rule. We must avoid, above all, the error of Cain, who brought the very best of what he had made through his own skill and efforts... but not what Yahweh had asked of him. (Gen 4:3-5)

There was a *reason* Yahweh asked for a lamb, because it was to represent the Sacrifice to come on behalf of mankind; but Cain, misunderstanding the character of the Almighty, sought to appease Him by his own works. Those who misunderstand the reasons why Yahweh asks for a particular segment of our time, to build a relationship with His people on a day “sanctified” (set aside for holy use) by Himself are in danger of offering the best of what they have, when Yahweh has asked for something else, something as easily offered. “Let us labour therefore to enter into that rest, lest any man fall after the same example of unbelief.” (Heb 4:11)

3.2 – Faith and Works

The Sabbath, as described above, is a perfect example of the balance between faith and works found within few religious systems outside of Adventism. The ditch on either side of the road of this doctrine is to either a) accept a faulty understanding of “grace” and believe that works are entirely unimportant to the Christian experience, or b) believe that since we have accepted grace, we now have permission to work as hard as we can to earn the reward we have been promised. The first ditch leads to

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licentiousness (using the grace of Yahweh as an excuse to violate His law) and the second leads to legalism.

What is required is a balanced understanding of the role of both faith and works. For example, there are verses that read, “Where is boasting then? It is excluded. By what law? Of works? Nay, but by the law of faith. Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law.” (Rom 3:27, 28)

And then there are verses that teach, “Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone. Yea, a man may say, ‘Thou hast faith, and I have works.’ Shew me thy faith without thy works, and I will shew thee my faith by my works.” (James 2:17, 18)

This is not a contradiction; one needs only read carefully. Paul, in Romans, writes that we are not “justified,” or “made just” by our works, because it was Yahshua who died on our behalf, without us earning this gift. James, for his part, does not counter this, but provides a different perspective. A close reading of his epistle reveals that he is actually presenting a rebuke to those who are both too “works” or oriented, and those who believe that works play no role whatsoever. He writes that faith is dead if it is “alone,” not that faith is not the key thing. He further implies that works by themselves are meaningless, because he concludes, “I will shew thee my faith (which I have) by my works.”



Emphasis Note

Context and audience are two of the primary keys for resolving apparent Biblical contradictions.

“But,” some may ask, “doesn’t James write in another place the exact reverse of what Paul explains in Romans, writing that, ‘Ye see then how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only,’ in James 2:24?”

He does say this, but the context reveals that Paul and James are using the word “justified” in very different senses. In Romans, Paul is speaking about being considered just before Heaven. Romans 3 speaks of the judgment of God, saying, for example, “God be true, but every man a liar,” (verse 4) “Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in *His* sight,” (verse 20) “... it is one God, which shall justify the circumcision by faith, and uncircumcision through faith.” (verse 30) Clearly, Paul’s emphasis is on the judgment of Yahweh being just, and also enabling Him to declare both Jews and Gentiles spiritually clean regardless of their works, for the Jews were chosen to “labor” for Him and the Gentiles were not, yet both may find justification in their acceptance of Yahshua, “a propitiation through faith in His blood.” (verse 25)

James, by contrast, is speaking about being considered a faithful servant of Christ *by other men*. Paul’s focus is on accepting Yahshua and being made

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holy, while James is looking at the responsibility of the Christian to set an example for other men, to lead them to a like experience through our testimony. He writes, in Chapter 2 of his Book, “If a brother or sister be naked, and destitute of daily food, and one of you say unto them, ‘Depart in peace, be ye warmed and filled,’ notwithstanding ye give them not those things which are needful to the body; what doth it profit?” (verses 15, 16)

And again, “Was not Abraham our father justified by works, when he had offered Isaac his son upon the altar? Seest thou how faith wrought with his works, and by works was faith made perfect? And the scripture was fulfilled which saith, ‘Abraham believed God, and it was imputed unto him for righteousness,’ and he was called the Friend of God.” (verses 21-23)

Now, note this well, James is quoting from Genesis 15:6, which reads, “And [Abram] believed in Yahweh; and He counted it to him for righteousness.” Here is the important part: *Isaac was not offered on the altar until Chapter 22!* In fact, Abraham did not even receive the name *Abraham*, as a sign of the promise to come, until Chapter 17. James is making a subtle, but very powerful point; Abraham was “justified” in Heaven’s judgment by his faith before the work was ever done, but this faith was refined or “made perfect” (verse 22) by his submission, and he was “called” the friend of God by all who came to know of the sacrifice – for example King Jehoshaphat (2Chron 20:7) – because his works had set an example by which his great faith may be known in the world of men.

Sabbaths, New Moons, Bible study, prayer, tithe paying, diet reform, acts of charity and so on may all be considered Christian works. Doing these things are not what make a man “just” before Yahweh, but without them others will not know what faith one claims to have. And, in fact, James writes that if the works are not there as a natural consequence of the belief, that faith is “dead.” Specifically, “For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also.” (James 2:26) In this he gives an object lesson to accompany the point he has just made. The spirit may be the life of a man, but the body is the part that is seen by others, and neither can exist as a living soul without the other. (Gen 2:7)

Christian works have a twofold blessing. First, there is the revelation of faith to others, the testimony by which we draw others to Christ. (1Cor 2:1) But (secondly) it also reads in Revelation that the saints overcome by means of their testimony as well as by the blood of the Lamb. (Rev 12:11)

In performing the works of faith, we are, as James writes, making that faith perfect. Faith may grow, in a sense, (2Th 1:3) for our faith can be “exercised” by the humble reception of rebuke as it becomes necessary, (Heb 12:11) or by the practice of those acts associated with virtue. (1Tim 4:7) Peter describes the specifics of this spiritual exercise in his Epistle, with works of faith as one of the steps to an invincible faith: “And beside this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue [a right course of thought

and action]; and to virtue knowledge, and to knowledge temperance, etc. [...] for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall.” (2Pet 1:5, 10b)

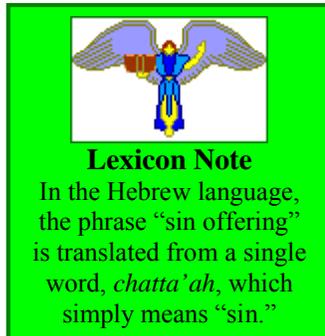
As we give respect to holy acts, including the observance of Yahweh’s holy times, we participate in both the spiritual and physical blessings and invite others to do the same. By our tithes and works of charity, we acknowledge in a concrete fashion that we are children of our Father in Heaven, who gives liberally to all who ask or have need. We also thereby strangle within ourselves any root of selfishness that the tempter may think to plant. Bible study and prayer have the obvious benefits of enrolling us in the theory courses of the school of Christ, by which we learn more about the character of the Creator, that very thing leading to eternal life in those who believe. The lifestyle reforms such as diet or dress benefit and sanctify the body, lacking which neither the mind nor the spirit can be whole. And again, in all these things we also set a visible, worthy example for others to follow.

These were the things taught and understood by early Christians, but such a healthy balance is rarely found today in those who claim to be following in the traditions of these inspired men and women.

3.3 – The Sanctuary Doctrine

In Chapter 1 we read of the Day of Atonement ceremony described in Leviticus 16. This ritual was the annual climax of a yearly consecration cycle for the Israelite nation. The steps for atonement, from a national perspective, were these:

- a) If an individual, or the congregation in general, has committed a “sin through ignorance against any of the commandments of Yahweh” (Lev 4:2) a provision was made that a sacrifice was to be offered as a substitute. (Lev 4: 13, 27)
- b) The sins of the offending individuals were to be confessed over the animal, in effect transferring the guilt symbolically to the innocent offering. (verse 33)
- c) The penitent was then to slay the animal before the Tabernacle. The blood was borne by the priest to the altar, where some was dabbed on the horns, and the remainder poured out at the base. (Lev 4:34)
- d) An often overlooked step is that after portions of certain sacrifices are burned for a sin offering, the blood was to be brought into the most holy place, and the priest was to eat that portion of the sin offering that remained, symbolically taking the very sin into his person and associating it with the Tabernacle itself. (Lev 6:25, 26; 10:12-20) A perversion of this principle, it seems, is the original



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concept behind the “sin-eating” deities of certain pagan cultures (e.g., Tlazolteotl of the Aztecs).

The cumulative result of the atonement cycle was that the sins of the congregation were transferred to the holy elements of the Tabernacle, such as the altar and most holy place, by means of the priests’ ministrations. Most Christian groups, essentially all except for Adventism, believe that the end of sin’s story is either at the Cross itself, or just afterward when Christ, as our High Priest, took the guilt from humanity and presented Himself as an offering before the courts of Heaven. (John 20:17, Eph 4:8, Heb 4:19) They then, since they believe that sin is “over” at that point, see the fires of judgment as essentially *retributive* and *penal* in nature.

This is an extremely limited view of the manner in which judgment is connected to mercy in the Divine mind. It is written, “Mercy and truth are met together; righteousness and peace have kissed each other.” (Psa 85:10)

Whereas the wrath of the almighty is described, in human speech, as “vengeance,” (Deu 32:41, Rom 12:19) this is far from a complete picture. It must be remembered that the Almighty is love and forgiveness personified, and even the most unrepentant of His children were the intended recipients of infinite pity and the ultimate Sacrifice by Him who is “not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.” (2Pet 3:9)

The vengeance of Yahweh is a description of the power of His might, but His heart is far from the destruction of sinners, (Ezek 33:11) whose loss He actively laments in the day of reckoning. Yahweh “is a consuming Fire,” because His hatred of sin is perfect, (Deu 4:24, 9:3) but (since they are part of the overall atonement process) the fires of judgment are *cleansing* and *restorative* for the universe, although the bodies and souls of those who persist in their association with sin are necessarily made *apollumi*, the Greek word for “to perish” in John 3:16, meaning “to go to nothingness.”

Here again, understanding the character of Yahweh makes it much easier to separate sound doctrine from even the most enduring of traditions. We will speak of the concept of “eternal, conscious torment in hell” in a later section, but the focus here is that the fires in the judgment are utilized for the cleansing of the universe, rather than the punitive punishment of sinners, although this is a natural consequence of the perfect system of Divine justice. The focus, even in this final act of righteous indignation, is on blessings rather than penalties, atonement rather than destruction.

Of course, none of this has ever been kept hidden from humanity. (Isa 48:6) Yahweh reveals Himself in the symbols and types of the Old Testament rituals, and this final cleansing of sin is indeed represented in the Day of Atonement ritual that was described in Chapter 1.

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The physical Tabernacle and Temple erected to Yahweh's glory were earthly representations of the true, (Exo 25:9, 40; 1Chron 28:11,12; Heb 8:5) the Heavenly Temple and Tabernacle that exist in Heaven. (Rev 11:19, 14:17, 15:5, 21:3) Now it is true, and often misunderstood, that there will be no visible Temple in the city of New Jerusalem that comes down to earth after the Judgment, (Rev 21:22) but New Jerusalem is only one city (the capitol) in the Kingdom of Heaven, since it "cometh down *out of* Heaven." (Rev 3:12) We further understand that although Christ is "an High Priest after the Order of Melchisedec" because His ministry is eternal, (Heb 5:10, 7:24) He is a High Priest after the *pattern* of the Levitical priesthood, fulfilling its types and ceremonies in a spiritual manner, instituting a more perfect order. (Mat 5:17; 1Cor 15:3, 4; Heb 7:11, 9:1, 19-26)

The Sanctuary Doctrine, in essence, is an acknowledgement of the correspondence between the imperfect, earthly Sanctuary, and the perfect, spiritual Sanctuary in which Christ now operates as an eternal High Priest after the Order of Melchizedek, and according to the symbols of the Levitical system (*e.g.*, sacrifices, the purification of the Most Holy Place, the taking-in of sin by the priest, and so on). This has led to a further understanding of the effects of Yahshua's priesthood, and the development of beliefs distinctive to Adventism, including the concept of an "Investigative Judgment."

3.4 – The Investigative Judgment

The basics of the Investigative Judgment, coming forth naturally from an understanding of the connection between the earthly types and the Heavenly fulfillment, result from an application of the given pattern to what is known of spiritual things. In this the Bible provides a large array of Scriptures that may guide a student into a confident understanding of the matter.



Activity Note

Go through the Scriptures listed here, and understand them all in light of the Investigative Judgment.

The Scriptures Adventists use to support the Investigative Judgment idea as it is connected to the Heavenly Sanctuary include: Dan 7:9-10, Dan 12:1-2, Rev 20:12, Gen 7:10, Ezek 9:1-6, Rev 7:1-3, Isa 62:11, Mat 16:27, Heb 9:27, 1Th 4:17, 1Tim 5:24, Rev 22:11-12, Mat 25:31-34. Some of these are stand-alone verses, and others lead to a sure interpretation when seen in the light of other passages. A concise statement of the doctrine, with relevant references, would be:

Yahshua the Messiah has come to earth and died for the sins of mankind. (1Cor 5:7) In so doing, He took the sins of humanity unto Himself, (2Cor 5:21) and ascended to the Heavenly Sanctuary to offer the Sacrifice of Himself before the Divine Courts, (John 20:17, Heb 10:20) and to operate as our High Priest before the Most Holy Place. (Heb 9:11) He has promised to return at some point to collect the faithful saints from earth

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(John 14:3) before it is destroyed in the fires of judgment and purification. (2Pet 3:10) At some point before Christ returns, the cases of all men will have been decided for good or for ill, (Rev 22:11) because He comes to gather home those *already* judged faithful, (Rev 22:12) and those who follow the wicked one are destroyed by the brightness of His coming, (2Th 2:8-12; Rev 19:20, 21; 2 Tim 4:1) reserved for a final judgment a thousand years later. (Rev 20:5)

It is the fact that “the cases of all men will have been decided for good or for ill” before the return of Christ that has led to the idea of an investigative, ongoing judgment before the second coming. When the Messiah returns to earth, it will not be to “judge” in the sense of deciding, but to “judge” in the sense of handing down a judgment, to separate those who are already sheep from those who are already goats. (Mat 25:32,33) Regarding that day He says, as referenced above, “And, behold, I come quickly; and *my reward is with me*, to give every man according as his work shall be.” (Rev 22:12) The inheritance has already been “prepared” for the saints, (John 14:2) and the lake of fire, though not yet ignited, has been “prepared” for the devil, his angels, and (by association) unrepentant sinners, for that time. (Mat 25:41)

We read, “Some men’s sins are open beforehand, going before to judgment; and some men they follow after.” (1Timothy 5:24) In a sense, Paul seems to be speaking about the judgment of other men, because just afterwards he writes, “Likewise also the good works of some are manifest beforehand; and they that are otherwise cannot be hid.” (verse 25) At the same time, this must also be applied spiritually, because if your sins go “before to judgment” and are cleared away, they will not continue to be a stumbling block to the humans around you, and they will also be blotted out in the spiritual judgment of Heaven. (Mat 16:19, 18:18)

This process of judgment, “preparing” both the reward and punishment for created beings, began in an active sense in the year 1844. Adventists have long understood and applied the prophecies of Daniel to this matter, particularly the passage below:

“And [the saint – literally, the “holy one”] said unto me, ‘Unto two thousand and three hundred days; then shall the sanctuary be cleansed.’” (Dan 8:14) Though Daniel did not understand the vision, (verse 15) the angel Gabriel appeared to him and specified, “Understand, O son of man: for at the time of the end shall be the vision.” (Dan 8:17) Gabriel then led Daniel through a series of symbolic lessons regarding human history, down to a prophecy of an individual representing pagan Rome standing up “against the Prince of princes.” (verse 25)

The experience proved to be too much for Daniel, who “fainted, and was sick certain days,” (verse 27) requiring a second visit from the angel who continued the explanation in the next chapter.

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In chapter 9, Gabriel again approaches the matter by pointing to the state of Israel in Babylonian exile, and then he gives the starting-point of the vision, saying, “Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people and upon thy holy city, to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up the vision and prophecy, and to anoint the most Holy. Know therefore and understand, that from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem unto the Messiah the Prince shall be seven weeks, and threescore and two weeks; the street shall be built again, and the wall, even in troublous times.

“And after threescore and two weeks shall Messiah be cut off, but not for Himself; and the people of the prince that shall come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary; and the end thereof shall be with a flood, and unto the end of the war desolations are determined. And He shall confirm the covenant with many for one week, and in the midst of the week He shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease, and for the overspreading of abominations He shall make it desolate, even until the consummation, and that determined shall be poured upon the desolate.” (Dan 9:24-27)

In order to make the numbers associated with that passage easy to follow, Adventists often provide a chart similar to the one below, reflecting the principle that every “day” in a symbolic statement or prophecy is equivalent to an earthly year in both Old and New Testament usage. (Num 14:34, Ezek 4:6, Luke 13:32) We then obtain the following:

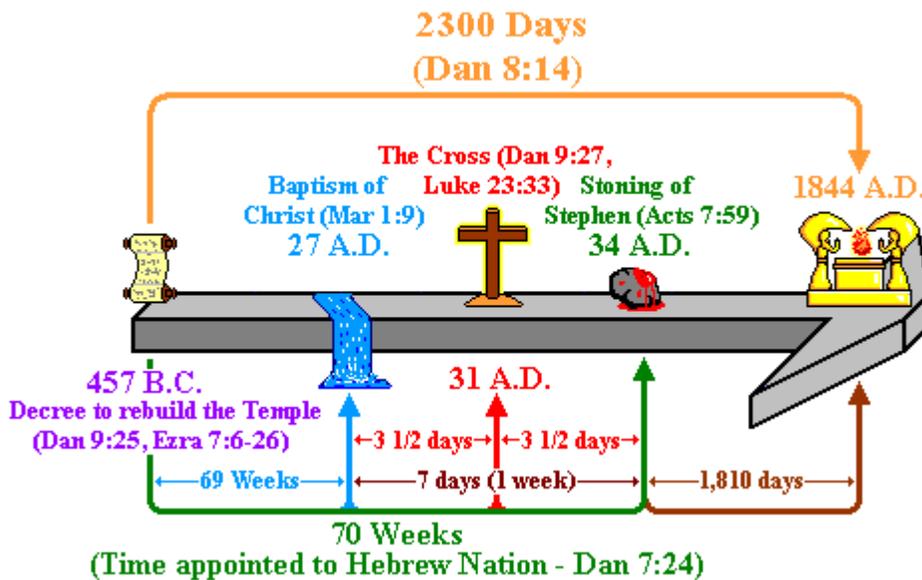


Fig. 3.1 – The Timeline of Daniel’s Prophecy

It is very important to understand that both the passages of Daniel in which Gabriel spoke were provided by the angel in response to the question of “how long” the Sanctuary of the Almighty would be despised or trodden down. (Dan 8:13, 9:17) Both these passages are referring to the same set of

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events; therefore the beginning of the timeline in Daniel 9 must also be applied to the identical question being answered in the chapter before it. The 2300 days begins at precisely the same time as the “seventy weeks,” not only because they are answering the same question, but also because Gabriel specifically indicates that the seventy weeks are “determined” (literally “cut out”) from the larger timeframe described just before.

In other words, OF the 2300 days, seventy weeks were provided to the Hebrews “to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up the vision and prophecy, and to anoint the most Holy.” Unfortunately, they did none of those things; they certainly did not “anoint” the most Holy, either by respecting the physical Sanctuary by national confession and repentance, or by respecting the Messiah, the “anointed One” when He appeared among them. (John 1:11) Because of this the Messiah, who appeared in the last (69th) week, (Dan 9:25) was “cut off, but not for himself,” (Dan 9:26) and in so doing caused “the sacrifice and the oblation to cease,” (verse 27) and declared the House of Israel “desolate” until the end of the earthly age. (Mat 23:38)

Three and a half years after the cross (which was seven years, a symbolic week, after Yahshua’s ministry began) the Gospel officially went to the Gentiles, largely through the efforts of Peter and Paul, (Acts 10, 13:46, Eph 3:1) bringing in a Kingdom of Righteousness that was not national, but global, in scale. This was the end of the time allotted to the Nation of Israel as the sole guardians of the knowledge of Yahweh. Individuals from every nation were now accepted through Christ. (Rev 14:6)

Seventy weeks is four hundred and ninety days and, if subtracted from the original total of 2300 days, this leaves us with 1,810 days (or years of actual time). Counting from 34 A.D., in which the last “timestamp” event took place, we are brought down to the year 1844. At this point the Sanctuary was to “be cleansed.” (Dan 8:14) To the *Millerites*, the followers of a Baptist minister named William Miller, this was thought to be the return of Christ, since they believed that the earth was Yahweh’s sanctuary. Scripturally, however, this is not true. We read, “And He built His Sanctuary like high palaces, *like* the earth which He hath established for ever.” (Psalm 78:69) “For He hath looked down from the height of His Sanctuary; from Heaven did Yahweh behold the earth.” (Psa 102:19)

Two things immediately become clear from those verses. First, the earth is *like* the Sanctuary in that it holds certain characteristics in common with it; but the two are not identical. Second, according to the parallelism in the Hebrew Psalm, the phrase “the height of His Sanctuary” is set in apposition to the word “Heaven,” meaning that the Sanctuary of Yahweh is a spiritual, rather than earthly, construct. Because this key element of the Bible’s teachings was not fully understood, the Millerites experienced what came to be known as “The Great Disappointment.” The Messiah did not return.

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Some, who did not believe that the clear and mathematical lines of interpretation had been totally in error, continued to search the Scriptures for the meaning of the vision given to Daniel and explained by the angel Gabriel. From these remaining students of the prophecy came the first Seventh-day Adventists.

One of the doctrines unique to this new movement was the understanding of the Sanctuary as a spiritual place, as described in the previous section, and that the “cleansing of the Sanctuary” was the beginning of a work of final Atonement such as that which is described in Leviticus 16. Yahshua, as the High Priest, was making “an atonement for the holy sanctuary, and he shall make an atonement for the tabernacle of the congregation, and for the altar, and he shall make an atonement for the priests, and for all the people of the congregation.” (Lev 16:33)

That word “atonement” is the Hebrew *kaphar*, and it means “a reconciliation, a purging.” The result of this purging is the state of being clean, as it reads of a woman undergoing the post-childbirth ritual, “she shall bring a lamb of the first year for a burnt offering, and a young pigeon, or a turtledove, for a sin offering, unto the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, unto the priest, who shall offer it before Yahweh, and make *kaphar* for her; and she shall be cleansed from the issue of her blood.” (Lev 12:6, 7)



Figure 3.2 – The Book of Life

A “Woman,” or a Church, (Jer 6:2) that undergoes this process is declared clean. Her sins are blotted out of the symbolic *Book of Life* that is mentioned in the Scriptures. Names may be blotted out of the Book if sins are recorded against an individual, (Exo 32:33) and such as these are destroyed in the final judgment. (Rev 20:15) On the other hand, those who have their sins “cleansed” have their names retained in the Book of Life, and of such it is written, “And there shall in no wise enter into [New Jerusalem] any thing that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie; but they which are written in the Lamb’s Book of Life.” (Rev 21:27, cf. Dan 12:1) When the “Books” are opened, (Dan 7:10, Rev 20:12) there will be some names retained, and some whose names have been blotted out because the sins have been retained. The Investigative Judgment is simply a means by which the Bible describes the process of setting this in order.

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The verse in Leviticus 16 regarding the “atonement” made for the Sanctuary is the only similar passage in all of Scripture. It uses a word of this ceremony for the final putting-away of Israel’s sins that means “to purge,” an event resulting in the state of being clean. The purging of this Sanctuary, Adventists concluded, that is represented by the “cleansing of the Sanctuary” prophesied to begin in 1844, is the process of atonement just before the return of Christ, a work of judgment described in Leviticus “that ye may be clean from all your sins before Yahweh,” (Lev 16:30) a solemn investigation in which “ye shall afflict your souls,” (Lev 23:27) indicating a serious contemplation of the events taking place. This is the only conclusion that can be reached if the Scripture is allowed to define Its own terms and thereby interpret Itself – for no other manner of cleansing is mentioned for the Sanctuary but this particular ritual.

Now, some have objected to this understanding by pointing out that the High Priest only enters into the Most Holy Place of the earthly Sanctuary in order to cleanse it once a year. And if we may enter “the holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way, which He hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, His flesh,” (*i.e.*, at His death and resurrection) why do we say that He entered the Most Holy place in 1844?

This is an important objection, and must be addressed. The issue, as is the case with so much else in the Bible, is one of *timing*.

Reading the account of the Levitical priesthood, we find indeed that the High Priest (who was represented by Moses before his brother’s official ministry had begun), had to first prepare the sanctuary, including the elements of the Most Holy place, by anointing it. (Lev 8:10-12) Thereafter the ministry of the Holy Place would begin, and the officiating priest would not again enter the innermost chamber except for the annual cleansing. Leviticus points out that the Most Holy place was anointed with oil, but the Book of Hebrews indicates that its instruments were also sprinkled with blood by way of preparation. (Heb 9:21)

Thus, it is rightly said that, “by His own blood He entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us.” (Heb 9:12) The word “once” there should not be taken to mean that He would not again enter this place, but that He entered it with a complete offering. He entered with the full measure of the sacrifice “all at once,” as the Greek word used may indicate, as opposed to every day with new blood. (verses 13, 14)

An additional factor is that from the viewpoint of the earth, Heaven is the “Most Holy Place.” Seen from the perspective of one already in Heaven, as Christ has been since the ascension, the Most Holy Place is the Glory within the heart of “the Tabernacle of the Testimony in Heaven.” (Rev 15:5) Can this position be shown from the Scriptures? Absolutely.

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The author of Hebrews is using all of Heaven as the place into which Christ entered upon His resurrection. We read of the “better covenant,” (Heb 8:6) “by His own blood He entered in once into the Holy Place, having obtained eternal redemption for us.” (Heb 9:12) He is speaking here of the “most holy place,” as see from Heb 9:7, speaking of the “second tabernacle,” that which is within the first into which the High Priest went “once every year.” But he is also speaking about Heaven as this “most holy place” from the perspective of human beings. We read here, as Hebrews continues the discussion: “For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true; but into *Heaven Itself*, now to appear in the presence of God for us.” (verse 24)

By the emphatic expression “Heaven Itself,” the author of Hebrews shows his emphasis – not on a mode of ministry within Heaven, but the fact that the Messiah has presented Himself before the Almighty once and ultimately on behalf of humanity. Yet Hebrews itself makes the statement that Christ at that time entered into something akin to the daily ministry that took place in the first compartment of the Tabernacle. We read that because Yahshua became the High Priest, “He is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them [...] who needeth not daily, as those high priests, to offer up sacrifice, first for His own sins, and then for the people’s; for this He did once, when He offered up Himself.” (Heb 7:25, 27)

Regardless, then, of the specific focus held by the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews, we find, by virtue of the fact that the Most Holy Place had to be prepared for service, and the fact that all of Heaven is “most holy” from an earthly perspective, there are no inconsistencies. Christ did indeed enter the “Most Holy Place” at the inauguration of His Priesthood; but He thereafter began to minister in the Holy Place (which is still “most holy” from earth) until 1844 when the Day of Atonement antitype began.

Note that there is also a difference between the atonement and the sacrifice! This section of the Guidebook is lengthy, and for good reason. Some Bible students have left Adventism due to a lack of understanding of this matter. Christ does not daily offer sacrifice on behalf of sinners; this He did once on the cross. Yet despite this, He “ever liveth” to make intercession for mankind by virtue of that one, ultimate sacrifice. In other words, He is performing the role of the High Priest without the need for the continual sacrifices – but the atonement itself is described as a *process*, not an *event*, from the perspective of the humans undergoing its effects.

From the perspective of earth, Christ entered into the presence of God upon His return to Heaven, the “most holy place,” yet once there He embarked upon a work of *daily* atonement, (which took place in the holy place, *not* the most holy place of the Tabernacle) for which He “ever liveth,” but that comes to an end before He returns to collect His saints. The work of *final* atonement can only be understood by looking at the last cleansing described

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for the earthly Sanctuary, which is patterned after the Heavenly, and this topic is not discussed at all by the author of Hebrews, who was concerned then with the present atonement, the present activities of the Messiah in Heaven.

Since 1844, the time predicted by the prophet Daniel, Yahshua has been actively preparing to return, saying through His servants, “Behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me to give every man according as his work shall be.” (Rev 22:12) It is just as important for us today to know and declare what Yahshua is doing to prepare for this event than it was for the author of Hebrews to know and declare what He was doing in his own time.

3.5 – The State of The Dead and Eternal Hellfire

3.5.1 – Doctrinal Overview

This is a doctrine of some consequence, because it has both practical and spiritual applications. “What happens when we die” is one of those questions that every religion (including secular humanism) attempts to answer in one form or another. The Bible is explicit regarding what happens when a man dies: “For the living know that they shall die; but the dead know not any thing, neither have they any more a reward; for the memory of them is forgotten [...] whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might; for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave, whither thou goest.” (Ecc 9:5, 10)

“[Yahshua] saith unto them, ‘Our friend Lazarus sleepeth; but I go, that I may awake him out of sleep.’ Then said His disciples, ‘Lord, if he sleep, he shall do well.’ Howbeit Yahshua spake of his death; but they thought that He had spoken of taking of rest in sleep. Then said Yahshua unto them plainly, ‘Lazarus is dead.’” (John 11:11-14)

“His breath goeth forth, he returneth to his earth; in that very day his thoughts perish.” (Psalm 146:4)

“And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt.” (Dan 12:2)

“And they stoned Stephen, calling upon God, and saying, ‘Lord Yahshua, receive my spirit.’ And he kneeled down, and cried with a loud voice, ‘Lord, lay not this sin to their charge.’ And when he had said this, he fell asleep.” (Acts 7:59)

Whenever the Bible describes death, particularly when discussing its effects on the individual, it is considered a sleep in which there are no dreams, knowledge or thoughts. There is no punishment until the judgment, (Dan 12:2) and no reward until the return of Christ. (2Tim 4:8) Those who teach that the dead go immediately to judgment on the basis of one or two

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misunderstood verses must ignore what the verses above declare. Yet there are no contradictions in the Scriptures, and therefore absolutely no need to ignore one passage in favor of another.

It is true that some passages that seem “strange” (at first glance) in light of those verses. A few examples are these: “... man goeth to his long home, and the mourners go about the streets [...] Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was: and the spirit shall return unto God who gave it.” (Ecc 12:5b, 7) There is also Christ’s teaching about hell: “And if thy hand offend thee, cut it off; it is better for thee to enter into life maimed, than having two hands to go into hell, into the fire that never shall be quenched, where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched.” (Mark 9:43:44)



Emphasis Note

When defining a Biblical word, it is important to look at both its first use, and its most common contextual meaning.

The first of these comes from a misunderstanding of the terms “spirit” and “soul.” Ecclesiastes 12 states that, as Stephen requested, the “spirit” returns to God who gave it. This is not at all saying that any conscious part of the man goes anywhere when he dies, for the same author mentions that the dead do not know anything. (Ecc 9:5) In fact, the word “spirit” there is the Hebrew *ruach*, which means simply, “breath,” and is used figuratively to represent the essence of life that activates a living being (whether human or animal – Ecc 3:21). The Scriptures put a distinction between the “spirit,” which is merely the activating force of the living, and the “soul” that contains the thoughts and consciousness. We read, “And Yahweh Elohim formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul.” (Gen 2:7)

Man is a combination of elements, a construct composed of two parts: body and spirit (or “breath of life”). *Neshamah*, the Hebrew term for “breath of life” is used in parallel to the word *ruach* in such verses as, “The Spirit [*ruach*] of God hath made me, and the breath [*neshamah*] of the Almighty hath given me life.” (Job 33:4) Now the resulting fusion of body and spirit is not, contrary to many popular Christian doctrines, immortal. The idea of an “immortal soul” is a pagan myth, and this has led to the concept of “eternal hellfire,” a gross and inconceivably brutal doctrine that is nevertheless held conscientiously by a number of Bible-believing groups.

The Scriptures state on several occasions, and with no contextual qualifiers:

“Behold, all souls are mine; as the soul of the father, so also the soul of the son is mine: the soul that sinneth, it shall die.” (Ezek 18:4)

“And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul; but rather fear Him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.” (Mat 10:28)

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Again, “The soul that sinneth, it shall die.” (Ezek 18:20a)

Further, only the Godhead is declared to be naturally immortal; not even the angels are described in this manner, for they too (if fallen) shall be destroyed in the final judgment. We read of Christ Yahshua that He is, “the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings, and Lord of lords, who *only* hath immortality, dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto.” (1Tim 6:15, 16, *cf.* 1Tim 1:17) Created beings may attain immortality by connection with Him, but it is something to be sought, (Rom 2:7) something to be “put on,” (1Cor 15:54) and *not* something inherently true for human souls upon their creation.



Cautionary Note

When discussing “Hell,” always define what precisely is meant (e.g., from which passage) in order to avoid confusion.

In both figurative language and doctrinal exposition, the soul is declared to be subject to death, (*i.e.*, mortal) and Christ states that “Hell” is the place for this destruction. Now, we must again be careful with our terms, because confusion has arisen due to the diverse number of words translated into English as merely “Hell.” In the Old Testament, the word “Hell” comes from the Hebrew term *She’ol*, which means simply the figurative place of the dead. It is not a place of torment, but a place of silence, (Psa 31:17) of darkness, (Job 17:13) and the single, collective destination of all who die. (1Sam 2:6) The reason why many readers of English translations do not realize this is because the word is usually translated “grave,” not “Hell.”

Now in the New Testament, Christ uses a different word that is translated “Hell,” and this is *Gehenna*, which is described as a place of burning. (Mat 5:22) But it should be noted that this is never declared to be the place where people go immediately upon death. In fact, the New Testament puts a difference between Hell (the collective place of the dead) and the fire of destruction that Christ labels *Gehenna*. It is written, “And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death.” (Rev 20:14) The word for Hell in this passage is the Greek *Hades*, which is the proper term in the New Testament to correspond with the Hebrew *She’ol*. The confusion arises because both *Gehenna* and *Hades* are translated as “Hell,” though their properties are quite different. *Gehenna*, the place of burning, is properly represented by the “lake of fire,” and the state of the dead consistently described in both Testaments of the Bible is *She’ol* or *Hades*.

