North Carolina pastor studies his way out of Adventism

Greg Taylor

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

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

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

Closest church to truth

When these pastor friends left Adventism and later the Sabbath, I went through a time of study. My primary reason for being an Adventist was the Sabbath. I had believed up to that point that Adventism was the closest church I had ever encountered to teaching Bible truth. For this reason I was solidly an Adventist by conviction, in spite of my concerns regarding Ellen White, the Investigative Judgement and the remnant church teachings. I was convinced that Sabbath was God’s special day. My sermons during this time were clearly direct on this issue.

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

Visited many churches

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

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

New Testament Sabbath

I was amazed to discover that the New Testament does not teach Sabbath the way I thought it did! I learned from Colossians 2:16-17, Galatians 4:10, Romans 14:5-6, and Hebrews 3:4, etc., that Sabbath was an institution that pointed forward to Jesus and therefore was no longer binding on Christians. The New Testament second is the view many former SDA pastors have adopted which we believe to be the New Testament view.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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The Covenants: why print both sides? For former Adventists • Inquiring Adventists • Sabbatarians • Concerned Evangelicals
Covenants: why print both sides?

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

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

If we are looking for some “North Star” to guide our study, it should be the gospel of Christ, not church order. The Bible, especially the epistles, to be our chief inspiration, not speculation, for our conclusions.

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

I have extended my article longer than usual to prevent misunderstanding. I have used the Bible, much to Mom’s horror, why would Jesus be starting in Glendale, Arizona (Northwest Phoenix). Please contact Dale and Carolyn Ratzlaff at 623-572-9549 for information. If you’re into any “Formers” in this area, please let us know. Dale is currently writing a curriculum to be used by Evangelical Pastors to help them better minister to “Formers.” We will be using this in our FAF.

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

— Dale Ratzlaff

The Christian and the Mosaic Law by Clinton Chisholm

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

Pastor studies his way out

As I write this, I do not know what the future will hold. I do not know what will happen to us finanicially. I must say that there was a real sense in which I had to face a dark part of my own personality in this struggle. I valued being a respected SDA pastor and having people think well of me. To think that others whom I had known and served in Adventism might lose respect for me was incredibly difficult for me to accept. I had to, in a very real sense, repent for having loved the praise of men more than the praise of God. Now I am resolved that “as far as my house, we will serve the Lord.” We will find our rest and security in Him. And we will look forward to the day when seeing how God leads us and how he leads all of us in the months and years that follow. Our prayers are with you and we solicit your prayers for us.
Clarity of message
I read Proclamation Vol. 2, Issue 2 with much interest. I am impressed with the clarity of the message. God bless you as you continue the good work. It’s fascinating how some SDA’s either really approve and see light in you or say do you think the work of the devil? Brainwashing does wonders doesn’t it? Yet, remember when I was a believer I often wondered how many more blind spots I may still have and not know it. Let’s pray for one another.

Found God’s grace and rest
From what I’ve read on your site, and others, I believe this is a moment in history we have long been needed. I was part of a group of 30 people that two years ago started a Grace oriented SDA church. But the more we studied the more we realized it could only be done under the SDA umbrella. Now we are a group of 10… that has truly found God’s grace and rest.

Pity for you
Dear Dale, It is becoming fashionable to question whether to stay or leave. Unbelief is the natural outgrowth of the unrenewed and is strengthened as it is encouraged. Many SDA Christians have truly found God’s grace and rest. I was part of a group of 30 people that two years ago started a Grace oriented SDA church. But the more we studied the more we realized it could only be done under the SDA umbrella. Now we are a group of 10… that has truly found God’s grace and rest.

Satan is tricking you
I will pray for you. I think it seems to me that Satan is tricking you in your Bible interpretation. Anyone who claims to question the validity of one’s own work is not a genuine Adventist. Adventists believe the Bible. They are not trying to reach and minister to ex-Adventists who are hurting and “floating” as my wife once did. From your experience, what is the most effective way to reach these people? May the Lord continue to bless your ministry.

No turning back
Thank you for continuing to send me your great little magazine, Proclamation. I am under no illusion that this is a part of Adventism as we know it today. It’s a lonely journey, but there is no turning back. I have just finished reading a marvelous book that I recommend to you and your readers. It is not as it was first published in 1922. The title is Grace—An Exposition of God’s Marvelous Gift.

Recovering from brain washing
Find enclosed my gift of ___ . It is the best I can do to keep you rescuing believers out of the bondage found in SDAism. I have been out of the church for many years. I am 18. My wife and I are recovering from the brain washing that God bless your ministry.

Edwin W. Reiner
I am indebted to brother Ratzlaff for the opportunity to discuss the covenants in a friendly atmosphere to help us all to arrive at the truth that was given through the covenants when all was lost in Adam. Earth, cursed, was the result of man’s sin. God’s mediator was a mediator and the covenants are those which are the basis of the atonement. No other subject is more important in the Bible than the covenants. As we go into the covenants and their interpretation we see that there are basic differences in the understanding of the covenants and that of brother Ratzlaff. Let us look at the presentations in a prayerful and fair attitude with no preconceived ideas that we may arrive at the truth.

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

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

It is important then to determine what kind of a covenant is being dealt with for systematic Bible study. This is important because of the different rights and obligations each covenant has, especially the law as the laws of the land, a promise, where one side promises while the other side has the privilege to accept or reject, or an agreement with both sides agreeing to entities they are respectively to perform. All Bible covenants can be classified under this definition of contracts. This study will concern itself with the primary covenants of the Bible, namely (a) the Commanded Covenant, (b) the Promised Covenant, and (c) the “old” and the “New” covenants.

The Commanded Covenant
The Commanded Covenant or, contract are legal terms that are classified in jurisprudence as to being either commanded, promised or agreement. In the Bible or any other relevant instance that are classified in jurisprudence as to being either commanded, promised or agreement. In the Bible or any other relevant instance that are classified in jurisprudence as to being either commanded, promised or agreement. In the Bible or any other relevant instance that are classified in jurisprudence as to being either commanded, promised or agreement. In the Bible or any other relevant instance. The Commanded Covenant is not only desirable, it is imperative. According to Black’s Legal Dictionary a covenant under consideration must be classified to determine whether it is a command or a promise. A command is a promise that is irrevocable, an agreement is an offer to make an offer, and an agreement between two parties. The covenant under discussion is the Commanded Covenant, given at Sinai, and was nailed to the cross. The promised covenant, given in the New Testament, is that same covenant that was given in the Old Testament.

Edwin W. Reiner
The Ten Commandments were written in stone by the finger of God to indicate their immutability. This contract, a commanded covenant, were orders to observe perfect righteousness in every thought and deed. foothold in our lives. It is a contract that describes the essential incomparable terms how the Commanded Covenant drives the repentant sinner to the atonement as demonstrated in the sanctuary service where Christ is depicted in types and figures as the Surety of mankind.

The commanded covenant, God’s law, is as holy as God is and forever. The Ten Commandments are a revelation of the character of God. Jesus is truly the Ten Commandments in actuality. Romans 10:4. He lived the Ten Commandments. ‘In Jesus’, the person of Jesus, we are saved, Romans 10:9, John 14:6. The Ten Commandments are the basis of the major covenant the Lord of Hosts. “Wherefore the covenant God pledged to take into the promised land and to be their King no one was saved under the old covenant. They were saved just as we are today, under the terms of the everlasting covenant. Adam and Eve were told, Genesis 2:17, that they would surely die if they transgressed God’s command. The result is painfully clear today. Transgression of God’s law is punishable by death. The Law is so unappealing and repulsive (God) as our substitute for sin, became sin, and was punished as a sinner by a horrible death. The ceremonial law on the other hand was part of the SDA church, the regulations. The laws of the land when the curse was placed in the tabernacle at Christ’s death, Israel as a nation and theocracy was finished along with it the ceremonial law.

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

God’s law is eternal, a separate covenant as noted over 100 times in the Scriptures, is in truth Jesus, and of course was not at the cross. The seventh-day Sabbath being at the center of the Decalogue continues and points to the rest, in Christ, in which the believer ceases having a heaven-taken sin. When we come to Christ we believe, like Abraham, whose faith was accounted for righteousness. Christ has kept the law perfectly for me.

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

The Everlastung Covenant
Now we come to the idea of the covenant, or contract are legal terms that are classified in jurisprudence as being either commanded, promised or agreement. In the Bible or any other relevant instance that are classified in jurisprudence as being either commanded, promised or agreement. In the Bible or any other relevant instance that are classified in jurisprudence as being either commanded, promised or agreement. In the Bible or any other relevant instance. The Everlastung Covenant is such a provision, for it gave Adam and his posterity a second chance, a second probation to vindicate God’s gift to man.