But what about Yahshua’s statement of those in *Gehenna*, that “their worm dieth not,” and other verses that call the fires of destruction “unquenchable,” (Luke 3:17) and “eternal?” (Jude 1:7) The first is easily understood; the term unquenchable (*asbestos*) simply means that the fire cannot be actively extinguished. There is no escape from the purging flames, for they cannot be doused. Yet if a fire burns until there is nothing left to burn, and everything is reduced to ashes, this fire was not quenched,

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it simply completed its task to the end. This is precisely what the Scriptures say will happen to sinners in the judgment:

“For, behold, the day cometh, that shall burn as an oven; and all the proud, yea, and all that do wickedly, shall be stubble. ‘And the day that cometh shall burn them up,’ saith Yahweh of hosts, ‘that it shall leave them neither root nor branch.’” (Mal 4:1) “But the wicked shall perish, and the enemies of Yahweh shall be as the fat of lambs; they shall consume; into smoke shall they consume away.” (Psa 37:20)

“Behold, they shall be as stubble; the fire shall burn them; they shall not deliver themselves from the power of the flame. There shall not be a coal to warm at, nor fire to sit before it.” (Isa 47:14) We note that there is no deliverance from the flame because it cannot be doused; yet the fire does go out, though it is described as never being *quenched*. “It shall not be quenched night nor day; the smoke thereof shall go up for ever. From generation to generation it shall lie waste; none shall pass through it for ever and ever. *But* the cormorant and the bittern shall possess it; the owl also and the raven shall dwell in it; and he shall stretch out upon it the line of confusion, and the stones of emptiness.” (Isa 34:10, 11)

When the Messiah speaks about “their worm” not dying, this is precisely the imagery He is invoking; the expression “their worm” is not a figurative representation of the soul, but rather the agent of destruction that works “for ever” until nothing is left and life can return to the desolated land – this is the “new Heaven and a new earth; for the first Heaven and the first earth were passed away.” (Rev 21:1) In fact, Christ is quoting directly from the prophet mentioned above. It is Isaiah who first says, “And [the redeemed] shall go forth, and look upon the carcasses of the men that have transgressed against me; for *their worm shall not die*, neither shall their fire be quenched, and they shall be an abhorring unto all flesh.” (Isa 66:24) In another place it is said that we shall, “tread down the wicked; for they shall be ashes under the soles of [our] feet.” (Mal 4:3)

This is consistent with the way the Hebrew language uses the term “forever,” which simply means “until death,” or “for an era of time.” (Exo 21:6) Sodom and Gomorrah, which are described as burning with “eternal fire,” (Jude 1:7) are not ablaze now; similarly Jerusalem, once suffering fire that “shall not be quenched,” (Jer 17:27) has been rebuilt; and people are living there now. The fact that the work of the destroying agents (such as flames and worms) is described as eternal or unstoppable does not prevent the death of the wicked and their destruction to carcasses, and ultimately to ashes. The *judgment* is eternal, yes, the punishment is eternal, (Mat 25:46) but the “torment” is the reduction to this state of death that is placed in opposition to eternal life. To



Emphasis Note

The Scriptures never equate the concept of eternal death with eternal *conscious* torment, and this is a key difference.

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say that there is still consciousness in “spiritual death” is to invent doctrines entirely alien to the Scriptural record.

3.5.2 – Six Objections Answered

There are about six passages of Scripture that are routinely cited in objection to this doctrine by those forms of Christianity that have unfortunately accepted a form of spiritualism into their theology. These passages are Luke 23:39-43; 1Samuel 28:11,12; Luke 16:19-24; Phil 1:21-24; Rev 6:9,10 and Rev 14:9-11 (*cf.*, Rev 20:10).

Two of these passages can be dealt with at once. The passage from Luke 23 is about the thief dying on the cross beside Christ, of which we have the record “And Yahshua said unto him, ‘Verily I say unto thee, To day shalt thou be with me in paradise.’” (Luke 23:43) The passage in Philippians 1 reads, “For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain. But if I live in the flesh, this is the fruit of my labour; yet what I shall choose I wot not. For I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ, which is far better. Nevertheless to abide in the flesh is more needful for you.” (verses 21-24) He makes a similar statement along the same lines here: “We are confident, I say, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord.” (2Cor 5:8)

Christ appears to be saying to the thief that immediately upon death, “to day,” they will both be in Paradise (equated with Heaven in passages like 2Cor 12:2-4; Rev 2:7 *cf.*, Rev 22:2, 14). Paul seems to be saying that if he departs from this life he will immediately “be with Christ,” because “to be absent from the body [is] to be present with the Lord.” What is being left out of the equation here is the true state of the dead; one cannot understand the divine system of reward and punishment if death is not understood, because judgment generally comes *after* death. (Heb 9:27)



Emphasis Note

Paradise is simply another term for Heaven, not a temporary “holding area” for the righteous dead. See the verses above.

In the case of the thief on the cross, is it true that both he and the Messiah were in Paradise that day? This cannot possibly be the case. Just before sunset, the end of the day, the soldiers discovered that Yahshua had died long before expected. (John 19:31) Conclusively, although He died on the Passover day, Christ did not enter Paradise until His ascension in bodily form. Before this, He was in *Hades*, which we recall to be merely the state of death, (except in pagan mythology) until He was raised on the third day following. (Acts 2:27) So did He break His promise? The promise was not broken; it is partly a matter of punctuation, and partly a matter of timing. Since there are no commas in Greek text, the Savior’s statement would more properly read, “Verily I say unto thee to day shalt thou be with me in paradise.” Without any punctuation, it is plainly seen that although He spoke the promise that

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day (“I say unto thee to day”) it was not fulfilled until they both should enter Paradise at a future time.

In a secondary sense, to the thief it would indeed appear as if no time had passed between his death and the fulfillment of the promise. Even assuming that the thief died that day due to the additional injuries inflicted by the soldiers, (John 19) the next thing he will consciously know (for there is no wisdom or knowledge in death) is the joy of eternal life. However the sentence is worded, therefore, Luke 23 provides no basis for misunderstanding the state of the dead.

In Paul’s case a very similar situation arises. It is better, he decided, to be with Christ upon death, rather than to remain on earth longer. Nevertheless, he comforts himself by the knowledge that he is helping the needy saints in this life until he should be called to rest. Being absent in the body does not, however, mean *immediately* entering Christ’s presence. Paul himself denies the immediacy of it in several passages. He writes, shortly before he is put to death himself by means of a Roman sword, “Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give me *at that day*; and not to me only, but unto all them also that love His appearing.” (2Tim 4:8) From Paul’s point of view, death would bring him immediately to Christ, but the actual event would take place “at that day” of “His appearing” when not only he, but all the redeemed, would receive the reward that Christ brings with Him. (Rev 22:12) As Daniel points out, it is only after the sleeping (*i.e.*, dead) individuals “awake” that they receive the blessing or curses of their characters’ destinies. (Dan 12:2)

In another place, Paul tells those who are mourning the death of their friends, “But I would not have you to be *ignorant*, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring [Gk: *ago*] with Him. For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep. For the Lord Himself shall descend from Heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God – and the dead in Christ shall rise first.



Cautionary Note

Misunderstanding the Greek for “bring” in 1Th 4:14 can cause confusion.

Ago means, “to bring forth,” in this context.

“Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord. Wherefore comfort one another with these words.” (1Th 4:13-18)

The word for “bring” in 1Th 4:14 (Gk: *ago*) has been the source of some unnecessary confusion. It does not always mean to bring with you from one place to another. It has the meanings, “to guide,” “to bring forth,” “to bring

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up,” and even to “leave” or “send away” in such verses as Mat 26:46. It is a general term that means “to move from one place to another,” and does not imply that the sleepers are brought back to earth from Heaven with Christ.

The main point here is that Paul does not say, “The ones who have died are rejoicing with Christ this day.” Far from it, in order to comfort them, he points to the day when they will *receive* their life even as Christ “rose again;” they are “brought up” like Him when the crowns of life are presented to the saints. Paul points to the resurrection as the hope of the Christian, not the bliss of disembodied spirits, cautioning believers not to be “ignorant” of this matter. Sadly, although Paul says, “comfort one another with *these* words,” most funerals in modern Christendom speak words of an entirely different nature from *these* words in order to comfort the grieving. This is tremendously unfortunate.

The next passage worth discussion is found in 1Samuel 28. We read, “Then said the woman [to Saul], ‘Whom shall I bring up unto thee?’ And he said, ‘Bring me up Samuel.’ And when the woman saw Samuel, she cried with a loud voice, and the woman spake to Saul, saying, ‘Why hast thou deceived me? for thou art Saul.’ [...] And Saul perceived that it was Samuel, and he stooped with his face to the ground, and bowed himself. [...] Then said Samuel, ‘Wherefore then dost thou ask of me, seeing Yahweh is departed from thee, and is become thine enemy?’” (1Sam 28:11,12, 14, 16)

In this unusual passage some Christians have seen the “spirit,” or disembodied soul, of the prophet Samuel being raised by a pagan necromancer and forced to speak with a king of whom it was already said, “Yahweh answered him not, neither by dreams, nor by Urim, nor by prophets.” (1Sam 28:6) Aside from these problems within the very chapter itself, it must be understood that the narrator of Samuel is speaking from Saul’s perspective. Saul “perceived that it was Samuel,” and the record thereafter refers to the entity by this name, despite the fact that just a few lines earlier it was said that Yahweh would not speak to Saul by means of prophets. Did a pagan sorceress force the Almighty to reverse His decision? This cannot be reasonably accepted.

To settle this matter very simply, all one needs to do is turn to a description of the incident that is not recorded with the inclusion of Saul’s perceptions. By the grace of the Almighty, the Bible is perfect, and contains enough information to understand every teaching. We read in the Book of Chronicles, a historical record that comments on the events that took place in the books of Samuel and Kings, “So Saul died for his transgression which he committed against Yahweh, even against the word of Yahweh, which he kept not; and also for asking [counsel] of [one that had] a familiar spirit, to enquire [of it].” (1Chron 10:13)

I have deliberately left certain words in [brackets], as in Section 3.1 that deals with the Sabbath, in order to demonstrate that the same kinds of misunderstandings may arise from those translators who have added their

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opinions to the Bible. The original text reads, “Saul died for his transgression [...] and also for asking of a *familiar spirit*, to enquire.” The Bible does not say that Saul’s death resulted from consulting with the woman herself (although he did consult with her). A “woman that hath a familiar spirit” in Hebrew is “*i’isha behalath owb.*” The word in Chronicles that says what Saul consulted is merely an *owb*, the familiar spirit itself.

What Saul experienced was a deception by a familiar spirit, a demon that attaches itself to a human in order to provide the individuals with certain powers such as clairvoyance, (*i.e.*, divination – Deu 18:10) precognition (*i.e.*, soothsaying – Acts 16:16) and so on. Samuel, who had died, remained dead, and was not subject to the incantations of a sorceress against the expressly stated will of the Creator. By looking at the complete record of Biblical events, we need never be concerned with going too far into error without finding a corrective statement or teaching. Looking at both passages together, each with their purpose, we find from the Book of Samuel that Saul indeed believed he was speaking to the departed prophet, and was thereby deceived; while from Chronicles we see the statement of facts from which we may support doctrinal teachings.

Luke 16, the section dealing with the teaching about “Lazarus and the rich man” is one of the most often quoted passages to “prove” that there is consciousness between death and the resurrection. We read, “There was a certain rich man, which was clothed in purple and fine linen, and fared sumptuously every day; and there was a certain beggar named Lazarus, which was laid at his gate, full of sores, and desiring to be fed with the crumbs which fell from the rich man’s table; moreover, the dogs came and licked his sores.

“And it came to pass that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels into Abraham’s bosom. The rich man also died, and was buried; and in hell he lift up his eyes, being in torments, and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom. And he cried and said, ‘Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water, and cool my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame.’” (Luke 16:19-24)

There are some Christians who believe that these events literally took place, and provide a foundation for believing in eternal, conscious torment in hell upon the moment of death, and an immediate reward in *Abraham’s bosom*, if not in Heaven itself, for the righteous.

It first needs to be established, and established firmly, that this passage is a parable, not a doctrinal discourse. Some say, “Luke 16 is a teaching, not a parable,” but the only justification given for this statement is, “Since it contains a name, ‘Lazarus,’ this means it is not a parable.” There is absolutely no Biblical support for this understanding. In fact, parables recorded in the Bible do contain names, even names of then-living individuals: “And he took up his parable, and said, ‘Balak the king of Moab

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hath brought me from Aram...” (Num 23:7, *cf.*, Num 24:15, Num 24:21, and Psalm 78 where the “children of Ephraim” are mentioned)



Cautionary Note

When discussing the Scriptures, always ask for *Biblical* justification of the “principles” that are invoked as guidelines.

That objection being eliminated, we may further ask what positive evidence exists from which we may conclude that Luke 16 is parabolic in nature. The evidence that may be supplied is conclusive; we know from the Scriptures that Yahshua always spoke in parables when addressing crowds, and only spoke plain doctrine when He was alone with His disciples. We read, “All these things spake Yahshua unto the multitude in parables; and without a parable spake He not unto them.” (Mat 13:34) “But without a parable spake He not unto them; and when they were alone, He expounded all things to His disciples.” (Mark 4:34) “And He said unto [His disciples], ‘Unto you it is given to know the mystery of the kingdom of God; but unto them that are without, all these things are done in parables.’” (Mark 4:11)

And were there indeed crowds around when Luke 16 was spoken? There were indeed many people listening, including the Pharisees who were being hostile to His ministry. The discourse in Luke 16 actually begins two chapters earlier, where we read, “And it came to pass, as He went into the house of one of the chief Pharisees to eat bread on the Sabbath day, that they watched Him. [...] And He put forth a parable to those which were bidden, when He marked how they chose out the chief rooms; saying unto them...” (Luke 14:1, 7) He then provides a series of parables. At the pause in the next chapter we read, “Then drew near unto Him all the publicans and sinners for to hear Him. And the Pharisees and scribes murmured, saying, ‘This man receiveth sinners, and eateth with them.’ And He spake this parable unto them, saying...” (Luke 15:1-3)

What follows is another series of parables, including some of His most well known, such as that of the “Prodigal son.” (Luke 15:11-32) While the Messiah did direct some of these parables specifically to His disciples, (Luke 16:1) the Pharisees *et al* were there the entire time to hear what was being said about them. (verse 14) There is no break in the narrative at all until Luke 17:11, and the passage represents one protracted discourse during which many individuals beside His disciples were present and paying attention. Luke’s Gospel, as we may recall, is the one most careful to describe things “all things from the very first [...] in order.” (Luke 1:3)

All the Biblical evidence points toward the story of the rich man and Lazarus being just one in a series of parables spoken in public on a Sabbath day. But having seen this, what is the significance of a label? Some might say, “Even if it is a parable, the words and concepts are still true.”

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The concepts are indeed true in parables, but the details are often invented in order to merely emphasize these concepts. In other parables, the mustard seed is called “less than all the seeds that be in the earth,” (Mark 4:31) but it is not the smallest of all seeds. It is then said by Christ that, “when it is sown, it groweth up, and becometh greater than all herbs.” (Mark 4:32) This is also not botanically accurate; but from the point of view of the *hearers*, the mustard seed was a perfect example of something that begins small and becomes large – the point of the parable was made.

Stories told in the Bible to make a point will sometimes have very strange settings. For example, in Judges, “The trees went forth on a time to anoint a king over them; and they said unto the olive tree, ‘Reign thou over us.’” (Judges 9:8) In the House of Yahweh, “the stone shall cry out of the wall, and the beam out of the timber shall answer it.” (Hab 2:11) “The thistle that was in Lebanon sent to the cedar that was in Lebanon, saying, ‘Give thy daughter to my son to wife.’” (2Kings 14:9) In the New Testament, Yahshua said that the Pharisees “strain at a gnat, and swallow a camel.” (Mat 23:24)

None of these things literally took place, but in each case the point was made. Those who focus on the details in such cases as these commit a grave error, and are in danger of both missing the point of the teaching and constructing a theology based largely on metaphors. This is the same error made by Trinitarians, who personify the Holy Spirit simply because of the actions it is described as performing (which are elsewhere attributed to objects or principles). Even worse, in the case of the teaching about death and hell, they are in danger of accepting a viewpoint that both contradicts several explicit verses of Scripture and misrepresents the character of the Creator who set Divine Law in place.

The parable of Luke 16 was provided to reveal that those who are blessed in this life are not necessarily in Heaven’s favor, but – as was stated at the beginning of this Guidebook – it is character, not wealth, power or possessions, that determines true success in the long run. Reading more into the details of the parable is not a sound basis for undoing the theology established by Solomon, David and the inspired prophets regarding the state of the dead.

Finally, we have a couple passages from the Book of Revelation that appear to give a decidedly different teaching about death and the afterlife than Ecclesiastes, Isaiah and Micah. We read, “And when [the Lamb] had opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of them that were slain for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held. And they cried with a loud voice, saying, ‘How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth?’” (Rev 6:9, 10)

In another passage we read of the punishment of the wicked from the Third Angel’s Message discussed in Chapter 2: “The [one who receives the Mark

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of the Beast] shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of His indignation; and he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb. And the smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever; and they have no rest day nor night, who worship the beast and his image, and whosoever receiveth the mark of his name.” (Rev 14:10, 11) This is said to apply also to Satan himself: “And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever.” (Rev 20:10)

This appears to be a contradiction of the idea that the wicked “consume away” into smoke, and all that is left of them is ashes upon which the new, clean Creation is built. If it is understood, however, that John’s vision draws upon imagery already seen by previous prophets, then we can (as in the case of the “worm dieth not” statement) gain further insight by going to the source – the original record of the inspiration.

First, however, the “souls under the altar” can be quickly explained. This passage, taken by itself, appears to speak of disembodied souls in Heaven who are eager for vengeance upon their adversaries. The first thing we need to ask is, “Is this altar in Heaven?” Most readers have assumed so, yet John merely says, “And when He had opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of them that were slain for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held.” (Rev 6:9) If we look at the events taking place when the seals are broken, they all result in effects upon the earth, not in Heaven. There is victory, violence, famine and death before, and earthquakes and other natural disasters thereafter.

Further, we note that there is no Altar of Sacrifice in Heaven. From Heaven’s point of view, the Altar of Sacrifice is the earth, where the Lamb of God was slain. (Luke 9:22, Heb 13:12) There is an Altar in Heaven, but it is a golden Altar of Incense, not of the Bronze one of sacrifice. (Exo 39:38, Rev 9:13)

We read next of “blood” that “[Yahweh] said [to Cain], ‘What hast thou done? The voice of thy brother’s blood crieth unto me from the ground.’” (Gen 4:10) Converts are called, “to Yahshua, the Mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel.” (Heb 12:24) Blood, which is the “life” of the soul or being, (Gen 9:4) is seen as crying out for vengeance when it is taken unjustly, as was the case with both Abel and Yahshua. The blood of the martyrs is seen as evidence that justice is not satisfied until those who have put them to death for their faith answer to the Almighty. A highly symbolic vehicle is used to represent this fundamental truth, as is used to represent almost every message in John’s



Emphasis Note

Paradise is simply another term for Heaven in the Bible, not a secondary or temporary “holding area” for the righteous dead.

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Apocalypse, and it may be easily understood as symbolism by simply recalling that this idea of blood speaking and crying out for justice has been used since the very first chapters of the Bible.

As we will see in Chapter 6, which deals with how to study the Bible for principle and meaning, if one passage teaches something in a doctrinal discourse or gives an instruction, and another appears to conflict it using symbolism, the doctrinal statement must be given precedent and the instruction obeyed; the meaning or principle represented by the symbolism in the other passage must then be sought. It will often be found that the speaker of the symbolic statement has a particular purpose behind his or her words that has nothing to do with establishing a theological premise.



Activity Note

Can you think of other examples in the Bible where symbolism is used that appears to conflict with stated doctrine?

Finally we come to the objections based upon the punishment for the wicked described in Revelation 14 and 20, where “the smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever; and they have no rest day nor night,” “And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever.” (Rev 20:10)

Two things should be said about the human torment described in Revelation 14. First, it is not said (it is never said) that humans are tormented forever. They are subjected to eternal punishment, and everlasting judgment; this means that the result of the second death is permanent; “smoke” is yet another way to signify the result of the burning, not the actual time spent in the flames. It says, specifically, that the “smoke” of their torment rises forever, and this is significant wording for one familiar with the description of Old Testament sacrifices. When an offering was provided for sin, the “smoke” of the offering was a memorial of the sacrifice that bore with it the significance of the death. A few examples: “And thou shalt burn the whole ram upon the altar; it is a burnt offering unto Yahweh: it is a sweet savor, an offering made by fire unto Yahweh.” (Exo 29:18)

“...and Moses burnt the whole ram upon the altar; it was a burnt sacrifice for a sweet savor, and an offering made by fire unto Yahweh.” (Lev 8:21) “And the smoke of the incense, which came with the prayers of the saints, ascended up before God out of the angel’s hand.” (Rev 8:4) “A people that provoketh me to anger continually to my face [...] are a smoke in my nose, a fire that burneth all the day.” (Isa 65:3, 5) “... the priest shall burn the memorial of it upon the altar, to be an offering made by fire, of a sweet savour unto Yahweh.” (Lev 2:2)

When discussing the symbolism Christ used in describing the “worm that dieth not,” we quoted from Isaiah 34. We may quote it here again, and emphasize a slightly different section of the passage: “And the streams [of

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Zion] shall be turned into pitch, and the dust thereof into brimstone, and the land thereof shall become burning pitch. It shall not be quenched night nor day; *the smoke thereof shall go up for ever*, from generation to generation it shall lie waste; none shall pass through it for ever and ever.” (Isa 34:9, 10)

This is clearly the symbolism John was employing in Revelation, and we see that just as the fire that “shall not be quenched” eventually goes out, so the smoke that goes up forever comes forth as a “memorial” (Lev 2:2) from a blaze that does go down before the new creation can be built over the ashes of the old; “His Spirit, It hath gathered them. And He hath cast the lot for them, and His hand hath divided it them by line; they shall possess it for ever, from generation to generation shall they dwell therein.” (Isa 34:17)

But what about Satan? Doesn't it say in Revelation 20 that the head of the fallen angels will be tormented “forever and ever” in the Lake of Fire? The surprising answer is, “No, it doesn't.” The verse reads, “And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever.” (Rev 20:10)

Readers of the English translation might be forgiven for coming away with the conclusion that “the devil [...] shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever.” The problem with this is that the verb for “shall be tormented” is *plural*, not singular – it is not referring to Satan there, but to the Beast and the False Prophet, who are not individuals at all, but systems of political and civil authority; they are kingdoms that have raised themselves against Christ and are to be destroyed utterly in the last days. (Dan 2:44) We will discuss how the Biblical symbols lead to the identification of the Beast and False Prophet in the following section on Biblical Symbolism.

The verse would properly read, “And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever.” Removing the comma, as in the verse with the thief on the cross, provides the necessary subject-verb numerical agreement, and reveals that Lucifer's end is in the destruction that takes away all the earthly systems that oppose the Kingdom of Yahshua; but he himself suffers the damnation of a creature, and not a system.



Instructor Note

Ask your study partner to provide details about the Adventist conception of the Lake of Fire mentioned in *Revelation*.

The kingdoms are seen symbolically as being “tormented” eternally, for their principles are everlastingly repudiated, but the verse is not speaking about the people who compose those kingdoms either. The beast and false prophet are symbolically “cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone” (Rev 19:20) upon Christ's Second Advent, but the wicked dead “lived not again until the thousand years were finished.” (Rev 20:5) In

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other words, even when *all* humans are either in Heaven for the millennium or awaiting the second resurrection, the beast and false prophet are seen as already existing in a lake of fire that does not appear until the Judgment. (Rev 20:9) It is only by understanding that the “forever and ever” applies to the systems and not the individuals can we fully understand what happens to Satan at the very end. He is cast into a lake of fire wherein the systems that espoused his rule are shown to be suffering everlasting torment, but of the fallen angel himself we may read his sentence directly from the words of the Almighty, “*I will bring thee to ashes upon the earth in the sight of all them that behold thee.*” (Ezek 28:18b) Now every verse that speaks of the final judgment is reconciled and harmonized.

3.6 – Biblical Symbolism

3.6.1 – The Woman

This brief will provide a few examples of how Seventh-day Adventists (including those of Creation Seventh Day Adventist Church) arrive at the identities of various individuals and systems mentioned in the prophecies and symbols of the Scriptures. We begin with “the Woman.”

Since we have already made reference to the symbolic “Woman” of Scripture in Chapter 2 and earlier in Chapter 3, this section exists only to provide a more thorough derivation. Jeremiah 6:2 has already been mentioned: “I have likened the daughter of Zion to a comely and delicate woman.” There are also these references:

“For I am jealous over you [the Corinthian Church] with godly jealousy; for I have espoused you to one Husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin [Gk: *parthenos* – a young woman of marriageable age] to Christ.” (2Cor 11:2)

“The elder unto the elect lady and her children, whom I love in the truth; and not I only, but also all they that have known the truth.” (2John 1:1 – epistle to an unknown congregation) Some have speculated that the recipient of John’s second epistle is an actual “woman,” a member of one of the other congregations; this is unlikely, however, since John ends the letter by referring not to himself, but to his own local Church with the words, “The children of thy elect sister greet thee. Amen.” (verse 13)

Paul provides a clear analogy, writing, “For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the Church; and He is the Saviour of the Body. Therefore as the Church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in every thing. Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the Church and gave Himself for It, that He might sanctify and cleanse It with the washing of water by the Word; that He might present It to Himself a glorious Church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that It should be holy and without blemish.” (Eph 5:23-27)

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A little later he states, “For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh. This is a great mystery, but I speak concerning Christ and the Church.” (verses 31, 32)

In the absence of qualifiers, a Woman in Biblical symbolism is considered pure and faithful, contrasted with the Mother of Harlots (see below).

3.6.2 – The Mother of Harlots

We read in Revelation, “So [the angel] carried me away in the spirit into the wilderness; and I saw a woman sit upon a scarlet coloured beast, full of names of blasphemy, having seven heads and ten horns. And the woman was arrayed in purple and scarlet colour, and decked with gold and precious stones and pearls, having a golden cup in her hand full of abominations and filthiness of her fornication. And upon her forehead was a name written, *MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH.*” (Rev 17:3-5)

A woman in Scripture, as we saw from the previous section, is a pure Church, often synonymously used with the term “virgin.” The opposite of this, in principle, is a woman who has proven unfaithful to her husband, or who has not kept herself pure for an eventual marriage. Now, one specific type of unfaithful woman is a harlot, one who is unfaithful for personal gain such as money, position or some other benefit that she feels cannot or will not be provided by the legitimate husband (or husband-to-be).

We need only apply this contrast to the same symbolism we have seen before. If a pure woman is the true and faithful Church, then an unfaithful woman is a religious system that has left its legitimate husband. A harlot, specifically and from a Christian perspective, is a church that has gone after worldly benefits to the undoing of its relationship with Yahshua. We read the details of an unfaithful religious system here: “Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen, and is become the habitation of devils, and the hold of every foul spirit, and a cage of every unclean and hateful bird. For all nations have drunk of the wine of the wrath of her fornication, and the kings of the earth have committed fornication with her, and the merchants of the earth are waxed rich through the abundance of her delicacies.” (Rev 18:2, 3)

In this, the church mentioned in Revelation 18 has gone after the errors of her older sister before her: “And Aholah [a symbol of Samaria] played the harlot when she was mine; and she doted on her lovers, on the Assyrians her neighbours, which were clothed with blue, captains and rulers, all of them desirable young men, horsemen riding upon horses. Thus she committed her whoredoms with them, with all them that were the chosen men of Assyria, and with all on whom she doted” (Ezek 23:5-7)

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In the Christian age, we find that the greatest departure of a church from the Law of her husband deals with one of the very commandments themselves, the 4th that involves the Sabbath day. In the Book of Daniel we read of a human power that arises and attempts to subvert the Law of God: “And the ten horns out of this kingdom are ten kings that shall arise; and another shall rise after them, and he shall be diverse from the first, and he shall subdue three kings. And he shall speak great words against the most High, and shall wear out the saints of the most High, and think to change times and laws: and they shall be given into his hand until a time and times and the dividing of time.” (Dan 7:24, 25)



Instructor Note

Your study partner can help you to become familiar with some good religio-historical commentaries.

From a spiritual history of the world, we understand that the “kingdom” out of which arose ten horns, and then one diverse from the others, is the mighty empire of Rome. It is from Rome that a new kind of ruler arose, the papal pontiff, and he sought indeed to “change times and laws.” It is true that the issue between Sabbath and Sunday arose within the early church before there was an official “office of the pope,” yet it was under this new authority that

the day of worship was changed as a matter of doctrine. We also understand that this church proceeded to have “daughters” that continued in her rejection of the Husband’s Law, for most of the churches that maintain the label “Protestant” continue to respect the early rejection of divine commandments in favor of human traditions that the Scriptures do not confirm.

It must be understood that the Adventist position is not to label any individual or set of individuals as the Mother of Harlots, or the daughters of this figure; these are restricted to the systems themselves, and the authority they claim to hold over the arbitration of Yahweh’s instructions. Indeed, the Bible reflects the Creator’s tender care for those faithful believers who are members of the fallen systems, appealing to them, “Come out of her, *my people*, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues.” (Rev 18:4) The intimacy of Yahweh’s use of the term “my people” when speaking to the misled ones is difficult to overstate.

In short, then, Adventist theology teaches, on the basis of the books of Daniel and Revelation, that the “Mother of Harlots” is the ecclesiastical system of the Roman Catholic Church, and the “Harlot” daughters are those forms of Protestantism that have continued in their mothers’ rejection of the Creator’s Sabbath for purposes of political and material gain.

We know that the Bride of Christ in these previous forms once did hold indeed to the Law of her Husband from historical evidence in addition to the incidents of post-crucifixion Sabbath-keeping and a lack of any divine support for altering the commandment:

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“The Gentile Christians observed also the Sabbath.” [*Church History*, Gieseler, Vol.1, ch. 2, par. 30, 93.]

“The ancient Christians were very careful in the observance of Saturday, or the seventh day...It is plain that all the Oriental churches, and the greatest part of the world, observed the Sabbath as a festival...Athanasius likewise tells us that they held religious assembles on the Sabbath, not because they were infected with Judaism, but to worship Jesus, the Lord of the Sabbath, Epiphanius says the same.” [*Antiquities of the Christian Church*, Vol.II Book XX, chap. 3, sec.1, 66. 1137,1138.]

“For although almost all churches throughout the world celebrated the sacred mysteries (the Lord’s Supper) on the Sabbath of every week, yet the Christians of Alexandria and at Rome, on account of some ancient tradition, refuse to do this.” [*Ecclestical History*, Socrates, Book 5, chap. 22, p. 289.]

“It seems to have been customary in the Celtic churches of early times [7th century A.D.], in Ireland as well as Scotland, to keep Saturday, the Jewish Sabbath, as a day of rest from labour. They obeyed the fourth commandment literally upon the seventh day of week.” [*The Church in Scotland*, p.140, James C. Moffatt, D.D., Professor of Church History, Princeton]

“Widespread and enduring was the observance of the seventh-day Sabbath among the believers of the Church of the East and the St. Thomas Christians of India, *who never were connected with Rome*. It also was maintained among those bodies which broke off from Rome after the Council of Chalcedon namely, the Abyssinians, the Jacobites, the Maronites, and the Armenians.” [*The New Enclopaedia of Religious Knowledge*, Schaff-Herzog, emphasis mine]

The above constitutes a characteristic of the true Bride, as opposed to the Harlot of Revelation, and the daughters she has produced.

3.6.3 – Wind

Wind is an interesting “element” of Biblical text. When it is used in a historical context, such as in the description of Noah’s flood (Gen 8:1) or the removal of the plague locusts from Egypt, (Exo 10:19) it may occasionally be a positive, constructive or calming force. In prophecy, however, wind is almost universally a symbol of war, strife and destruction (including divine judgment).

“And [Pharaoh] slept and dreamed the second time; and, behold, seven ears of corn came up upon one stalk, rank and good. And, behold, seven thin ears and blasted with the east wind sprung up after them.” (Gen 42:5, 6)

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“[The wicked] are as stubble before the wind, and as chaff that the storm carrieth away.” (Job 21:18) “Behold, they are all vanity; their works are nothing; their molten images are wind and confusion.” (Isa 41:29) “Thy rowers have brought thee into great waters; the east wind hath broken thee in the midst of the seas.” (Ezek 27:26)

“And after these things I saw four angels standing on the four corners of the earth, holding the four winds of the earth, that the wind should not blow on the earth, nor on the sea, nor on any tree.” (Rev 7:1) Note that in verse 3, the wind blowing on these things is synonymous with “hurt[ing]” them.

3.6.4 – Water

Water is also a complex symbol, and may mean different things depending on context. When used in history and ritual, water is a symbol of purity and cleansing; but as with wind, its meaning changes when it is applied to prophecy. It is often used in symbolic prophecy to represent armies or “people” if it is not used as part of a compound symbol (*e.g.*, “fountains of waters,” and “streams of waters”). Some examples include:

“Woe to the multitude of many people, which make a noise like the noise of the seas; and to the rushing of nations, that make a rushing like the rushing of mighty waters! The nations shall rush like the rushing of many waters...” (Isa 17:12, 13a)

“Who is this that cometh up as a flood, whose waters are moved as the rivers? Egypt riseth up like a flood, and his waters are moved like the rivers...” (Jer 46:7, 8a) See also Jer 47:2, 51:55, Nah 2:8.

In the book of Revelation, the author notes the explicit connection, drawing upon the established symbolism of preceding prophecy: “And [the angel] saith unto me, ‘The waters which thou sawest, where the whore sitteth, are peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues.’” (Rev 17:15)

3.6.5 – Earth

The prophetic significance of “earth,” when it is not directly applied to either the planet itself or individual countries thereof (its most common function), is used in a refined sense to refer to countries that are not densely populated with individuals. This is especially true when the land is specified as being “dry.” In other words, land not covered by “many waters” is land not filled with people; this is a contrast to the “floods” of armies or a numerous population. When warfare was to pass over a country and destroy much of its populace, the terms “barren,” “wilderness” and “desolate” are often used, these having the connotations of being dry and lifeless... although there is almost never a divine command to destroy the actual agriculture or literal waterways of the nation that is conquered.

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Some examples include:

“Your mother shall be sore confounded; she that bare you shall be ashamed. Behold, the hindermost of the nations shall be a wilderness, a dry land, and a desert. Because of the wrath of Yahweh it shall not be inhabited, but it shall be wholly desolate; every one that goeth by Babylon shall be astonished, and hiss at all her plagues.” (Jer 50:12, 13)

“Her cities are a desolation, a dry land, and a wilderness, a land wherein no man dwelleth, neither doth any son of man pass thereby.” (Jer 51:43)

“And the goat shall bear upon him all their iniquities unto a land not inhabited; and he shall let go the goat in the wilderness.” (Lev 16:22)

“Plead with your mother [a symbolic reference to Israel], lest I strip her naked, and set her as in the day that she was born, and make her as a wilderness, and set her like a dry land, and slay her with thirst.” (Hos 2:2, 3)

“And He will stretch out His hand against the north, and destroy Assyria; and will make Nineveh a desolation, and dry like a wilderness.” (Zeph 2:13)

3.6.6 – Fire

Fire, whether used symbolically or literally, is an indication of power, glory, and purification.