The Everlastung Covenant is of the promised type, between members of the covenant and was nailed to the cross in the person of Jesus. Before creation God the Father pledged to accept the atoning work of man in Christ’s behalf. Christ would make an atonement. He would come in the likeness of man, to live a perfect human life and die for the sins of Adam and his posterity. The Holy Spirit will help the human mind to comprehend this atone-
And more fundamentally, His law must be vindicated. It must be demonstrated that man, as God created Him, in union with God, could perfectly keep God’s law.

In inspiration has recorded the promise of God made before creation to take our sins and to save us. This is the Everlasting Covenant. “In hope of eternal life, which God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began,” Titus 1:2. “This is my covenant unto them, when I will take away their sins,” Ezek. 20:28.

Rom 8:28. And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.

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

NEW COVENANT

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

references
39 2 Cor. 3:7,8
40 Rom. 3:21
41 Rom. 4:12
42 Eph. 3:20,21
43 Rom. 6:6,7,8,9
44 Rom. 7:6,7,10,11
45 Gal. 3:16,17,18,19
46 Exod. 24:7
47 Num. 28:16
48 Gen. 15:13
49 Gen. 17:1
50 Gen. 49:1
51 Gal. 3:16
52 1 Pet. 3:22
53 2 Tim. 1:9
54 Gal. 2:21
55 Rom. 3:21
56 Rom. 5:10
57 Rom. 6:6,23
58 Gal. 3:11
59 Rom. 6:18,19,22, 1 John 3:8,9
60 Rom. 7:4,6
61 Rom. 7:6
62 Rom. 8:1,5
63 Rom. 8:37
64 Eph. 2:8,9,10
65 Rom. 10:14
66 Rom. 10:16
67 Rom. 11:1
68 Gal. 5:2
69 Eph. 4:28
70 Gal. 5:7
71 Eph. 5:16
72 Eph. 6:4
73 Heb. 12:7
74 Gal. 6:7
75 Gen. 17:1
76 Gen. 17:2
77 Gen. 12:1
78 Gen. 11:1
79 Gen. 14:15
80 Gen. 50:19
81 Gen. 21:1
82 Gen. 23:4
83 Gen. 26:5
84 Gen. 15:5
85 Gen. 17:1
86 Gen. 18:17
87 Gen. 21:33
88 Gen. 22:17
89 Gen. 23:4
90 Gen. 15:5
91 Gen. 17:1
92 Gen. 18:17
93 Gen. 21:33
94 Gen. 22:17
95 Gen. 23:4
96 Gen. 15:5
97 Gen. 17:1
98 Gen. 18:17.
The Sabbath and the Lord’s Day stand the test of investigation! This does not mean that the Christian will steal, kill, lie, or commit adultery. Ex. 31:13–18. See also Meredith G. Kline, Mosaic (1978), pp. 59,60 for more biblical support.

16 The old covenant was provisional and existed for 1500 years until the new covenant was ratified by the blood of Christ as the Surety, through the Mediator who kept the law perfectly for me! The Lord Jesus Christ has set me free. He has delivered unto His people with immortality. Even then grace will not do away with God’s law and Sabbath keeping, etc. This law is the law of the universe and is eternal. We have now righteousness by faith. Our faith is in our divine substitute, our Mediator, Jesus, who has the law written in His heart for us. His lawkeeping is our lawkeeping. His life is our life.

When He was born, when He died, and we were crucified forever when He arose triumphant from the grave... all by faith in our Mediator who kept the law perfectly for me! The glory of the gospel of grace through the imputed righteousness of Christ, provides no other way of salvation than through obedience to the law of God in the person of Jesus Christ, the divine substitute. Under the new covenant God requires no other! He required in Eden, perfect obedience. The believing sinner, through his divine Substitute and Surety, renders by faith obedience to the law of God.

The new covenant Law of Christ is much better than the old covenant law of commandments.

16 Many of the principles of the new covenant are now operating in the life of the Christian. The Ten Commandments are not now God’s tools to promote righteousness—there is a better way! The new covenant is about relationship with Christ.

16 We must not care to read into Scripture the unbiblical concepts of Ellen White. We have no evidence that the twenty-sixth article of the Tenth Commandments says there is a Sabbath in the New Testament.

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

1. The Ten Commandments are the very words of the old covenant.

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

3. The New Testament defines the “old” or “first” covenant as the Sinaitic Covenant and unmistakably includes both the Ten Commandments and the “other laws” in this covenant.

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

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

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

7. The new covenant Law of Christ is much better than the old covenant law of commandments.

8. Many of the principles of the new covenant are now operating in the life of the Christian. The Ten Commandments are not now God’s tools to promote righteousness—there is a better way! The new covenant is about relationship with Christ.

9. We must not care to read into Scripture the unbiblical concepts of Ellen White. In this hike we have not explored many of the side trails that gave needed perspective to this subject. However, I believe we have given our readers enough study for the next two months! Re-read these two articles on the covenants, including all the footnotes. Get Dr. Reiner’s book, The Covenants. Get Sabbath in Crisis and The Sabbath and the Lord’s Day. Then study these books. Compare them to Scripture. It is my prayer that every reader will prayerfully study God’s Word on this important subject. Yes, truth can stand the test of investigation! Yes, the truth will set you free!
The Covenants: The Continental Divide of Biblical Interpretation

DALE RATZAFF

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

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

things had already been accomplished...101 Then with keen, Holy-Spirit insight the Gospel writer records, ‘And Jesus uttered a loud cry, and breathed His last. And the veil of the temple was torn in two from the top to the bottom.’102 This divine intervention was to show that the old covenant had come to its end.

What is our work? Jesus answered and said to them, ‘This is the work of God, that you believe in Him whom He has sent.’103 ‘Come unto Me, all who are weary and heavy-laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For My yoke is easy and My burden is light.’104 We have this promise. Truly, truly, I say to you, he who hears My word, and believes Him who sent Me, has eternal life, and does not come into judgment, but has passed out of death into life.105

We must be careful not to read into the Ten Commandments the ‘fulfilled’ meaning. The New Testament is not used in this way. Rather, it is used in the ‘commanded’ covenant. It is true that a better, and more biblical, way of expressing the plan of salvation would be the new covenant in promise—before the cross, and the new covenant in reality—after the cross.106 The term, ‘everlasting covenant’ is used in Scripture in various ways. It is used for the covenant of circumcision107 which the New Testament clearly says is abolished.108 The term ‘everlasting covenant’ is used with meat offerings the Israelites offered to the Lord109 in connection with the Sinaitic Covenant which is abolished. It is used for the Deuteronomic covenant.110 It is used in future, Israel-centered prophecies.111 Jeremiah uses this term in a similar context to the way he uses ‘new covenant.’112 The term ‘eternal’ (or everlasting) covenant as used in Hebrews 13:20 seems to be identical, or at least similar, to its usage in 12:24 when referring to the new covenant. The writer of Hebrews is reinforcing what has been taught throughout the book by showing the ‘blessedness’ of the new covenant over the old by stressing its eternal nature.113 Could it be that Dr. Reiner’s distinction is simply a reflection of Ellen White and her extra-biblical theology? I also do not see any scriptural evidence for the Ten Commandments in the time of Adam, Noah, Abraham, Isaac, or Jacob, to say nothing of the institution of a covenant based upon the Ten Commandments before Sinai. The Bible references listed do not mention the Ten Commandments. Let’s look at them. Unless the cited reference supports the stated conclusion it is nothing but a ploy that may result in deception. Gen. 3:15 is a shadowy promise of a coming Savior at best. Nothing is mentioned about law. Gen. 9:9–17 Speaks about God’s covenant with Noah in promising not to send another flood. I see nothing here that could be construed to be the Ten Commandments. Gen. 12:2,3 speaks about God making a covenant with Abraham regarding the land of Canaan and his future posterity. Again, there is nothing about law here. It is true that God said that “Abraham obeyed Me and kept My charge, My commandments, My statutes and My laws”114 Yet he lied115 and committed adultery.116 Therefore we must, it seems to me, interpret these commandments and laws that Abraham “kept” to be the specific instruction God gave to Abraham which he did keep.117 If we read into Scripture that these laws are the Ten Commandments, then we make Scripture untrue. Abraham did not keep the Ten Commandments. To break one is to break them all.118 Could it be that Dr. Reiner is reading the teachings of Ellen White into Scripture? She supports all these unbiblical concepts.

Dr. Reiner places much emphasis on whether the covenant is ‘commanded’ or ‘agreement’ in type. He states that the Ten Commandments are a ‘Commanded Covenant’ and the old covenant is an ‘agreement covenant.’ However, we have shown conclusively that the Ten Commandments are part and parcel of the old covenant. Therefore, his distinction seems to be of no value here. There are also a number of references that disprove his assertion.

In Ex. 35:1, Moses says, “These are things that the Lord commanded you to do.” then follows instruction regarding the Sabbath, offerings, tabernacle workmen, instructions on building the sanctuary, etc., with no clear distinction between the Ten Commandments and the ‘other laws.’ Note also that in Deut. 29:1, Moses says, “These are the words of the covenant which the Lord commanded Moses to make with the sons of Israel in the land of Moab beside the covenant which he had made with them at Horeb.” Here Moses says, “These are the words which the Lord commanded.” “To what words is he referring?” The careful reader will note that “these words” refers to everything between Deut. 5:1–28:68—nearly the whole book of Deuteronomy! This section contains the Ten Commandments (6:11–21) and the laws relating to the following topics: sanctuary, clean and unclean, sabbatical years, feasts, administration of justice, Levites, spiritualism, cities of refuge, warfare, crime, domestic relations, marriage, family, the assembly, divorce, first fruits, blessings and cursings, and many, many others. Therefore, all these law topics are included in the “commanded covenant.” When the Israelites agreed to keep the covenant, they were agreeing to keep the commanded covenant. In 2 Kings 21:8 we read, “I will not again make the feet of the Israelites wander about the land which I gave their forefathers, if only they will be careful to do everything I commanded them and will keep the whole Law that my servant Moses gave them.” Notice here the whole law is what God commanded, not just the Ten Commandments. Therefore, I see no valid application of Dr. Reiner’s distinction. Rather, these Scriptures reinforce our conclusion that the old covenant is the whole law of Moses.
The Sabbath and the Covenants (Ex. 20:1-17). The new covenant picture of God is when Satan becomes the “veil” of the old covenant is taken away, and we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as from the Lord, the Spirit (2 Cor. 3:14-18).

The new covenant is about relationship with Christ. Jesus is the new covenant center. The new covenant partners are God, the Father, and Jesus, His Son. I will appoint you (the Messiah) as a covenant to the people, as a light to the nations. “I will keep you and give you for a covenant of the people.” For Him (Jesus) the Father and the Son, Christ, is the one who rendered perfect obedience to His Father. We enter into the blessings of that covenant when we place our faith in Jesus Christ. Over and over again we hear Jesus saying, “My food is to do the will of him who sent me. I have come to do the will of Him who sent me.” I quote from Riggle, “The Sabbath and the Lord’s Day.”

Again, sacrifices, offerings, sabbaths, new moons, and feasts are all required “in the old covenant” (Heb. 10:1). Scores of texts like this could be cited, where “the law of the Lord” includes sacrifices, circumcision, feast-days, and all the Jewish law. So the law of God is not simply the Decalogue, but the whole law in Moses. (cf. Rom. 7:1-8, 11-14). They read “in the book of the law of Moses,” the “law” “the book of the law” “the book of the law of God,” “the law which the Lord commanded by Moses,” “the law commanded by Moses,” and even “the law which the Lord gave Moses.”

One could break the Sinaitic (old) Covenant by a violation of any of the Ten Commandments and many of its “ceremonial-type” laws. We have now shown that the words of the covenant God made with Israel were the Ten Commandments and this covenant was expanded to include all the laws given by God to Moses was collectively called the law, the law of the Lord, the law of God, the covenant, etc.

The New Testament defines the “old” or “first covenant” as the Sinaitic Covenant and unanimously calls God’s law of the Ten Commandments and “other laws” in this covenant the “old covenant” or “ceremonial” or “ceremonial law” and the “law of Moses.”

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

Now even the first covenant had regulations regarding “the holy mountain” and “the Ark of the Covenant.” The Ark was one of these regulations and the earthly sanctuary. For there was a taber- nacle prepared, the outer one, in which were the lampstand and the table and the golden vessels, this was the Ark’s place. Behind the second veil there was a tabernacle which is called the Holy of Holies, having a golden altar of incense and the ark of the covenant covered on all sides with gold, in which was a gold- en jar holding the manna, and Aaron’s rod which budded, and the tables of the covenant. Hebrews 9:1-4.
This is unmistakable evidence that the Ten Commandments were included in the old, or first, covenant. Notice also, that both the Ten Commandments and the other laws are included in this one covenant. There is no separation between “moral” and “ceremonial.” This same truth is clear in Paul’s descriptions of the covenants.

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

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

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

We see, then, that the New Testament defines the “old or first” covenant as the Sinaitic Covenant which included all the laws given to the children of Israel, including the Ten Commandments—the very “words of the covenant.” 13 This agrees perfectly with our findings in the Old Testament.

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

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

The very wording of the law proves that it was designed only for them. The Decalogue is introduced thus: “I am the Lord thy God, which brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage” (Exod. 20). To whom is that applicable? Only to the Israelite nation. Neither angels, Adam, nor Gentile Christians were ever in Egyptian bondage. Then, the law was not addressed to them. Paul plainly states to whom the law was given. “Who are Israelites; to whom pertaineth the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law” (Rom. 9:4). It was given to Israel. In Mal. 4:4 it is clearly stated that the law given in Horeb was “for all Israel.”

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

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

Many people have shown that most, if not all, the moral principles upon which the Ten Commandments were founded were in operation before the time of Moses. The one exception, however, is the Sabbath, which is first mentioned in the time of Moses. For good reasons, we do not believe the Sabbath to be a moral law. 14

Take another drink and a five-minute break to catch your breath in this high altitude, then let’s continue our hike on this trail of Scripture. I quote from Riggles.

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

I believe the Spirit-led Christian does have the law of Christ— the law of love—perfectly written in his spirit (table of his heart). In his spirit the Christian is a new creation. This all happens the moment we are saved—yes, the Bible teaches we can be saved and know it now! However, our soul (psyche) is being saved by a law. 15 We have now been released from the law! We now serve in the newness of the Spirit and not in the oldness of the letter! There is now no condemnation (N O E) to those who are in Christ. 16 We have now received the spirit of adoption! We now overwhelmingly conquer though Him who loved us! 17 We are now sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise. We are now saved through faith! 18 We are now the dwelling of the Holy Spirit! We are now chosen in Christ. 19 We have redemption through His blood. 20 God is now at work in us to will and to do His good pleasure. 21 We are now qualified to share in the inheritance of the saints in Light. 22 We have now been transferred to the kingdom of His beloved Son. 23 We have now entered His rest. 24 We now have each received a spiritual gift. 25 The Spirit now helps our weakness. 26 We have now been predestined to be like Christ. 27 And this is just the beginning! Do you see why the gospel is “good news”? One cannot work righteousness from the outside in—that was the old covenant way. Rather, it never worked. Rather, in the new covenant God creates or regenerates our spirits. We are born of God. 28 We have the divine DNA, God’s life living in us and that life is perfect. 29 Some will answer, “I don’t believe all these things are true in my experience.” This is because our mind, emotions and will have been programmed to sin and we are accustomed to accepting the lies that the devil has been feeding us. Now that we are “in Christ,” we are to go to the word of God for truth. The path of transformation is not trying to become what we are not—as in the old covenant. Now transformation is becoming who we now are—a new creature in Christ Jesus. We are not to
Proclamation!

The Scripture, said, “I am thirsty.” What genuine Christian with righteousness came “apart from the law.” The new covenant promise made to Abraham, and Abraham’s righteousness did not come by law. The moral law of the Ten Commandments is fulfilled in those who walk in the Spirit. The Holy Spirit does not come through the works of the law. The person who seeks righteousness by observing the law will be held accountable for all the requirements of the law. Christ is the end of the law for righteousness. If righteousness came through the law, Christ died needlessly. Paul kept the law “blamelessly” yet, he compared this righteousness to rubbish (dung, KJV). The law is not intended for righteous person, but for those who are lawless and rebellious, for the ungodly and sinners, for the unholy and profane…

Many of the principles of the new covenant are now operating in the life of the church.

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

What happens to the Christian who is wedded to Christ and the law? If one is transformational transformation of self and is enmaried by the Ten Commandments and focuses his attention on this law and the scenes of judgment, as Ellen White records, “in this state he never knows what he is doing.” Scripture is clear…for these are the two covenants; the one from the mount Sinai, which gendereth to bondage (KJV) or who shall no longer be slave to bondage. The Ten Commandments are described variously as a “ministry of death” and “a ministry of condemnation?” If one focuses on them it will not result in righteous living. It did not for the Jews and it will not for the Christian. Rather, focusing on the old covenant is going back under the veil.