The first and last appearances of “fire” in the Bible, the former in history and the latter in prophecy, are both used to describe divine judgment against sin. “Then Yahweh rained upon Sodom and upon Gomorrah brimstone and fire from Yahweh out of heaven;” (Gen 19:24) “But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone, which is the second death.” (Rev 21:8)

The presence of the Almighty, and the angels that serve Him most closely, is often described using fiery terms:

“Then I beheld, and lo a likeness as the appearance of fire; from the appearance of His loins even downward, fire; and from His loins even upward, as the appearance of brightness, as the colour of amber.” (Ezek 8:2)

“For Yahweh thy Almighty is a consuming fire, even a jealous God. Understand therefore this day, that Yahweh thy God is He which goeth over before thee; as a consuming fire He shall destroy them, and He shall bring them down before thy face; so shalt thou drive them out, and destroy them quickly, as Yahweh hath said unto thee.” (Deu 4:24, 9:3, *cf.*, Heb 12:29)

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“Above [the Throne] stood the Seraphim; each one had six wings; with twain he covered his face, and with twain he covered his feet, and with twain he did fly. And one cried unto another, and said, ‘Holy, holy, holy, is Yahweh of hosts; the whole earth is full of His glory.’ And the posts of the door moved at the voice of him that cried, and the house was filled with smoke. [...] Then flew one of the Seraphim unto me, having a live coal in his hand, which he had taken with the tongs from off the altar, and he laid it upon my mouth, and said, ‘Lo, this hath touched thy lips, and thine iniquity is taken away, and thy sin purged.’” (Isa 6:2-4, 6, 7)



“As for the likeness of the living creatures, their appearance was like burning coals of fire, and like the appearance of lamps; it went up and down among the living creatures, and the fire was bright, and out of the fire went forth lightning.” (Ezek 1:13)

In rare cases, even unholy sources of supernatural power may be said to produce “fire.” We reading the prophecies of Revelation, in which a counterfeit of Elijah’s fire from Heaven (2Kings 1:12, 14) is produced by the agents of Satan in order to deceive the world, “And [the second Beast] doeth great wonders, so that he maketh fire come down from heaven on the earth in the sight of men, and deceiveth them that dwell on the earth by the means of those miracles which he had power to do in the sight of the [first] Beast...” (Rev 13:13, 14a)

3.6.7 – The Dragon, the Beasts and the False Prophet

The figures of the Dragon, the Beasts and the False Prophet are much easier to understand now that we have identified the “elemental” symbols of prophecy: earth, fire, water and wind.

The Dragon is easiest; John identifies this symbol explicitly: “And the great Dragon was cast out, that old Serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world; he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him.” (Rev 12:9) “And he laid hold on the Dragon, that old Serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan, and bound him a thousand years.” (Rev 20:2)

We read of the first Beast, “And I stood upon the sand of the sea, and saw a beast rise up out of the sea, having seven heads and ten horns, and upon his horns ten crowns, and upon his heads the name of blasphemy. And the beast which I saw was like unto a leopard, and his feet were as the feet of a bear, and his mouth as the mouth of a lion; and the dragon gave him his power, and his seat, and great authority. And I saw one of his heads as it were wounded to death, and his deadly wound was healed; and all the world

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wondered after the beast. And they worshipped the dragon, which gave power unto the beast, and they worshipped the beast, saying, ‘Who is like unto the beast? Who is able to make war with him?’

“And there was given unto him a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies; and power was given unto him to continue forty and two months. And he opened his mouth in blasphemy against God, to blaspheme His name, and His tabernacle, and them that dwell in heaven.” (Rev 13:1-6)

Adventists have provided detailed historical studies identifying this first beast as a symbol of the papacy, a union of apostate Christianity with pagan Rome, resulting in a beast unlike any previous beasts, which are all identified with kings or kingdoms. (Dan 7:23, Rev 17:12) No attempt will be made here to provide an exhaustive exposition, but we can examine a few key points. We read, for example, of this ten-horned monstrosity back in the book of Daniel, “After this I saw in the night visions, and behold a fourth beast, dreadful and terrible, and strong exceedingly; and it had great iron teeth; it devoured and brake in pieces, and stamped the residue with the feet of it: and it was diverse from all the beasts that were before it; and it had ten horns.” (Dan 7:7)

This provides an unmistakable parallel; the “kingdom” formed from the union of Rome and the early Church resulted in a power that was “diverse from all the beasts before it,” because the others were openly pagan, whereas this beast could not be described by any analogy from the natural world as it was a beast hiding under a guise of holiness. The “ten horns” makes the identification certain; this first beast has to do with the third kingdom after Babylon, with the Media-Persian and Greek empires between them.

The charge of “blasphemy” is laid upon this beast, and we know that the theological connotations of this term include “the crime of assuming to oneself the rights or qualities of God.” [*Dictionary.com Unabridged* (v 1.0.1), Random House, Inc., *cf.*, Luke 5:21] There is no major religious organization on earth but the Roman Catholic church that claims to have a visible representation of Yahweh Himself upon the earth in the person of a single human being. The Scriptures describe an anti-Christ figure “who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God.” (2Th 2:4)

The only created being before the papal figure to appropriate such an office to himself is the fallen prince of Heaven, Lucifer. He was recorded to have said, “I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the Most High.” (Isaiah 14:14) Here we have a human being, the head of an organization associated by both Daniel and John with the Roman Empire, that claims to be the very representative of God on earth, and who not only repeats Satan’s claim to “be like the Most High,” but also has a history of

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using force to promote his aims. It should be noted that neither mainstream Adventists nor CSDAs make any personal statements about the individuals who hold the office of the pope at any given time; the office *itself* is that which represents, on earth, all that Satan claimed in the spiritual world.

The heroes of the Protestant reformation saw in the papacy a great spiritual evil, the antichrist himself, making such statements as, “at last I know that the pope is antichrist, and that his throne is that of Satan himself.” [Martin Luther as quoted in *History of The Reformation of The Sixteenth Century*, D’aubigne, p. 204] “... the Bishop of Rome and his sects [...] be the right Anti-Christ, and deny both the Father and the Son; for they deny the witness that the Father bore unto His Son, and deprive the Son of all power and glory that His Father gave Him.” [*The Practice of Prelates*, William Tyndale] Protestantism, by ceasing to *protest* the unions of Church and state such as that embodied in the papacy, has by-and-large denied the very purpose for which Christ has raised it up.

Building on what we know from the identification of the elements of water and earth, we see that while the first beast rose out of the “sea,” or populated lands, the second beast rises out of the “earth.” This makes their identifications yet more concrete.

“And I beheld another Beast coming up out of the earth; and he had two horns like a lamb, and he spake as a dragon. And he exerciseth all the power of the first beast before him, and causeth the earth and them which dwell therein to worship the first beast, whose deadly wound was healed. And he doeth great wonders, so that he maketh fire come down from heaven on the earth in the sight of men, and deceiveth them that dwell on the earth by the means of those miracles which he had power to do in the sight of the beast; saying to them that dwell on the earth, that they should make an image to the beast, which had the wound by a sword, and did live.” (Rev 13:11-14)

We will deal with the specific nature of the “image of the beast” in Chapter 4, because this is one of the areas in which CSDAs and Adventists in general will have something of a diversity of opinion. Creation Seventh Day Adventists accept all that Adventism teaches about the identity of the image, but see further in the teaching a *principle* that ought not to be applied arbitrarily to one set of individuals and not others, “for there is no respect of persons with God.” (Rom 2:11)

For now, we will look at the attributes of this second beast.

We read, “And I beheld another beast coming up out of the earth; and he had two horns like a lamb, and he spake as a dragon. And he exerciseth all the power of the first beast before him, and causeth the earth and them which dwell therein to worship the first beast, whose deadly wound was healed. And he doeth great wonders, so that he maketh fire come down from heaven on the earth in the sight of men, and deceiveth them that dwell on the earth by the means of those miracles which he had power to do in the

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sight of the beast; saying to them that dwell on the earth, that they should make an image to the beast, which had the wound by a sword, and did live.” (Rev 13:11-14)

Just as the first beast came out of the populated “sea” of the old world, so this second comes out of the “land,” or a relatively unpopulated area. Further, this beast has the appearance of a lamb, which stands for purity, submission to Yahweh, and gentleness (Isa 53:7) – but at the same time it “spake as a Dragon,” revealing a heart that is Satanic in at least some of its activities, “for of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaketh.” (Luke 6:45b)

Adventists have identified this second beast as the United States of America, as in the book *Daniel and The Revelation* mentioned above. Quoting a number of historical sources regarding the formation and nature of this New World power, “Will the reader now look at these expressions side by side – ‘coming up out of the earth,’ ‘emerging amid the silence of the earth,’ ‘like a silent seed we grew into empire,’ ‘mighty regions’ secured by ‘peaceful conquest.’ The first is from the prophet, stating that *would be* when the two-horned beast should arise; the others are from political writers, telling what *had been* in the history of the United States of America. Can anyone fail to see that the last three are exactly synonymous with the first, and that they record a complete accomplishment of the prediction?” [pages 578, 579, emphasis original to the text]

Further, although it has the appearance of gentleness, the United States, by its policy, would speak “as a Dragon” and employ the principles of the papacy that came before it, in effect bringing the world into agreement with the notion of dominion by force. While individuals may have varying degrees of conviction regarding strictly political matters, the focus of the Book of Revelation, and the focus of Yahshua’s Church, must be how the policies of this beast (like the beast before it) relate to the work of the Gospel and the actions of the saints.

The United States of America was founded on the principles of Protestantism. The two main pillars of this philosophy (two “horns,” as it were) are religious and civil liberty. Protestants believe that:

- a) There must be no ecclesiastical compulsion placed upon the religious beliefs and practices of individuals. No Church was, or is ever, to attempt to compel the words or actions of individuals, whether they belong to that church or not. Legitimate criminal matters are to be tried by courts in actions initiated by the state itself, but to initiate a lawsuit for civil redress by a Christian is a rejection of the religion taught by Yahshua, once espoused by Rome, but initially rejected by the founders of the United States (although, to be sure, they were not perfect in their understanding of how this related to slaves, supposed heretics or accused witches).

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- b) There must be no legal compulsion placed upon the religious beliefs and practices of individuals. This idea is reflected in the First Amendment of the United States Constitution: “Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances.” This concept guarantees, and the state constitutions have interpreted it so, that an individual is free to worship the Creator “according to the dictates of his own conscience.”



Activity Note

What are some Scriptures that establish a reliance on the world by a religious body as a betrayal of its Head?

If the practice of these things was never perfectly enjoyed by the citizens of the United States, at least the principles were in line with New Testament instructions. In the last days, however, as men “depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils,” (1Tim 4:1) this gradual apostasy is reflected in the religious society as a whole.

This second Beast, while promising civil and religious liberty to all, actually becomes – through a process similar to that which was seen in the apostolic movement when it united with pagan Rome – a persecuting power by virtue of the betrayal of Christ by those organizations through whom many suppose He continues to operate on the earth: the protestant Churches themselves. The rejection of this promise of freedom allows us to identify the second beast of Revelation, not only as that which arises in the new world to facilitate the advancement of papal (Satanic) principles in a new hemisphere, but in another role as well.

We read of the False Prophet: “And I saw three unclean spirits like frogs come out of the mouth of the dragon, and out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet.” (Rev 16:13) “And the beast was taken, and with him the false prophet that wrought miracles before him, with which he deceived them that had received the mark of the beast, and them that worshipped his image. These both were cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone.” (Rev 19:20) “And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever.” (Rev 20:10)

The careful reader of Revelation will note that, although two beasts are introduced in John’s prophecies, the second being mentioned in chapter 13, this second beast is never seen again. Yet, are we to conclude that this second beast vanishes? Not at all, it is simply identified by its character, and it continues to be active under the guise of the “false prophet” until its destruction in the lake of fire. We note that after Revelation 13, the three

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powers mentioned are not the “dragon, the first beast and the second beast,” but rather the “dragon, the beast and the false prophet.”

The second beast is easily identified as the false prophet if we simply take a look at the characteristics mentioned. The second beast is an evil power masquerading as a positive influence, a creature that speaks as a dragon while appearing with “lamb-like” characteristics. The Scriptures thus warn us, “Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves.” (Mat 7:15)

The false prophet is described as a deceiving force that tricks the unwary into receiving “the mark of the beast.” This is precisely the deception that the second beast establishes, for it “deceiveth them that dwell on the earth,” (Rev 13:14) and “causeth all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond, to receive a mark in their right hand, or in their foreheads.” (verse 16)



Emphasis Note

Looking at the *character* of an individual or organization is the surest way of identifying it in prophetic symbolism.

If any doubt remains regarding the identification of the second beast with the false prophet (whom many suppose to be an individual, rather than a system) we can look at the means by which this deception is accomplished. We read that the second beast “doeth great wonders, so that he maketh fire come down from heaven on the earth in the sight of men, and deceiveth them that dwell on the earth by the means of those miracles which he had power to do in the sight of the beast.” (Rev 13:13, 14a) Note also that once the second beast is established as a separate entity, the first beast is simply called “the beast,” as it is throughout the rest of the prophecy, further strengthening the understanding that the second beast is henceforth called by another name.

But we see that one of the characteristics of the second beast is miracle-working, specifically “fire from heaven.” This constitutes a counterfeit of the actions of one of the Bible’s most famous prophets, of whom we read:

“And it came to pass at the time of the offering of the evening sacrifice, that Elijah the prophet came near, and said, ‘Yahweh Elohim of Abraham, Isaac, and of Israel, let it be known this day that thou art God in Israel, and that I am thy servant, and that I have done all these things at thy word. Hear me, Yahweh, hear me, that this people may know that thou art Yahweh the Almighty, and that thou hast turned their heart back again.’ Then the fire of Yahweh fell, and consumed the burnt sacrifice, and the wood, and the stones, and the dust, and licked up the water that was in the trench. And when all the people saw it, they fell on their faces; and they said, ‘Yahweh is Elohim, Yahweh is Elohim.’” (1Kings 18:36-39)

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“And Elijah answered and said to the captain of fifty, ‘If I be a man of God, then let fire come down from heaven, and consume thee and thy fifty.’ And there came down fire from heaven, and consumed him and his fifty.” (2Kings 1:10)

Elijah is the only prophet on record to have called fire down from Heaven, and he did so at two significant occasions, and for two significant reasons. First, he provided proof that he was a true prophet, in contrast with the servants of Ba'al. Second, he summoned divine fire to avoid being taken captive before the proper time by the servants of the apostate king Ahab. In the activities of the second beast, we see a perfect dark counterfeit to this messenger's activities. First, the powers behind this entity make fire come down from Heaven in an attempt to prove that they are truly of God. Secondly they do it to defend themselves from what they see as an attack.

In uniting with the United States Government to produce a law that protects itself (and we will examine the specifics of this in the next chapter) apostate Protestantism has indeed attempted to deceive the people of the earth into thinking that they represent an upright organization that is justly defending itself from perceived attacks; however they are using “strange fire,” (Lev 10:1) rejecting the very principles of genuine Christianity in the process and making of the government a false prophet.

There are predicted to be false revivals in the last days, (2Tim 4:3, 4) and, specifically, *Elijah the prophet* is to come before “the great and dreadful day of Yahweh.” (Mal 4:3)

The second beast does precisely what a false prophet must do in the last days, for it counterfeits the true Elijah's mission, and “such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ. And no marvel, for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light. Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness; whose end shall be according to their works.” (2Cor 11:13-15) By understanding this connection, we see that the second anti-Christ kingdom John predicted is indeed and justly consigned to the flames of the last judgment, suffering perdition with the others of its clique under the name by which it is condemned in the courts of Heaven.

3.6.8 – The Host of Heaven

The stars are occasionally used to represent the “lights” of the heavenly courts, the holy angels, and sometimes fallen angels as well. We read, for example: “They fought from heaven; the stars in their courses fought against Sisera.” (Judges 5:20) The opponents of the Canaanite warlord Sisera were seen as agents of Yahweh's divine outworking, (verses 13-19) and thus as “stars;” this applies not only to human servants of the Most High, but the literal angels as well.

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“Where wast thou when I laid the foundations of the earth? [...] When the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy?” (Job 38:4a, 7) Although “sons of God” occasionally refers to redeemed human beings, (e.g., John 1:12, Rom 8:14, 1John 3:2) in the book of Job it is clearly used as a term to describe non-human creatures with access to the courts of Heaven itself, as here, “Now there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before Yahweh, and Satan came also among them.” (Job 1:6 *cf.* Job 2:1)

The phrase “host of Heaven” refers both to literal stars and angels in prophecy: “And all the host of heaven shall be dissolved, and the heavens shall be rolled together as a scroll: and all their host shall fall down, as the leaf falleth off from the vine, and as a falling fig from the fig tree. [...] And the stars of heaven fell unto the earth, even as a fig tree casteth her untimely figs, when she is shaken of a mighty wind.” (Isa 34:4, Rev 6:13)

“And he said, ‘Hear thou therefore the word of Yahweh: I saw Yahweh sitting on His Throne, and all the host of heaven standing by Him on His right hand and on His left.’” (1Kings 22:19) “And Jacob went on his way, and the angels of God met him. And when Jacob saw them, he said, ‘This is God’s host,’ and he called the name of that place *Mahanaim* [two camps *i.e.*, of angels].” (Gen 32:1, 2) “Then God turned, and gave them up to worship the host of heaven; as it is written in the book of the prophets, ‘O ye house of Israel, have ye offered to me slain beasts and sacrifices by the space of forty years in the wilderness? Yea, ye took up the tabernacle of Moloch, and the star of your god Remphan, figures which ye made to worship them; and I will carry you away beyond Babylon.’” (Acts 7:42, 43)

3.7 – Types and Antitypes

3.7.1 – Rituals and Ordinances

All of the major activities and viewpoints associated with Adventism involve an understanding that the will of Yahweh is absolute, that He neither speaks nor does anything idly or arbitrarily, that there is no “shadow of turning” in Him, (James 1:17) and that there is continuing value in everything that He has ever inspired men to commit to a permanent record or to perform as rituals and observances.

A few examples include:

- a) The Mission of Christ: The very mission of the Messiah was foreshadowed in the Garden of Eden. Immediately after sin entered human experience, an innocent animal was slain to provide a “covering” for the first couple. (Gen 3:21) This represented not only the Sacrifice on the cross, but also the “robe of righteousness” that Yahshua gives to His people in the sight of Heaven. (Rev 7:13, 14)

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- b) The Priesthood: Yahshua is a High Priest after the “order” of the Old Testament figure Melchizedek, (Gen 14:18, Psa 110:4) and according to the pattern of the priesthood of Levi. (Heb 9:16-28) The more clearly we understand this order and this pattern, the greater an appreciation we may develop for the current activities of the Redeemer.
- c) Communion: As taught in Mark 12:22, the unleavened bread of communion is the post-crucifixion memorial of Yahshua, just as the lamb was the pre-crucifixion symbol of His sacrifice. (John 1:29)
- d) Baptism: The passing of the nation of Israel through the Red Sea was seen by the apostle Paul as a type, occurring on a national level, for individual baptisms under the New Covenant. (1Cor 10:1, 2)
- e) Foot washing: The priests who officiated in the Tabernacle were to have clean hands and feet. They had already been ordained and “cleansed,” (Num 8:21) but a basin of water (the “laver”) was provided that they should have a partial cleansing before entering into an occasion of active service. (Exo 40:30, Exo 30:18-20) In the New Covenant, the members of the “royal priesthood” (1Peter 2:9) wash the feet of one another as a sign that we have been made clean by conversion, yet frequently refresh ourselves with the partial cleansing. (John 13:5-15)
- f) Diet reform: We believe that the original diet of man, and that which was instituted as soon as access to the Tree of Life was restricted, (Gen 1:29 and 3:18 respectively) forms the pattern for which the diet of men was always to follow as closely as circumstances would reasonably allow. Just after the great Flood, when vegetation was destroyed due to the catastrophe, men were permitted to eat flesh, (Gen 9:3) however this was never the ideal.

All of these involve applying the symbolism of earlier rituals (the “types”) to current activities (the “antitypes”).

3.7.2 – Appointed Times

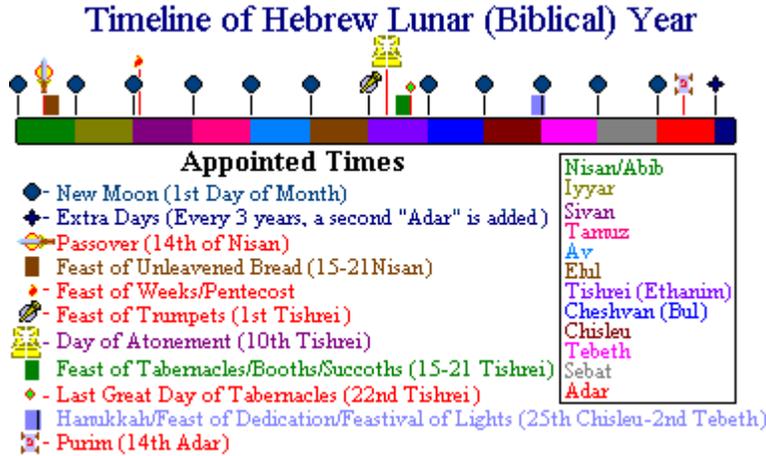


Figure 3.3 – The Hebrew Calendar

In addition to rituals or doctrinal viewpoints, Adventists also see certain times (both events and periods) as fulfilling elements of Old Testament typology. Some examples of this include:

- a) The Seventh Day Sabbath: At the end of the Creation week, Yahweh set a day aside for holy use, (Gen 2:3, Exo 20:11) and no record is to be found of this blessing ever being modified or removed. In the New Testament era, the Sabbath commandment (Luke 23:56) has come to hold the additional significance of “rest” in Christ as the Author and Finisher of our faith. (Heb 4:9, 10)
- b) The Passover: The deliverance of Israel from Egypt by means of the blood of a clean animal (Exo 12:5-7, 13) has met its antitypical fulfillment at the occasion of the death of Christ, the “Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.” (John 1:29, 1Cor 5:7)
- c) The Day of Atonement: As discussed in a previous section, the Day of Atonement provides a symbolic pattern for the means by which the Creator deals with sin. In 1844 this event met its fulfillment with the beginning of the Investigative Judgment. It should be noted that while the symbol was a single event (taking only a brief period of time) it represents a searching of Israel that involves a relatively lengthy process. Naturally, the activities of a human priest could only *imperfectly* represent the work of the true, Heavenly priesthood as “a figure for the time then present,” (Heb 9:8-12) therefore it must not be supposed (as some have objected) that the priest would need to stay in the Most Holy place one day for each year of the spiritual Investigation (*i.e.*, 1844 until the return of the Messiah).
- d) The Feast of Tabernacles: Imagery from the celebration of Israel’s literal harvest (Lev 23:33-36, 39) is found in both the incarnation of Yahshua, (John 1:14, which literally reads that He “tabernacled” among us) and also a number of key prophecies of John’s Revelation. (*e.g.*, Rev 14:15, 18) Like the Sabbath day that will meet

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a grand fulfillment in the next age, (Isa 66:23) the Feast of Tabernacles has not yet met its antitype, and continues to be “a shadow of things to come.” (Col 2:16, 17) Further discussion of this matter is included in Chapter 4, since mainstream Adventism has no current activity corresponding to this antitype. The Feast of Unleavened Bread is discussed in Chapter 4 for the same reason.

3.8 – Michael the Archangel

3.8.1 – The Angelic Form of the Deity

When discussing this doctrine, which is somewhat controversial in modern Christianity, it is best to provide evidence for the identification of Michael the Archangel with Christ in three steps. The first is to establish firmly that the Creator has indeed manifested Himself as an Angel. The second is to show from the Scriptures that this Angel takes the name “Michael.” The third is to show that Michael performs several functions that cannot, under divine law, be undertaken by any created being, and in fact fulfills an office that is specifically attributed to Christ.

First, we read a few verses showing the Bible equating the Almighty with a Being called the “Angel of Yahweh.”

In the very first appearance of this Being we read, “And the Angel of Yahweh found [Hagar] by a fountain of water in the wilderness, by the fountain in the way to Shur ... And she called the name of Yahweh that spake unto her, ‘El Roi,’ for she said, ‘Have I also here looked after Him that seeth me?’” (Gen 16:7, 13)

Here the Angel of Yahweh is identified with both El/Elohim, the Scripture’s title for the Godhead, and the divine name Yahweh, which is borne at times by both the Father and Son before the incarnation of the Latter, as indicated by such verses as, “Then Yahweh rained upon Sodom and upon Gomorrah brimstone and fire from Yahweh out of Heaven,” (Gen 19:24) and “Yahweh said unto Satan, ‘Yahweh rebuke thee, O Satan.’” (Zech 3:2a) Here one Being named “Yahweh” calls upon and acts on behalf of “Yahweh” that is specified as being “out of Heaven.” The second figure of Yahweh, known in common theological jargon as a *hypostasis*, or a manifestation of a Person of the Godhead, is seen to act as an intercessor, (speaking with Abraham about the fate of Sodom and Gomorrah and Satan concerning Joshua) which becomes important momentarily.

Other verses identifying the Angel with a Person of the Godhead are:

“And the Angel of Yahweh called unto Abraham out of Heaven the second time, and said, ‘By *myself* have I sworn,’ saith Yahweh.” (Gen 22:15, 16a)

“And the Angel of Yahweh appeared unto [Moses] in a flame of fire out of the midst of a bush ... And when Yahweh saw that he turned aside to see,

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Elohim called unto him out of the midst of the bush, and said, ‘Moses, Moses.’ And he said, ‘Here am I.’” (Exo 3:2, 4)

“And an Angel of Yahweh came up from Gilgal to Bochim, and said, ‘I made you to go up out of Egypt, and have brought you unto the land which I swear unto your fathers.’” (Judges 2:1 *cf.* Exo 13:9, when “Yahweh” is said to have brought His people out of Egypt)

“And the Angel of Yahweh appeared unto [Gideon], and said unto him, ‘Yahweh is with thee, thou mighty man of valour.’ ... And Yahweh looked upon him, and said, ‘Go in this thy might, and thou shalt save Israel from the hand of the Midianites; have not I sent thee?’” (Judges 6:12, 14)

“But the Angel of Yahweh did no more appear to Manoah and to his wife. Then Manoah knew that He was an angel of Yahweh. And Manoah said unto his wife, ‘We shall surely die, because we have seen Elohim.’” (Judges 13:21, 22)

These are just a few of the many examples when the Angel of Yahweh is identified as a member of the Godhead. We may read also of Jacob, who wrestled with a “man” at the brook named Jabbok “until the breaking of the day,” and this human-appearing Figure who had the authority to re-name Jacob *Israel* – one who prevails with El – is identified as both Elohim (Gen 32:30) and an Angel. (Hos 12:4)

From the intercessory role, and the fact that He can be seen by humans and live, it should be clear to the Bible student that this figure, though bearing the divine name “Yahweh,” is not the Person identified in the New Testament as the *Father*, (John 14:28) or the God to whom Yahshua prayed. (John 17:9) Of the Angel, the Holy One of Israel said, “Behold, I send an Angel before thee, to keep thee in the way, and to bring thee into the place which I have prepared. Beware of Him, and obey His voice; provoke Him not; for He will not pardon your transgressions, for my name is in Him.” (Exo 23:20, 21) We know that although the face of the Angel identified explicitly as both Yahweh and Elohim was seen by several humans, no one can see the face of the Father in any direct manner and live. (Exo 33:20)

It should not be supposed, based on the Exodus 23 verse, that since the Angel “will not pardon ... transgressions,” this is evidence that it is not a manifestation of the Savior. The purpose of the Intercessory work at that time was not to forgive sin – the Levitical system was specifically put in place for this purpose to point forward to the *future* work of Christ in this capacity – but to guide. After His death and resurrection, Christ “became” the High Priest of humanity through His experience on earth, (Heb 2:10) replacing the symbolic service with that which is perfect. (Heb 9:11-15)

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3.8.2 – The Identification of the Angel of Yahweh

Having seen the title Elohim and the divine name Yahweh applied to an angelomorphic Figure (*i.e.*, a being that appears and acts like an angel) we must next demonstrate that this Individual is to be identified as Michael the Archangel.

One of the simplest ways to do this is to point to a manifestation of the Angel of Yahweh to Joshua, the successor of Moses. We read, “And it came to pass, when Joshua was by Jericho, that he lifted up his eyes and looked, and, behold, there stood a Man over against Him with His sword drawn in his hand; and Joshua went unto Him, and said unto Him, ‘Art thou for us, or for our adversaries?’

“And He said, ‘Nay; but as Captain of the Host of Yahweh am I now come.’ And Joshua fell on his face to the earth, and did worship, and said unto him, ‘What saith Adonai unto His servant?’ “And the Captain of Yahweh’s Host said unto Joshua, ‘Loose thy shoe from off thy foot, for the place whereon thou standest is holy.’ And Joshua did so.” (Josh 5:13-15)

From this Being’s words and actions, and Joshua’s reaction to Him, we see that this is no mere messenger, but a divine Being. In His statement to Joshua that he should un-shoe himself, the Captain of the Host speaks a command identical to that spoken by Yahweh (the Angel of Yahweh) to Moses in Exodus 3:5. In receiving *worship*, the figure reveals that He is no created angel, for we read an angel’s words to the prophet John, “And I fell at his feet to worship him. And he said unto me, ‘See thou do it not; I am thy fellow servant, and of thy brethren that have the testimony of Yahshua. Worship God, for the testimony of Yahshua is the spirit of prophecy.’” (Rev 19:10)

The Being placed at the head of Yahweh’s Host of angels is identified by name in the Book of Revelation. We read, “And there was war in Heaven; Michael and His angels fought against the Dragon, and the Dragon fought and his angels, and prevailed not; neither was their place found any more in Heaven.” (Rev 12:7, 8)

Note that Michael is placed in apposition to the Dragon, whom John identifies as Satan. (Rev 12:9) Just as Satan has “his angels,” meaning he is at the head of their company, (see also Mat 25:41) so Michael has “His angels” by means of identical language. Michael is seen as the leading figure in the fight against the Adversary, as the Vessel chosen to represent the Almighty, of whom it is said, “Yahweh is a Man of war; Yahweh is His name.” (Exo 15:3)

No other Being than Michael may be identified from the Scripture as the Captain of Yahweh’s Host, and – leading into the next section – we find this very Captain receiving worship from a human, as no created being may do. Only Christ, a visible form of the invisible Elohim, has been given the

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authority to receive worship, (Heb 1:6) and only Christ has been appointed as the “Head [chief, prominent] of all Principality and Power,” (Col 2:10) two terms in the New Testament applied to angels. Furthermore, the Hebrew word translated as “Captain” in Joshua 5 is actually the word *Sar*, which means “Prince,” and is precisely the word applied to the Angel Michael by Daniel, who calls Him, “one of the chief *Sar'im*.” (Dan 10:13)

3.8.3 – The Role of The Mediator

The next step is to further examine the mention Daniel makes of Michael, where He is described as one of “*ha-sar'im ha-rishonim*,” or “the chief Princes.” Although it is true that He is the only entity described by the title translated as “Archangel” in the Scriptures, this should not be taken to mean He is the only one bearing that title. Daniel 10:13 reads, “But the prince of the kingdom of Persia withstood me one and twenty days; but, lo, Michael, one of the chief Princes, came to help me, and I remained there with the kings of Persia.”

Clearly, this designates Him as one of a set according to rank, at least in terms of the angelic hierarchy, for an arch (chief) angel would certainly be a “chief” Prince of Heaven – the two terms appear to be used in a similar manner. Some have attempted to argue for Michael’s uniqueness based upon the designation given Him of “Archangel,” but this is not a complete argument. What separates Michael from any other named messenger of Elohim such as Gabriel or John’s revelatory guide is the set of functions that He performs on behalf of humanity, not merely the title “Archangel.”

We have already seen that the only angel-type being ever to receive worship is the Captain of Yahweh’s Host, described in Revelation as Michael who was at the Head of the Host to vanquish Satan. This Headship over angels is also ascribed to Christ by Paul in Colossians 2.



Emphasis Note

The legitimate reception of worship, and the role of *Intercessor* are two unique identifiers of the Son of God.

The intercessory role, however, is what truly solidifies the identification of Michael with Yahshua, for we are told in no uncertain terms, “there is one God, and *one Mediator* between God and men, the man Christ Yahshua, who gave Himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time.” (1Tim 2:5, 6) This “Man” Christ Yahshua is further described thus: “*God* was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory.” (1Tim 3:16)

If we accept the words of the apostle that *God* was manifest in the flesh, we can see that this is precisely the same concept of God’s manifestation as the hypostatic Angel of Yahweh in the Old Testament texts, and for the same reason – to reveal the glory of Elohim to men in a manner that they could

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withstand. Further, we understand that Yahshua is the only Mediator between mankind and the Father who sent Him, therefore if any other entity or being can be demonstrated to perform a role involving divine mediation beyond simple “messenger service” it must *of necessity* be identified with the Person of Yahshua the Messiah.

Is there, then, a place where Michael is seen mediating between humanity and the Most High? There certainly is, and again the Book of Daniel provides the link: “And at that time shall Michael stand up, the great Prince which standeth for the children of thy people; and there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation even to that same time, and at that time thy people shall be delivered, every one that shall be found written in the book.” (Dan 12:1)

Michael is shown as “standing” for the people of Daniel, and this has led some commentators to suppose that this indicates a national “guardian angel” for all or certain countries, with Michael being the protecting spirit of Israel. If we are aware of the context of the vision, however, Daniel’s people are those in the last days, (Dan 12:9) and would constitute Christians, members of the Spiritual House of Israel. (Gal 3:29)

Nowhere in mainstream Christian theology is Michael (under that name) considered the “protector” of Christians as a collective people, but we know with assurance that Yahshua is the Protector and Defender of His Church; we read, “Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the Church, and gave Himself for It ... for no man ever yet hated his own flesh, but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the Church.” (Eph 5:25, 29) Paul presents us with a picture of the tender care with which Christ watches over His people, guarding them and guiding them according to His promise, “Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world” (Mat 28:20)

Michael “standing” for His people evokes from the language exactly the same concept that Christ fulfills toward the Church. As an Intercessor, Advocate and Defender, this is an absolutely unique position ascribed to Michael in the Old Testament, and to Yahshua after the incarnation of the “Angel of Yahweh” in whom the name of Yahweh exists. (Exo 23:21, John 5:43)

In addition, when Michael “stands up” this initiates a time of trouble such as the world has never seen before – and this is one of the signs that Yahshua gives of His imminent return in Matthew 24. When the Son of Man returns for His people, it is with the “voice of the Archangel,” (1Th 4:16) further identifying “the Lord” with this title. Michael and the Yahweh-Angel are shown to use precisely the same language when dealing with the Accuser of the brethren, both times acting as a divine Intercessor for humanity, first for the high priest Joshua and then for the patriarch Moses:

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“And he shewed me Joshua the high priest standing before the Angel of Yahweh, and Satan standing at his right hand to resist him. And Yahweh said unto Satan, ‘Yahweh rebuke thee, O Satan; even Yahweh that hath chosen Jerusalem rebuke thee; is not this a brand plucked out of the fire?’” (Zech 3:1, 2)

“Yet Michael the archangel, when contending with the devil He disputed about the body of Moses, durst not bring against him a railing accusation, but said, ‘Yahweh rebuke thee.’” (Jude 1:9)

It must not be supposed that Michael does not possess divine authority in the Jude record because it is said that He “durst not” bring an accusation against Satan. By calling upon the Father to rebuke Satan, He was doing precisely as He did during His earthly mission, bringing accusation only against the human agents of the Adversary, but relying upon the authority of Elohim when faced directly with the Tempter, saying, for example, “It is written...” (Mat 4:4, 6, 7)

In addition to the unique mediator role shared by Michael and Christ, which makes the identification as sure as any doctrine that may be found in Scripture, a great deal of indirect support may be provided for the position.