New covenant righteousness comes “apart from the law.” The new covenant promise made to Abraham, and Abraham’s righteousness did not come by law. The moral law of the Ten Commandments is fulfilled in those who walk in the Spirit. The Holy Spirit does not come through the works of the law. The person who seeks righteousness by observing the law will be held accountable for all the requirements of the law. Christ is the end of the law for righteousness. If righteousness came through the law, Christ died needlessly. Paul kept the law “blamelessly” yet, he compared this righteousness to rubbish (dung, KJV). The law is not intended for righteous person, but for those who are lawless and rebellious, for the ungodly and sinners, for the unholy and profane…

Having been a fourth generation conservative Adventist, and having served as a pastor and/or Bible teacher for some 13 years in that denomination, it has been my experience and it has been confirmed in conversations with dozens of others, that the concept of the new covenant is critical.

First, there are those who looking at the multitude of the requirements of the law and Ellen White, they conclude, “The Law is not the Messiah” (Ellen White’s view of the New Testament). Often they are afraid to attend a Sunday church for fear of receiving the mark of the beast. Their spiritual life with others and as they neglect Christian fellowship. Many of these “Formers” become agnostic, even cynical of all religion. I have talked with many of these people. Second, there are those who see the numerous laws and standards set out to keep them all and fine themselves continually failing to meet the demands. When they confess their sin, determine never to fall short again, but it is not long until they do. These folks, in time, become discouraged with their way of life and their own sanctification. Their life is often filled with guilt for not achieving what they set out to achieve. These are the people who reject Paul in message of righteousness by faith. Yet, Adventist theology often muddles the waters if one tries to harmonize Paul and Ellen White. Some have com-

The old or first covenant which included the Ten Commandments came into force only until the death of Christ.

After reading the above statement you will want to sit down by the trail and look at the scene before you. Can you see the beautiful Rocky Mountains. We have now come to a major theological watershed. You must decide which way you will go. Are you going to continue to follow the trail marked “Scripture?” Or are you going to opt for the trail marked, “Ellen White?” You cannot go both ways. Take your time here in prayer and contemplation because the outcome of this decision will have major consequences to your future life no matter which way you go. Why not get out the maps—all three of them—and let’s do some carefully study? Let’s determine now which is the right way!

The map of Scripture, says that “Scripture is the final authority and is powerful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.”

The map of Adventist doctrine before 1960 stated that the Scriptures were the “sufficient revelation of His will to men, and the only unerring rule of faith and practice.” Even after 1980 it still read, “The Holy Scriptures are the infallible revelation of His will. They are the standard of character, the test of experience, the authoritative revelation of doctrines, and the trustworthy record of God’s acts in history.”

The map of Ellen White states “God will have a people upon the earth who will maintain the Bible, and the Bible only, as the standard of all the doctrines and the basis of all reforms…. Before accepting any doctrine or precept, we should demand a plain and unmistakable Scripture warrant.” What do you say, let’s go down the trail marked “Scripture”? This will be rough and narrow at times. There will be large rocks to pay attention to. However, you can be assured that it is this trail that ends up at “the sea of glass.”

To accept the functional proposition that the Ten Commandments came to a functional end at the cross, completely shatters the whole paradigm of Adventist theology. I fought and fought against it. Then—I still remember the day—I decided there was plenty of Scriptural evidence to warrant accepting this proposition on a biblical paradigm. I wanted a perfectly sound and sure foundation. I had many questions that it raised and harmonize all the biblical statements that I thought contradicted it. Then it happened. It was the most sudden and overwhelming change. I had nothing before the cross. I had nothing after the cross. I had nothing, nothing, nothing. I quote again from Riggle, “We are no longer under a schoolmaster but under grace.”

Note how John records the end of Christ’s mortal ministry. After this, Jesus, knowing that his hour had come, and that he had laid down a life that he had received from the Father, said, “I am ready.” John 18:27

The epistles are in agreement here: When He said: “A new covenant.” He has made the first obstacle. But whatever is becoming obsolete and growing old is ready to disappear. Heb 8:13 Then He said: “This is the covenant that I will make with the House of Israel after those days, says the Lord: ‘I will put my laws into their mind, and I will write them on their hearts.’” (Jer 31:33-34).

For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be upon his shoulder, and his name will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. (Is 9:6). To use this expression in the Adventist church is to be synonymous with the death of Christ. After this Jesus, knowing that his hour had come, said, “I am ready.” John 18:27
will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all. Heb. 10:9-10

Remember that the writer lists “the tables of the covenant” in this same context (Heb. 9:4) as part of the “first covenant.” What I am saying is this: the Law, which came four hundred and thirty years later, does not invalidate a covenant previously ratified by God, so as to nullify the promise. For if the inheritance is based on law, it is no longer based on a promise: but God granted it to Abraham by means of a promise. …But the Scripture has shut up everyone under sin, so that the promise by faith in Jesus Christ might be given to those who believe. But before faith came, we were kept in custody under the law, being shut up to the faith which was later to be revealed. Therefore the Law has become our tutor [law = tutor] to lead us to Christ, so that we may be justified by faith. But now that faith has come, we are no longer under a tutor [the law]. For you are all sons of God (This includes the Gentiles, who did not have the law) through faith in Christ Jesus. For all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, (The Greeks were separated by the old covenant laws) nor slave or free (slaves or servants are mentioned in the Ten Commandments) nor free man, there is neither male nor female, for you are all in one Christ Jesus. And if you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham’s descendants, heirs according to promise (not according to the law). Gal. 3:27-29

We are accepted into the family of God, not on the basis of the law or the law keeping, but on the basis of the promise made to Abraham which was fulfilled in Christ. The Gentiles “who do not have the law” are included in this new covenant family based upon their faith in Christ. The Holy Spirit even writes the requirements (moral principles) of the law on their hearts. Gal. 3:24-25

We are in context teaching, Paul calls the Law our tutor, then says we are no longer a tutor under. In other words he is saying that the old covenant law no longer has authority over the life of a Christian. But can we be sure this is what Paul really means? Yes. Note carefully his powerful allegory.

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

The following chart will help us understand this passage:

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It is important to note that Paul is not speaking about the condemnation of the law, from which the Christian is also free, but rather he is speaking about Christian service. In other words Paul is telling the Christians in Rome that the law no longer serves as a guideline for Christian living.

Notice also how Christians serve in the newness of the Spirit, in contrast to the oldness of the letter, a clear reference to the Spiritual Covenant which resulted in bearing “fruits of the Spirit.” Those who want to be joined both to Christ and to the law are commits spiritual adultery. Notice also how Christians serve in the newness of the Spirit, in contrast to the oldness of the letter, a clear reference to the Spiritual Covenant which resulted in bearing “fruits of the Spirit.” Those who want to be joined both to Christ and to the law are commits spiritual adultery. Remember, I told you this was not an easy task! Nevertheless, it is well marked, see the sign “Scripture” is still there! In fact, it is a well-worn trail as millions of Christians have walked this way before!

The new covenant is much better than the old covenant law of commandments. As mentioned earlier, one of the first reactions by Adventists—and I used to do the same thing—was that the old covenant law, including the Ten Commandments, is no longer binding upon Christians. “Well, then, you must be saying it is alright to kill, steal, cheat and commit adultery!” Nothing could be further from the truth. I believe that the mystery taught in Christ is not that we sin and then we sin again on a much higher plain than that taught in the old. While there are good moral laws in the Ten Commandments and other places within the old covenant, the moral principles found in the new covenant are much better for a number of reasons. First, they are in general principles rather than specific laws. Principles can be applied in a Christ-centered way to a much broader set of circumstances, than the specific commandments we must meet to the specific situation. The new covenant is to go to all nations and is designed to penetrate all cultures without necessarily changing every cultural pattern. Second, and more importantly, within the new covenant, the Holy Spirit plays a role in the life of every Christian, in a way that it did not in the old. In the following reference, note how the Spirit in the new covenant replaces the function of the law in the old. Those who accept the old covenant as it reads, or read it through old covenant eyes, Paul is saying that you understand the old covenant correctly we must see it from the new covenant perspective. This is a very important principle of interpretation. The new covenant, which is a better and more nearly complete revelation of truth, must be allowed to interpret, modify or transform the old covenant state-ments in a Christ-centered way. Second, if we continue to read the old covenant from any other perspective it will be as though we are looking through a veil and we will be confused and could come to the wrong conclusions. This means that we should not accept any old covenant laws or practices on the basis of the old covenant statements themselves. Rather, we must examine every old covenant law or practice in light of its new covenant perspective: Jesus Christ.