Two examples include:

- a) The name “Michael” itself. The Scriptures state specifically that there is none like Yahweh. (Exo 15:11, Deu 33:26, Psa 89:8, etc., etc.) The name *Michael*, however, means “Who is like El.” Some theologians have made the name into a question, and thus a challenge: “Who is like God?” There is no evidence, however, that the name is an inquiry, and in fact the name *Michaiah*, (2Kings 22:12) which is merely an alternate form of the name that means, “Who is like Yah,” is translated precisely that way (as a statement rather than a question) in concordances. The fact that Michael is “like El” identifies Him with the Creator far more intimately than any created being could be, for in a spiritual setting names are descriptive of character, and this name identifies Him at once as both separate from the Father, and akin to Him in nature – precisely as Christ, the only-begotten Son, is.
- b) The complete absence of Michael from both the earth and the visions of Heaven after the incarnation of Yahshua. We read that Michael, as the divine-name-bearing Angel of Yahweh, is generally designated as the messenger between Heaven and earth, cooperating with Gabriel in Daniel’s case, and operating by Himself in this role from the very earliest books of the Pentateuch down to the records of the Minor Prophets. The moment Yahshua is conceived, however, we find Gabriel working alone, and the only mention ever made of Michael in the New Testament is in visions of the past (*e.g.*, Jude and Revelation) or, indirectly, as the authoritative “voice” with which Yahshua returns.

One minor objection raised is the charge of angel-worship leveled against Adventists and others who hold this doctrine, the verses being cited: “Let no man beguile you of your reward in a voluntary humility and worshipping of angels, intruding into those things which he hath not seen, vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind, and not holding the Head...” (Col 2:18, 19a) It should be made clear that Yahshua is described as a “Man” several times in the Scriptures, but this does not by any means indicate that He is an ordinary human; and while Yahshua is worshipped by both angels and men, no Christian believes that he or she is worshipping a man.

By the same token, although Yahshua may have manifest Himself as a man, yet retained His divinity, so the Scriptures indicate that Yahshua as the Intercessor and as the divine, un-created Angel of the Lord, who is “Like El,” (*i.e.*, Micha-el) retains every aspect of His God-hood. All that being the case, it should further be noted that Adventists and other groups who hold this doctrine never direct worship to Michael anyway, believing that after the incarnation of the Son of God He retains His human form, (Zech 13:6, 7; Mat 26:31) and receives worship as the King of Kings by the appointed name *Yahshua*.

3.9 – The Adventist Lifestyle

3.7.1 – Conviction and Preference

Whenever we are discussing “works” as they relate to character, and particularly as these works pertain to the habits and practices that compose a lifestyle, it is necessary to avoid two fatal errors. The first of these errors is *legalism*; the Christian faith does not consist of a series of actions designed to either obtain or prove a connection with the Redeemer. If the actions we undertake are not the results of something that has already taken place within, they are artificial. It is true that discipline is required to take up one’s cross, (Mat 16:24) but the motivation must always be to draw nearer to Yahshua in moral likeness, and to reveal this likeness to others for their own edification.

The second fatal error is *licentiousness*; to disrespect the instructions of Yahweh, and to enter a state of lawless negligence when considering one’s behavior is the very definition of “sin” in the Scriptures. All too often the idea is presented by worldly Christianity that the grace of the Almighty is permission to sin. Forgiveness, it must be understood, is not what ultimately redeems mankind and provides us with eternal life. Atonement, the state of being reconciled with Yahweh, is eternal life, and forgiveness is the means by which it is accomplished – the door into the Temple, in a manner of speaking. The implication of this concept is as follows: one may seek, and receive, forgiveness “seventy times seven” for a sin if one sincerely repents, but sincere repentance cannot long coexist with a false understanding of grace. The conscience will become “seared” with

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repeated resistance to the leadings of the Holy Spirit, (1Tim 4:1) a situation in which the sinner no longer has any true desire to look Heavenward.

One of the clear Scriptural examples of an open apostolic rebuke to a false teaching is against this very thing, this very error in misunderstanding grace. To Christians who were in danger of being influenced by a form of Christian-tinged *Gnosticism*, John wrote the following words:

“Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God, because many false prophets are gone out into the world. Hereby know ye the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesseth that Yahshua the Messiah is come in the flesh is of God, and every spirit that confesseth not that Yahshua the Messiah is come in the flesh is not of God; and this is that spirit of antichrist, whereof ye have heard that it should come; and even now already is it in the world.” (1John 4:1-3)



Emphasis Note

Scriptural “tests” are often geared toward specific circumstances and false teachings.

Unfortunately, some have taken this passage out of context, and believe that this is the ultimate test of all orthodoxy. Many have been thereby deceived, for almost all forms of apostate Christianity *today* claim that “Jesus has come in the flesh.” Now, in John’s day this was a more reasonable criterion for identifying the true believers, and this first epistle was designed to rebuke the errors being propagated by a particular group of deceivers.

One of the errors espoused by the group John had in mind was that the body and spirit are separate, and that they do not affect one another in any discernable manner. Modern Christendom has echoes of this error in such doctrines as once-saved-always-saved and saved-in-sin theology. The Gnostics believed that once one was “saved,” his actions did not matter, and the things done in the flesh could not corrupt the spirit to the degree that eternal life could be forfeited.

This is not what the Bible teaches! John’s first epistle refutes this very error that was espoused by the Gnostics, and that continues in many forms of so-called mainstream Christian churches to this very day. John wrote, “Little children, *let no man deceive you*; he that doeth righteousness is righteous, even as He is righteous.” (1John 3:7) “And hereby we do know that we know Him: if we keep His commandments. He that saith, ‘I know Him,’ and keepeth not His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him. He that saith he abideth in Him ought himself also so to walk, even as He walked.” (2:3, 4, 6) “If we say that we have fellowship with Him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth.” (1:6) “We know that whosoever is born of God sinneth not; but he that is begotten of God keepeth himself, and that wicked one toucheth him not.” (5:18)

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John scarcely goes a few paragraphs without re-iterating his point: those who claim to be Christ's will follow in His footsteps and obey His instructions. If one teaches, "I am saved, but I continue to willingly commit acts of sin. Even so, I am okay, for I am saved," he will need to be educated before the Day of Judgment, for it is written that, "we labour, that, whether present or absent, we may be accepted of Him. For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad." (2Cor 5:9, 10)

Some teach that the non-Christians (only) will be judged according to their works, but the Christians according to their faith. This is not accurate, for the audience of Paul's statements in the above passage consisted of Christians, (included in the "we ... all appear") and he was speaking of the entire world. It is possible, unfortunately, to take this too far and slip into legalism, the idea that the works are what save or condemn us. This is as bad, if not worse, an error – the works merely reveal the quality of our faith. They constitute an accurate, outward *indicator* of that faith, or the Messiah was mistaken when He taught that, "Ye shall know them by their fruits." (Mat 7:16a) If men are not able to accurately perceive the fruits of others claiming to be Christians, what was the point of that teaching? It is true we are not to sit in judgment of one-another, but if we are not able to discern who is or is not an open hypocrite or sinner, we have not received the gifts that Yahshua died and ascended to give unto His people. (Eph 4:8, 1Cor 12:4)

This understanding lays the foundation for discussing convictions and preferences, which is key to finding balance in the Christian lifestyle. In seeking the middle ground between licentiousness and legalism, we must be prepared to acknowledge that another Christian may share one's convictions, but have different preferences. Convictions are beliefs and practices for which we would sacrifice freedom and life to maintain. For the Christian, these would necessarily include the free worship of the Creator and obedience to His explicit instructions for our behavior. We understand that our actions are important. They lead us to develop character and to provide a suitable example for others. We understand it as an error to suppose that being "saved" provides any least excuse for disobedience, yet we also understand that no human being is the standard of obedience.

In the examples we will study in the following sections, the principles will be laid down, which constitute convictions that Adventists are taught to hold. We understand that these are elements of the plan that the Almighty has provided for our lives, and to rebel against them would be to deliberately introduce a corrupting influence upon the character, and ultimately end in the destruction of the soul – serious matters indeed. At the same time, we will see that individuals may have preferences about the precise manner in which these convictions are implemented in daily life, and this is a part of the freedom inherent in life eternal. (Gal 5:1)

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3.7.2 – Health Reform

Much has already been said in Adventist writings regarding health reform. Each of the eight main principles underlying the Creator’s plan for human health may be found in the Scriptures:

a) Nutrition: There are guidelines provided for diet in the Bible. We are told that the original diet of man was vegetarian, (Gen 1:29, 3:18) and flesh foods were introduced only as a provision after the global Flood. (Gen 9:3) Of those meats that were permitted, we find that there was always (even before the Mosaic Law) a distinction between those designated as “clean” and those called “unclean.” (Gen 7:2) Even after the death of Christ, these meats continued to be regarded as unfit for food by the apostles, although Peter was taught that certain men (*i.e.*, Gentiles) are not to be treated in that same manner. (Acts 10:14, 28)

While that which comes out of a man from the heart is a measure of moral and spiritual purity, (Mark 7:18-23) a concept often confused by the Pharisees of Christ’s day, no teaching of the Messiah was ever regarded by His followers as purifying the animals that were declared as “unclean” by God in Leviticus and other passages. Paul’s statements, often taken by those in modern Christendom as an allowance for eating even the most unhealthy kinds of food, are concerned only with foods offered to idols, which in his day set a very poor witness for the superstitious pagans with whom the Church often had to do. (Acts 21:25, 1Cor 8:1, 10:28-31)

The Christian will, as a matter of principle, seek those foods which best serve his body in order to glorify the Temple of the Holy Spirit, which is a name that inspiration gives to the fleshly “tabernacle” of the believer. (1Cor 6:19)

b) Exercise: The lifestyle of most human beings was, until fairly recently, quite an active one. Because of this, only those who were very wealthy or very lazy had health concerns associated with lack of exercise. It is in this setting that Paul writes, “For bodily exercise profiteth little; but godliness is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come.” (1Tim 4:8)

Paul is not there saying that exercise is of little value in an overall sense; we read his reasoning that in comparison to spiritual development physical exercise pales, since spiritual factors influence not only this life, but also the one to come. That having been said, the idea is implied that physical exercise does benefit *this* life. Without exercise, both the body and mind easily become diseased. The Creator who set the universe in place certainly understood this, and revealed it in His sentence upon Adam, who would now have to find a place in the sin-cursed world. “In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground.” (Gen 3:19)

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Emphasis Note

The Scriptures reveal a vital connection between body and soul: 1Th 5:23, Pro 17:22, 3John 1:2, etc.

The benefits of exercise, when not taken to the extreme that they interfere with out devotional practices, are difficult to dispute. The people of Yahweh, those who know the very Lawgiver of all creation, ought to be the happiest and most healthy people in the world, for they know the plan He has given to humanity for the optimum performances of our minds and bodies.

c) Water: This substance is not only refreshing, (Mat 10:42) but is absolutely essential for life. (Gen 2:5, 6; Isa 35:7) So important is pure, cleansing water that it has become a symbol of divine grace and eternal life. (Psa 36:9, Pro 14:27, Jer 17:13, Zech 13:1, Rev 21:6)

Just as the spiritual water is essential for the cleansing and maintenance of the spiritual life, so pure, fresh water is necessary for the cleansing and maintenance of the physical body. Few people get enough of it, and thus deny their bodies the opportunity to function to the best of their potentials.

d) Sunshine: Sunshine, like exercise, was not as important a consideration in the days of Christ as it is now. Without sunshine the body cannot make essential nutrients, nor can it effectively utilize the ones it obtains through even a proper diet. In his prayer of blessing concerning the tribe of Joseph, Moses gives thanks for “the precious things of Heaven, for the dew, and for the deep that coucheth beneath, and for the precious fruits brought forth by the sun.” (Deu 33:13, 14a) The Preacher writes, “Truly the light is sweet, and a pleasant thing it is for the eyes to behold the sun.” (Ecc 11:7)

The life-giving sun is likened unto the Almighty Himself, (Psa 84:11) although in the pagan religions the symbol was confused with the One who was symbolized, and this led to a degeneration of true human worship into idolatry. (2Kings 23:5)

e) Temperance: One of the visible evidences of the true faith, described by Paul as a “fruit of the Spirit,” is temperance or self-control. (Gal 5:22, 23) Temperance is one of the necessary steps of sanctification that we must undertake to “make [our] calling and election sure; for if [we] do these things, [we] shall never fall.” (2Peter 1:10)

The Christian understanding of temperance is that we wisely use that which is good, and abstain completely from corrupting influences, such as alcoholic beverages. (Pro 23:31) As “kings and priests” of the eternal kingdom, (Rev 5:10) we read that these two classes in particular were never to make use of fermented wine or “strong drink.” (Pro 31:4, Hos 7:5, Lev 10:9-11, Isa 28:7, Ezek 44:21) What may have been allowed to some degree for the common citizen of Israel was forbidden for those in responsible positions, and in these last days every individual in whom the

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Spirit of Christ dwells feels as great a sense of moral responsibility as any Levite or social leader in the ancient nation chosen by the Almighty.

Mind-altering drugs such as caffeine, tobacco and (naturally) all legally controlled substances also fall into the same category as “strong drink,” and for precisely the same reasons. Moreover, many *legal* drugs used to treat diseases according the world’s understanding of medicine ought generally to be avoided in favor of the natural system of health and healing set in place by the Most High. (Exo 15:26; Pro 3:7, 8)

In addition to completely avoiding corrupting foods and drinks as a matter of principle and a testimony to others, we also realize that there can be “too much of a good thing.” Over-indulgence in even healthy foods and certain drinks can lead to health issues, and weaken even moral discipline that is necessary for the process of sanctification on the Highway of Holiness.

f) Air: Some have made light of the health message in Adventism, saying, “Churches should teach spiritual things, and leave the subject of healing to doctors.” A vital element of the Gospel, however, is the healing of individuals both spiritually and physically. Yahshua went around healing physical as well as emotional and spiritual ailments, (Mat 4:23) and He has commanded His followers to do the same. (Luke 10:9)

While miracles are certainly at the disposal of genuine Christians if the circumstances call for them, it is also a true teaching that Yahweh will not remove the responsibility of caring for others and ourselves with the resources that He has, in His wisdom, already provided for our use. On the other hand, the Christians’ teaching about health has had to become more overt as time has passed, for – and the matter of air is a perfect example of this – the lifestyle and diet of humanity has been dramatically altered in the past two thousand years.

As with exercise and sunlight, air is far more vital a consideration in today’s modern world of indoor living, labor and sleep than in the days of the apostles. It is certainly true that the Messiah and His messengers rebuked the unhealthy practices of His day, such as drunkenness and fornication; and while these particular activities have gotten even less healthy with the passage of time, other effective innovations to destroy health have been introduced into human society. Indoor air has been shown to be far less healthy than outdoor air – and this is even within cities that contain pollution and large amounts of synthetic particles.

In the Scriptures, the ability to interact with air is equated with life, and living beings are described in many verses as those who have “breath.” (Gen 2:7, 1Kings 17:17, Ezek 37:8) While the “breath of life” in many passages refers to a spiritual event, (*e.g.*, Job 33:4) it is also used often of literal breathing, (*e.g.*, Gen 7:22) pointing to the importance of air to life and health. The best air to still be found on the planet would be located at

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the most natural, least urban places. While it is not always feasible to spend the majority of one's time there, the more fresh air one gets, the better.

g) Rest: The Bible is clear on the benefits of rest. Although we are to “love not sleep” (Pro 20:13) to the degree that we cannot put in an honest day's labor, rest is clearly a blessing worth having, (1Kings 8:56) and has even been enshrined in one of the commandments. (Exo 20:8-11, 34:21)

Physical as well as spiritual rest is necessary, not only once a week – the minimum commanded – but also at such times as the body requires it. Even the Messiah, our perfect Example, rested when necessary and instructed His followers to do the same. (Mark 6:32) This is a worthy pattern to emulate, for while there is always much to do, and many for whom we must labor in this life of service to others, we cannot be effective servants if we ourselves are in need of care.

h) Trust: The Scriptures contain examples of individuals who made themselves literally sick with worry or unfulfilled, unrestrained desire. (Dan 8:27, Pro 13:21, 2Sam 13:2) The disquiet of the mind can often lead to the disease of the body, and trust in the Master may do much to alleviate this condition or prevent its appearance.

We read, “the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up.” (James 5:15) Although this concept does not remove the responsibility of adopting a healthy lifestyle to maintain well-being, it certainly points to trust and faith as vital elements of that manner of living. Maintaining trust in Yahweh as the source of our health and prosperity completely eliminates any possibility of conditions that develop due to anxiety or depression.

If we hold fast to the promises of the Most High, we will find that our health will become a natural part of our testimony, that by our connection with the Son of Yah, we have overcome the world. We may testify, with the Psalmist, that genuine faith has a very real impact on both the spirit and body of the believer: “I have set Yahweh always before me; because He is at my right hand, I shall not be moved. Therefore my heart is glad, and my glory rejoiceth; my flesh also shall rest in hope.” (Psa 16:8, 9)

3.7.3 – Dress Reform

The Scripture tells us, “I will therefore that men pray every where, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and doubting. In like manner also, that women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with shamefacedness and sobriety; not with broided hair, or gold, or pearls, or costly array; but (which becometh women professing godliness) with good works.” (1Tim 2:8, 10)

This passage speaks about modest dress. It does not, as many believe, speak only of modesty for women, but the instruction regarding what

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women wear is preceded by the phrase, “in like manner also.” In other words, the principle underlying the reason why women would dress modestly is first applied to men! If men “pray everywhere,” and are in a constant attitude of submission to the will of the Father, they will naturally be meek, gentle, longsuffering, and demonstrate all the other kinds of spiritual fruit, (Gal 5:22, 23) one of which is translated as “goodness” into the English of the King James Version. Some modern translations will attempt to substitute a word such as “generosity,” (NRSV) but others like the New International Version and Today’s English Version leave it untranslated, because “goodness” is exactly the right connotation. It is a general word that means “uprightness of life.”

A man or woman who has “uprightness of life” will not only act, but also dress, in a manner becoming a son or daughter of the King of Kings. It would be scandalous for the prince or princess of an earthly monarchy to dress in the manner of many worldly Christians, yet where is real majesty to be found but with Yahweh? There must be no extravagance in the clothing, as Paul’s statements make plain, for the jewels of Heaven are not yet those that sparkle in the sun or send merchants to distant countries. Yet while the dress must be relatively simple, such adjectives as “frumpy” and “boring” should not be drawn from observers either, except from those who have truly perverted their taste due to a lifetime of abuse.

Such a balance between modesty and loveliness may indeed be found, even in this evil generation. It is left to the individual to find his or her way on that path, yet none who are born again would deviate so greatly from either the culture or the spiritual principle that the name and people of Christ would be debased.

3.7.4 – Speech Reform

In Chapter 7 we will study the matter of communication and speech in some detail. For now, it is sufficient to mention the principle, that the words coming out of a Christian’s mouth are an indication of the value of his connection with the Savior. Yahshua taught that what comes out of our mouths originates in our hearts, (Luke 6:45) and if we are truly born again, genuinely converted, that heart within us is of soft, sensitive flesh and not hardened stone. (Ezek 36:26)

Our speech, as a direct consequence, will be gentle and pure; as it is written, “I turn to the people a pure language, that they may all call upon the name of Yahweh, to serve Him with one consent” (Zeph 3:9) We will testify with our behavior that, “A soft answer turneth away wrath,” (Pro 15:1) although we will not hesitate to testify against sin, and do so as those seeking to save the perishing from destruction. “Cry aloud, spare not, lift up thy voice like a trumpet, and shew my people their transgression, and the house of Jacob their sins.” (Isa 58:1) This is also the duty of the Christian.

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By our speech we should be seen as set-apart from the world. While our language must be free of what the society in which we are dwelling considers “coarse,” we are to present our thoughts with eloquence and beauty, as those befitting servants of the Most High. In everything, language as well as clothing, we are set apart from the norm, as those who “use this world, [but] not abusing it; for the fashion of this world passeth away.” (1Cor 7:31)

3.7.5 – Recreation Reform

In times of rest and play, as well as times of work, we represent the Messiah to the on-looking universe. In our time of recreation, we are to honor the Master who created and redeemed us. Recreation activities must be considered carefully, and that which is educational as well as enjoyable is best.

Recreation also brings into play the “holiday” question. Creation Seventh Day Adventists, like the mainstream Adventist Churches have traditionally done, observe the “religious” holidays only to the extent that we acknowledge their presence and seek to employ them for evangelistic purposes. Some religious groups go so far as to actively shun the holiday seasons, however the CSDA Church has seen wisdom in utilizing the themes brought forth to good use, although we refrain from participating in the “trappings” of the occasions (*e.g.*, Christmas trees, Easter eggs, etc.). Generally speaking, we do acknowledge national holidays, such as Independence Days and Thanksgiving, since the Scriptures do contain precedent for a nation setting certain days of rest and celebration even without direct divine command. (Est 9:26-28, John 10:22, 23)

In those days, as all others, there is ever an eye toward evangelistic opportunities, and the time is not to be spent in idleness, but in useful endeavor to the glory of the Father and Son.

3.7.5 – War and Politics

Adventists have had relatively little to say about politics. The principles given by the Scriptures are clear: “Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord’s sake; whether it be to the king, as supreme, or unto governors, as unto them that are sent by him for the punishment of evildoers, and for the praise of them that do well. Fear God. Honour the king.” (1Pet 2:13, 14, 17b) “And [Yahshua] said unto them, ‘Render therefore unto Caesar the things which be Caesar’s, and unto God the things which be God’s.’” (Luke 20:25)

Pay whatsoever taxes you owe. Pray for the leaders of the country in which you live. Obey the laws of the land to the fullest extent of your ability. Many individuals, particularly in developed countries like the United States of America, find themselves disagreeing with the policies of their leaders.

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When this happens, they often say a great deal that does not “honour” those in the position of leadership. If the apostle Peter teaches us to honor an individual that was a monarch, and may not even have been elected to his position, how much more ought an individual to be respected who is at the helm of a republic or a democracy? We may agree or disagree with policies, but every Christian has a duty before Yahweh to respect the officials He has allowed to stand in responsible positions. (Dan 2:21)

Voting, likewise, must be strictly about *policies* and not individuals. Those who cast votes in favor of elected officials due merely to political affiliations, personal familiarity or (worst of all) the hopes of personal gain show a great disrespect for both human and divine government. There is certainly no requirement that an Adventist must vote, and many may indeed abstain completely as a matter of preference, but those who do ought to seek the will of the Almighty carefully before setting their seal to a candidate.

War is another governmental issue that comes up from time to time, and has proven to be a source of controversy in the history of Adventism. Creation Seventh Day Adventists take the position that our members may, in times of national need, serve as non-combatant participants in the military forces. We would not serve in a combat capacity, but would provide aid to those who do, knowing that the Scriptures have a long history of honoring warriors (those of Israel and those of heathen lands – men on both sides of the battle) involved in reasonable causes.

In these last days, we understand that Gospel workers have little time to engage in warfare in any capacity. The principle is listed here merely *as* a principle, and one worthy of our consideration, although it is doubtful that time should last long enough for any practical implications of the above concept for Church members. It does help in understanding both the events recorded in the Scriptures and certain major developments in the history of Adventism, such as the origins of the Seventh-day Adventist Reform Movement as a separate entity from the General Conference organization.



Cautionary Note

It is possible to become myopic on this (as any) issue, and this has led to the Reform Movement's premature separation.

3.7.8 – Labor Unions and Secret Societies

The Messiah said, “I spake openly to the world; I ever taught in the synagogue, and in the temple, whither the Jews always resort; and in secret have I said nothing.” (John 18:20) In another place He taught, “Again, ye have heard that it hath been said by them of old time, ‘Thou shalt not forswear thyself, but shalt perform unto the Lord thine oaths.’ But I say unto you, Swear not at all; neither by Heaven, for it is God's throne, nor by the earth, for it is His footstool, neither by Jerusalem; for it is the city of the

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great King. Neither shalt thou swear by thy head, because thou canst not make one hair white or black. But let your communication be, ‘Yea, yea; Nay, nay,’ for whatsoever is more than these cometh of evil.” (Mat 5:33-37)

Both of these concepts forbid us from participating in any secret societies or unions that require arcane oaths and secret ceremonies. Servants are told to respect their masters, and to do their labor with contentment as if laboring for the Holy One directly. (Luke 3:14, Col 3:22, 1Tim 6:1) In light of this, labor unions, secret societies and fraternal organizations (such as the Freemasons) are strictly avoided by Adventist Christians.

3.10 – The Very Elect

The “Election of grace,” is a somewhat controversial subject in Christianity. Some traditions believe and teach that the Almighty has elected some individuals to be lost and some to be saved. To a degree this is true, however the balanced view of this matter taught in the Scriptures acknowledges the sovereignty of the Almighty while, at the same time, demonstrates the gift of free will with which all intelligent beings have been created.

The question that arises when discussing the election of grace and the key Biblical word “predestinated” is, “Are some human beings arbitrarily chosen to be saved or lost?” While there is an *election*, as we will see, the Bible also decidedly refutes the idea that Yahweh actually chooses certain men for destruction even before their birth.

One verse often used to support an arbitrary destiny for certain humans regarding salvation or damnation is: “As it is written, ‘Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated.’” (Rom 9:13) Some take this verse, and other passages in Romans 9, to indicate that Yah has selected some individuals before their birth to be saved or lost. This is not the case. The ninth chapter of Paul’s epistle to Rome is not speaking of individuals at all, but of nations. The Almighty never said (so it is not “written”) about the *humans* Jacob or Esau that He loved one and hated the other... Paul is not quoting from Genesis here but from the Book of Malachi, which records a theoretical conversation between Yahweh and Israel: “‘I have loved you,’ saith Yahweh. Yet ye say, ‘Wherein hast thou loved us?’ ‘Was not Esau Jacob’s brother?’ saith Yahweh, ‘yet I loved Jacob, and I hated Esau, and laid his mountains and his heritage waste for the dragons of the wilderness.’” (Mal 1:2, 3)

The context reveals that the subject of the passage in Malachi is the nation of Israel (named for Jacob) and the nation of Edom (Esau’s land). The heads of these nations, to a large degree, gave their characters to the people of their countries, and this is the reason why one was accepted and the other rejected. The individuals themselves were chosen or rejected based upon how they responded to the grace offered to them, and we read that Esau lost

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his earthly lot, a symbol of the Heavenly inheritance, because he was a “profane person,” caring more about the dignities of this life than the honor of the priesthood as it pertained to the next. (Heb 12:16)

The word “predestinated” features heavily in an epistle of Paul. We read: “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Yahshua the Messiah, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ, according as He hath chosen us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love, having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Yahshua the Messiah to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will, to the praise of the glory of His grace, wherein He hath made us accepted in the beloved.

“In whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace; wherein He hath abounded toward us in all wisdom and prudence; having made known unto us the mystery of His will, according to His good pleasure which He hath purposed in Himself.

“That in the dispensation of the fullness of times He might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; even in Him; in whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of Him who worketh all things after the counsel of His own will, that we should be to the praise of His glory, who first trusted in Christ, in whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation; in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise, which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of His glory.” (Eph 1:3-14)

Clearly, in this lengthy passage Paul is focusing primarily on the concept that salvation is initiated by Yahweh, and not in the mind or heart of any human being. He makes it plain that men are saved at the instigation of the Creator, and not by the merits of any human. Men are “chosen” from the foundation of the world... but the question is, “*Why* are some men chosen and some men rejected?”

Those who believe in absolute predestination in a Calvinistic sense say that God elects based on some criteria we do not know, or on no real criteria at all; He simply points and says, “That one will be saved.” This is not at all what the Bible teaches. While Paul’s words are certainly profound, they are not in conflict with other passages that tell us that we may choose (by the gift of grace) to serve the Almighty. Mankind is “totally depraved,” as the phrase in Calvinism goes, which is why an additional factor – grace – must be provided that men should have a hope of Heaven. As Joshua said to the Israelites, “choose you this day whom ye will serve.” (Josh 24:15) *Every* book of the Bible provides men with a moral choice, either explicitly worded or implied by the content, and Christ taught us to, “lay up for

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yourselves treasures in Heaven,” because “no man can serve two masters,” (Mat 6:20, 24) the options being the spirit or the flesh.



Activity Note

It is often educational to read the works of the reformers such as Calvin and Luther to see the development of thought.

Yahweh is said to “predestinate” those whom He “foreknows.” (Rom 8:9) The Almighty knows ahead of time who will be saved and who will be lost; nowhere does it say that He predestinates those whom he “fore-saves,” or “fore-selects.” The selection itself (also called being “ordained before” in 1Cor 2:7) is based upon His knowledge, not His activity. Paul Himself tells us, in Ephesians 1, that those who are selected are those who hear the word and

believe. These are the ones Yah successfully draws to Himself but, and this is key, He is seeking to draw *all*. He is “not willing that any should perish,” (2Pet 3:9) and “will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth.” (1Tim 2:4) These passages refer to the setting of not only the saints, but also the wicked. (2Pet 3:7) Christ intended that His sacrifice should “draw all” unto Himself; (John 12:32) and again this was not spoken in terms of only the elect, but for all who were present, even those who did not understand His ministry or work. (verse 29)

Essentially, the election of grace is not based upon some divine principle that is higher than the human mind can grasp, or else the vast number of moral lessons and instructions to reject evil and choose righteousness would be meaningless. The apostle Peter tells us in no uncertain terms that the election is not arbitrary, for he gives us clear instructions, saying, “Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to *make your calling and election sure*; for if ye do these things [described in the passage above], ye shall never fall.” (2Pet 1:10)

3.11 – The Remnant Church

Both mainstream Adventists and Creation Seventh Day Adventists believe in the concept of a “Remnant” Church. We believe that the Almighty has always had a faithful group of believers who practice and teach His commandments, and that they have (generally speaking) been in the minority.

While the exact phrase “remnant Church” does not appear in that form in the Bible, we do read of a remnant that is “called out” from prevailing apostasy, thus meeting the definition precisely. We read of a “remnant” of Israel who returned from Babylonian captivity to rebuild the holy city, (Ezra 9:8) and we see in this a prototype of every stage of the reform within the Christian Church since the days of the Apostles.

The promises are given: “The remnant shall return, even the remnant of Jacob, unto the mighty God. For though thy people Israel be as the sand of

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the sea, yet a remnant of them shall return; the consumption decreed shall overflow with righteousness. And the remnant that is escaped of the house of Judah shall again take root downward, and bear fruit upward.” (Isa 10:21, 22; 37:31) “The remnant of Israel shall not do iniquity, nor speak lies, neither shall a deceitful tongue be found in their mouth; for they shall feed and lie down, and none shall make them afraid.” (Zeph 3:13) “And the Dragon was wroth with the Woman [*i.e.*, the Church], and went to make war with the remnant of her seed, which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ.” (Rev 12:17)

That last verse from Revelation is the very definition of the Adventist Church in its faithfulness, and both mainstream Adventists and the Creation SDA movement claim to be this Body. In claiming to be the Remnant Body of Christ, they indicate that they believe a standard of Scripture is provided, and that there is “one Lord, one faith, one baptism.” (Eph 4:5) There is a right way to read the Scriptures, and a right understanding of the principles and prophecies of the Bible; anything that deviates from a proper, spiritual understanding of the texts is rightly described as “error,” and it is not always sufficient to simply “agree to disagree” on doctrines.

Accepting the idea of a “Remnant” constitutes a rejection of the non-denominational and ecumenical movements within Christianity that seek to be inclusive to the extent that pastors and leaders have lost (to a large degree) the ability to call sin by its right name. The Scriptures tell us that with practice and spiritual growth we may indeed learn what is true and what is false, (Heb 5:14) and the Remnant will certainly develop this discernment that it may “not do iniquity” as the promise indicates.

3.12 – Spiritual Gifts

3.12.1 – The Presence and Purpose of Spiritual Gifts

The Adventist Church believes that the people of Elohim are defined to a degree by the presence of spiritual gifts. We are told, “And God hath set some in the Church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, governments, diversities of tongues.” (1Cor 12:28) In Ephesians we are told the reason: “And He gave some, apostles, and some, prophets, and some, evangelists, and some, pastors and teachers, for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ” (Eph 4:11, 12)

No indication is ever given in the Scriptures that the Church will go for any length of time without these offices and these gifts. In the very last days, in fact, we are told that the Church will have the “testimony of Jesus Christ,” one element of which is the “spirit of prophecy.” (Rev 12:17, 19:10)

Two gifts meriting particular mention are those of prophecy and tongues.

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3.12.2 – The Gift of Prophecy

Individuals with the gift of prophecy are provided to aid in the development of doctrine, (Dan 9:10) to provide a guide when examining and interpreting existing Biblical prophecies, (Amos 3:7) and to offer insights into the events that are coming upon the saints. (1Tim 1:18)

Prophets are not fortune-tellers, not infallible, and will often draw symbols from the objects and events around them. (Ezek 5:1-4) Though they speak with the authority of the Spirit when relating insights and visions, they are still subject to the voice of the Body as a whole. (1Th 5:20, 21) The warnings and promises they give must be understood as *conditional*, as we will examine in a later section, and examples from the Bible are commonplace (e.g., Jonah’s prediction that Nineveh would fall in 40 days).

3.12.3 – The Gift of Tongues

“Tongues” is another controversial point in Christianity. The Charismatic and Pentecostal movements see it as a “secret prayer language” for communication with the Almighty in a state of near-ecstasy wherein self-control and normal patterns of behavior are lost. This state, referred to as being “drunk in the Spirit” is based upon an interpretation of such verses as: “And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit,” (Eph 5:18) and “Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities, for we know not what we should pray for as we ought, but the Spirit Itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered.” (Rom 8:26)

Adventists believe that the interpretation is flawed. In the first verse, from Ephesians 5, two different words are used; “drunken” is *methusko*, and “filled” is *pleroo*. Paul is not here saying to be drunken with the Spirit rather than with wine, but that if one is “filled” with the Spirit, (a neutral word) one will not desire the intoxication that comes from unsanctified sources. Likewise, Romans 8 does not speak of a secret prayer language, because the groanings of the Spirit in that context *cannot* be uttered!



External Link Note
Articles on tongues:
<http://csda.us/binary/essays/etongues.html>
<http://csda.us/binary/essays/etongues2.html>

The word *unknown* that often precedes the description of the gift of tongues in the Bible is added by translators, but the word “tongues” itself simply means “languages.” In every case in the Scriptures, the language spoken was understood by at least one human standing by, or a translator who could make the meaning plain to others. Paul specifically writes that if no translator is present, the person speaking in the language unfamiliar to onlookers should be silent. (1Cor 14:28)

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Though the Pentecostals say that their gift of tongues is drawn (as is their name) from the events at the Pentecost recorded in Acts, we find that the gift there was given so that individuals from other nations could hear the Gospel in their native language. “And they were all amazed and marvelled, saying one to another, ‘Behold, are not all these which speak Galilaeans? And how hear we every man in our own tongue, wherein we were born? Parthians, and Medes, and Elamites, and the dwellers in Mesopotamia, and in Judaea, and Cappadocia, in Pontus, and Asia, Phrygia, and Pamphylia, in Egypt, and in the parts of Libya about Cyrene, and strangers of Rome, Jews and proselytes, Cretes and Arabians, we do hear them speak *in our tongues* the wonderful works of God.’” (Acts 2:7-11)

No indication is anywhere given that the gift ever differed from this, and the descriptions that *are* given (*e.g.*, in the home of Cornelius) actually indicate that the gift bestowed at those times was precisely the same as that which is defined in Acts 2: “And they of the circumcision which believed were astonished, as many as came with Peter, because that on the Gentiles also was poured out the gift of the Holy Ghost. For they heard them speak with tongues, and magnify God. Then answered Peter, ‘Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized, which have received the Holy Ghost as well as we? [...] And as I began to speak, the Holy Ghost fell on them, *as on us at the beginning.*’” (Acts 10:45-47, 11:15)

3.11 – Summary

- 1) The mainstream Adventist Church and Creation Seventh Day Adventists have far more similarities in doctrine than differences.
- 2) The main similarities include obedience to the Decalogue, understanding the balance between faith and works, the Sanctuary doctrine, the Investigative Judgment and the state of the dead.
- 3) Many elements of Biblical symbolism remain constant in interpreting the prophecies of Revelation and the other books.
- 4) Creation Seventh Day Adventists are to be notable examples of the very principles of lifestyle first expounded in mainstream Adventism.
- 5) An identical understanding is held of such concepts as the connection between Michael the Archangel and Yahshua, as well as the election of the saints and our views on predestination, tongues and prophecy.
- 6) Both Conference Adventists and Creation Seventh Day Adventists believe in the concept of a “Remnant Church;” the only question that remains is, “Where is it? How do we identify it when we have found it?”

Chapter 4: Narrowing Road

Topics: Unique CSDA doctrines including the Victory message, the Biblical Godhead, appointed times, acts of worship, sacred names, the Church mission and our prophetic understanding

4.1 – The Victory Message

4.1.1 – The Gospel of Freedom

This chapter, dealing primarily with the doctrines peculiar to the Creation Seventh Day Adventist Church (at least in terms of Adventism) begins with a statement of the Gospel that is practically unheard of in any other religious body on earth.

Interestingly enough, it may be explained by simply quoting a verse from the New Testament: “Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for His Seed remaineth in him, and he cannot sin, because he is born of God.” (1John 3:9)

So what is unique about that? The Remnant people take this verse to be true precisely as it reads. While other churches are teaching that, “Yes, this verse presents the ideal, but everyone knows *we all sin*,” or “this just means we will not always *continue* in sin,” or “Christians will get to that point *someday*, but not today,” the CSDA Church teaches that when one becomes born again, he simply ceases to deliberately perform (*i.e.*, commit) acts of which he is already convicted are transgressions of Yahweh’s law of love.

The word “commit” there implies two ideas, first that it is not simply an error, and second that the individual knows the action is wrong. When the members of the Church give their testimony to others, saying, “Since I have been converted, I have not committed any known sins,” the typical response is, “So are you saying you are perfect?”

Legitimately, the answer could potentially be, “By faith,” because we are told that this is precisely what the mature Christian is. “Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.” (Mat 5:48) “Let us therefore, as many as be perfect, be thus minded...” (Phil 3:15a) That verse from Philippians 3 is very important to understanding the details of this concept, and we will return to it in a moment. For now, however, it should be seen that the word “perfect” has been applied to the faithful saints, and also to a number of individuals before Christ’s first Advent, such as Noah, (Gen 6:9) Job, (Job 1:1) Asa (2Ch 15:17) and anyone who may be used as a worthy example. (Psa 37:37)

Practically, the answer requires some explanation in this drunken, sin-sick world. The word *perfect* in the Bible properly connotes two ideas, first that

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the individual being discussed has no moral lack. In other words, they serve the Almighty “with a perfect heart and with a willing mind,” (1Ch 28:9) performing no known acts of unrighteousness, and leaving no known duty undone. The words from which this concept is translated are *tam* in Hebrew and *teleios* in Greek.

The second definition means absolute purity and perfection, which is the goal of sanctification, the end result of our walk with Christ. This is *tamam* in Hebrew and *teleioo* in Greek. While it is claimed by faith, it is not understood to be a present reality since the instructions of the prophets are, “Wash you, make you clean; put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes; cease to do evil, learn to do well; seek judgment, relieve the oppressed, judge the fatherless, plead for the widow.” (Isa 1:16, 17) In other words, what you know to be “evil” you must “cease” to do... immediately halt these activities. But we do not immediately thereafter know all about righteousness, and must continue to “learn to do well.” By the power of Christ in us (Galatians 2:20) we faithfully perform that which is already exposed to our view... helping those in need, worshipping Yahweh and serving our fellow man with all our current understanding, but there is more, ever more, to learn in this life.

To demonstrate the concept of having no lack, but still having more to learn, we turn to Philippians 3 and read Paul’s testimony, where he writes that he does not speak or act “as though I had already attained, either were already perfect [*teleioo*]; but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Yahshua. Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended, but this one thing I do: forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Yahshua. Let us therefore, as many as be perfect [*teleios*], be thus minded: and if in any thing ye be otherwise minded, God shall reveal even this unto you. Nevertheless, whereto we have already attained, let us walk by the same rule, let us mind the same thing.” (Phil 3:12-16)

Briefly, what Paul already knows is true he accomplishes “by the same rule,” and lets Yahweh reveal any errors to him. While seeking the absolute perfection that awaits the resurrected saints, we (*as many as be perfect*) walk in the manner the apostle here describes. This is the new birth, the new creation that becoming a Christian involves, “therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature; old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.” (2 Cor 5:17)

Here is just a small sample of verses to underscore this idea, and the Scriptures are heavy with such promises as these:

“And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as He is pure. Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law. And ye know that He was manifested to take away

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our sins; and in Him is no sin. Whosoever abideth in Him sinneth not: whosoever sinneth hath not seen Him, neither known Him.” (1 John 3:3-6)

“Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin [*lo echatah*; literally: “I *will not* sin”] against thee. Before I was afflicted I went astray: but now have I kept thy word.” (Psa 119:11,67)

“As far as the east is from the west, so far hath He removed our transgressions from us.” (Psa 103:12)

“All scripture is given by inspiration of Yah, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of Yah may be perfect, throughly furnished unto all good works.” (2 Tim 3:16, 17)

“And Paul, earnestly beholding the council, said, ‘Men and brethren, I have lived in all good conscience before Elohim until this day.’ I say the truth in Christ, I lie not, my conscience also bearing me witness in the Holy Ghost.” (Acts 23:1, Rom 9:1)

“Thou hast proved mine heart; thou hast visited me in the night; thou hast tried me, and shalt find nothing; I am purposed that my mouth shall not transgress. Concerning the works of men, by the word of thy lips I have kept me from the paths of the destroyer. Hold up my goings in thy paths, that my footsteps slip not.” (Psa 17:3-5)

“Forasmuch then as Christ hath suffered for us in the flesh, arm yourselves likewise with the same mind; for he that hath suffered in the flesh hath ceased from sin, that he no longer should live the rest of his time in the flesh to the lusts of men, but to the will of God.” (1 Pet 4:1, 2)

“Yahshua answered them, ‘Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin. And the servant abideth not in the house for ever; but the Son abideth ever. If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed. Verily, verily, I say unto you, If a man keep my saying, he shall never see death.’” (John 8:34-36, 51)

“Thou hast enlarged my steps under me, that my feet did not slip.” (Psa 18:36)

“Awake to righteousness, and sin not; for some have not the knowledge of God; I speak this to your shame.” (1 Cor 15:34, Note: sin comes from a lack of true knowledge of God, as it is also said in 1John 3:6)

“Blessed are they that keep His testimonies, and that seek Him with the whole heart. They also do no iniquity: they walk in His ways.” (Psa 119:2, 3)

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“The remnant of Israel shall not do iniquity, nor speak lies; neither shall a deceitful tongue be found in their mouth, for they shall feed and lie down, and none shall make them afraid.” (Zeph 3:13)

“Now unto Him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy, to the only wise Elohim our Saviour be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever. Amen.” (Jude 1:24, 25)

I have left out a great many that the student of the Bible may find, and it is not redundant to rehearse these verses over and over again, for it is by these that “ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.” (2 Pet 1:4)

The Word declares that “[Yahweh] hath made [Christ] to be sin for us, who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him.” (2Cor 5:21) The amazing significance of this verse is rarely emphasized. Do we believe that Christ’s mission on earth was successful? Do we believe He has made atonement for us with the Father? If yes, then we must believe that we are “the righteousness of God in Him.” We, if we *truly* believe this, accept as a gift of grace the very character and presence of the Almighty (*i.e.*, His Holy Spirit) into ourselves, (Acts 13:52) and thenceforth it is a practical *impossibility* to commit a known wrong! A man can never act against his own basic nature unless that nature already allows for the possibility of such actions; and the nature of “Christ in you, the hope of glory” (Col 1:27) contains “no darkness at all,” (1John 1:6, *cf.* John 14:30) and “no shadow of turning.” (James 1:17) “According to your faith,” it is written, “be it unto you.” (Mat 9:29)

4.1.2 – The Objections Answered

Naturally, Satan will not allow such a message as this to be spread unchallenged. Early and diligently he has done the work of undermining the Gospel in the Christian faith... and today the typical Christian is no better than the more decent of the worldlings. There is no sharp line of distinction between the sacred and the profane, which line the priests of the New Covenant were to display, (Lev 10:10, 1Pet 2:9) and the reason is because few believe it is even possible to live a life without known sin, truly free from the works of Satan that Christ came to destroy. (1John 3:8)

Here are a few of the more common objections that the mind of the flesh (inspired by Satan, for Yahweh would never cause doubt in His own Word or promises) has raised in response to the “testimony of Jesus Christ” (Rev 12:17) in His people:

1) How can you say that those who are born again “cannot sin,” when the Scriptures record that some fell away? Also, doesn’t this take away free will if we are forced to be obedient?

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Both these similar objections are answered if we understand the difference between theory and practice. For example, when Christ was on earth, was it possible for Him to commit sin? Obviously it was possible in *theory*; Satan tempted Him to do this very thing, and there would be no struggle as recorded in Gethsemane if there were no possibility of yielding to fear and anxiety. (Mark 14:32, Luke 22:44) The struggles that the Messiah endured were not, as the Gnostics believed, just for show – there was a genuine power in the “likeness of sinful flesh,” (Rom 8:3) that Yahshua genuinely had to overcome. By looking to His example, we may overcome as (in the same manner like) He did, and become partakers of His inheritance. (Rev 3:21) In *practice*, however, because the Messiah carried with Him the born-again nature from birth, and had no darkness marring His perfect character, there was no realistic way He would commit a crime against His Father. (John 8:29)

The Scriptures record that “Herein is our love made perfect, that we may have boldness in the Day of Judgment: because *as He is, so are we in this world.*” (1John 4:17) In other words, those who are born again have the exact same experience in our generation, being tempted (sorely at times) and praying for strength to overcome, because Satan knows that it is theoretically possible to triumph in individual lives. As we hold to the faith of Yahshua, however, knowing that as “partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust,” (2Pet 1:4) we cannot possibly, practically sin. (Gk. *hamartia*, “to miss the mark”)

Those whom the Scriptures record as falling away only did so because they first surrendered the faith. They did not fall into a sin and then cast away their belief... they first ceased to believe that they were partakers of Christ’s divine nature, and had already conquered whatsoever temptation faced them. This is not the experience of those who walk faithfully and consistently in the newness of life; (Rom 6:4) and as the apostle wrote, “we are persuaded better things of you [...] though we thus speak.” (Heb 6:9)

Our freedom is manifest in our ability (by the gift of grace) to choose whom we will serve. (Josh 24:15, Mat 6:24) As long as that choice is affirmed and maintained, there is no practical possibility of falling into sin. We are not forced to be obedient, we continually choose to be so because the Spirit of Elohim dwells with in us – not for a time, not periodically, but It abides always. This is where freedom and grace perfectly unite; we choose to serve the Almighty, and that choice, made in faith, preserves us by the power of the Son who poured out His very life upon all flesh as an atoning sacrifice for sin. Members of the Creation Seventh Day Adventist Church, by their submission to the ordinance of baptism (discussed in detail in a later chapter) affirm that they have indeed made this choice, and covenant (as did Abraham) to walk before Yahweh and be pure. (Gen 17:1)

2) The Scriptures say, “If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.” (1 John

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1:9) Doesn't this outright tell us we will have sins to confess? In fact, the verse just before us tells us that, "If we say that we have no sin we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us." (verse 8) Further, John appears to leave the possibility open by saying, "these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father..." (1John 2:1)

Here the distinction is seen between deliberate sins and errors in judgment. The Scriptures make a clear difference between the two, in one place writing, "And if any soul sin through ignorance, then he shall bring a she goat of the first year for a sin offering. But the soul that doeth ought presumptuously, whether he be born in the land, or a stranger, the same reproacheth Yahweh; and that soul shall be cut off from among his people." (Num 15:27, 30)



Lexicon Note

"Presumptuous," (Heb. *Zed*) implies insolence and conscious impiety; it is deliberate, akin to the "commit" of 1John 3:9

David wrote, "Keep back thy servant also from presumptuous sins; let them not have dominion over me: then shall I be upright, and I shall be innocent from the great transgression." (Psa 19:36)

Presumptuous, or deliberate, sins lead invariably to death. Sins committed in ignorance, without a clear knowledge of their nature, may be atoned according to both the Old and New Covenants.

John himself, whose letter is quoted in the objection, is clear to distinguish between those sins that are "not unto death," and those that are. (1John 5:16) Now plainly, the Scripture teaches that, "the wages of sin is death," making no distinction between any "kind" of sin, therefore the difference can only be in the person who commits the acts of transgression, not the sinful act itself. That is the only other option – either there are sins that are not worthy of death (an idea the Scripture does not teach in any place) or some sins are not "imputed" or counted against us.

The Scripture does teach this idea, reading, "Blessed is the man unto whom Yahweh imputeth not iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no guile." (Psa 32:2, *cf.*, Rom 4:8) If there is no "guile" in the spirit, no rebellion, then the acts that are committed, even if they are errors, are not counted against an individual for condemnation. Now, to be clear, this does not mean there are no consequences to the actions. A man who ignorantly, innocently breaks a speed limit will still have to pay a fine. This is the difference between the chastisement of Yahweh and the wrath of Yahweh. The Almighty will often bring us into situations where our faith may be refined, so that we make no errors and walk in absolute purity. (1Pet 1:7, Heb 12:6) "But when we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world." (1Cor 11:32) We are not subject to His wrath, which "cometh on the children of disobedience," (Col 3:6) who "cannot cease from sin; beguiling unstable souls, an heart they have exercised with

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covetous practices; cursed children.” (2Pet 2:14) Those who say, “We ‘cannot cease from sin’” ought to read what the Scriptures say about them... and further, need to accept the promise that “with God all things are possible,” (Mark 10:27) lest they set themselves up for wrath.

To reply directly to the second objection, if we say we “have no sin” in that we have nothing further to learn, we will certainly reject the chastisement of Yahweh, and will not be suited for the new Heaven and new Earth. But if we understand the difference between willful and ignorant sins, and confess such sins as Yahweh reveals to us as the Scriptures direct, (Phil 3:15) then He will “cleanse” us from them, as the very reference records, and if we are thus cleansed we will not go back into the mud from which we were washed. This is the true experience for which our Father and Creator have prepared us. (2Pet 2:22)

Finally, 1John 2:1 does not have John saying, “I am writing to you that you sin not, but if you do sin, you have an Advocate [Christ] with the Father.” John uses a conjunction that does not contradict or weaken what he has said before, but adds and strengthens when he employs the term *kai* (translated “and” in the King James Version). In addition, the word he uses for “sin” is in the same tense as the word in the verse reading, “For all have sinned [past perfect tense], and come short of the glory of God.” (Rom 3:23) What the verse reads, as seen in the King James and with the proper rendering of tense included, is, “My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And further, if any man *has sinned*, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.”

John, in speaking to those who had been influenced by the Gnostic religion, is not here attempting to point out an ideal situation, but to win back to the true faith those who have already been tempted with spiritualistic errors. If any man has sinned, he is not to despair; he is to trust in the atoning sacrifice of the Messiah and then, thereafter, he is to enter into that life in which he has “ceased from sin” as the Master before him. (1Pet 4:1)

3) What about Romans 7? Doesn’t Paul say that he cannot cease to sin, even though he wants to in his spirit? We read him saying, “For we know that the law is spiritual: but I am carnal, sold under sin. For that which I do I allow not: for what I would, that do I not; but what I hate, that do I. For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh) dwelleth no good thing; for to will is present with me, but how to perform that which is good I find not. For the good that I would I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do.” (Rom 7:14,15,18, 19) He later calls himself the “chief” of sinners. (1Tim 1:15)

This is one of the most common objections we hear, and it is due to a very poor understanding of Romans 7. The problem is that this chapter is pulled from its rightful setting between “chapters” 6 and 8 (remember, Paul did not write his letters in chapters!) and used as a stand-alone statement of faith (or lack thereof). To briefly but thoroughly deal with this matter, we really

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ought simply to say, “Read Romans all the way from chapter 6 through chapter 8.” It is only thus that the matter becomes clear. A brief synopsis, which ought to be thoroughly confirmed by personal reading, follows:

In Romans 6 Paul begins by saying, “How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?” (Rom 6:2) He explains further why this comes to pass: “Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin. For he that is dead is freed from sin. What then? Shall we sin, because we are not under the law, but under grace? God forbid.” (Rom 6:6, 7, 15)

Near the end of chapter 6, Paul begins to draw a contrast between the past and the present, and this is key to understanding what follows. He writes, “But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you. Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness. I speak after the manner of men because of the infirmity of your flesh; for as ye have yielded your members servants to uncleanness and to iniquity unto iniquity, even so now yield your members servants to righteousness unto holiness. For when ye were the servants of sin, ye were free from righteousness.” (verses 17-20)

Two ideas come through here: first, those who were converted once served sin helplessly, unwilling and unable to be righteous; second, that the infirmity is in the “flesh,” the theological concept of the “body” with its needs and desires that are often contrary to spiritual aims and higher reasoning. (Gal 5:16, Rom 12:1)

Romans 7 exists primarily to expand upon this point, not to point to Paul’s current state of spirituality. At the very beginning of the seventh chapter, Paul re-establishes the timeline he mentioned in the preceding passages. He writes, “Wherefore, my brethren, ye also are become dead to the law by the body of Christ; that ye should be married to Another, even to Him who is raised from the dead, that we should bring forth fruit unto God. *For when we were in the flesh*, the motions of sins, which were by the law, did work in our members to bring forth fruit unto death. But *now* we are delivered from the law, that being dead wherein we were held; that we should serve in newness of spirit, and not in the oldness of the letter.” (Rom 7:4-6)

The next verse begins a section that underscores what he just said. He points out that the commandments, which are “holy, and just, and good,” are what convicted him of his sinful state. (verses 12, 13)

It is after this that he begins to say, “I am carnal, sold under sin. For that which I do I allow not: for what I would, that do I not; but what I hate, that do I.” (verses 14, 15) Note that this statement will not be properly understood if the reader does not realize that Paul is speaking about when he was under the law, and finding himself guilty of sin before his new birth.

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“But,” some object, “Paul is clearly speaking in the present tense. Why do you think he is speaking of the past?” There are two reasons. First, Paul has already established a timeline in verses 4-6, and he is simply being consistent. Second, tenses in narrative verses of the Bible are not immediately apparent, and must often be derived from the context. The New Testament writers will, at times, even employ *future* tenses to speak about the past if they have already established a timeline. For example, we read, “For [the Israelites] could not endure that which was commanded, and if so much as a beast touch the mountain [Sinai], it shall be stoned [future perfect tense], or thrust through with a dart.” (Heb 12:20)

Hebrews 12 poses no problems for readers, because they already know the author is speaking about the Exodus; the context makes the timeline clear. Similarly, in Romans 7, if Paul’s statements about the past vs. the present Christian experience are understood, the verses which have Paul appearing to be describing his current experience are placed in their right setting. It is only those who ignore both the setting (chapter 6 and the early verses of chapter 7) and the full text (the last part of chapter 7 and all of chapter 8) that stumble over the “troubling” passages. The same applies to the statement that Paul is the “chief” of sinners in his letter to Timothy; he considers himself so only by virtue of his past actions, not his current experience. (1Tim 1:12, 13)

At the very end of the chapter in question, Paul writes, “O wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me from the body of this death?” (Rom 7:24) Is Paul *now* crying out for salvation? Anyone who has read his epistles should know that Paul is already rejoicing in the race he has run, (2Tim 4:7) and inviting others to do the same. (Phil 4:4) Further, Paul teaches that he has the very Son of God living in him, (Gal 2:20) in direct opposition to his declaration that “no good thing” dwells in him in Romans 7 (verse 18).

The only way this can be understood with any intellectual honesty is to realize that there is a time element at work here. The only way to deny this is to a) believe there is a contradiction in the writings, b) believe that Paul changed his mind later on, or c) accept the spiritualistic (Gnostic) view that once we are saved our bodies may continue to sin while our spirits are preserved in purity. This last teaching is particularly dangerous to sanctification, and is further directly denied by the writers of the Bible, who declare that the entire being (body soul and spirit) must be sanctified, and that all the being is preserved by the spirit and grace of the Savior unto eternal life. (1Th 5:23)

No, Paul is not *now* saying, “Who will save me from this body of death;” he is recording what he said when he discovered that by the Law he was worthy of death. (Rom 7:11) In fact, Paul immediately answers his own question just before returning the narrative to the present. “Who shall deliver me from this body of death?” He replies, “I thank God through

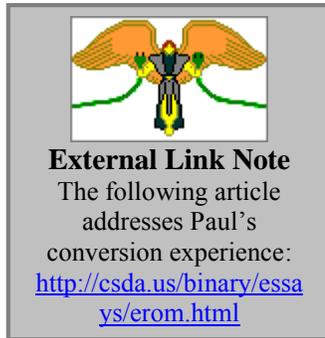
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Jesus Christ our Lord. So then with the mind I myself serve the law of God; but with the flesh the law of sin.” (verse 25)

We must be clear, the “flesh” remains subject to the temptations of the law of sin. We are still “temptable,” as discussed earlier, still needing to consistently walk in the Spirit in order to maintain that pure life. (Rom 8:13) In the present, after conversion, we are yet dwelling in sinful flesh; but now the spirit is different, sanctified; and Paul records, in the very next verse, (which is unfortunately segmented by a chapter-break) “There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Yahshua, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.” (Rom 8:1)

Romans 8:1 provides even further evidence that the preceding passages are speaking of Paul’s past experience, because the word used for “now” is not a word that simply draws emphasis. It means, literally, “at this present time.” *Thayer’s Lexicon* records of this word: “said to be or be done the present time [as] opposed to past time.”

Paul summarizes his argument in the remainder of chapter 8, pointing out that while we may yet dwell in sinful flesh, we who are in Yahshua choose always to walk in the Spirit, “that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.” (verse 4) In fact, from this converted, spiritual point of view, Paul goes so far as to deny the power of the flesh altogether, reminding his readers, “ye are *not* in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his.” (Rom 8:9) If anyone says, “We all sin because of our sinful flesh,” this verse is the antidote for such a condition, and certainly such an argument.



4) If we can cease to sin, what purpose does Christ serve, since it reads that He “ever liveth to make intercession for” His people? (Heb 7:25)

This objection may be briefly answered, but it is among one of the most tragic that can be raised. Those who make such statements have an extremely poor concept of the infinite love of the Father as expressed in the life, death, resurrection and subsequent ministry of Yahshua the Messiah. Those who say this do so because they believe that Christ, by making continual intercession for His people, is simply patching up our spiritual wounds and sending us back to play amidst the dangers of this world.

It would be like a mother whose infant is playing in a room filled with sharp, rusty knives. At every occasion on which the child (inevitably) cuts himself, the concerned mother runs in, puts a bandage on the latest laceration, gives a kiss and an assuring look to the child... and places him

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right back in the deadly situation from which she has taken him. The kindest thing that may be said about such a parent is that she is “negligent.”

A more accurate term might be, “wicked;” for although there are outward expressions of affection, such as the kiss and the treatment of immediate injuries, true love would never consent to having the child returned to such a deathtrap. Yet while such a scenario must surely be offensive to any reader, and particularly so to any parent, these very people happily ascribe these very actions to Him who is “infinite in love,” as if He were some kindly but doddering absentee father who is unaware or unwilling to do better than a human parent who would immediately be brought up on charges of most heinous abuse. The love of the Father is greater, not less, than that of any earthly mother; “Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? Yea, they may forget, yet will I not forget thee.” (Isa 49:15)

We do not ever read that Yahshua’s work in Heaven is to have the Father pick us up “whenever we fall.” We read, instead, of true love, “Now unto Him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy...” (Jude 1:24) This is the only verse in the entire Bible that uses both the words “keep” and “falling” in the same place... and it is an overt denial that any such thing as continuous sin happens in the life of the genuine believer. It is by Christ, and only by Christ, that such a life may be lived. Those who live the life of victory, rather than not needing the sacrifice and mercy and grace of the Messiah, are the *only ones* who truly rely upon them! They live, minute-to-minute, day-to-day, only by this majestic power placed in them by the new birth. (John 3:3, 1Pet 1:23)

Those who are righteous sometimes (by an effort of will, or fear of punishment) and sinful sometimes, have never settled into the Sacrifice; yet these are the ones who will level the accusation against the saints that they have rejected the power of the Blood; this is the Babylonian condition that exists in Christendom in these last, evil, days.

5) Related to the above explanation, since the Scriptures teach that the Almighty will keep us from falling, why does it say in the Proverbs that “a just man falleth seven times, and riseth up again: but the wicked shall fall into mischief?” (Pro 24:16) Even the prophets seem to repent for personal sins, as we read, “Rejoice not against me, O mine enemy. When I fall, I shall arise; when I sit in darkness, Yahweh shall be a light unto me.” (Micah 7:8)

There are two things going on here. First, in the Proverbs, the author is not speaking about falling into sin. The word “mischief,” used as a contrast to what happens with the righteous, means “distress, misery, calamity.” It is most often used of unpleasant situations, rarely of moral evil. The Scriptures is not here saying that wicked men fall into wickedness; this is

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redundant, for the man is already described as “wicked.” It is saying instead that misfortunes befalling those who are obedient to Yahweh are only temporary, while the tragedies that befall worldlings and the rebellious are longer lasting, and ultimately permanent.

In Micah, the same principle applies, but another factor is also involved; the prophet is not speaking of an individual, but a nation or city. The pronouns used are female, therefore the prophet is not speaking for himself; it appears that He is fulfilling a role similar to that of Obadiah, who cautioned Edom against celebrating the disasters that fell upon Israel. Micah, adopting the role of Zion, expresses repentance toward the Almighty for the transgression of her people, and faith that she will be restored to a prosperous place.

Some believe that verses such as those found in Proverbs and the books of the prophets apply to misfortune and not moral sin, yet they say, “Even so, there is a secondary application to individuals.”

There often are parallels between nations and individuals, and broad principles find many applications. In this general, however, it is unsafe to apply principles intended for nations to individuals without a great deal of care. For example, as we have already seen, the error of absolute *predestination* arises partly because the statements Paul makes in the Epistle to the Romans about Jacob and Esau (representing their respective nations) is incorrectly applied to the individuals. If the Scriptures present a doctrine that denies an application, the doctrinal statement must take full precedent; and we have already seen a number of verses that teach a clear victory over all known sin, which makes an application of this principle to individual humans a great error.

6) Peter was with Christ for 3.5 years and he still denied Him during His trial. (John 18:27) Are we expected to do any better?

Yes, absolutely. Peter was expected to do better than the Old Testament saints, (Heb 11:40) and we who have had the benefit of the New Testament are expected to do better than they, for “the path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day.” (Pro 4:18) Adventists point out that we of the last generation are accountable for more light than Christians from earlier ages as we approach the time of trouble, “that the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ.” (1Pet 1:7)

Creation Seventh Day Adventists would take this even further, and point out where the mainstream Adventist body has repudiated some of its key principles and teachings on this point. Namely, the 144,000 must “follow the Lamb whithersoever He goeth,” (Rev 14:4) not only learning from the mistakes of the past, but learning new lessons that the Almighty sends us.

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Many Adventists have taken the light given to them in, for example, the writings of Ellen White and thereby been shackled rather than set free. Indeed, one common argument that Adventists who continue to seek new light meet with is, “Ellen White didn’t see it that way.” We will discuss in a later chapter how properly to use the Scriptures and Ellen White’s writings; but such an objection should immediately be distasteful to any true student of the Bible.

Regarding Peter specifically, it should be pointed out that being “with” Christ in active ministry is not the same as being fully converted. The Bible records, actually, a key passage that many have apparently missed. Before the trial and crucifixion of the Messiah, we find this dialogue with Peter:

“And the Lord said, ‘Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat. But I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not: and when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren.’”

“And he said unto Him, ‘Lord, I am ready to go with thee, both into prison, and to death.’”

“And He said, ‘I tell thee, Peter, the cock shall not crow this day, before that thou shalt thrice deny that thou knowest me.’” (Luke 22:31-34)

Peter was not yet converted in the fullest sense, and Christ provided evidence that this was so by predicting the denial. Peter was sure that he was ready for the troubles ahead, but he relied upon self, and not upon the Savior, as indeed he had done when he began to sink in a previous incident. (Mat 14:30) Peter’s experience is typical of many modern Christians. They have been “following” the Master in an external sense; they know the prayers, the rites and rituals, they have even been led by the Holy Spirit in many things, even to confessing the Son as Master, (Mat 16:16, 17) but unless the Spirit is within them, (Ezek 36:27) the center of their very lives, they have not yet been “sealed” into the faith, (2Cor 1:22) and not yet prepared for either great darkness (as an obstacle) or great light.

Peter did not receive this until Pentecost, (Acts 2:4) for which he was prepared by genuine, heart-felt repentance. (Mat 26:75) Even thereafter, he continued to make some errors in judgment, necessitating an open rebuke by Paul, (Gal 2:11-14) which he appears to have accepted graciously, (2Pet 3:15) growing in grace and knowledge. (2Pet 1:9, 10)

7) David sinned, (2Sam 11) and yet God calls him a “man after his own heart.” (Acts 13:22) Are we expected to be any better than him?

Yes, absolutely. As referenced above, “And these [pre-incarnation saints] all, having obtained a good report through faith, received not the promise, God having provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect.” (Heb 11:39, 40) While those who lived and died

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before the first advent of the Messiah were saved by faith, by hope, it was not as aggressively taught in the message of Yahweh to them concerning every aspect of the future life.



Activity Note

What are some other activities allowed in the Old Testament that we would avoid in the Christian era?

For example, many things were permitted in the older times that Christians, who have the example of Christ and the teachings of the Apostles, are expected to avoid. Polygamy, the allowance of intoxicating drinks (for those who were neither priests nor kings only), and so on were not condemned under the Old Covenant. Now, however, as the priests and kings of the ministration of the Spirit, (2Cor 3:6) we are taught in no uncertain terms to avoid all these

things. As Paul said of pagan idolatry, presenting an important aspect of the Almighty's character as He deals with humans, "And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent." (Acts 17:30)

Of course, adultery and murder were never permitted in the religion of the Most High, and David's actions were criminal under any circumstances. We find, however, that David appears (for some reason) to have been unaware of the full impact of his deeds. The clearest example of this comes from his reaction to the parabolic rebuke of the prophet Nathan, when he told the story of the unjust man who stole from his neighbor, and ended with the conclusion, "Thou art the man. Thus saith Yahweh, Elohim of Israel, 'I anointed thee king over Israel, and I delivered thee out of the hand of Saul; and I gave thee thy master's house, and thy master's wives into thy bosom, and gave thee the house of Israel and of Judah. And if that had been too little, I would moreover have given unto thee such and such things. Wherefore hast thou despised the commandment of Yahweh, to do evil in His sight? Thou hast killed Uriah the Hittite with the sword, and hast taken his wife to be thy wife, and hast slain him with the sword of the children of Ammon.'" (2Sam 12:7-9)

David's reaction is not one of self-justification; he does not seek for an excuse for his actions, but says, "I have sinned against Yahweh." (verse 13) During Nathan's parable it is written that, "David's anger was greatly kindled against the man" (verse 5) who was represented, therefore it is clear that the king knew the right principles, but somehow failed to apply them to his own works. When he was shown the sin, he did not hide himself; he did not say, "Oh, but Yahweh is merciful." That declaration is certainly true, but it does not remove the need for repentance (which begins with a mental rejection of the sin) and forsaking such actions in a visible way.

Careful readers of the Scriptures will find that before this occasion David did many things that Christians would not do. He lied, he feigned madness to avoid death, and he acted as a dual agent during the Philistine wars

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against Israel, to name a few. After the incident with Bathsheba, however, he wrote Psalm 51, and appears to have experienced a new level of intimacy with Elohim from which he never turned away. His attitudes, actions and mode of life were clearly different after this event; we have to conclude, therefore, that there was some significant growth taking place at that time. David was praised by Heaven even before this, but that he was still capable of such a great wrong demonstrates that his heart was not yet “perfect” as the apostles and later Christians would use the term.

Ultimately, those who would raise such an objection are not looking at Christ, but at men. That is the real issue behind their words; we must remember that although men in the past have both sinned and erred, Yahshua the Messiah did neither, and He poured out His own Spirit, His very life, upon humanity *in a way that was not done before*. That is extremely important. Something is clearly different, as the Scriptures record in Acts 2 and beyond. Whereas before certain individuals were filled with the Holy Spirit, even to the degree that they overcame death itself (e.g., Enoch and Elijah) in these last times, this Spirit fills every believer, not a select few. Yahshua, and Yahshua alone, is our Example, and Enoch and Elijah have their experiences recorded as a standing rebuke to any who would say, “We cannot do it.”

Even before the crucifixion it was done, “Therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let them slip. For if the word spoken by angels was stedfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompence of reward, how shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation, which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard Him; God also bearing them witness, both with signs and wonders, and with divers miracles, and gifts of the Holy Ghost, according to His own will?” (Heb 2:1-4)

David, though he was forgiven, nevertheless had to bear a lifetime of consequences. Those who want to use his experiences as an excuse for their own transgressions, or who wish to say that the Almighty is “too merciful” to also be just, must remember the question raised in Scripture, “Of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace?” (Heb 10:29) This passage is not a threat, or even a warning, to the saints themselves; it is a correction to those who would use the wrongs of the men of the past to promote a faulty understanding of what Yahweh has called His people to perform through the death of His Son and the gift of His Spirit.

The bottom line to all these objections is simply this: If we know that Yahweh desires His people to cease from sin, and if we likewise desire it, we will ask, and we will receive; as it is written truly, “And all things,

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whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive.” (Mat 21:22) Asking for the victory over sin is the best thing for which we can ask, because it leads to genuine conversion, and eternal life with the Father and Son in the Kingdom. It is the gift that Yahweh most joyfully will bestow upon any who request it of Him. He sent His own Son to die that we may have this gift – how can any who know Him claim that Yahweh will now deny us the very thing He sacrificed so much to provide?