I now quote again form Riggley,

“For the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ. (John 1:17) “Jesus the mediator of the new covenant” (Heb. 12:24). “Bear ye no other’s burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ” (Gal. 6:2). Here are contrasted the two systems. The first was “the law” given by Moses, its mediator; the second is grace and truth, the New Testament, which came by Christ, its mediator. The New Testament is “the law of Christ.” This is the law Christians are now under.

In 11:6-7 we have a clear prediction of the coming of Christ and his redemptive work. “And the isles shall wait for his law” means that the isles (governments) paid attention to God’s law. “He shall send the law of his gospel to all nations and among all these nations. God is at work in nations and cultures.”

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

What is Paul saying here? First, the people with the veil over their faces are those who accept the old covenant as it reads, or read it through old covenant eyes. Paul is saying that to understand the old covenant correctly we must see it from the new covenant perspective. This is a very important principle of interpretation. The new covenant, which is a better and more nearly complete revelation of truth, must be allowed to interpret, modify or transform the old covenant statements.”

(Quoted from: “Let The Proclamation” July 2001, pg 11)
will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all. Heb. 10:9-10

Remember that the writer lists “the tables of the covenant” in this same context (Heb. 9:4) as part of the “first covenant.” What I am saying is this: the Law, which came four hundred and thirty years later, does not invalidate a covenant previously ratified by God, so as to nullify the promise. For if the inheritance is based on law, it is no longer based on a promise: but God himself granted it to Abraham by means of a promise. …But the Scripture has shut up everyone under sin, so that the promise by faith in Jesus Christ might be given to those who believe. But before faith came, we were kept in custody under the law, being shut up to the faith which was later to be revealed. Therefore the Law has become our tutor (law = tutor) to lead us to Christ, so that we may be justified by faith. But now that faith has come, we are no longer under a tutor [the law]. For you are all sons of God (This includes the Gentiles who did not have the law) through faith in Christ Jesus. For all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, (The Greeks were separated by the old covenant laws) nor slave nor free person, for you are all one in Christ Jesus. And if you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham’s descendants, heirs according to promise (not according to the law). Gal. 3:27-29

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Tell me, you who want to be under law, do you not listen to the law? For it is written that Abraham had two sons, one by the bondwoman and one by the free woman. But the son of the bondwoman was born according to the flesh, and the son by the free woman through the promise. This contains an allegory for these women are two covenants, one proceeding from Mount Sinai bearing children who are to be slaves, the is Hagar. Now this Hagar is Mount Sinai in Arabia, and corresponds to the present Jerusalem, for she is in slavery with her children. But the Jerusalem above is free; she is our mother. And you brethren, like Isaac, are children of promise. But as at that time he who was born according to the flesh persecuted him who was born according to the Spirit, so it is also now. But what does the Scripture say? Cast out the bondwoman and her son, for the son of the bondwoman shall not be an heir with the son of the free woman. So then, brethren, we are no longer children of a bondwoman, but of the free woman. (Gal. 4:21–31)

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We can safely draw five conclusions: (Gal. 4:30,31)
1. “Cast out the bondwoman” means that you are to cast out the old covenant. 2. Cast out “her son.” Means that we are to cast out [not accept the teaching of] those who promote the old covenant. 3. “For the son of the bondwoman shall not be an heir with the son of the free woman.” This means that the terms of covenants are mutually exclusive. 4. “We are not children of a bondwoman” means that we do not under the old covenant. 5. We are [present tense] children “of the free woman” means that Christians are now under the new covenant.

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

1. The Law was given 430 years after Abraham and was in effect until the coming of the Holy Spirit through the new covenant. We are no longer under the Law. (3) Christians are to “cast out” the old covenant and those who promote its being kept. In Romans 7 Paul states the same things in other words.

Therefore, my brethren, you also were made to die to the Law through the body of Christ, that you might be joined to another, to Him who was raised from the dead, in order that we might bear fruit for God. For while we were in the flesh, the sinful passions which were aroused by the Law, were at work in the members of our body to bear fruit for death. But now we have been released from the Law, having died to that by which we were bound, so that we might bear fruit for God. For while we were in the flesh, the sinful passions which were aroused by the Law, were at work in the members of our body to bear fruit for death. But now we have been released from the Law, having died to that by which we were bound, so that we might bear fruit for God. For while we were in the flesh, the sinful passions which were aroused by the Law, were at work in the members of our body to bear fruit for death. But now we have been released from the Law, having died to that by which we were bound, so that we might bear fruit for God.

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

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

What is Paul saying here? First, the people with the veil over their faces are those who accept the old covenant as it reads, or read it through old covenant eyes. Paul is saying that to understand the old covenant correctly we must see it from the new covenant perspective. This is a very important principle of interpretation. The new covenant, which is a better and more nearly complete revelation of truth, must be allowed to interpret, modify or transform old covenant statements in a Christ-centered way. Second, if we continue to read the old covenant from any other perspective it will be as though we are looking through a veil and we will be confused and could come to the wrong conclusions. This means that we should not accept any old covenant laws or practices on the basis of the old covenant statements themselves. Rather, we must examine every old covenant law or practice from the new covenant perspective. Jesus Christ. I now quote again from Riggles, “For the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ” (John 1:17). “Jesus the mediator of the new covenant” (Heb. 12:24). “Bear ye one another’s burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ” (Gal. 6:2). Here are contrasted the two systems. The first was “the law” given by Moses, its mediator; the second is “grace and truth,” the New Testament, which came by Christ, its mediator. The New Testament is “the law of Christ.” This is the law Christians are now under. In Gal. 6:27 we have a clear prediction of the coming of Christ and his redemptive work. “And the isles shall wait for his law” (literally the law of the old covenant). The law of Moses was given to one nation—Israel. But of the law of Christ—the New Testament—it was forecasted that the “isles” should wait for it. “The isles” here mean the different nations of earth. The gospel is for all people and nations. The command is, “Preach the gospel to every creature” (Mark 16:15), “Teach all nations” (Matt. 28:19). The law of Moses was “grace and truth came by Jesus Christ” (John 1:17). The isles and the ends of the earth wait for his law; it is the standard of judgment in the earth.

Christ is the “one lawgiver” of this dispensation (Jas. 4:12). For at “sundry times in sundry manners” the Lord spoke unto the fathers in time past, but “in these last days spoken unto us by his Son” (Heb. 1:1). The great promises of the Lord of Moses on the mount, God said of Christ, “This is my beloved Son; hear him” (Matt. 17:5-11). Moses and his laws are ruled out of this dispensation, and Christ and his superior law now rule in its...
To go back to Moses is to reject Christ. The law taught the people of Israel that the reign of God had not yet come. The kingdom of the Messiah must precede the law. The mission of Moses was to teach people that the time of the kingdom was near. He was to show them that the law was to be given at the time of the kingdom, when God’s people would be in possession of it.

The Ten Commandments are described variously as a “ministry of death” and “a ministry of condemnation.” If one focuses on them, it will not result in righteous living. It did not for the Jews and it will not for the Christian. Rather, focusing on the old covenant is going back under the veil.

New covenant righteousness comes “apart from the law.” The new covenant promise made to Abraham and his descendants was that, through him, all nations would be blessed (Gal. 3:8). The law was not a covenant; it was a substitute for the covenant of grace. It was a “shadow” of the new covenant. It was given in order to point to the new covenant, which is better (Heb. 8:5).

The holy Spirit does not come through the works of the law. The person who seeks righteousness from the law will be held accountable for all the requirements of the law. Christ is the end of the law for righteousness. If righteousness came through the law, Christ died needlessly. Paul kept the law “blamelessly” yet, he compared this righteousness to rubbish (Phil. 3:8). The law is not intended to free righteous people, but for those who are lawless and rebellious, for the ungodly and sinners, for the unholy and profane.

Having been a fourth generation conservative Adventist, and having served as a pastor and/or Bible teacher for some 13 years in that denomination, he has been a part of this phenomenon since its inception. He believes that the law cannot be written on the heart as the Bible teaches, but rather on the tablets of stone.

Bible students are often amazed by the power of the new covenant, which was established through Christ. The new covenant is different from the old covenant in several important ways. First, there are those who seek the new covenant as people of faith. They are not trying to be righteous but are seeking to live according to the law of Christ. They are not trying to earn righteousness but are trying to live according to the law of Christ.

The Ten Commandments came to a functional end at the cross, completely shutting the whole paradigm of Adventist theology. The new covenant, which was established through Christ, is the only way to enter into the presence of God. The new covenant is the only way to enter into the presence of God. The new covenant is the only way to enter into the presence of God.

The old or first covenant which included the Ten Commandments came in force only until the death of Christ. After the death of Adam, death entered into the world. The first Adam is the type of Christ. He paid the price for sin. He died for our sins. He rose again. He is the one who came to the rescue of sinners. He is the one who came to save sinners. He is the one who came to save sinners. He is the one who came to save sinners.

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This is unmistakable evidence that the Ten Commandments were included in the old, or first, covenant. Notice also, that both the Ten Commandments and the other laws are included in this one covenant. There is no separation between “moral” and “ceremonial.” This same truth is clear in Paul’s descriptions of the covenants.

You are our letter, written in our hearts, known and read by all men, being manifested that you are a letter of Christ, cared for by us, written not with ink but with the Spirit of the living God, not on tablets of stone but on tablets of human hearts. Such confidence we have through Christ toward God. Not that we are adequate in ourselves to consider anything as coming from ourselves, but our adequacy is from God, who also made us accepted in the beloved, in himself through faith in Christ Jesus. We have therefore confidence through Christ toward God. And this is what we call the righteousness of God, that is, his approval of us, not by works of the law as laid down by the law, but according to the righteousness of faith. For we believe in Christ, and God has also approved us through faith in Christ. It is our persuasion and hope that we will be justified by the faith of Christ and that we will be saved according to his grace, for we believe in Christ Jesus, and the approval of God to us.

The old covenant law was given only to the children of Israel. I quote from Riggles,

This is so manifest in every item of the law that it needs no argument to prove it. Moses says (Deut. 4:18) that no nation has a law so good “as the law which I set before you this day.” Then he names the Ten Commandments as a part of it (vss. 10-13). “This is the law which Moses set before the children of Israel” (vv. 44). Then no other nation had the law. This was stated a hundred times over. It was addressed to the Israelites, and to them only. The very wording of the law proves it was intended only for them. The Decalogue is introduced thus: “I am the Lord thy God, which brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage” (Exod. 20). To whom is that applicable? Only to the Israelite nation. Neither angels, Adam, nor Gentile Christians were ever in Egyptian bondage. Then, the law was not addressed to them. Paul plainly states to whom the law was given. “Who are Israelites; to whom pertaineth the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law” (Rom. 9:4). It was given to Israel. In Mal. 4:4 it is clearly stated that the law given in Horeb was “for all Israel.”

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

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

I take another drink and a five-minute break to catch your breath in this high altitude, then let’s continue our hike on this trail of Scripture.

I quote from Riggles,

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

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

I believe the Spirit-led Christian does have the law of Christ—the law of love—perfectly written in his spirit (table of his heart). In his spirit the Christian is a new creation. This all happens the moment we are saved—yes, the Bible teaches we can be saved and know it now! However, our soul (psuche) is being saved by a law that we now have been released from the law! We now serve in the newness of the Spirit and not in the oldness of the letter! There is no condemnation (NONE) to those who are in Christ Jesus! We now have received the spirit of adoption! We now overwhelmingly conquer even those who hate us! We are now sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise! We are now saved through faith! We are now the dwelling of the Holy Spirit! We are now chosen in Christ! We now have redemption through his blood! God is now at work in us to will and to do His good pleasure! We are now qualified to share in the inheritance of the saints in light! We have now been transferred to the kingdom of His beloved Son. We have now entered His rest! We now have each received a spiritual gift! The Spirit now helps our weaknesses! We have now been predestined to be like Christ. This is just the beginning! Do you see why the gospel is called “good news”? One cannot work righteousness from the outside in—that was the old covenant way and it never worked. Rather, in the new covenant God creates or regenerates our spirits. We are born of God. We have the divine DNA, God’s life living in us and that life is perfect.

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

Jesus is the new covenant center. The new covenant partners are God, the Father, and Jesus, His Son. I will appoint you (the Messianic church) as a covenant for the people, as a light to the nations. I will keep you and give you for a covenant of peace, because it is in the heart of the Ten Commandments. This truth is underlined by the words of Jesus: “For on Him [Jesus] the Father has set His seal, and as that anointing is real, not counterfeit—it just has taught you, remain in Him.”

This promise may not be fully realized now. However, some commentators believe that the statement regarding the new covenant unifies ideas that teach and/or presuppose the presence of the Holy Spirit in the life of a person who turns to the Lord, the Spirit, are being beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as from the Lord, the Spirit. 2 Cor. 3:14-18

The Ten Commandments are the very words of God. The Ten Commandments are not even in view in this passage. The Ten Commandments are not even in view in the book of Matthew. The Ten Commandments are not even in view in the book of the New Testament. The Ten Commandments are the very words of God. If we are taught about the Ten Commandments, we are taught about the Word. Hebrews 9:15. The Ten Commandments are not even in view in the book of the New Testament.

The Ten Commandments and “other laws” in this covenant. Sometimes “the law” is used to include the whole of the Ten Commandments. This is because there is nothing in the text of Hebrews 9:10 that indicates precisely what is included in the Law. One could break the Sinaitic (or old) Covenant by a violation of one of the Ten Commandments and many of their “ceremonial-type” laws. We have now shown that the words of the Ten Commandments were kept in the Holy of the Holy and are kept in the Ark, where “the law of God” includes sacrificial, communion, feast days, and all the Jewish law. So the law of God is not simply the Decalogue, but the whole law in Moses. Hebrews 9:1-2, 7, 8, 14, 18, they read “in the book of the law of Moses,” “the law,” “the book of the law,” the book of the law of God,” “the law which the Lord commanded by Moses,” “the law,” “the book of the law,” the book of the law of God,” “the law which the Lord commanded by Moses.” They read the whole law of Moses. Hebrews 9:1-2, 7, 8, 14, 18, they read “in the book of the law of Moses,” “the law,” “the book of the law,” the book of the law of God,” “the law which the Lord commanded by Moses,” “the law,” “the book of the law,” the book of the law of God,” “the law which the Lord commanded by Moses.” They read the whole law of Moses.

One could break the Sinaitic (or old) Covenant by a violation of any of the Ten Commandments and many of their “ceremonial-type” laws. The New Testament defines the “old” or “first covenant” as the Sinaitic Covenant and unmistakably states “other” laws in this covenant.

The author of Hebrews describes the “first covenant” and specifically mentions “the tables of the covenant”—an unmis- takable reference to the Ten Commandments and “other laws” in this covenant.
The Covenants: The Continental Divide of Biblical Interpretation