The Victory over sin is not a hard, condemnatory teaching; it is an invitation to enter into the life that Yahweh would have His people live. He does not actively condemn those who reject this gift; but neither can He save those who mar their characters by participation in known transgression. The fires of *Gehenna* are simply representative of the holiness of the Almighty, who cannot tolerate sin in His universe for the good of all His created beings. If matters are seen in this light, we come to understand that it is not a fear of punishment that motivates the sin-free life of the Christian, but rather it is the “goodness of God [that] leadeth thee to repentance.” (Rom 2:4)

4.2 – The Biblical Godhead

4.2.1 – The Biblical Model

Creation Seventh Day Adventists are not Trinitarian in their understanding of the Godhead. There is some leeway, and certainly freedom for discussion, regarding just how the three elements of the Godhead relate one to another, however it is universally held by the Church that the Trinity doctrine, which states specifically that the *Elohim* concept consists of three **co-equal, co-eternal, separate** intelligences acting in unison is an idea foreign to the Scriptures. While the word *Elohim* is, in fact, plural, and we may point to plural pronouns being used in such verses as Genesis 1:26, mere plurality does not necessarily indicate a triplet of speakers. In other words, “more than one” does not equal “three;” and we know that there is a Father and there is a Son, both Personal beings.

Very briefly, remembering that this guidebook is not intended to function as an apologetic document for every doctrine, non-Trinitarians need only point out a lack of Bible evidence for the paradigm described above. It is not an effective pro-Trinitarian argument to say to those who deny its existence, “Prove from the Bible that the Trinity does not exist.” This is a shifting of the burden of proof; the non-existence of something cannot be proven, for why would the prophets or apostles make a statement amounting to, “There is no Trinity,” if there were never such a concept (as non-Trinitarians believe) to deny?



Cautionary Note

Losing track of who has the burden of proof often leads to illogical arguments and a loss of credibility.

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The Biblical argument for the non-Trinitarian view of the Godhead therefore runs along two lines: first, it shows that there is no evidence in favor of three co-equal, co-eternal Persons in the divine model; second, it provides verses that make the Trinitarian model unlikely in light of divinely-inspired statements. Remembering that the latter is evidence, and not proof, (which is impossible, since we would be looking for a statement denouncing a concept that is not believed to have *existed*) the above argument renders the non-Trinitarian view of the Godhead as solid a doctrine as any that may be reasonably derived from the words of Scripture.

In the first line of argument, we find many references to the Holy Spirit, or Holy Ghost, in both Old and New Testaments. What we decidedly lack is any record of anyone treating the Holy Spirit as an individual; certainly there is no reference to an independent divine person. We find:

- No prayers directed to the Holy Spirit; prayers are offered for the Spirit, not to the Spirit. (Psa 51:11)
- No conversations between the Holy Spirit and humans*
- No conversations between the Holy Spirit and other members of the Godhead*
- No reference to the Holy Spirit as “God” apart from Its association with either the Father or Son (*e.g.*, “the Spirit of God,” [Gen 1:2] and “the Spirit of Christ” [Rom 8:9])
- No name for the Holy Spirit – remembering that in the Bible a *name* is symbolic of character and individuality (Gen 32:38, Mat 1:21) – although the Father and Son have distinct names (Pro 30:4)
- No anthropomorphic references to the Holy Spirit. Both the Father and Son are seen in symbol, vision or incarnation as “men” at various times, (Exo 15:3, 1Tim 2:5) but the Spirit is never thus depicted. It is a flame, (Acts 2:3) a dove, (Mat 3:16) rain, (Isa 44:3) and so on
- No male personal pronouns used in the Bible to describe the Holy Spirit; they are always gender-neutral. In Hebrew the word for Spirit (*ruach*) is feminine, and it is used in its basic form with no masculine ending provided (as in the masculine plural *Elohim*) to indicate a male Person. In Greek, the word *ekeinos*, which is a general he/she/it indicator, is used in place of the standard pronoun *autos*. In Biblical use, *ekeinos* appears to be used of individuals only in a derogatory sense, to indicate outsiders or objects of disapproval*

*Note: Some alleged exceptions to these three points are dealt with in the second line of evidence.

There is always a clear distinction drawn in the Bible between the natures of the Father and Son and the nature of the Holy Spirit. The Father wishes to be known by men, and reveals Himself through the Person of His Son.

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Now, the means by which this is accomplished is the Holy Spirit that is “sent” by the Father and that is embodied or *personified* in the Son. The Scripture has the Son saying, “And I will pray the Father, and He shall give you another Comforter, that He may abide with you for ever.” (John 14:16) When that Comforter is identified, however, we find that the Messiah used the word “another” (*alla*) in order to identify it as a distinctive presence. For example, “And the scribe said unto him, ‘Well, Master, thou hast said the truth; for there is one [*alla*] God; and there is *none other* but He.’” (Mark 12:32) Again, “And about the space of one [*alla*] hour after another confidently affirmed, saying, Of a truth this fellow also was with him; for he is a Galilaeen.” (Luke 22:59)

In both these cases, and others also, the word for “another” does not indicate one as separate from another, but as one that is identified with another. There is no “other” God from the one mentioned by Christ and the scribe in Mark 12. The “one hour” that passed is “another” hour like the first during which Peter was watching the trial of the Master. This understanding of the term “another” is further confirmed when the Comforter is identified by Christ Himself, and later by the apostle John.

Just after saying that He would send “another” Comforter, He says to them, “I will not leave you comfortless: *I will come to you.*” (John 14:18) The apostle, in his letters, tells us “we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.” (1John 2:1) The word “advocate” (Gk: *parakletos*) is the same word used in John 14 for “Comforter.” Paul gives us a definitive identification of the Spirit as the life and essence of Christ, by saying plainly, “Nevertheless when [Israel] shall turn to the Lord [Christ – see verse 14], the vail shall be taken away. Now the Lord is that Spirit; and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty.” (2Cor 3:16, 17)

The Spirit, being *from* the Father, (John 15:26) is both *of* Christ, and *essentially* Christ. This is perfectly in line with the way the Bible writers speak of their “spirits” as being troubled (Dan 2:3) or overjoyed, (Luke 1:47) when it simply means that they themselves are experiencing these states. It is also not a minor point that while the Spirit is described as that “which proceedeth from the Father,” (John 15:26) indicating continuous, ongoing action, the Son uses a different word, saying He “came forth from the Father,” (John 16:28) indicating a past, completed act of begetting, not a continual streaming-forth of presence or power. In other words, in earthly families, which are symbols of the divine model (1Cor 11:3) the children “come forth” from the parents at discrete points in time, but non-person things such as words, authority, power, and wisdom “come forth” from them in a continual way as long as those parents are alive and active.

The second line of argument expands upon the above, showing not only a lack of Scriptural evidence for a third co-equal, co-eternal person, but also verses that would refute the concept. We have already seen the strong identification made between the Spirit and Christ in 2Cor 3:17, which

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would make the Spirit essentially *equivalent* to Christ, and not *co-equal* (indicating another being with the same authority). Further, we have shown that the Spirit “proceedeth from the Father,” which would make it *eternal* with the Father as an aspect of His Being, not *co-eternal*, as if it were a separate Being from Himself that existed in Its own right as long (if time may be even theoretically applied) as the Father and Son.

The difference between the terms *equivalent/co-equal* and *eternal/co-eternal* are not hair-splitting by any means, because there are decided spiritual consequences to separating the Spirit in personality, presence and existence from the Father and Son, as will be discussed at the end of this section. For now, we will look at further statements from the Bible that make the paradigm extremely difficult to justify when inspired language is allowed to speak for itself.

First, to answer some apparent problems with the list provided just above, we may read that the Spirit does at times appear, on the surface, to speak to both humans and other elements of the Godhead. What we find, however, is that invariably when the Spirit “speaks” it is doing so through an *agent*. In other words, a human or an angel that has the Spirit of God (*i.e.*, shares in His purposes and character and stands in His presence) will perform an action and this is attributed (rightly) to the Spirit that motivated these actions. We find the Spirit speaking to holy men strictly through internal dialogue, *e.g.*, Ezek 3:24 and Acts 11:12 which is equated in later texts with the *conscience* that is under the power of divine influence.

We are told in one place that the redeemed “shew the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness,” (Rom 2:15) and in another that “The Spirit Itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God.” (Rom 8:16) Paul relates the two in various passages, writing that “I say the truth in Christ, I lie not, my conscience also bearing me witness in the Holy Ghost.” (Rom 9:11) We see a further difference described in the writings of both Paul and others; when the Father and/or Son speak openly, it is always accompanied by an anthropomorphic manifestation that may be detected by the senses as having a human (or human-like) source, either by hearing or seeing. (2Tim 4:17, 1Cor 15:7, Acts 9:4, John 12:29) On the other hand, the Spirit’s presence is either symbolic (*e.g.*, a flame or a dove) or invisible: the work of the Godhead on the “inner man” (Eph 3:16) serving to motivate actions that may only be seen and heard by others thereafter.

Examples of this include “As [the disciples] ministered to the Lord, and fasted, the Holy Ghost said, ‘Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them.’” (Acts 13:2) Another place reads, “And I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, ‘Write, Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth,’ ‘Yea,’ saith the Spirit, ‘that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them.’” (Rev 14:13) A third place, “And the Spirit and the bride say, ‘Come.’ And let him that

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heareth say, ‘Come.’ And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely.” (Rev 22:17)

In the three verses above, it might appear as if the Spirit is speaking on Its own; but what we find is that these events always occur in the community or presence of agents: the fasting, praying disciples, the redeemed saints, (Rev 14:3) or the entire Church in the third case. The Spirit Itself is never shown appearing, speaking from Heaven, or manifesting itself in any way that facilitates direct communication with human beings. Indeed, the Bible itself defines how the Spirit speaks: “And the Spirit of God came upon Zechariah the son of Jehoiada the priest, which stood above the people, and said unto them, ‘Thus saith God, Why transgress ye the commandments of Yahweh, that ye cannot prosper? Because ye have forsaken Yahweh, He hath also forsaken you.’” (2Ch 24:20)

In order to speak, the Spirit came upon the priest Zechariah, a willing agent. The same principle is revealed in the work of the other prophets, including Ezekiel (11:5) and David. (Mat 22:43) We read that even in the last book of the Bible the way that the Almighty communicates to people has remained the same, by means of His Spirit through a human mouthpiece: “He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches...” (Rev 2:4, 11, 17, 29; 3:6, 13, 22) The “Spirit” is said to be speaking, but John the Revelator is the one actually doing the communication.

This is perfectly in harmony with descriptions of the Spirit in all other places. It, being without person-hood in the sense that the Father and Son exist as separate beings, must be sent, (Gal 4:6) taken, (Psa 51:11) poured out (Isa 32:15) etc. at the will of the Godhead. (Acts 2:18) It is consistently shown to lack *volition*, or the ability to make decisions, which would classify It as a separate intelligence from the agents through which It invariably acts or Its divine Senders.

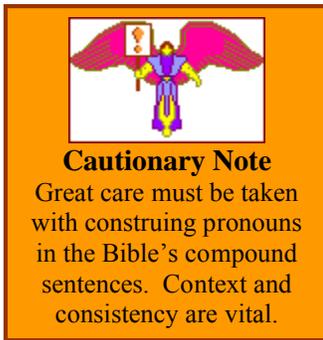
The impersonal pronoun *ekeinos* is used of the Spirit with overwhelming regularity in the New Testament. The only time the personal male pronoun *autos* is ever (apparently) used to describe the Holy Spirit is in John 14:16-19, where the Spirit is specifically associated with Christ Himself in this very passage (verse 18). The entire passage reads, “And I will pray the Father, and He shall give you another Comforter, that He may abide with you for ever; even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth Him not, neither knoweth Him; but ye know Him, for He dwelleth with you, and shall be in you. I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you. Yet a little while, and the world seeth me no more; but ye see me: because I live, ye shall live also.” (Rev 14:16-19)

It should be noted that the first “he” is part of a grammatical construct associated with the verb, and is not a separate word indicating person or gender. The other *Hes* (*autos* in Greek) refer not to the Spirit, but to the Father; this is the only possible reading of the passage. Christ is stating that

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He will pray the Father to send (future tense) the Spirit to dwell with the disciples; the world cannot receive this Spirit because He (who?) is not yet known by the world. If the subject of the rest of the sentence was the Spirit, the request for the Father to send the Spirit would be nonsensical, since the Spirit would already be living in them so that they could receive the Spirit.

The Messiah prays for the Spirit to be upon His disciples because they already know and have the Father, not because they already know and have the *Spirit*; that would make His request completely redundant. It is only if we understand the personal pronoun *autos* to refer to the Father that this sentence both makes grammatical sense and agrees with another, related statement by the Messiah.



The passage thus reads, “And I will pray the Father, and He shall give you another Comforter, that He may abide with you for ever; even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth [the Father] not, neither knoweth [the Father]; but ye know [the Father]; for [the Father] dwelleth [already!] with you, and shall be in you. I will not leave you comfortless; I will come to you. Yet a little while, and the world seeth me no more; but ye see me: because I live, ye shall live also.” (Rev 14:16-19)

Now it makes sense; the world cannot receive the Spirit, because it has not already seen, known and been intimately acquainted with, the Father. When the apostles received the Spirit, the related quotation from Christ defines precisely what Persons dwell within them: “Yahshua answered and said unto him, ‘If a man love me, he will keep my words; and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him.’” (John 14:23)

The difference between Trinitarians and non-Trinitarians on this particular point is that Trinitarians see the Father, Son and Holy Spirit as three separate beings that act in unity and dwell in the believer. The non-Trinitarians take the position (which may be supported by direct statements from the Scripture) that the Father and Son are the Persons who dwell in the believer *by means of* the divine, mystical presence: the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is not left out, but never in any place is the Spirit mentioned as a third, separate indweller with the Persons of the Godhead; at times it speaks of the Spirit dwelling within, and at times of the Father and Son. Non-Trinitarians see this as an apposition, a parallelism common throughout the Bible, rather than a diffuse “list” of Godhead elements.

Some Trinitarians believe that they have found evidence of just such a “listing” in a passage from an epistle of John. They read, “For there are three that bear record in Heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost;

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and these three are one.” (1John 5:7) While on the surface this appears to be a solid supporting verse, and many will point to it as *the* Trinitarian proof text, the problem is that the topic of the list is never defined. Is this a “list of elements of the Godhead,” or simply a list of witnesses that may or may not be Persons? To conclude that the Spirit is a Person simply because it is listed with the Father and Son is shown to be a fallacious argument by simply reading the very next verse: “And there are three that bear witness in earth, the Spirit, and the water, and the blood; and these three agree in one.” (verse 8)

Now we have a problem. If we wish to conclude that the Spirit is a Person like the Father and Son does this mean (remember, there are no verse breaks in the manuscripts) that the water and blood are persons also? The Spirit is listed right along with them. It cannot be said that a difference is placed between the Spirit and the other two earthly witnesses by the phrase “agree in.” This word does not appear in the Greek, and the verb is precisely the same in both verses. The Father, Word and Spirit are “one” in that they are all witnesses in Heaven. The Spirit, Water and Blood are “one” in that they are all witnesses on earth.

The paradigm for the Godhead is actually revealed here: “And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, ‘Abba, Father.’” (Gal 4:6) The Father sends forth the Son by means of the Spirit. This is also the principle that must be applied to the passage in which we are told to baptize converts “in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.” (Mat 28:19) The word “name” means not merely a personal name, but also a cause or a purpose; that the word cannot be used to mean that all three have personal names is indicated by:

- the singular form “name” being used rather than “the names” of the Father, Son and Spirit
- the fact that the Spirit is not given a name, as discussed above (Pro 30:4)
- the fact that the Apostles always baptized in the name of “the Lord Jesus” in every recorded case; (*e.g.*, Acts 2:38, 8:16, 19:5) they did not disobey the instruction, they merely understood what it meant

Another place in which the true character of the Godhead is revealed is by Paul when speaking of human marriage. He writes, “But I would have you know, that the head of every man is Christ; and the head of the woman is the man; and the head of Christ is God.” (1Cor 11:3) Again, “For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the Church; and He is the Saviour of the body. This is a great mystery, but I speak concerning Christ and the Church.” (Eph 5:23, 32) In spiritual terms, Paul is making three parallels: between the husband and wife, between Christ and the Church, and between the Father and Son. The Father is the “Head”

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of Christ, just as the Son is the “Head” of the Church, just as the husband is the “head” of the wife. Where is the third “person” in any of these relationships?

Further, of the time when the Godhead created man in His image we read, “So God created man in His own image, in the image of God created He him: *male* and *female* created He them.” (Gen 1:27) The image of God, manifest in humanity, is a holy pair that share a common spirit. Such a clear statement of Biblical doctrine – reinforced by the repetition that we are indeed bearing witness to the incarnate “image” of the Godhead – is too plain and too simple to be ignored or misunderstood.

While it is true that spiritual things cannot always be perfectly applied to the material world, the creation of man and the very purpose of the state of matrimony was to provide us with an illustration of the inter-workings of the Godhead, (Eph 5:24) so that we may participate – to a limited degree – in His creative acts. (Gen 1:28) The husband and wife together make a third concept, the “family;” and we are told that they become “one flesh” (Gen 2:24) for they are, outwardly, of flesh. Following the same parallel, the Father and Son, in unity, are “one Spirit;” they are perfectly One in that sense, (John 10:30) but neither of these third elements (the family or the Spirit) constitute a third, separate person – although they may *act* as a unit – and this is where the analog between the Godhead and humanity would fail entirely if one were to accept the Trinitarian position.

4.2.2 – Early Adventist Contributions

It needs to be understood clearly that the contributions of early Adventists to this matter does not form a basis for the Creation Seventh Day Adventist position on the Godhead. In other words, if the pioneers of the Advent faith erred in their understanding of Yahweh and Yahshua (and some of them did) this would not affect the way the Scriptures are read. Naturally, the tradition of any Church will color the way certain aspects of the Bible are understood, at least initially; however, the freedom that comes from eschewing a formal “Church creed” allows for increasing light, correction of past errors, and the progressive elimination of misunderstandings.

Mainstream Adventists certainly ascribe to the “increasing light” concept by claiming that the Trinity came about because the non-Trinitarian teachings of the earlier Advent people were erroneous, and later rejected in favor of clearer truth. This is, however, an improper application of a valid principle, for a number of reasons outlined below.

- a) The Holy Spirit does not lead men in a circuitous route.

God’s people do not go from truth to error and then back to truth unless there is *apostasy*, which is not recorded (to any degree) as marking the progress of the collective Advent people in the early days. The Scriptures

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reveal the path of a reforming individual or set of individuals with unmistakable language: “But the path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day.” (Pro 4:18) “But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord.” (2Cor 3:18) “forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.” (Phil 3:13b, 14)

Once again, for emphasis: unless there is open apostasy, the Spirit of Yahweh never leads men into error from truth; this would be a denial of the Father’s very purpose in sending the Spirit: “He will guide you into all truth, for He shall not speak of Himself; but whatsoever He shall hear, that shall He speak; and He will shew you things to come.” (John 16:13 – remembering that *gender neutral* pronouns are used throughout)

To further strengthen this position, we must remember that the early Advent people had the assistance of the clearly manifest Spirit of prophecy in the writings of Ellen G. White, who considered understanding the person of the Creator the most important factor in the faith of the Church. Some may contend that Luther, Calvin and others erred in various matters, and this is true – on the other hand they had neither the benefit of “open vision” nor a framework of dedicated Bible students working in unison as did those who anticipated the soon return of Christ in the middle-to-late 1800s.

- b) None of the Biblical reasons for the non-Trinitarian paradigm accepted by Adventist pioneers were ever refuted

The Adventist pioneers set forth arguments from both Scripture and logic in defense of their position. They avoided both Trinitarianism and strict Unitarianism, which they considered extremes, [James White, Aug 5, 1852, *Review and Herald* – Vol. 3] and they fully acknowledged the divine, uncreated nature of Christ. The difference between early Adventists and Trinitarian movements primarily involved the nature of the Holy Spirit, the Scriptural discussion of which we have briefly described above.

None of the modern apologists for Adventism have ever been able to satisfactorily (in the view of Creation Seventh Day Adventists) answer *any* of the Bible arguments used by the early figures of Adventism. Neither the reasoning nor verses they employed have changed in the past century; no new light has been shed on the Word of the Almighty that would counter what He has been pleased to reveal to His people in the past. The only conclusion that may be reached is that, along with the increasingly worldly spirit manifest in mainstream Adventism, the true concept of the Godhead was correspondingly lost.

Creation Seventh Day Adventists cannot, in any form of intellectual honesty or spiritual consistency, concede that while the practices and teachings of

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mainstream Adventism have become worldlier, its view of the Godhead has become clearer. This would be a direct contradiction of divine principle. (John 7:17) Without strong evidence from the Scriptures, and the application of sound reasoning regarding exactly why the pioneer position from the Bible was in error, objective students of Biblical and Adventist history can make no other conclusion than CSDAs have made.

c) No divine or prophetic correction was ever brought to the topic.

The claims of some Adventists researchers that Ellen White became a Trinitarian later in life is belied by both the lack of written evidence of this, and her son's statements after her death, which indicate that she never accepted that position, nor should her writings be used to support it. W.C. White is on record as stating, "The statements and the arguments of some of our ministers, in their effort to prove that the Holy Spirit is an individual as are God the Father and Christ the eternal Son, have perplexed me, and sometimes they have made me sad." [Letter, W. C. White to H. W. Carr, 1939]

If Ellen White became a Trinitarian late in life, her family was kept in ignorance of this most important fact, and so were all of her contemporaries. The existing facts of the matter indicate that Mrs. White was invariably supportive of the writings of Adventist pioneers, who were uniformly non-Trinitarian, even while rebuking certain well-known figures such as J.H. Kellogg, who strayed from a strictly Biblical interpretation of the Godhead.



Emphasis Note

Construing Ellen White as a Trinitarian would make her the *only* prophet either in or after the Bible to promote that doctrine.

Some online resources discussing the position of Seventh-day Adventist pioneers regarding this issue include:

<http://csda.us/binary/essays/ePioneer.html>
<http://csdachurch.org/phpBB2/viewtopic.php?t=64>
<http://csdachurch.org/phpBB2/viewtopic.php?t=98>
<http://csdachurch.org/phpBB2/viewtopic.php?t=175>

For the purposes of this guidebook, the Biblical argument is the major focus; the position of our spiritual forefathers is merely a matter of historical consistency. For the benefit of readers who may be relatively new to the topic, however, a few of the shorter quotations taken from the first link above are provided:

"They who have read our remarks on the death of the Son of God know that we firmly believe in the divinity of Christ; but we cannot accept the idea of a trinity, as it is held by Trinitarians, without giving up our claim on the

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dignity of the sacrifice made for our redemption.” [J. H. Waggoner, 1884, *The Atonement In The Light Of Nature And Revelation*, pp. 164, 165]

“As *fundamental errors*, we might class with this counterfeit Sabbath [Sunday sacredness] other errors which Protestants have brought away from the Catholic church, such as sprinkling for baptism, the trinity, the consciousness of the dead, and eternal life in misery. ... can it be supposed that the church of Christ will carry along with her these errors till the judgment scenes burst upon the world? We think not.” [James White, Sep 12 1854, *Review and Herald*, Vol. 6, No. 5, P 36, Par 8, emphasis added]

“But respecting this Spirit, the Bible uses expressions which cannot be harmonized with the idea that it is a person like the Father and the Son. Rather it is shown to be a divine influence from them both, the medium which represents their presence and by which they have knowledge and power through all the universe, when not personally present.” [Uriah Smith, Oct 28, 1890, *Review and Herald*]

“This [Trinitarian] doctrine destroys the personality of God, and his Son Jesus Christ our Lord. The infamous measures by which it was forced upon the church which appear upon the pages of ecclesiastical history might well cause every believer in that doctrine to blush.” [J. N. Andrews, March 6, 1855, *Review and Herald*, Vol. 6, No. 24, P. 185]

“The seventeenth chapter of John is alone sufficient to refute the doctrine of the Trinity.” [J. N. Loughborough, Nov 5 1861, *Review and Herald*, Vol 18, p 184, par 1-11]

“The doctrine of the Trinity is a cruel heathen monstrosity, removing Jesus from his true position of Divine Savior and Mediator. It is true we can not measure or define divinity. It is beyond our finite understanding, yet on this subject of the personality of God the Bible is very simple and plain.” [Letter, J. S. Washburn, 1939]

With this small sample of quotes in mind, we next need to examine just why this matter is important.

4.2.3 – Spiritual Implications of The Trinitarian Doctrine

Why is the Trinity a matter of such discussion? Some have made it a divisive argument, which separates fellowships and churches. Creation Seventh Day Adventists are not quite at that level of dogmatism for this particular doctrine. Some firm non-Trinitarian groups will contend, “If they are worshipping a Trinity, they are paying divine respect to a heathen god, and not the God of the Bible.” Whereas there is a measure of truth in that statement, the same Scriptures are used to support both views, and the same general characteristics are ascribed to the Godhead regardless of what paradigm one accepts.

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Instead of taking the hard line that Trinitarians are merely glossed-over pagans, the more diplomatic approach is taken: “For when the Gentiles, which have not the law (*i.e.*, the teaching), do by nature the things contained in the law, these, having not the law, are a law unto themselves; which shew the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness.” (Rom 2:14, 15a) We note that various individuals were baptized without any knowledge of the Holy Spirit whatsoever, (Acts 19:1-5) although they were later re-baptized when they learned the proper doctrine. In essence, while we are responsible for far more light than were the converts of the first century, we must be no less gracious than the teachers of those times.

The implications of this are simple: While the CSDA Church denies the validity of the Trinity paradigm, and would never claim to be a Trinitarian movement by any means, neither fellowship nor, indeed, even membership is necessarily restricted to those who are convinced otherwise. Generally speaking, a Trinitarian would either come to understand the Bible as we do or lose the desire for membership anyway, so the issue has not – thus far – come up in practice. None of our Baptismal examination questions (the examination procedure is covered in a later chapter) deals with the precise nature of the Godhead. If the applicant knows the personality of the Godhead, and is in intimate relationship with the Father through the ministration of the Son and the power of the Spirit, they will have ceased from sin, and this is the primary mark of a genuine convert.

This is not to say the issue is not important. Understanding and grasping the Victory message is far more difficult in practical life if the Godhead is not understood precisely as the Bible reveals it. We are told in no uncertain terms, “And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent.” (John 17:3)

It is knowledge of the Father and Son (the Spirit is not mentioned as One who may be “known” in this manner) that keeps one from transgression and leads to sanctification, (Gk: *hagiasmos*: holiness) “without which no man shall see the Lord.” (Heb 12:14) It is difficult to judge the precise extent to which a faulty paradigm of the Godhead blurs the true knowledge of the Father and Son, and thus the ability to walk in *hagiasmos*, but unless a man is willfully ignorant or rebellious, it is generally for the Judgment to decide his ultimate destiny. If the lives are otherwise upright, and the fruits of the Spirit manifest, we would likely say of baptismal candidates as Peter did of Cornelius, “Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized, which have received the Holy Ghost as well as we?” (Acts 10:47)

Admittedly, this would be an extremely rare occurrence for reasons the Scripture itself implies. We read of Paul’s conversion experience, described thus: “I am crucified with Christ, nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave Himself for me.” (Gal

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2:20) This verse, which we have examined in an earlier chapter, describes the convert as being filled with the very life of the Son. Indeed, it is the Son dwelling within him, as indicated earlier by John 14:23.

Now, it is also true that the convert is filled with the Holy Spirit. (Acts 13:52) Herein lies the issue: if we accept that the Father and Son dwell within us, and also that the Holy Spirit dwells within us, but fail to understand that the Spirit is the very presence of the Father and Son – not a separate person – then we are claiming to be filled with a fictitious personage.

If a Trinitarian is asked, “Who among the Godhead dwells in a convert,” he might say, “The entire Trinity.” This would be a faulty statement, since one of the Persons to which he is referring is fictional. If he says, “The Son,” he is correct. If he says, “The Spirit” he is also correct, but failing to identify one with the other would indicate that the concept in his mind and spirit is not clear, even if he has spoken the right words. This is a subtle point, but not insignificant. When a Trinitarian speaks of “the Holy Spirit,” these words, though the right ones, are used in a different way than when a non-Trinitarian speaks, and it is the “inner man” who exists on, and reacts to, spiritual truths for the salvation of the soul. (Eph 3:16)

The statement in John 17:3 is literally true – knowledge of the Father and Son is the very foundation of eternal life. When the Messiah appears, His criteria is not the works one has done in His name, the doctrines one has professed, or the emotional content associated with one’s conversion and subsequent life. He will say to one group, “I have called you friends; for all things that I have heard of my Father I have made known unto you.” (John 15:15) He will say to another group, “I never knew you; depart from me, ye that work iniquity.” (Mat 7:23)

If we are not clear in our understanding of the relationship between the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, we quickly begin to speak in vague generalities, and resort to the word “mystery” to avoid understanding something that was *meant* to be understood, and to avoid truly knowing Those who are inviting us to know. “The secret things belong unto Yahweh our Almighty, but those things which are revealed belong unto us and to our children for ever, that we may do all the words of this law.” (Deu 29:29) Ultimately the concept of the Godhead in the mind of Trinitarian individuals may become a hazy, ethereal thing not unlike a fairy-tale or distant theory, and this is one of the most subtle, but most pervasive, dangers of adopting and maintaining this model.

4.3 – Appointed Times

4.3.1 – Annual Feasts

The times provided for worship in the Scriptures involve more than just the seventh day of the week. In the writings of Moses we find that the seventh day Sabbath is just the first of a number of “convocations” which include the Passover, (Lev 23:5) the Feast of Unleavened Bread, (verse 6) Pentecost, (verse 16) the Feast of Trumpets, (verse 24) the Day of Atonement, (verses 27, 28) and the Feast of Tabernacles, which includes the Last Great Day. (verse 39)

These were all given to Israel with associated rituals, however we find that the times themselves, like the Sabbath, were mentioned before the Levitical priesthood was set in place. In Genesis we find, “And Elohim said, ‘Let there be lights in the firmament of the heaven to divide the day from the night; and let them be for signs, and for seasons, and for days, and years.’” (Gen 1:14) The word there for “seasons” does not refer to the concept it represents today, meaning times of the year such as summer or spring. The first reference to dramatic climatic changes on earth is after the global flood of Noah’s day, when the Almighty said, “While the earth remaineth, seedtime and harvest, and cold and heat, and summer and winter, and day and night shall not cease.” (Gen 8:22)

Instead, the word there, *mo’edim*, means “appointed times.” Based upon the movements of the heavenly bodies, humans were to know – even from the first and perfect creation – when the appointed times were. Now, if the first earth was a paradise, and man did not need to labor for his food before the fall, (Gen 3:19) what would be the purpose of knowing these times?

The reasonable conclusion to draw is that these were always, even before agriculture and the rituals later associated with them, intended as times of worship. Every mention in the Scriptures of “appointed times” involves worship, and though later agricultural rituals were provided to underscore spiritual truths, we find that the times themselves predated *and post-date* the Levitical system.



Emphasis Note

The lack of distinction between *rituals* and *feasts* is the cause of many errors in modern Adventism on this topic.

Many in modern Christianity (including mainstream Adventism) make the mistake of failing to differentiate between *ritual* and *mo’ed*. Whereas it is true that after the death of Christ the rituals associated with the appointed times lost much of their value, and Seventh-day Adventists find support for this idea in the Bible and the writings of Ellen White, the days themselves did not become “less holy.”

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Some believe there is support for rejecting the “Jewish” feasts in the New Testament, referencing such passages as, “Ye observe days, and months, and times, and years. I am afraid of you, lest I have bestowed upon you labour in vain.” (Gal 4:10, 11) Another one is, “One man esteemeth one day above another; another esteemeth every day alike. Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind.” (Rom 14:5) Thus, they say, keeping particular days is either a rejection of grace or (more diplomatically) unnecessary, since every day may be regarded alike.

We must understand the context of both those passages. In Romans 14, Paul is speaking specifically about days chosen for fasting or dietary restrictions, (Rom 14:1-4) not about days of worship. If Paul was teaching here against particular days of worship, he would be making of himself a hypocrite, for Paul himself kept the appointed times, as we will see below – and we must recall that he was not converted until years after the Cross.

Likewise, in Galatians 4, Paul is not repudiating his own practices. The apostle to the Gentiles is addressing a particular problem, which he outlines just before the verses in question. He writes, “Howbeit then, when ye knew not God, ye did service unto them which by nature are no gods. But now, after that ye have known God, or rather are known of God, how turn ye again to the weak and beggarly elements, whereunto ye desire again to be in bondage?” (verses 8, 9)

Note, Paul is addressing Gentiles, not Jews, and he is specifically commenting on the fact that they were once serving pagan deities and concepts, but were turned to the Christian path, which – as we will see – incorporated Yahweh’s feast days as well as His weekly Sabbath commandment. The Galatians were, according to Paul, returning to their practices of observing pagan superstitions, and he is rebuking them for returning to the things from which they were once drawn. This has nothing to do with the Scriptural times, for these were the very things the Gentiles were being taught to understand and observe.

As mentioned, Paul kept the annual feast days. We read of this in the New Testament in such verses as:

“And we [Luke, Paul, and their companions] sailed away from Philippi after the days of unleavened bread, and came unto them to Troas in five days; where we abode seven days.” (Acts 20:6) This was not merely a matter of reporting the time of the year, because Paul’s attitude toward the Biblical feast days is mentioned in other places, such as, “When [the Ephesians] desired him to tarry longer time with them, he consented not, but bade them farewell, saying, ‘I must by all means keep this feast that cometh in Jerusalem, but I will return again unto you, if God will.’ And he sailed from Ephesus.” (Acts 18:20, 21)

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Commentaries tell us that there was no Jewish synagogue at Philippi, therefore we find Paul spending the Feast of Unleavened Bread with Gentile converts, being “all things to all men;” (1Cor 9:22) and to the Corinthian Church Paul specifically references this feast as a symbol of the communion service: “Therefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness; but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.” (1Cor 5:8)

Now, Creation Seventh Day Adventists do not currently observe all the feasts listed in Leviticus 23 in an *active* manner, (*i.e.*, with any corresponding ceremony or meeting) however this is not a mark of inconsistency. There is also a second principle that must be applied to the matter of the appointed times. After the Messiah was killed, we find that the Christians no longer sacrificed animals in memory of His appearing as they had previously done to foreshadow it. The only place in the Bible, in fact, where a legitimate “change in the law” is mentioned is in the Book of Hebrews, speaking of the Levitical system. We read, “If therefore perfection were by the Levitical priesthood, (for under it the people received the law) what further need was there that another Priest should rise after the order of Melchisedec, and not be called after the order of Aaron? For the priesthood being changed, there is made of necessity a change also of the law. For such an high priest became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens; who needeth not daily, as those high priests, to offer up sacrifice, first for His own sins, and then for the people’s: for this He did once, when He offered up Himself.” (Heb 7:11, 12, 26, 27)

Again we are told, “So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for Him shall He appear the second time without sin unto salvation.” (Heb 9:28)

We find that for each appointed time provided, there is a ritual pointing to a particular event in human history. The Passover, as we saw, was fulfilled in the sacrifice of the “Lamb of God.” After this point, although the day continued to be used as a preparation for the Feast of Unleavened Bread, it had no particular rituals associated therewith. The Lord’s Supper, or communion, was instituted as a memorial, and no particular timing was specifically applied to this event.