DALE RATZAFF

udying the covenants is like pouring one’s theological waters out on the Continental Divide. Which ocean of theological understanding one ends up is determined here. Differences that may seem minor at this point, when run their course down the streams of application will be thousands of miles apart. Therefore, how important it is that we make sure which side of this great divide we choose. Dr. Reiner and I are, so to speak, only several feet apart on this high divide. His emphasis on the substitutionary death of Christ is to be commended. His stress on faith in Christ and faith in the aspects of Christ is to be commended. His call to prayerful study and the laying aside of one’s preconceptions is to be commended. His stated conclusion it is nothing but a ploy that may result in deception. Gen. 3:15 is a shadowy statement of a coming Savior at best. Nothing is mentioned about law. Gen. 9:9–17 Speaks about God’s covenant with Noah in promising not to send another flood. I see nothing here that could be construed to be the Ten Commandments. Gen. 12:2,3 speaks about Abraham regarding the land of Canaan and his future posterity. Again, there is nothing about law here. It is true that God said “Abraham obeyed me and kept My charge, My commandments, My statutes and My laws”104 Yet he lied114 and committed adultery.115 therefore we must, it seems to me, interpret these commandments and laws that Abraham “kept” to be the specific instructions God gave to Abraham which he did keep.116 If we read into Scripture that these laws are the Ten Commandments, then we make Scripture untrue. Abraham did not keep the Ten Commandments. To break one is to break them all.118 Could it be that Dr. Reiner is reading the teachings of Ellen White into Scripture? She supports the “everlasting covenant” and the “new covenant”112 whereas the Lord commanded Moses to make with the sons of Israel in the land of Moab, besides the covenant which he had made with them at Horeb. Here Moses says, “These are the words which the Lord commanded: “To what words are he referring? The careful reader will note that “these words” refers to everything between Deut. 5:1–28,68– nearly the whole book of Deuteronomy! This section contains the Ten Commandments (6:11–21) and the laws relating to the following topics: sanctuary, clean and unclean, Sabbatical years, feasts, administration of justice, Levites, spiritism, cities of refuge, warfare, crime, domestic relations, marriage, divorce, first fruits, blessings and cursings, and many, many others. Therefore, all these law topics are included in the “commanded covenant.” When the Israelites agreed to keep the covenant, they were agreeing to keep the commanded covenant. In 2 Kings 2:18 we read, I will not again make the foot of the Israelites wander from the land I gave their forefathers, if only they will be careful to do everything I commanded them and will keep the whole Law that my servant Moses gave them. Notice here the whole law is what God commanded, not just the Ten Commandments. Therefore, I see no valid application of Dr. Reiner’s distinction. Rather, these Scriptures reinforce our conclusion that the old covenant is the whole law of Moses. things had already been accomplished...110 Then with keen, Holy-Spirit insight the Gospel writer records, “And Jesus uttered a loud cry, and breathed His last. And the veil of the temple was torn in two from the top to the bottom.”111 This divine intervention was to show that the old covenant had come to its end. What is our work? Jesus answered and said to them, “This is the work of God, that you believe in Him whom He has sent.”114 “Come unto Me, all who are weary and heavy-laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you from Me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For My yoke is easy and My burden is light.116 We have this promise. Truly, truly, I say to you, he who hears My word, and believes Him who sent Me, has eternal life, and does not come into judgment, but has passed out of death into life.”112 We must be careful not to read into Scripture the unbiblical concepts of Ellen White Dr. Reiner makes a distinction between the “everlasting covenant” and the “new covenant.” Yet he states that “the new covenant is eternal and everlasting.” I have no problem with the term “Everlasting Covenant.” It seems to me that a better, more biblical way of expressing the plan of salvation would be the new covenant in promise109—before the cross, and the new covenant in reality—after the cross.110 The term, “everlasting (or eternal) covenant” is used in Scripture in various ways. It is used for the covenant of circumcision13 which the New Testament clearly says is abolished.111 The term “everlasting covenant” is used with meat offerings the Israelites offered to the Lord112 in connection with the Sinaitic Covenant which is abolished. It is used for the Decalogue.113 It is used in future, Israel-centered prophecies.114 Jeremiah uses this term in a similar context to the way he uses “new covenant.”115 The term “eternal (or everlasting) covenant as used in Hebrews 13:20 seems to be identical, or at least similar, to its usage in 12:24 when referring to the new covenant. The writer of Hebrews is reinforcing what has been taught throughout the book by showing the “bitterness” of the new covenant over the old by stressing its eternal nature.116 Could it be that Dr. Reiner’s distinction is simply a reflection of Ellen White and her extra-biblical theology? I also do not see any Scriptural evidence for the Ten-Commandment law in the Old Testament. The Bible references listed do not mention the Ten Commandments. Let’s look at them. Unless the cited references support the supposed conclusion it is nothing but a ploy that may result in deception. Gen. 3:15 is a shadowy statement of a coming Savior at best. Nothing is mentioned about law. Gen. 9:9–17 Speaks about God’s covenant with Noah in promising not to send another flood. I see nothing here that could be construed to be the Ten Commandments. Gen. 12:2,3, speaks about Abraham regarding the land of Canaan and his future posterity. Again, there is nothing about law here. It is true that God said “Abraham obeyed me and kept My charge, My commandments, My statutes and My laws”114 Yet he lied114 and committed adultery.115 therefore we must, it seems to me, interpret these commandments and laws that Abraham “kept” to be the specific instructions God gave to Abraham which he did keep.116 If we read into Scripture that these laws are the Ten Commandments, then we make Scripture untrue. 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Conclusion

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

1. The Ten Commandments are the very words of the old covenant.
2. The old covenant, or Sinaitic Covenant, is based upon one law, not two. It comprises the whole Mosaic Law: moral, civil, and ceremonial.
3. The New Testament defines the “old” law as the first covenant in the Sinaitic Covenant and unmistakably includes both the Ten Commandments and the “other laws” in this covenant.
4. The old law was given only to the children of Israel.
5. The laws of Sinai, including the Ten Commandments, were not given until the time of Moses.
6. The old, or first covenant, which included the Ten Commandments was in force only until the death of Christ.
7. The new covenant Law of Christ is much better than the old covenant law of commandments.
8. Many of the principles of the new covenant are now operating in the life of the Christian.
9. The Ten Commandments are not now God’s tools to promote righteousness—there is a better way.
10. The new covenant is about relationship with Christ.

We must not be careful not to read Scripture the unbiblical concepts of Ellen White.

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

Endnotes:

3. If Hebrew; if one counts words from the beginning of a verse he overlooks the word “remember” in the central phrase is “remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy.” Ex. 31:13–18. See also Sabbath in Crisis, pp. 40–43 for a detailed comparison between the Sabbath sign in Ex. 31 and the circumcision sign in Gen. 17.
6. Ellen G. White, Early Writings, pp. 33, 34.
7. See Sabbath in Crisis, pp. 219–234, where a whole chapter is dedicated to this subject.
8. See the Sabbath and the Lord’s Day, pp. 59, 60 for more biblical support.
10. See The Sabbath and the Lord’s Day, pp. 308 for biblical examples of each of the Ten Commandments.
12. See Sabbath in Crisis, pp. 36, 37 where abundant evidence is given to show that the “other laws” interpret and apply the Ten Commandments to the situation of the Israelites.
13. See Sabbath in Crisis, pp. 79ff for additional material on this point.
14. See Sabbath in Crisis, pp. 187–218 for a discussion of this statement with supporting material.
16. 7 Tim. 3:16–17
17. Heb. 7:27. The same fundamental beliefs of Seventh-day Adventists were last revised.
19. Fundamental Beliefs of Adventist Church, No. 1.
23. Rom. 2:15, 2 Cor. 3:2–6.
25. This does not mean that the Christian will steal, kill, and commit adultery etc., rather, it means that there is the same freedom for service which is the Holy Spirit in the life focusing on the present realities of those who are in Christ helping us to live out what He has done for us. He has made it just in us, we are now created in Christ, which is our new covenant. Rom. 5:17, 19; Gal. 5:16–19.
27. Rom. 7:1–4; Sabbath in Crisis, p. 196ff.
28. every man his brother, knowing the Lord for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the Lord: for I will forgive their iniquity, and will I remember their sin no more. Bro. Ratzlaff is deceiving you when he says living under the new covenant in fact. He is contradicting himself. He is trying to continue to convert people to “know the Lord.” If he is really living under the new covenant in fact he will also repeated to Abraham, Noah, Isaac, Jacob and Israel. It is that part of the everlasting covenant that began at the cross and goes until the second coming of Christ. After that time, the Lord will fulfill all of the promises made to the new covenant. In the new covenant we are promised eternal life and immortality, and not a temporary life. Our part, in the new covenant is to “remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy.” Ex. 31:13–18. The old covenant service was in type, pictures of the true sanctuary. Type met antitype at the cross with Christ as the true priest and the true lamb. The new covenant is not a repetition of the old covenant, but a fulfillment of all of the promises made to the new covenant. There is no need to convert any longer. Heb. 8:10, 11

10. The old, or first covenant was given to the house of Israel after those days, saith the Lord… Paul is using the future tense “will come….” By faith now but in fact when the terms of the covenant are fulfilled at the second coming Believers will be clothed with immortality when the terms of the new covenant are delivered in fact. Then the law will be written in our hearts. We will be living under the new covenant in Heaven from everyone from the least of them unto the greatest who will know the Lord. We are living under the Everlasting Covenant now. Heb. 13: 20, 21 By faith His life of complete obedience to all of God’s commands stands in the inner places, and you are accepted as though you had never sinned. Through the merits of the Redeemer you render perfect obedience to all of God’s requirements and under the terms of the new covenant you have received righteousness before God. But this is all by faith. Like Abraham “He believed in the Lord, and he counted it to him for righteousness.” Gen. 36:5 repeated to Abraham, 19:1, 7. Does Brother Ratzlaff really believe that we are in fact, in act, under the new covenant and not by faith? Has the new covenant actually been delivered? Are we in a glorified state? Is God’s law actually written in our hearts? To what are we free from the tendency to sin? Jeremiah 31: 33–35 has something to say about the new covenant: “Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah. Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand, and brought them out of the land of Egypt, which my covenant they brake, although I am a husband unto them, saith the Lord. But this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel, after those days, saith the Lord: I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they will be my people. And they shall teach no more every man his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the Lord: for I will forgive their iniquity, and will I remember their sin no more.