Similarly, each of the feast days mentioned in Leviticus has an associated ritual, and some of these have already met what will be described in a later chapter as its *antitype*, or fulfillment. The only justification that the New Testament provides for Christian feast keeping is found in Paul’s writings, where he says, “Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holyday, or of the New Moon, or of the Sabbath, which are a shadow of things to come, except the Body of Christ.” (Col 2:16, 17, properly rendered) As described in Chapter 3, this is not invalidating the feasts, but pointing out to the Gentile audience why they are still important.

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As long as the rituals of the feast days pointed to a future event, they were to be observed as significant occasions.

What we find, as history has continued to progress, is that several of the feast days have had their ritual significance fulfilled, thus removing them from that set constituting “a shadow of things to come.” The Passover met its fulfillment at the Cross. Pentecost met its fulfillment in the experience of the early Christians as described in Acts 2:1-4. The Feast of Trumpets met its fulfillment in the Great Awakening approximately ten years before the Investigative Judgment began. This was to take place ten days before the next feast in symbol, and its fulfillment represents the last of the day/year prophetic applications before prophetic time was to be no more at the pioneering of the Advent movement. (Rev 10:6) The Day of Atonement met its fulfillment in the fall of 1844, which initiated the Investigative Judgment, as discussed in Chapter 3.

Now, it is true that the Day of Atonement in particular signified the beginning of an *ongoing* event, for Adventists do not believe that this process is completed until shortly before the return of Christ. This appointed time is unique, however, in that in every other case a period of time (symbolic) is given to point out a period of time in history (literal). The Day of Atonement was a single day that points out a period of time, further underscoring the end of the day/year prophetic interpretation during the era of Adventism. As such, although we are still living in the time of the Judgment, the event that initialized it has passed, and therefore rituals associated with that day are also made inactive.

The Creation Seventh Day Adventist Church primarily observes the Feasts of Unleavened Bread and Tabernacles with associated events. Unleavened Bread has individual (in addition to collective) fulfillment in the conversion of every saint who puts away the “leaven” of sin, and will continue to be fulfilled in the walk of the believer until the return of Christ. Unlike the Day of Atonement, there was no particular “event” that marked its antitype, and its observance continues to have great value, like the Lord’s Supper, in memorializing the work of Christ in our experience.

The Feast of Tabernacles is perhaps the most obviously unfulfilled feast day. In its agricultural, symbolic rituals, it represented a harvest of the crops, and the Book of Revelation points out that the “harvest of earth” does not take place until the return of the Son of man in glory. (Rev 14:15) As such, the Feast of Tabernacles represents a vital element in the Christian religious calendar. On the Feast days kept by the Church, those believers who are near enough to reasonably meet hold camp meetings as times of refreshing, blessing and joy, and as a testimony to the world of the unity of believers and the power of the Gospel to save.

It should be noted, at this point, that while the CSDA Church believes that feast days are vital and strongly encourages attendance at the corresponding

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camp meetings, they are not made tests of fellowship for converts or members. It is taught that if there is no reasonable way these days can be observed, one need not sacrifice a job or other essential duties to attend. In general, the desire for a reunion with the saints held by members reflect that which was stated by the apostle Paul, “I must by all means keep this feast...” (Acts 18:20a)

4.3.2 – New Moons

Unlike annual feasts, New Moons *are* considered tests of fellowship by the Creation Seventh Day Adventist Church. The primary reason for this is because the New Moon days are more strongly associated with the weekly Sabbath than any other appointed time and, while the annual feasts are never mentioned as taking place in the New Heaven or New Earth, the New Moon is. The prophet Isaiah records the words of the Almighty, stating, “from one New Moon to another, and from one Sabbath to another, shall all flesh come to worship before me.” (Isa 66:23)

Like the seventh day Sabbath, and unlike the annual feasts, not only is the significance of the event an eternal precept, but also the actual observance of the time appointed. The Remnant Church is unique in this doctrine, since even Orthodox Judaism does not place such a strong focus on the New Moons.

The day is kept primarily for its symbolic significance at the full conjunction when the moon is entirely dark, and it drives home the “Church-as-Bride” concept, (2Cor 11:2) demonstrating the dependence of the Bride upon her Husband, and also the monthly “cleansing” that takes place while awaiting the divine marriage. (Luke 5:35, Rev 19:9)

The practical implication of the symbol is that New Moons are a time for self-examination. As the moon is dark without sunlight to reflect, so are human beings dark and dead apart from the “Sun of righteousness.” (Mal 4:2) In the acknowledgment of our state apart from the Savior, a humility is cultivated that allows us to consider our words and actions from the viewpoint of Heaven, and removes all traces of pride in our own works. In this the principle is very similar to that which is promoted by Sabbath keeping, “For he that is entered into His rest, he also hath ceased from his own works, as God did from His.” (Heb 4:10) Like the seventh day Sabbath, New Moons, by showing us our true state and utter dependence upon divine light, reminds us that true progress and salvation are “Not of works, lest any man should boast.” (Eph 2:9)

New Moons are mentioned frequently in the Scriptures, however many appearances are frequently not understood, since they also appear by way of reference to the “first day of the month.” (*e.g.*, Gen 8:5, Exo 40:2, Lev 23:25, Num 1:18, Deu 1:3, Ezra 7:9, Ezek 26:1, etc.) A quick survey of the

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relevant Scriptures will reveal a vast number of spiritually significant events taking place on New Moons, often involving revelations or examinations.

The Scriptures tell us, “Blow up the trumpet in the New Moon...” (Psa 81:3a) New Moons are solemn occasions, and the “trumpet” to be blown on that day is a Scriptural symbol of not only victory, (Josh 6:5, 1Kings 1:34) but also of warning and judgment. (Isa 58:1, Rev 8:6) These are key elements of this occasion. Additionally, we find New Moons mentioned as a customary day for eating with royalty, (1Sam 20:5) and also for consulting with the oracles of Yahweh. (2Kings 4:23)

All of these concepts have applicability for the modern observance. New Moons are a time for the Church to enter into a form of judgment, wherein the members may speak with humble, serving words to one another, expressing appreciation for various ones, and perhaps providing advice or correction. In this way, the Spirit ensures that no potential conflict or concern exists within the Body of Christ for longer than a month, and as with the natural woman, that which is not needed passes out and is discarded. Of course, this delicate work can only be accomplished within an atmosphere of *agape*; any other Church lacking this perfect love would quickly give way to faultfinding or schism in the attempt.

The New Moon, as a symbolic observance, also points forward to the monthly communion with Christ in New Jerusalem, and access to the Tree of Life, of which it is written, “In the midst of the street of it, and on either side of the river, was there the Tree of Life, which bare twelve manner of fruits, and yielded her fruit every month; and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations.” (Rev 22:2) The expression “every month,” which is *kata mem* in Greek, is literally, “every New Moon,” and serves to shed further light on the prophecy of Isaiah 66.

In recognition of this, Creation Seventh Day Adventists have their communion service, which includes foot washing, the Lord’s Supper, and an agape feast or “feast of charity” (Jude 1:12) on New Moon days. Seeing Christ Yahshua as the incarnate form of the principle behind both the Tree of Life in His flesh, (Gen 3:22) and the River of Life in His blood, (John 6:54, 56) we find that the appointed time for communion (although it may also be held at other times if so desired) perfectly reflects the divine order behind the types and symbols that Yahweh has provided for mankind from the very beginning of the creation.

4.4 – Acts of Worship

4.4.1 – Communion: Foot Washing, the Lord’s Supper and Agape Feasts

Several of the unique practices of the Creation Seventh Day Adventist Church involve the New Moon day on which communion takes place. In recognition of our dependence upon Yahshua, and as a sign of our unity

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with Him, the members partake of the Lord's Supper according to the instruction given, "this do in remembrance of me." (Luke 22:19)

The elements of communion consist of bread as close to the natural ingredients as possible, thus being made of whole-wheat flour without any leavening. Since "Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us," we find that this spiritual Lamb must be taken with unleavened bread to commemorate not only the haste with which we have fled our lives of sin, (Deu 16:3) but also the lack of hypocrisy and corruption in the new life. (1Cor 5:8)



Instructor Note

Ask your study partner about wine's appearances in the Bible, and the use of the words *oinos*, *yayin* and *tirowsh*.

The wine used in the communion service is likewise as close to nature as possible, being therefore entirely unfermented, as this is how it comes forth from the grape. (Isa 65:8) Fermentation in the Scriptures is a symbol of corruption, (Pro 23:31) and intoxicating drink is never to be consumed in any amount by either kings or officiating priests, (Pro 31:4, Ezek 44:21) both of which describe converts to Christianity. (Exo 19:6, 1Pet 2:9, Rev 1:6)

Times of communion also involve the ceremony of foot washing. As Yahshua said to His disciples, "If I then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet; ye also ought to wash one another's feet." (John 13:14) Some have said that the Messiah meant this only symbolically, however we find that every other action associated with that occasion was to be physically performed in light of its symbolic significance (*e.g.*, actually partaking of the bread and wine, really singing a hymn, gathering together in person as well as spirit) therefore such an idea is groundless.

Truly making oneself the servant of another involves a willingness to serve in both material and spiritual things, "And one of you say unto [the needy], 'Depart in peace, be ye warmed and filled,' notwithstanding ye give them not those things which are needful to the body, what doth it profit?" (James 2:16)

As further witnesses to the literacy of this act, we read that a widow was considered worthy of support by the brethren if she had shown her dedication to the Church by such criteria as "if she have lodged strangers, if she have washed the saints' feet, if she have relieved the afflicted, if she have diligently followed every good work." (1Tim 5:10) Every one of those acts is strictly literal in nature, and shows that the acts of service were actual, not restricted to simply a "spirit of service," but a spirit of service made manifest in action.

The traditional significance of the act goes all the way back to the book of Genesis, in which we read that Abraham washed the feet of the three "men"

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who came to visit him, or had them washed, (Gen 18:4) and thus “entertained angels unawares.” (Heb 13:2)

Associated with communion is an *Agape Feast*. This is a meal generally eaten after the communion ceremony to symbolize “the marriage supper of the Lamb.” (Rev 19:9) While it is true that there were problems associated with the meals connected to communion in the first century, (1Cor 11:20-22) the problem was not the meal, but the attitude of some members. Some would fill themselves with food to the extent that others were left hungry, and Paul’s admonition is, “if you come to stuff yourself at the expense of others, why do you not stay home and fill yourself there?”

Actual meals were traditionally associated with Christian fellowship, as we read that the early converts, “continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart.” (Acts 2:46) The meal is eaten after, and not before, the communion elements of bread and wine to signify the “filling” that takes place after unity with Yahshua and the brethren is achieved, and the service that the King Himself will render to His servants in the resurrection. (Luke 12:37) This appears at first glance to be a departure from the ordinance sanctified by the Messiah in the Gospels, since on that occasion it might be assumed that the disciples ate first and then shared the bread and wine, singing a hymn and departing right afterward. (Mat 26:30, Mar 14:26) This is not, however, actually the case.

The Scriptures actually records that this incident took place “as they did eat,” (Mar 14:22) not before or after; and we note that even the apostles did not fully come into unity until some days after the crucifixion. (Acts 2:1) The Holy Spirit, a symbol of Heavenly *manna*, did not come upon the believers until after they had come into harmony; the Church thus holds that after the crucifixion the elements associated with the Passover ritual itself (including time of year, frequency, and order of events) were altered by the meeting of the ceremony with its antitype at the cross. The spiritual significance thereafter took precedent. We note that the only reason given for the continuance of Feasts in the New Testament is not to remember incidents from the history of the nation of Israel (which would mean little to Gentile converts anyway) but as either memorials of Christ, or a foreshadowing of future events. (Luke 22:19, Col 2:17)

The content of the communion meal reflects, as much as possible, the original and perfect diet of humanity. The feast in Heaven will consist of no dead animals, (Isa 65:25) so the meal here is strictly vegetarian in nature in order to render it a proper foreshadowing. Further, as access to the Tree of Life will be restored, (Rev 22:14) the need for vegetable matter (which was added after the fall – Gen 3:18) will also be removed. The diet of humanity in eternity will be precisely that which it was before the advent of sin; and of this it is written, “Behold, I have given you every herb bearing

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seed, which is upon the face of all the earth, and every tree, in the which is the fruit of a tree yielding seed; to you it shall be for meat.” (Gen 1:29)

Fruit and seeds, including nuts – no Biblical distinction is made between seeds and nuts – are a part of the original diet of man. A ritual distinction is made between seeds and nuts in *modern* Judaism; however, this is because of tradition (the numerological values of “sin” and “nuts” are identical) and has nothing to do with the Word of Yahweh. The food described for the life to come is invariably associated with such imagery as vines and fig-trees, (Mic 4:4) which would be perfectly consistent with a removal of the physical effects of sin.

As such, the Agape feast, with its menu of fruit, seeds and nuts, consists of the best and freshest fare that may be obtained, and generally uncooked (*i.e.*, the nuts would not be roasted, salted, or otherwise modified; the fruit would not be processed) to signify that perfect banquet in the age to come.

4.4.2 – The Holy Kiss

The Holy Kiss in the practice of the Creation Seventh Day Adventist Church is one of several unique identifiers of Yahweh’s people. Mention of the act itself is found in several verses:

“Salute one another with an holy kiss. The churches of Christ salute you.” (Rom 16:16) “All the brethren greet you. Greet ye one another with an holy kiss.” (1Cor 16:20) “Greet one another with an holy kiss.” (2Cor 13:12) “Greet all the brethren with an holy kiss.” (1Th 5:26)

The practice, however, is not described in detail. Some principles may be gleaned from Scripture that govern its use. We read, to a young male, “Rebuke not an elder, but intreat him as a father; and the younger men as brethren; the elder women as mothers, the younger as sisters, with all purity.” (1Tim 5:1, 2) Again, “But as He which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation,” (1Pet 1:15) and “Abstain from all appearance of evil.” (1Th 5:22)

“He that loveth his brother abideth in the light, and there is none occasion of stumbling in him,” (1John 2:10) therefore all that we do must be above the least possibility of criticism or reproach. Without catering to *undue* criticism, or facilitating fault-finders, absolute propriety must be maintained at all times.

So how is this kiss to be performed? We know *when* it is to be performed; from the relevant verses we find that the holy kiss is used as a greeting, but the specifics of its administration must be obtained from the principles in other verses.

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We read in the Scriptures, “And [the holy Seal] shall be upon Aaron’s forehead, that Aaron may bear the iniquity of the holy things, which the children of Israel shall hallow in all their holy gifts; and it shall be always upon his forehead, that they may be accepted before Yahweh.” (Exo 28:38) Again, “And Yahweh said unto him, ‘Go through the midst of the city, through the midst of Jerusalem, and set a mark upon the foreheads of the men that sigh and that cry for all the abominations that be done in the midst thereof.’” (Ezek 9:4)

Both the Seal of Yahweh and the Mark of the Beast (Rev 14:9) use the forehead as the only (or most significant) location on the body. The forehead is the idiomatic indicator of character, whether it is one of endurance, (Ezek 3:9) or one of apostasy and infidelity. (Jer 3:3) Holy anointing is also shown to be performed on the head of the recipient. (Exo 29:7)

We may gather a few more guidelines from the Scriptures. In the sacred record, kissing the hand appears to be a sign of trickery, (Job 31:27) and kisses between the sexes are restricted to lovers or spouses. (Songs 1:2)

It appears, then, that a *holy* kiss would fulfill the following criteria:

- 1) It would give no appearance of evil
- 2) It would (like the kisses of the Scriptures) be between only the members of the same gender
- 3) It would be to a part on the body that itself is reserved for holiness

Based on these things, Creation Seventh Day Adventists greet one another with the holy kiss when meeting each other, or departing, by a kiss to the forehead – the men to the men and the women to the women. The propriety with which this is conducted, combined with the neutral target, place this action absolutely above reproach, and serve as a sign of such genuine affection between the saints as the Scriptures encourage.

4.4.3 – Tithes and offerings

It may seem unusual to some that the act of tithing would be considered an “act of worship.” Nevertheless, the obedience to the commandments of the Most High is considered a worshipful act, particularly (but not exclusively) in their spiritual application. The keeping of the Sabbath is described as an act of worship. (Isaiah 66:23) A life free of covetousness is considered a mark of the true Christian, (Heb 13:5) and ministering to the saints was and is certainly considered worthy of praise. (2Cor 9:1-7, Heb 6:10) Unlike the mainstream Adventist Church, (at least in this particular matter) the CSDA movement considers obedience to the Decalogue to be a direct measure of conversion. Tithing, therefore, which directly relates to the commandment to avoid stealing, is considered a test of fellowship.

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The Scriptures indicate that it is an act of robbery to withhold tithes and offerings (both are mentioned) from the necessary use of the appointed servants of Yahweh, whether the Levites of the Mosaic system, (Mal 3:8-12) or the “ministers of the New Testament.” (2Cor 3:6, 1Cor 9:14)

Recently, a number of independent ministers and isolationists (those who do not believe in the necessity of a visible Church community or established places of worship) have attempted to undermine the value of the tithing system. The argument is made that in the days of Malachi, the tithe consisted of goods grown from one’s own land. “It does not,” they state, “translate into the money of today’s modern system. And we do not see any examples of money being used as a tithe.”

It is true that there are no direct examples of money being used as tithe, but it must be understood that the principle of tithing is an absolute. In other words, the term used for what is to be provided as tithe, (Deu 14:22) while it was once applied in practice to crops or flocks (Lev 27:32) in the agricultural society of ancient Israel, is a *general* word for “income.”

In the older society, wealth was calculated not by the size of one’s bank account, but by his flocks and his land. He had a responsibility to the ministers of the Gospel in his day, to support them with a tenth of his income, and the principle of responsibility directly translates to the New Covenant in whatsoever way the “wealth” of an individual is calculated.

The Messiah taught that tithing was a continuing aspect of the religion of Yahweh, saying to the Pharisees, “Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For ye pay tithe of mint and anise and cumin, and have omitted the weightier matters of the law: judgment, mercy, and faith. These *ought* ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone.” (Mat 23:23)

The Messiah was not there saying that the Pharisees tithed only their herbs, but that they tithed down to and including the least leaf and seed; and for this He commended them. At the same time, while telling them they ought to continue in this, they should not have neglected the principles behind the religion they had inherited from their fathers: justice, mercy and faith.

Turning to the New Testament saints, some have said, “Why is there no clear mention of tithing among the members of the early Christian Church?” There is a very specific reason for this. The Epistles were generally written to further instruct believers in doctrine, or to correct problems that arose within the congregations. It is apparent from the book of Acts that generosity in giving to the work, the workers, and the fellow-believers in need was never much of an issue. We read, “And all that believed were together, and had all things common, and sold their possessions and goods, and parted them to all men, as every man had need.” (Acts 2:44, 45) “And the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and of one soul,

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neither said any of them that ought of the things which he possessed was his own; but they had all things common.” (Acts 4:32)

It should be noted, for the record, that this mutual benevolence did not eliminate the Biblical principle of private property, (Acts 5:4) but it reflected the perfect spirit of charity and concern held by the believers for each other. In those days, the converts were selling extra land for the good of their brethren; today even 10% in tithe and a bit of offering is begrudged by those who have not yet fully experienced the awakening to righteousness.



Emphasis Note

The principle behind all Christian giving in the Scripture is pointed out by the Savior in Matthew 6:21 and Luke 12:34

Those who oppose the New Testament principle of tithing income will point to the example of Paul, and say, “Paul worked for a living by making tents. The ministers ought to all do the same.” (Acts 18:1-3) There are a couple serious flaws in this thinking. First, Paul had a special calling to go about and establish congregations. He was a traveler, and thus it would have been very difficult for any one group or set of groups to support him as he moved about. In the

congregations Paul did initiate he set ministers in place to remain there as stable guides to the residents of that city. (Titus 1:5)

Second, Paul clearly teaches that those who are placed in charge of a specific group of people ought to be supported by the work he does for that group. He writes, “Do ye not know that they which minister about holy things live of the things of the temple? And they which wait at the altar are partakers with the altar? *Even so* hath the Lord ordained that they which preach the gospel should live of the gospel.” (1Cor 9:13, 14)

The phrase “even so” is important. Paul first points to the Levites and priests who minister at the Temple and Altar, who are supported by the tithe of the Israelites. Then he immediately turns his attention to the New Covenant Church and says, “even so,” or “in this same way,” the ministers of the Gospel ought to make their living off of their preaching. This clear and unambiguous passage completely eliminates any notion that tithing was discontinued in the Christian Church... and further, if the ministers are to be “supported” or to “live of the Gospel” in every age in which there is a *Church*, it cannot possibly be said that since the culture is no longer agricultural, but based on paper money, this no longer holds true. As long as there are “ministers” the parallel to the Levitical priests holds true. It is truly Christ who receives this support, as the author of Hebrews points out, (Heb 7:8) but the tithes are still given, and received into the everlasting inheritance as we labor for the Kingdom to come.

Finally, Paul’s experience is an isolated case. We read that the apostles appointed deacons over the finances of the Church so that they would not

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need to be concerned with money at all. “But we will give ourselves continually to prayer, and to the ministry of the word.” (Acts 6:4) Unlike Paul, most of the apostles remained in Jerusalem to oversee the central work, and those ministers that are stable in particular were clearly to be supported by those to whom they were ministering. Paul wrote that he had the divine right to partake of the tithe, asking “If we have sown unto you spiritual things, is it a great thing if we shall reap your carnal things?” (1Cor 9:11) While Paul had other means of support, receiving the patronage of the many Churches he raised up, (e.g., the Philippian congregation – Phil 4:10) those who have been placed over a single congregation do not have such an option.

The New Testament clearly teaches that the system Yahweh put in place to support the ministers of the Temple and the Altar ought to be continued in the Christian Churches. Indeed, it should be more fervently held, as we see the need for dedicated ministers to do much work with few resources and little time. Ultimately, since keeping the “commandments of God” is one of the defining characteristics of the members of the Remnant people, (Rev 14:12) and since neglecting to tithe to the “storehouse” from which the ministers of the Gospel must draw their living is considered robbery, (Mal 3:8) and thus a violation of a commandment, (Exo 20:15) it is certainly a valid measure of the *agape* and spirit of service required for membership in the Body of the Messiah.

4.5 – Sacred Names

4.5.1 – The Names of The Father and Son

A very clearly revealed principle of the Bible is that the name of a person, place or thing is of great importance. The name given to something, particularly when originating in a divine source, functions in two capacities. First, it serves as an identifier that, in the proper context, is unique. Second, it is a reflection of the characteristics of the named.

In situations when the name did not match the character, and would not serve as a proper designation for the object, person or place, these were actively changed by an agent of Heaven.

A person’s name was changed in Genesis: “Thy name shall be called no more *Jacob*, but *Israel*; for as a prince hast thou power with God and with men, and hast prevailed.” (Gen 32:28) The name of a place was given due to the events that took place in that location: “And Jacob called the name of the place *Peniel* [the Face of El], ‘For I have seen God face to face, and my life is preserved.’” (verse 30)

Objects that represent principles have also received names in the Biblical record: “And [Solomon] set up the pillars in the porch of the temple: and he set up the right pillar, and called the name thereof *Jachin* [He will

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establish]; and he set up the left pillar, and called the name thereof *Boaz* [Fleetness].” (1Kings 7:21) “And [Hezekiah] did that which was right in the sight of Yahweh, according to all that David his father did. He removed the high places, and brake the images, and cut down the groves, and brake in pieces the brasen serpent [*nachash*] that Moses had made: for unto those days the children of Israel did burn incense to it: and he called it *Nehushtan* [a thing of brass].” (2Kings 18:3, 4)

For some reason, in modern Christianity, and even in Adventism, the names by which we are instructed to call the Father and Son tend to make individuals uncomfortable. This is not a coincidence; since a name represents a character, the extent to which an individual is comfortable with the names of the Father and Son may be a measure of the degree to which one who claims to be in Their service will differ from the world, (and worldly religion) possibly bearing reproach by the unsanctified, for the purpose of partaking in a blessing provided by the Creator.

There is *absolutely no reason* given in the Bible for avoiding the use of the names of Yahweh and Yahshua. Jewish superstition has avoided the name of the Father for fear of misusing it; but if the Law is written on the heart, (Jer 31:33) there is no need to fear misusing His name. Every individual mentioned in the Scriptures as being a true servant of the Almighty has called upon the name of Yahweh, and it is He who makes men worthy, therefore the idea that we are not “good enough” to call upon our Father’s name is based on works-centric religion, not the religion of faith.

Modern Christianity has great animosity to the “Hebrew” name for the savior, Yahshua. Although names do not translate, and although the speech of the early Christians was clearly either Hebrew or Aramaic, as seen by the identification of locations by their Semitic names, (John 5:2, 19:13, 19:17, Rev 16:16) the Greek name “Iesous” (Jesus) appears in even the earlier manuscripts. That name does not, however, and cannot, mean what the Savior’s name was supposed to mean: “And [Mary] shall bring forth a Son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS, for He shall save His people from their sins.” (Matthew 1:21)

The name “Jesus” as it reads in Greek or English has no such meaning as would be implied by the angel’s statement. Yet the name that the Savior bore was (like every other prophet, angel, and agent of Heaven) to represent His character and purpose. Yahshua means, “Yah Saves,” or “Yah is Salvation.” Although Creation Seventh Day Adventists do not take the position that it is wrong or evil to use the name Jesus, or the titles (not the names, for these are not names) God, Lord, *etc.*, we believe that the use of the names of the Father and Son represent the close relationship between the redeemed and the Redeemer.

As it is written, “Who hath ascended up into heaven, or descended? Who hath gathered the wind in his fists? Who hath bound the waters in a

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garment? Who hath established all the ends of the earth? What is his name, and what is His Son's name, if thou canst tell?" (Pro 30:4)

Since there is no instruction to avoid these names, the CSDA position on these is extremely simple. First, we identify what these names are, and second we need only show where we are encouraged to use them in our worship. The Biblical argument being thus completed, we simply leave it up to individuals whether they wish to follow the example set by the saints of both Bible and post-Bible times, or whether they will be influenced by the fashion of the modern, religious world.

The names are easy enough to identify:

"Sing unto God, sing praises to His name: extol Him that rideth upon the heavens by His name, JAH, and rejoice before Him." (Psa 68:4) We need only turn to any lexicon, concordance, Bible dictionary or commentary to discover that the letter "J" does not exist in any classical language, (like Hebrew, Aramaic or Greek) but instead replaces a "Y" or "I" sound... thus the name of the Almighty is YAH or, in its full form YA(W/V)H. There is some question about how the third letter should be pronounced, either as a "W" or a "V," therefore the letters would produce either "Yəhwəh" or "Yəhvəh." In the CSDA Church, both Yahweh and Yavah are used, the first a little more commonly.

יהוה
יהושע

Key	י = "u"
י = "i"	ש = "sh"
ה = "h"	ע = "ua"

Figure 4.1 – The Tetragrammaton

The Son's name is also fairly easy to discover. In the English text we find the name given as *Jesus*, from the Greek *Iesous*. The *meaning* of the name, however, is given as "He will save," with *He* referring to the Creator. There is actually an individual in the Old Testament with an identical name: Joshua, the servant of Moses. We find the meaning of his name in the concordance as, "Jehovah [Yahweh] is salvation." The pronunciation of this name using the proper transliteration is *Yahoshua*, or *Yahshua* in its more contracted form (*e.g.*, the way "policeman" is pronounced by contracting the first vowel).

From Psalm 68:4 quoted above we see the Scriptures instructing us to praise the Almighty by His name. In Exodus, Moses was told to use the name of the Father to convince the Hebrews he was truly sent with a divine mission. (Exo 3:14) The children of Yah are repeatedly told to "call upon [His] name," (1Ch 16:8, Psa 116:13, Rom 10:13) not upon His title or some designation of their own personal choosing. The same importance is given to the name (not title or honorific) of the Son: "in every place call upon the

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name of Jesus Christ our Lord...” (1Cor 1:2, *cf.*, Rom 10:13, Acts 19:13, Acts 4:12) The divinity of Christ is here also clearly expressed, in that Christians are told to call upon the name of Yahshua with as much holy zeal as the ancient Hebrews were told to call upon the name of Yahweh. No created being is held in such a light, the object of worship and the subject of prayers.

Of course, the Father’s name is not forgotten, or eclipsed, by the presence and ministry of Yahshua. The saints are explicitly shown as calling upon the name YAH in the New Testament. We read, “And after these things I heard a great voice of much people in heaven, saying, ‘Alleluia’ [...] And again they said, ‘Alleluia.’” (Rev 19:1a, 3a)

“And I heard as it were the voice of a great multitude, and as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of mighty thunderings, saying, ‘Alleluia; for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth.’” (Rev 19:6) Several times, John the revelator sees a vision of perfect, heavenly worship. In these several cases, the name *Yah* is held up to the highest degree of reverence, for Alleluia – or Hallelu-Yah – is not merely a shout of joy that Christians happen to say; it means, specifically, “Praise be to Yah.”

There are Adventists who take the position, “Well, Ellen White never used these names;” but what can we say to those who are content with the light given thus far, when the path of the just is ever forward? The question should never be, “What did Ellen White (or any past reformer, prophet or pioneer) teach?” The question must always be, “What does the *Bible* say?” The Bible, even in its English translations, lifts high the name of Yahweh. Its original language is even more explicit.

The very names given by the Father and Son for the purpose of calling upon them for praise and prayer (and ought not a people to call upon the name of their God?) also strengthen the non-Trinitarian picture of the Godhead presented by the Scriptures. As Proverbs 30:4, mentioned in Section 4.2.1, points out, the Father and Son possess these divine names, these marks of character and personal identifiers. The Holy Spirit, on the other hand, is consistently represented as the Spirit of the Godhead, and possesses no revealed name, no individual character, no indication of will or intelligence apart from “the deep things of God,” (1Cor 2:10) of which It is a part; the spirit of man that knows the mind of man (because it is a *part* of man) is paralleled to the Spirit of Yahweh that knows *His* mind. (verse 11)

4.5.2 – The Name of The Bride

As we saw in the last section, there are three things that may receive divine names for the purposes of identification and the revelation of character: people, places, and objects. There are also three means by which legitimate names may be bestowed: by Yahweh Himself, (Gen 17:5) by an angel sent

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from Yahweh, (Mat 1:21) or by a messenger such as a prophet or divinely appointed reformer. (Jeremiah 20:3)

Just as the names of natural persons are reflections of their spiritual significance, so the name of the Church or nation led by Yahshua will always have a distinctive name. This name not only represents the character of such a People, but it also encapsulates its mission and beliefs with divine precision. We find in the Scriptures that the people of the Almighty have always had a specific name:

“The sons of God.” (Gen 6:2) Adventists believe that these represented the faithful, human (not angelic – Mat 22:30, Luke 20:35, 36) servants of Yahweh before the Flood, who fell away and procreated with the descendants of Cain. This led to a general and widespread apostasy leaving only the family of Noah faithful. (Gen 6:5, 8)

“Israel.” (Exo 4:22) The “Children of Israel,” or the “Tribes of Israel” was the designation of those who descended from Jacob and came out of Egypt under the leadership of the prophet Moses.

“Christians.” (Acts 11:26) Although this name may have originated as an insult, the apostles embraced it, writing to the disciples, “Yet if any man suffer as a Christian, let him not be ashamed; but let him glorify God on this behalf.” (1Pet 4:16) Paul also used it as the name of his faith, “Then Agrippa said unto Paul, ‘Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian.’ And Paul said, I would to God, that [...] thou [...] were both almost, and *altogether such as I am.*” (Acts 26:28, 29) Paul was known to certain Jews as a member of the “sect of the Nazarenes,” (Acts 24:5) and some Christians and Messianic believers have preferred this title; but it is mentioned only once as a name for the disciples in the divine record, and that by Paul’s enemies. Christ was called a “Nazarene” inasmuch as He lived His early life in Nazareth, (Mat 2:23) but this refers solely to a location, and was not there meant to function as a statement of religious affiliation. The CSDA movement has followed in the path of general Protestantism in accepting the identifying name that the apostles of Yahshua most clearly accepted as proper, containing “that worthy name by the which [we] are called.” (James 2:7) The name “Christian” is a standing rebuke to those who have not (yet) accepted Yahshua as Christ or Messiah.

“Protestants.” Speaking of Protestantism, the first name by which the Bible-believing Christian called themselves following the corruption of Romish Christianity (and the close of the Canon) was “Protestant,” coined in 1521 at the second Diet of Spyer. We find, however, that in none of the cases of a change of name do the faithful surrender the names that have gone before. Israel was still considered the nation of the sons of God. (Mal 2:10) Christians declared themselves the “sons of God,” (1John 3:2) and the true and spiritual nation of Israel, (Eph 2:12) distinguished from Israel

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that is merely “after the flesh.” (1Cor 10:18) Protestants have historically defined themselves as all three: Christians, Israel, and the sons of God.

“Seventh-day Adventists.” A more controversial title in modern Christianity, the name “Seventh-day Adventist” was given to the faithful Christians of the 1800s who continued the Reformation begun in the 16th century, returning to the faith taught by the apostles in terms of their adherence to the ten commandments and the expectation of the soon return of the Messiah. Since this is recorded in the Scripture as the criteria for the final movement of Christians on the earth, (Rev 12:17, 2Pet 3:12) the name here once again calls to mind the present-truth aspects of the Body of Christ. Seventh-day Adventists have always considered themselves to be Protestants, Christians, Israel and the sons of God.

“Creation Seventh Day Adventists.” In these last days, we find that the Church continues to be identified by two key characteristics: “the commandments of God and the faith of Yahshua.” (Rev 14:12) The CSDA movement believes that it is corporately called to stand in the role of the 144,000 mentioned in Scripture as having a perfect heart to “follow the Lamb whithersoever He goeth.” (Rev 14:4) It has been understood by the Church that, as will be covered in the following sections, when an organization apostatizes and, in that sorrowful condition, unites with the world by the actions of its leaders, it “unchurches itself” and a Remnant is drawn forth. (Deu 24:1-4, Isa 9:13-17, John 19:5, Acts 2:36-38)

By the testimony of history, when the “Sons of God” fell away from faith, Israel was called from among those who survived the global flood. When Israel crucified the Messiah by the union of its high officials with Rome, the Apostolic Church came forth. When this movement united with Rome, forming the Roman Catholic amalgam, the Protestant movement appeared. When they ceased the work of reform and demonstrated their separation from Christ by means of the “Blue Laws” of the United States, this crystallized the separation between the Sabbath keeping Adventists and other organizations. When the Seventh-day Adventist Church began to absorb pagan errors and, in this confused state, united with the United States to defend itself from perceived harm, it fell, and was the Church of God no longer.