THE BETTER PROMISES

OLD COVENANT PROMISES

NEW COVENANT PROMISES

Earthly Canaan

Heavenly Canaan

Earthly Jerusalem

Heavenly Jerusalem

Earthly Sanctuary

Heavenly Sanctuary

Earthly Priests

Heavenly Priest (Christ)

Eternal Life

Immortality

Glorification

THE TWO COVENANTS

OLD COVENANT

NEW COVENANT

Table:

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

**OLD COVENANT**

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

Four hundred thirty years before God delivered Israel from the Egyptians, He had entered into a covenant with Abraham pledging that He would make a nation of Israel, Abraham’s posterity and would give them the promised land, Canaan. The Israel nation once proud and rich in Joseph’s time had been reduced to slaves of the Egyptians. But despite their unworthiness and degraded condition God chose to renew the covenant made before creation and renewed to Abraham with the blood of the everlasting covenant, make you perfect in every good work and to present you before Christ without blemish and spotless.

The Bible says, “I will be their God and they shall be my people.” Ezekiel 37:26

**NEW COVENANT**

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

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- Eph. 4:12.

Ezzekiel 37:26

NEW COVENANT

With the close of the old dispensation, a new covenant came into being at the cross. Various called a new covenant, a better covenant, a
Found God's grace and rest.

Dear Dale, It is becoming fashionable to question the validity and existence of a belief that has been the natural outgrowth of the unrenewed heart and is strengthened as it is encouraged. Many SDA Christians have a problem they cannot conquer; so they excuse themselves with the simplest way out—grace covers it! You question EVGs's validity. She has stated that the unbelief indulged, the doubts expressed, the darkness cherished, encouraged the presence of evil angels and opened the way for all of Satan's snares. I wonder if she knew she was writing her own warnings and left daggers at the end of her words to you and me?

People the same.

No turning back.

Thank you for continuing to send me your little magazine, Proclamation... I am under no illusion that I am of any great stature among Adventists, and I am grateful for your interest. It is a lonely journey, but there is no turning back. I have just finished reading a marvelous book that I recommend to your readers. It is not as new as was first reported in 1922. The title is Grace—An Exposition of God Marvelous Gift.

Recovering from brain washing.

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

Satan is tricking you.

I will pray for you, it seems to me that Satan is tricking you in your Bible interpretation. Anyone who has no vision of what Sinai is all about, that was presented to Saul was really Samuel and not one produced by Satan is being tricked by the Devil.

Breath of fresh air.

Coming across your publication was a breath of fresh air: You are providing a needed service to all questioning Adventists. I asked about her for something better and does not smother one’s intelligence with Ellen White’s pansy-hocky parish (Tryking to keep it clean).

Keep holding the fort.

Grace to you, brother! You remind me of Paul. He was a real trickster and he stole with the same stuff I was wrestling with, and Sabbath in Crisis I only decided to read because I realized I had to at least look at another standpoint without fear of being “tainted.” I had no idea it would change my whole outlook on life literally, and fill me with such joy in knowing Jesus. Thank you! “We are persecuted but not abandoned.”Praise God for that! You offer to send the Book is much appreciated. Will love to read it... For some reason I am reminded of a song we sang at Camp Au Sable when I was a teen...Hold the fort for I am coming!” Keep holding the fort, Dale. Thank the Lord He is coming soon!

Pity for you.

Dear Dale, My pastor gave me your “Truth Without an Umbrella.” Now we are a group of 10-15... that are feeling a little cold under the SDA umbrella. Now we are a group of 10-15... that has truly found God's grace and rest.

Edwin W. Reiner

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

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

The Ten Commandments...

“I, the Lord thy God, am a jealous God; visit the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, and upon the children's children, even unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me; and shew forth my goodness unto them that love me, and keep my commandments.”

The commandments, God’s law, is as holy as God and is forever...

The Ten Commandments are a revelation of the character of God. Jesus is truly the Ten Commandments in actuality. Romans 10:4. He lived the Ten Commandments. In ‘Jesus’, the person of Jesus, we are saved, Romans 10:9, John 14:6. The Ten Commandments are the basis of the major covenants. God’s law is law that is unchangeable. While the Ten Commandments were given to take Israel to the promised land and to be their king No one was saved under the old covenant. They were saved just as we are today, are under the terms of the everlasting covenant. Adam and Eve were told, Genesis 2:17, that they would surely die if they transgressed God command. The result is painfully clear today. Transgression of God’s law is punishable by death. The law is unchangeable. God’s law is forever. God’s law is eternal, a separate covenant as noted over 100 times in the Scriptures, is in truth Jesus, and of course was not ended at the cross.

The Everlasting Covenant.

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

The Everlasting Covenant.

There is in the Bible a mystery hidden from eternity that has everything to do with the restoration of man to His edenic perfection. According to the Scriptures the sons and daughters of Adam were to be not only redeemed but also elevated to a higher state than Adam’s. The Ten Commandments were written in stone by the finger of God to indicate their immutability. This contract, a commanded covenant, were orders to observe perfect righteousness in every thought and deed. According to the Scriptures a commanded covenant is incorrigible. The commanded covenant, God’s law, is as holy as God and is forever...
Covenants: why print both sides?

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

The second thing we ought to consider is our own prejudice or paradigm of preconceived truth. If the Bible clearly states a fact that is completely contrary to our theological structure, it is nearly impossible for us to accept that fact. This is true because fact underlines our whole system of truth—something that most of us have a difficult time applying to others, it is harder to see it in ourselves. Let us, however, seek to be objective even if the facts of our study do not fit our preconceived ideas. If we are looking for some “North Star” to guide our study, it should be the gospel of Christ, not the church organization. The New Testament, especially the epistles, to be our chief Brake.
North Carolina pastor studies his way out of Adventism

Greg Taylor

Greg Taylor was senior Pastor of the 500 member Fostor Seventh-day Adventist church in Asheville, North Carolina. The following is a high-

condensed and edited summary of Pastor Taylor’s “Manifesto,” the full text (32 pages) of which may be downloaded from our web site at: http://www.ratzlaf.com/news.html.

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

A couple of my friends in similar min-

istries left Adventism to start non-denomi-

national churches. However, shorty there-

after they moved away from the seventh-

day Sabbath to a Sunday worship format. This discredited them in my eyes and in the eyes of most of the SDA church com-

munity I told them how I felt. They were both gracious to listen to my concerns, shared a few of their ideas, and were Christian gentlemen toward me.

Closest church to truth

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

ing Ellen White, the Investigative Judgement and the remnant church teach-

ings. I was convinced that Sabbath was God’s special day. My sermons during this time were clearly direct on this issue.

I studied the materials that my friends, who had left the denomination, recom-

mended. I also poured over materials writ-

ten by Adventist theologians including Samuel Bacciocchi, the Church’s fore-

most authority on the Sabbath. In addi-

tion, I consulted two of our denomina-

tion’s most respected professors and writ-

ers with a passion to prove where my friends were wrong.

Visited many churches

During a summer vacation we traveled around the USA visiting Adventist churches on Sabbath and other churches on Sunday. While the Adventists were sincere, there was such a dearth of life it was depressing. It was almost as if they were just going through the motions of “doing church”. The Sunday churches were the other way around. With the exception of one church we visited, all of them had such life and joy that it was contagious. We would rejoice when we were in these churches of various denominations or independent commu-

nities. When we would visit the SDA church-

es, we would get so sad and depressed. I remember praying, “Why, Lord, if the Sabbath is so significant and part of your moral law that is binding on all Christians, why are you clearly blessing other church-

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

standing of the Bible in a whole new and powerful way.

New Testament Sabbath

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

ing on Christians. The New Testament

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

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

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

Life Assurance Ministries (LAM), Inc.

Volume 2 Issue 4 July August 2001

THE CONTINENTAL DIVIDE

Life Assurance Ministries, Inc.

Proclamation!

for former adventists | inquiring adventists | sabbatarians | concerned evangelicals

Editor’s Comments:

Covenants: why print both sides?

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

A correct understanding of the covenants is funda-

mental to a correct interpretation of all Scripture and it is absolutely critical for one’s view of the Sabbath. In this issue of Proclamation we will present two views: One by Edwin Reiner, whose book, The Covenants, (Southern Publishing Association) is used in Adventist education. The other by Adventist theologian, Jack Callahan. We believe both perspectives are valid, and therefore have chosen to print both views.

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

This study also, will challenge the paradigm of truth for many of our readers. Several things need to be made clear before we move to the two studies. First, we must remember to use good hermeneutics. We believe the Bible and the Bible only is our source of truth and the standard for all doctrines and reforms.

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