Creation Seventh Day Adventists, as the remnant believers of this ancient movement of Yahweh-worshippers, continue to hold fast to all the names ever given by Heaven: Sons of God, Israel, Christian, Protestant and Seventh Day Adventist. It does not matter now, and it never has, that these names have been misused by the former collective holders of the title of “God’s people.” Mainstream Seventh-day Adventists are criticized by many Bible-believing Christians that know the Scriptures (*e.g.*, 1Corinthians 6) because of their reliance upon human power. Protestants are maligned by religious scholars for their fundamentalism and some of the more sordid elements of their past. Christians are held in contempt by the irreligious, and Israel has long had to deal with anti-Semitic individuals and nations.

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The “sons of God” mentioned in Genesis 6 are thought by many today to be *fallen angels*. It would be difficult to find a more disparaging description than that, yet this name is kept by the faithful even to this day, as it was in the days of the apostles. (1John 3:1)

The names Yahweh has given to His people are reasons for enduring persecution. For example, although there was no letter-commandment to teach in the name of Christ, the disciples were willing (even joyful) to “suffer as Christian(s).” (1Pet 4:16) We note that the Pharisees did not command the disciples not to teach doctrine, but not to teach in the name of Yahshua. (Acts 5:28) To deny Christ by the denial of the name He had given them would be to give in to the idols of fear or covetousness, thus violating the letter of associated elements of the Decalogue, (the second and tenth) and certainly the spirit of *agape*. Some have said, “Well, in Acts 5 the name of Christ was important, but the name of a Church is not the same thing.” This is a faulty understanding of the connection between Yahshua and His Bride. The Church of Christ is verily His “Body,” (1Cor 12:27) and as such is entirely under His headship. If the Church believes that the divine Husband has given Her a particular name, no decree of men, opinion of outsiders, or threat of punishment, will force Her disobedience.

As Yahweh declared to those who were falling into apostasy, “And ye shall leave your name for a curse unto my chosen: for Adonai Yahweh shall slay thee, and call his servants by another name.” (Isa 65:15) The word “another” there (Heb: *acher*) does not mean it will be a name that is unlike the first; but because the original name – though a curse – is *left* to Yahweh’s servants; it means “a further” name, or “an additional” name. The Creation Seventh Day Adventist Church has embraced their name for the character portrayed in those words, for the instructions of those who have gone before us in the faith, and for the Word of Yahweh that has shown us the testimony that His people must bear in the closing work.

4.6 – Conditional Prophecy

The concept of conditional prophecy is an exceedingly simple one, but it is not one that is very clearly taught in many Churches. Although it will not require a lot of time to demonstrate the concept from a number of Biblical examples, it is vital for a discussion of the sections that follow this one, therefore it is presented here in as concise a form as possible.

The idea underlying conditional prophecy is that although Yahweh does not mislead His people, it is often stated, and always understood by the faithful, that the promises He makes to humanity, and the warnings of judgment He provides, may or may not be fulfilled due to the reaction of the individuals to whom the promise or warning is given.

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Some find this idea strange, citing: “God is not a man, that He should lie; neither the son of man, that He should repent; hath He said, and shall He not do it? Or hath He spoken, and shall He not make it good?” (Num 23:19)

Yet we also have these statements to reconcile, such as what follows His promise to prosper Abraham’s descendants (Gen 23:6): “Behold, I set before you this day a blessing and a curse: a blessing, if ye obey the commandments of Yahweh your Almighty, which I command you this day, and a curse, if ye will not obey the commandments of Yahweh your Almighty, but turn aside out of the way which I command you this day, to go after other gods, which ye have not known.” (Deu 11:26-28)

Although no conditions are explicitly given in Yahweh’s promise to Abraham in Genesis 23, we find that indeed the union with the Promise-giver is the means by which the promises are fulfilled. This makes sense on even a human level; if I promise to give some money to an individual but he departs from me and I cannot meet with him, I cannot fulfill my promise although I have spoken no lie. It is true that Yahweh is everywhere, and no individual or nation can hide from His presence, (Psa 139:7, 8) but He does not force that presence upon anyone either. (Deu 32:19, 20)



Emphasis Note

This principle is reflected in the concept of a valid “divorce.” (Mat 19:9) A believing husband or wife may remarry, if innocent.

While Yahweh never breaks His covenants, it is not true that He continues to cling to covenants He makes when others break them first. In other words, if the Almighty makes a covenant with a human, He will never turn aside from His word; but, if the human breaks the covenant, the covenant is broken, and there is no binding tie between that man and Yahweh thereafter. This is spelled out explicitly in the writings of the prophets. “And I took unto me two staves; the one I called Beauty, and the other I called Bands; and I fed the flock. Three shepherds also I cut off in one month; and my soul loathed them, and their soul also abhorred me. Then said I, ‘I will not feed you; that that dieth, let it die; and that that is to be cut off, let it be cut off; and let the rest eat every one the flesh of another.’ And I took my staff, even Beauty, and cut it asunder, that I might break my covenant which I had made with all the people. And it was broken in that day, and so the poor of the flock that waited upon me knew that it was the word of Yahweh.” (Zech 11:7b-11)

We note here that although Yahweh purposed to guide and shelter His people, when they apostatized to the degree that His “soul loathed them,” and (worse still) that their souls also hated Him, the covenant was broken. Although Yahweh is the one mentioned as breaking the covenant, we read from the record that this was actually the humans’ act, and the Almighty merely “broke” it in the sense of *declaring* it void, and providing a prophetic symbol (the staff) to represent the condition of the nation.

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There are examples of this working both ways. First, we find instances where declared judgments are avoided due to the repentance of those who were warned:

“So Jonah arose, and went unto Nineveh according to the word of Yahweh. Now Nineveh was an exceeding great city of three days’ journey. And Jonah began to enter into the city a day’s journey, and he cried, and said, ‘Yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown.’ So the people of Nineveh believed God, and proclaimed a fast, and put on sackcloth, from the greatest of them even to the least of them. And Elohim saw their works, that they turned from their evil way; and Elohim repented of the evil that He had said that He would do unto them; and He did it not.” (Jonah 3:3-5, 10)

“So Yahweh sent pestilence upon Israel; and there fell of Israel seventy thousand men. And Elohim sent an Angel unto Jerusalem to destroy it; and as He was destroying, Yahweh beheld, and He repented Him of the evil, and said to the Angel that destroyed, ‘It is enough, stay now thine hand.’ And the Angel of Yahweh stood by the threshingfloor of Ornan the Jebusite.” (1Ch 21:14, 15) Because of the genuine repentance of David, (verse 8) the Almighty did not execute the full measure of His wrath, which was anticipated to last for three days. (verse 12)

The blessings that Yahweh has promised to His people have, at times, been set aside due to their sins. Aside from the example in Zechariah:

“Yahshua saith unto them, ‘Did ye never read in the Scriptures, “The stone which the builders rejected, the same is become the head of the corner: this is the Lord’s doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes?” Therefore say I unto you, the kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof. And whosoever shall fall on this stone shall be broken; but on whomsoever it shall fall, it will grind him to powder.’ And when the chief priests and Pharisees had heard His parables, they perceived that He spake of them.” (Mat 21:42-45)

It should be noted that some (rare) prophecies are not dependent upon the actions of human beings. For example, the 2300-day prophecy discussed in chapter 3 was not conditional, and there are two reasons for this. First, no mention of human interaction is mentioned; this was not a promise to any particular individual or nation; therefore, no human action could waylay its accomplishment. Second, a definite and specific timeline is provided. This is generally a strong indication that the Almighty will perform an act for His own supreme purpose, and irrespective of human intervention. Another example of this is the exile in Babylon. The prophet Jeremiah gave a specific time that the nation of Israel would spend in exile, (Jer 25:11) and when this time had expired, the people were again brought into Israel.

The prophet Daniel points out that this time in Babylon was pre-determined by the Almighty, and had nothing to do with the faithfulness or apostasy of the Israelites themselves, recording, “In the first year of [Darius’] reign I,

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Daniel, understood by books the number of the years, whereof the word of Yahweh came to Jeremiah the prophet, that He would accomplish seventy years in the desolations of Jerusalem.” (Dan 9:2) He then prayed, “O my Almighty, incline thine ear, and hear; open thine eyes, and behold our desolations, and the city which is called by thy name; for we do not present our supplications before thee for our righteousnesses, but for thy great mercies.” (verse 18) Daniel acknowledges that nothing the Israelites have done deserve a release from exile, but presents his request for the freedom of the people because of Yahweh’s own mercies, and His own name’s sake.

In general, and unless the two conditions specified above are present, the prophetic utterances and promises of the Almighty are conditional upon the spiritual state of humanity (the individual or the nation) remaining constant. Here, then, is a summary of the principle of conditional prophecy, spoken in Yahweh’s own words: “At what instant I shall speak concerning a nation, and concerning a kingdom, to pluck up, and to pull down, and to destroy it; if that nation, against whom I have pronounced, turn from their evil, I will repent of the evil that I thought to do unto them. And at what instant I shall speak concerning a nation, and concerning a kingdom, to build and to plant it; if it do evil in my sight, that it obey not my voice, then I will repent of the good, wherewith I said I would benefit them.” (Jer 18:7-10) This works as effectively for individuals as for nations, as declared in Ezekiel 18:20-24.

4.7 – The Elijah Mission

The Creation Seventh Day Adventist Church sees in its movement a fulfillment of the promise given to the nation of Israel by means of the prophet Malachi: “Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of Yahweh. And he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers, lest I come and smite the earth with a curse.” (Mal 4:5, 6)

While it is true that John the Baptist fulfilled the Elijah promise to a degree, (Luke 1:13-17, Mat 11:13, 14) we find here a second and ultimate fulfillment prophesied to occur before “the great and dreadful day” of Yahweh. The first appearance of Christ, for which John the Baptist prepared the people, was the “Day of Salvation;” (Isa 49:8, 2Cor 6:2) but of the second appearance, when the Messiah returns as Judge, we are told: “The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before the great and the terrible day of Yahweh come.” (Joel 2:23, *cf.* Acts 2:20 and Rev 6:12 – both statements following John the Baptist’s ministry) All references to a “great day” likewise concern themselves with judgment at the end of the age: Zeph 1:14; Jude 1:6; Rev 6:17, 16:14.



Activity Note

What are some other examples of prophecies that have been fulfilled in more than one way during the course of history?

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So how is the identification of the last day prophet to be made? As we read in our identification of the Beast and the False Prophet, character (the keynote of this book) is the sure means by which identity may be revealed. We already see from Malachi 4 one characteristic, a ministry of reconciliation. Elijah's purpose is to reunite the interests and affections of fathers and children; this has application both to actual families, and to the potential "sons of God" with the "Father of Spirits." (1John 3:1, Heb 12:9)

We may read from the actual record of Elijah's time on earth that he did indeed set a type for this manner of reconciliation: "And Elijah came unto all the people, and said, 'How long halt ye between two opinions? If Yahweh be Elohim, follow Him; but if Ba'al, then follow him.'" (1Kings 18:21a) Other elements of Elijah's ministry involved:

- 1) Restoring true worship (1Kings 18:38, 39)
- 2) Uniting Israel according to the twelve tribes (verses 30, 31)
- 3) Pronouncing judgment against wicked leaders (verses 17, 18)
- 4) Pronouncing judgment against false prophets (verse 40)
- 5) Announcing the appearance of much-needed rain (verse 41)
- 6) Ascending into Heaven at the end of the ministry (2Kings 2:11)

By means of these seven works (the six of the list and the one described above) the latter-day Elijah, the true messenger that the False Prophet of Revelation seeks to counterfeit, can be identified.

The work of the Creation Seventh Day Adventist Church is to restore family unity. By a consistent application of Gospel Order in the family and Church settings, as well as extensions to the mode of worship, (Mat 18:15-20, 1Cor 11:2, 3) both family counseling and worship reform are accomplished.

According to the times, the Twelve Tribes are being gathered from among the nations of the earth to unite in knowledge of the Father and Son that leads to eternal life. The purpose of these tribal organizations is to stand in place for the integrity of the Gospel, to vindicate the character of the Creator, and to pronounce judgment by precept and example against the corrupt leaders of the world's ecclesiastical systems. In taking a firm stand against independent ministries according to the precepts of Adventism, and critically examining the claims of various religious groups, the CSDA movement is committed in the sight of Heaven to correct errors in doctrine, reveal (by contrast with the truth) false prophets, and rebuke the individualistic mindset of many in these wicked times.

In teaching the Sealing Message of Revelation 7 and Ezekiel 9, the Church is preparing its hearers for receiving the latter rain, a spiritual fulfillment of the life-giving downpour mentioned in 1Kings, which is even now falling. In the Biblical lands, the rains came first at the planting of the seed, and finally just before the harvest, to revive the crops after the long, hot summer

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months. Similarly, before the harvest of earth, (Rev 14:15) there is anticipated another great downpour, and it will fall upon those who have received the Seal of God in their foreheads because of their acceptance of the truth, and unity with their brethren in Spiritual Israel. (Rev 9:4; Eph 4:12, 13) It is this group, who receive the Seal of Yahweh, that will be “alive and remain,” (1Th 4:17) being changed in a twinkling to the incorruptible spiritual bodies, and will be taken to Heaven without seeing death. Thus, the mission of Elijah is reflected in these last days by the Remnant Church of the Messiah.

In these days, many claim to have the Elijah mission, but we need only look at the history of Elijah himself and testify that as he had done in the apostate kingdom of Israel, so we now do on a planet turned Sodom and Egypt.

4.8 –The Image of The Beast

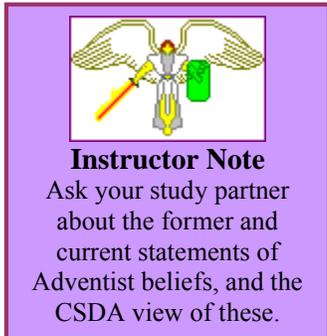
Adventists have long taught that the “image of the Beast” will be a union of Church and state that develops a Sabbath-related law for the persecution of the commandment-keeping Christians in the last days. With this teaching CSDAs are in perfect accord. The difference is that while mainstream Adventists are firmly rooted in the idea that this will be fulfilled in a union between Sunday-keeping Protestants and the United States government, the CSDA Church holds that, due to certain factors related to conditional prophecy, the mainstream Adventist Church can no longer be the Remnant that will go through the time of trouble.

The Bride of Christ must be a pure Virgin. (2Cor 11:2) In the Levitical type that Christ fulfills, the High Priest must marry a young woman who has never known a man. In fact, there are four types of women that the High Priest can never marry: “A widow, or a divorced woman, or profane, or an harlot, these shall he not take: but he shall take a virgin of his own people to wife.” (Lev 21:14) The mainstream SDA Church can be shown as fulfilling *at least three of these four* forbidden types!

- 1) *A Divorced Woman* – In setting aside the protection and principles of Christ, the rightful Husband, nominal Adventism has accomplished a separation between itself and the divine Bridegroom. Worse, a “remarriage” has been revealed that parallels the Jewish dignitaries saying, “We have no king but Caesar.” (John 19:15) Although the Hebrews were covenant-bound not to use the arm of flesh to accomplish the requirements of divine law, they nevertheless yielded to political and personal greed and did what they felt was necessary to silence opposition. This satanic action has been fulfilled in these last evil times by a Church that once claimed (and still claims in doctrine) to be Christ’s turning aside from His doctrine of enduring wrongs and grasping a forbidden sword to do what they feel is necessary to carry out their policies.

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- 2) *Profane* – In accepting pagan errors, and incorporating worldly policy into the way its doctrines and organizations are run, (in direct and extraordinarily bold rejections of the prophets’ testimonies) the nominal Church has cast off most if not all of its sacred character, leaving only that which is common (*i.e.*, profane) in its place. While we are not going to here undertake a list of the Adventist Church’s shortcomings, it may suffice the student of the Scriptures to study the difference between the statement of beliefs in the early SDA Church and what is current in the year 2007.



- 3) *An Harlot* – In seeking political and civil support from a source not only distinct from Christ, but a nation destined to facilitate His avowed enemy in the prophecies, (*i.e.*, the Second Beast) the mainstream Seventh-day Adventist Church has done just as Israel of old: “Yahweh said also unto me in the days of Josiah the king, ‘Hast thou seen that which backsliding Israel hath done? She

is gone up upon every high mountain and under every green tree, and there hath played the harlot.’” (Jeremiah 3:6)

Christ will only (can only) be joined to a Church that has never united with the world for policy or protection. It would be contrary to divine Law for Him to unite Himself with a backslidden people, or even a people who had repented if, in their backslidden state, they had united with a second source of power. (Deu 24:1-4) While the individuals may be saved out of such a fallen organization, that organization itself has made itself unfit for matrimony with the divine High Priest.

So what of the Image of The Beast? The principle still holds that a Sabbath-related issue will be agitated due to a union between a former Protestant church and the United States government. It should be obvious from above that such a union has indeed taken place. The Seventh-day Adventist Church, in uniting with the U.S. Civil Government for the advancement and protection of its status, reputation and doctrinal positions, has followed the ungodly example of the degenerating apostolic church when it united with pagan Rome (for the same reasons) and became the Roman Catholic Church, with the first beast (the papacy) at its head.

The long precedent of this doctrine bears mentioning at this point. In Matthew 20, we have a parable that Adventists have long understood to be a spiritual timeline of the calling-forth of new workers to take the place of former systems. [*Christ’s Object Lessons* (1900), pp. 296, 400] In the table below we see the record of once-faithful churches uniting with a beast-power to produce an amalgam from which the Almighty has invariably called His faithful people. In following the parable carefully, we find that

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the mainstream Seventh-day Adventist Church, as the natural successor of Sunday keeping Protestantism, is *not the last group to be called out*.

Location	Hour	Name	Beast/Union	Angel	
Old World	Early Morning	Jewish Church	Rome (Pagan)	1st Beast	1st
Old World	3rd Hour	Apostolic Church	Rome (Papal)		2nd
New World	6th Hour	Reformation Churches	U.S. Gov't (Secular)	2nd Beast	3rd
New World	9th Hour	S.D.A. Church	U.S. Gov't (Spiritual)		4th
New World	11th Hour	144,000	NONE – Virginal Purity	NONE	NONE

Figure 4.2 – The Parable of Matthew 20

In the parable there follows a final group, a set of “eleventh hour” workers who labor in the power of the Fourth Gospel Angel (discussed in the next section) just before the end of earth’s time of grace. This group will have never known a “man” in the sense of uniting with human power to accomplish its goals. This group will stand in protest against all the previous beast/woman unions, and will undergo great tribulation for its uncompromising stand for doctrinal and spiritual purity.

The image, therefore, is that organization in the New World that reflects the actions of the primitive Church in the Old. The General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, the legal “head” of the SDA constituency, and the power that is driving the courts to persecute the saints for their conscientious objection their activities, fulfills this role like no other ever has, or ever can. The activities of the nominal Church against those who render obedience to the instruction given to the Church to bear the name “Seventh-day Adventist” as a testimony to the world marks them as a persecuting power, one opposed to the very principle of religious freedom they were supposed to protect.

But what of the “Sabbath” issue? While it would be obvious in the case of a Sunday-keeping union with the government to produce a Sunday Law, the Scriptures teach us that it is as much a violation of the Sabbath to profane the character of Christ in the manner it is being done as it is to labor or conduct business on the seventh day of the week. We read Paul’s long and beautiful commentary on the Sabbath in Hebrews 4. Speaking to those who already knew about the letter of the fourth commandment, Paul explains that the truth behind the Sabbath is a spiritual one. It is ceasing from one’s own labors; it is entering into the “rest” that Yahweh has provided through His Son, and not doing our own works, especially when it affects “the people of God,” because the “rest,” (*sabbatismos*) is for them and them specifically. (Heb 4:9)

In order for the General Conference to take professed Christians to court and remain Sabbath-keepers (*i.e.*, those who have ceased from their own works) they would have to claim that they have direct orders from Yahshua Himself to use the United States civil government to confiscate the property

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and freedom of others who are all claiming to serve Him, albeit in a way different from the Conference itself. It would be hard indeed to imagine the Savior revealed in the New Testament inspiring men to write such claims and accusations as are found in the lawsuit complaints filed by the Conference.

Although it is easily seen from the Scriptures, using verses such as that above, that the Trademark law by which the SDA General Conference persecutes the people of God is a Sabbath issue, it may be helpful to note that in the teachings of early Adventism this very concept was openly taught. We read, “I need not undertake to give a definition in detail of what the image of the beast is; we all know well that it is the church power using the government, the civil power, for church purposes [...] And of all Christians, Seventh-day Adventists cannot do [this]. *The very keeping of the Sabbath forbids it.*” [A. T. Jones, *1895 General Conference Bulletin*, page 28, emphasis added]

Where is the spirit of true reform that prompted those words found today? It is found in no nominal church. It is found in no independent ministry. It is found *only* in the teachings of the Creation Seventh Day Adventist Church, the only organized body of believers that protests the actions of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists to the degree that it identifies it as the very “image of the Beast,” and the very test of Yahweh’s latter-day people for the evil that it has done and continues to do.

4.9 – The Fourth Angel

Following from the above section, the Creation Seventh Day Adventist movement sees in itself a fulfillment of the angel mentioned in Revelation 18: “And after these things I saw another angel come down from heaven, having great power; and the earth was lightened with his glory. And he cried mightily with a strong voice, saying, ‘Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen, and is become the habitation of devils, and the hold of every foul spirit, and a cage of every unclean and hateful bird. For all nations have drunk of the wine of the wrath of her fornication; and the kings of the earth have committed fornication with her, and the merchants of the earth are waxed rich through the abundance of her delicacies.’

“And I heard another voice from heaven, saying, ‘Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues. For her sins have reached unto heaven, and God hath remembered her iniquities.’” (Rev 18:1-5)

This angel is the fourth with a message for mankind (following the three in Revelation 14) and is therefore often referenced simply as “the fourth angel.” We find that its message is largely a repeat of the second Gospel angel, declaring the fall of Babylon, an end to the system of worldly

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confusion of policies, and preparing the earth for a calling-out message from Heaven.

We may note from the history of religious reform that each of the Three Angels' messages had particular significance for the era just before a major dissention from the established ecclesiastical order. When the Apostles were calling the Hebrews out of nationalistic Judaism and into the eternal kingdom that "shall stand for ever," (Dan 2:44) they pointed out no doctrinal errors that would identify the Jewish religion as "Babylon" in the sense that it is now understood, but merely told them to worship the Creator, who had appointed His Son as Heir and Judge. (Acts 2:36) When Martin Luther finally separated from the Roman system, he not only called it "Babylon," but also went so far as to identify the papal office as that of the antichrist. This is the Second Angel's message in verity.

Under the reformers, however, little was spoken of the Mark of the Beast. Some, such as Martin Luther, even had difficulty accepting books such as Hebrews and Revelation, which are vital for understanding last day events. It was not until the "Great Awakening" of the 1800s, and the Seventh-day Adventist movement that followed, that the Third Angel lent its significance to present truth, warning believers against unions of civil and church power, that was predicted to be the final enemy of Yahweh's people on earth. The Third Angel produced a unifying message that resulted in the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

Historically, Adventists have seen the Revelation 18 message as a call going forth once again to Sunday keeping Churches as a last-ditch effort to save them from error before the time of Judgment. While it is true that the Fourth Angel repeats the warning of the Second Angel in Revelation 14:8, the borders of Babylon have also increased since the time when the Three Angels' Message was originally given in the 1800s. Creation Seventh Day Adventists see in the "strong voice" of the fourth angel a judgment against *all* forms of confused religion, against *all* organizations that have accepted false doctrines, and against *all* ecclesiastical organizations that have rejected the Sabbath-rest principles of Christ in favor of the strong arm of human power. These concepts are the very ones the term *Babylon* has come to imply.

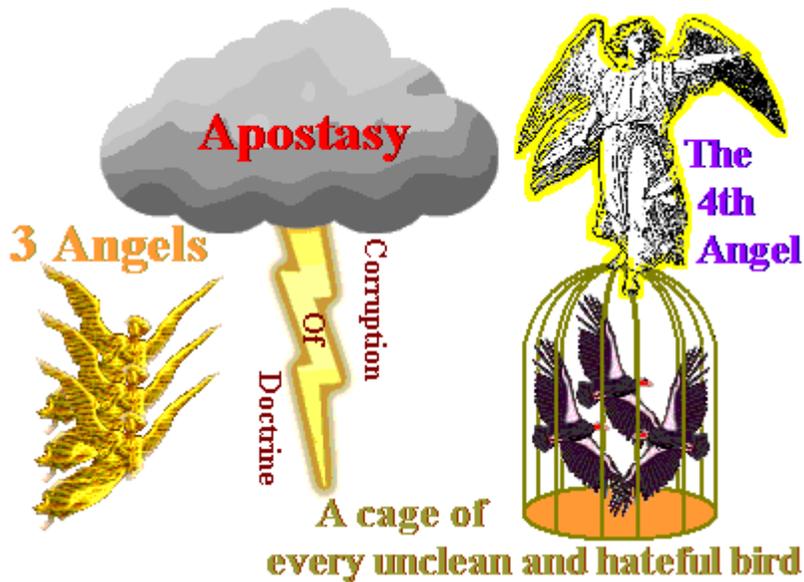


Figure 4.3 – The Angels and The Apostasy

Section 2.3.3 already contains the relevant details of the CSDA Church’s inclusion of the General Conference organization among the fallen churches being described in Revelation 18, but it bears repeating and specification that there is no arbitrary judgment being made about any groups. We see from Biblical precedent the way in which Yahweh has conducted His Church, and the precise moment at which a calling-out is required. Further, we have warnings from the members of the pioneer Adventist Church itself, stating not only the possibility of, but a stern warning against, becoming the system described in this passage.

We read, “We are in danger of becoming a sister to fallen Babylon, of allowing our churches to become corrupted, and filled with every foul spirit, *a cage for every unclean and hateful bird*; and will we be clear unless we make decided movements to cure the existing evil?” [Ellen G. White, *Testimonies on Sexual Behavior, Adultery, and Divorce*, page 188, paragraph 3, emphasis added] The bearers of the Three Angels’ Message, if they did not perform decided actions, were in danger of becoming a hold of corrupted messengers.

It is interesting to note that the Woman of Revelation 18 is also accused of being a *Widow*, as implied by her denial of the designation in Revelation 18:7. This applies to her the fourth of four types of women that the High Priest is explicitly forbidden to marry (see the preceding section), identifying the mainstream Adventist Church as an entirely unsuitable bride for the returning Messiah if the antitype matches the pattern set forth in the Law and the prophets to any least degree.

We see the very terms – the precise language – used in the Scriptures to describe *Babylon fallen* applied to the potential state of mainstream Adventism by one accepted within Adventism itself as a prophetess. Some

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may object to this characterization based upon the use of the term “*sister* to fallen Babylon;” but the Scripture states that not only will sisters receive the same judgment for the same actions, but the younger sister, who should have learned from the example of her elder, will receive a greater penalty for her apostasy. (Ezek 23:1-35) Note in particular verses 31 and 32, “Thou hast walked in the way of thy sister; therefore will I give her cup into thine hand. Thus saith Adonai Yahweh, ‘Thou shalt drink of thy sister’s cup deep and large; thou shalt be laughed to scorn and had in derision; it containeth much.’” Reading about the “cup of judgment” that the Mother of Harlots drinks in Revelation 16:19, the connection cannot possibly be missed.

With this in mind, a quick review of the history of the Adventist movement, particularly following the death of Ellen White, will reveal beyond the possibility of controversy that the actions, which would have prevented such a transformation, were not accomplished! If, therefore, the voice speaking to us from early Adventism can be trusted at all, and the testimony borne by Ellen White was indeed accurate, then there can be no other conclusion reached than this: because the conditions placed upon the continued purity of the Adventist Church were not met, there arose the need for this final reform, the Fourth Angel’s Message.

This is the final summoning of the saints to make a stand for truth and Christian principle, a stand against the errors once rebuked by the Three Angels of Revelation 14 and the eternal character of the Creator.

4.10 – The Ten Virgins

The parable of the Ten Virgins, which in CSDA teaching is tied directly to the Fourth Angel’s message discussed above, is found in Matthew 51: “Then shall the Kingdom of Heaven be likened unto ten virgins, which took their lamps, and went forth to meet the bridegroom. And five of them were wise, and five were foolish. They that were foolish took their lamps, and took no oil with them; but the wise took oil in their vessels with their lamps.

“While the bridegroom tarried, they all slumbered and slept. And at midnight there was a cry made, ‘Behold, the bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet him.’ Then all those virgins arose, and trimmed their lamps.

And the foolish said unto the wise, ‘Give us of your oil; for our lamps are gone out.’ But the wise answered, saying, ‘Not so, lest there be not enough for us and you; but go ye rather to them that sell, and buy for yourselves.’

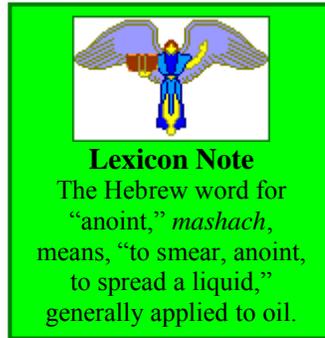
“And while they went to buy the bridegroom came; and they that were ready went in with him to the marriage, and the door was shut. Afterward came also the other virgins, saying, ‘Lord, Lord, open to us.’ But he answered and said, ‘Verily I say unto you, I know you not.’” Watch therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of man cometh.” (Mat 25:1-13)

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The meaning of the parable is plain: be watchful for the return of the Messiah. The Bible, by means of other authors, tells us the same. (1Th 5:6, 1Pet 4:7) But what of the means by which the wise virgins stay watchful or, for lack of it, the foolish are excluded from the marriage? These symbols, the lamps and the oil, are defined in the symbolic prophecies of earlier books.

We read, “Thy Word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path.” (Psa 119:105) “For the commandment is a lamp; and the law is light; and reproofs of instruction are the way of life:” (Pro 6:23) Thus, the Word of Yahweh, and the instructions contained therein, are seen as the “lamp” held by the virgins. This corresponds with the description of the last generation of saints, who are recorded as having “the commandments of God” as one of their defining characteristics. (Rev 14:12)

Of the oil we read, “Then Samuel took the horn of oil, and anointed him in the midst of his brethren; and the Spirit of Yahweh came upon David from that day forward. So Samuel rose up, and went to Ramah.” (1Sam 16:13) Again, “The Spirit of Adonai Yahweh is upon me, because Yahweh hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek.” (Isa 61:1a)



Not only, then, is the oil a source of the lamp’s light, or that which provides the Word with its usefulness, but the Scriptures directly link it to the reception of the Holy Spirit, going so far as to say that the figure in Isaiah 61, (referring to the messenger himself, but later applied also to Christ in Luke 4:18) has the Spirit *because* he has been “anointed.”

The CSDA understanding of this parable involves the Third and Fourth Angels’ messages, those final warnings that are given to the earth just before the Bridegroom arrives. It is the Third Angel that speaks of avoiding the Mark of the Beast, and it is the Fourth that gives power to the message, pronouncing the fall of the Babylonian system that engendered the mark, and enlightening the entire earth with the glory of the truth. (Rev 18:1) It should be noted that all the virgins, both the foolish and wise, begin with lamps and oil. The “foolish virgins,” therefore, cannot in any sense be Sunday-keeping Christians since, in Adventist theology, these groups do not have *any* oil in their lamps to know and obey the longest and most identifying commandment of Yahweh, which names Him as the Creator.

When the foolish virgins run out of oil, (although all are guilty of a time of having “slumbered”) they ask for more fuel for their lamps. Understanding the oil as the Holy Spirit it becomes plain that the wise virgins do not reply as they do (‘Not so, lest there be not enough for us and you’) for lack of charity, but because the Holy Spirit can only be received through union with Christ, not transferred from one dependent human to another. Certainly the

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wise virgins, like the Husband whom they emulate, would save any who ask to the uttermost; but, just as the Messiah Himself will not force anyone into Heaven, so the wise virgins realize that if a human were to enter Heaven without first developing the blameless character of Yahshua, it would be for them an eternity of guilt and sorrow in the presence of happy and holy beings. Yahweh is merciful; even His method of dealing with the lost is an act of the most perfect mercy.

The foolish virgins hear the advice, “But go ye rather to them that sell, and buy [oil] for yourselves.” But to whom can they go? They have not heard the Messiah in the acceptable time, in the Day of Salvation. (Isa 49:8) Yahshua had called to them, “Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy, and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price. I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear; and anoint thine eyes with eye salve, that thou mayest see.” (Isa 55:1, Rev 3:18) But now, while the Bridegroom is silent in His apparent delay, the decree has gone forth, and cannot be reversed, “He that is unjust, let him be unjust still, and he which is filthy, let him be filthy still, and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still, and he that is holy, let him be holy still. And, behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be.” (Rev 22:11, 12)

The judgment has been set; the reward is already appointed to every man, and it waits only to see the Son of Man returning to appoint each member of humanity his or her eternal reward. Will the foolish virgins go to the fallen worldly systems? It will be said of those systems in that day, “no man buyeth their merchandise any more: The merchandise of gold, and silver, and precious stones, and of pearls, and fine linen, and purple, and silk, and scarlet [...] and souls of men.” (Rev 18:11-13) All who have made the world their confidence will find, as the Scripture states, that they have no source for their oil in the dark of night that falls before the eternal day... and for Creation Seventh Day Adventists, this group includes the irreligious, the apostate... and all religious groups who have gone to human power in the supposed defense of a spiritual kingdom that needs no human defense.

4.11 – Summary

- 1) The concept of *Victory Over Sin* is a result of true knowledge of the Father and Son, and is the key to eternal life, since “The wages of sin is death.” (Rom 6:23)
- 2) The Biblical description of the Godhead includes no mention of “God the Holy Spirit.” No worship or prayer is ever directed toward the Spirit, It is a Presence sent from the Father and Son to the people of Yahweh, and all who are redeemed share in that Spirit. The

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Trinity doctrine, which holds the Holy Spirit to be a third, independent, all-powerful deity (or manifestation of a deity) has no basis in the Word of God.

- 3) The Biblical Feasts and New Moon days continued to be kept by Christians after the crucifixion, and are relevant to the religious life of believers to this day.
- 4) Distinctive acts of worship separate true Christians from the world and worldly forms of religion, including such practices as foot washing and the holy kiss.
- 5) Names are important, particularly when provided by a divine source. This includes the names of the Father and Son, as well as the name that They have given to their Bride, the Church.
- 6) A right understanding of prophecy is the key to understanding the predictions of the Bible; conditional prophecy is a principle that has not always been properly understood by Christ's people.
- 7) The Creation Seventh Day Adventist Church considers itself to be composed of individuals who have come in the spirit and power of the prophet Elijah, giving the Fourth Angel's message of Revelation 18, and standing against the Image of The Beast, which in this age has been formed by a union of the apostate General Conference of Seventh Day Adventists with the United States civil government. This has led to a distinct, but Biblically sound, understanding of the parable of the Ten Virgins presented in the Gospel.