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FOR FORMER ADVENTISTS • INQUIRING ADVENTISTS • SABBATARIANS • CONCERNED EVANGELICALS

Avoiding Bible Fender Benders

DR. VERLE STREIFLING

First we'll review some 35 methods of 'Scripture Twisting' commonly used to pervert the truth; then, in the next issue of *Proclamation*, we'll review numerous logical fallacies used in interpreting the Bible, which also perverts God's truth.

1. Inaccurate Quotation: Like reading the road sign "Slow Men at work" as "Slow men At Work"; this speaks of not quoting the Bible in the way it's written, to shade its meaning, or change it entirely. This writer's had Jehovah's Witnesses read 1 Cor 13:8 to say "Healing will vanish away" to show why they

3. Biblical Hook: Some use one verse, on which to hang an entire doctrine or justify an unorthodox practice. The Mormons use James 1:5 to test if the Book of Mormon is true by seeking the 'burning in your bosom' as evidence. They practice substitutional baptism for the dead on grounds of one verse in 1 Cor 15 which doesn't support the practice, but questions its validity!

4. Ignoring Immediate Context: Like ignoring 'Road Construction' signs, this speaks of translating a word, verse, or passage different from the demands of the context. SDA's Samuele Bacchiocchi insists Heb 4:9 says we must keep the Sabbath, when the context speaks of God's rest (*katapausis*). Also SDA's use Dan 8:14 for their 1844 'Sanctuary Teaching' ignoring the context interpreting the vision, where 'evenings-mornings' speaks of sacrifices—not days (Heb *yom*). Their Dr. Ray Cottrell listed 17 anomalies in their teaching violating the text of Daniel, at their San Diego Forum, in 1997.

SDA's Samuele Bacchiocchi insists Heb 4:9 says we must keep the Sabbath, when the context speaks of God's rest (katapausis).

don't pray for the sick, contrary to James 5:14–16. But Paul said "Knowledge will vanish away".

2. Twisted Translation: Like interpreting '60 Km/h' as 'miles per hour', this speaks of deliberately mistranslating the Bible to support one's doctrinal views. The JW's *New World Translation* is riddled with these, some copied from other twisted translations as the *Emphatic Diglott*, or the spiritist Johannes Greber's N.T. But far worse is the SDA's *Clear Word Bible* (1994, now titled *The Clear Word*).

5. Collapsing contexts, speaks of using one text to interpret another, when they're mutually unrelated. The JW's use 1 Cor 1:24 to interpret Prov 8:22 by making Jesus 'wisdom', while they should use Heb 1:8–10 to show He's the 'Jehovah-Creator' of Prov 8. SDA's use the Jew's Sabbath of Ex 20:10 to exegete the Christian's 'Lord's day' of Rev 1:10, (*Kuriakos Hemera*) coined 1500 years after Exodus!

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Life Assurance Ministries (LAM), Inc

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

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

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

Hermeneutics

We have all heard the story—probably apocryphal—of the person desperately seeking divine guidance. Looking sanctimoniously up to heaven, as the story goes, he let the Bible “fall open” then placed his finger on the page where God was to communicate His special will. There he read, “And... Judas... went and hanged himself.” Wondering what this could mean, he sought a further clarification. This time the Bible

Hermeneutics is to Bible interpretation as a recipe is to gourmet cooking.

opened at, “Go and do likewise.” Now he was really worried. Seeking better guidance—God for bid it should be confirmation!—the third episode led him to “What you do, do quickly.” We snicker at the possibility of anyone being so foolish as to seek God’s will in this way. But, could it be that many of us have interpreted the Bible in equally careless ways?

This issue of Proclamation is primarily dedicated to hermeneutics, a topic of tremendous importance to all Christians, *especially* former or inquiring Seventh-day Adventists. Hermeneutics is to Bible interpretation as a recipe is to gourmet cooking. Good ingredients alone do not insure a tasty, even eatable, dish. In the same way good Bible texts thrown together haphazardly do not insure a correct interpretation. The importance of hermeneutics cannot be over emphasized. Perhaps another illustration will help. We just installed Windows 2000 Professional on our computers. When we were using Windows 98, our computers were “crashing” several times a day, always at the most inappropriate time when we had not “saved” in the last several minutes. To test W2K’s strength I decided to see how many programs I could run at the same time without it “locking up.” At fifteen I gave up, as it was not yet even slowing down! What does this have to do with hermeneutics? Much. As an operating system is to a computer, so hermeneutics is to the person seeking truth. As a poor operating system like Windows 98 (sorry Bill) can really mess up your files, in the same way a poor set of interpretive principles can sure mess up one’s theology and life. All aberrant religions have one thing in common: poor hermeneutics. William Miller, for example, may have been a very sincere man, but his hermeneutics, upon which Adventism was founded, were a disaster.

A correct understanding of basic hermeneutics is fundamental for recovering Adventists. Many of us grew up using the “proof-text” method. While proof texts do have some value when used very carefully, it is so easy to put together a string of Bible texts that teach something more than, or different from, what any of the texts say when read in their individual contexts. Doing so—to go back to our illustration—can crash your system, lock it up with guilt, bring frustration, anxiety and waste a lot of precious time. Having the right hermeneutic, however, will free one up and like Windows 2000 Professional (thanks Bill) and provide a stable platform upon which to build a workable theology and life.

Hermeneutics is both science and art. It is a science because it is guided by rules within a system; and it is an art because the application of the rules is by skill, and not by mechanical imitation.¹

Two former Seventh-day Adventists have consented to join me in teaching on this vital subject. Dr. Verle Streifling will share common errors of interpretation, which he calls “Fender Benders.” His short, crisp laws with accompanying illustrations will make these hermeneutical mistakes come to life. Dr. Streifling was a third generation SDA, graduated from CUC and after years of extensive Bible study he left the SDA church, was ordained in 1984 by the Evangelical Church Alliance, earned a Th.M. in 1988 and a Ph.D. in Theology in 1990. He taught in Bible College, served in missions and has written literature for winning cults to Christ.

Australian scholar, Dr. Fred Mazzaferri left a successful professional career in telecommunications to study theology. His received a Ph.D. in NT theology in 1986, from Scotland’s Aberdeen University. His specialty is the Book of Revelation, and his dissertation has been published. Like Dr. Streifling, Dr. Mazzaferri is interested helping sectarian Christians make transitions to Christ-centered Christianity. Fred maintains a keen interest in the sciences, especially mathematics and cosmology, and finds relaxation in breeding native flora. He is married, with three adult sons. Dr. Mazzaferri’s carefully written essay examines the very foundation stone of Adventism and, at the same time, serves as an excellent illustration of good, technical, scholarly hermeneutics.

In my short article, “Context, Context, Context,” I will discuss the basic fundamental of hermeneutics in a less technical way.

¹ Ramm, Bernard, *Protestant Biblical Interpretation* [Baker Book House, Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1970,] p. xiii.

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Context,

The first and most important rule of hermeneutics is to consider the context. Few are aware of the massive and appalling misuse of this fundamental principle of interpretation by the founders of Adventism. William Miller's Bible study methods and conclusions received the glowing and comprehensive endorsement of Ellen G. White.¹ Of his chart which listed his fifteen "proofs" of the second coming she said, "I have seen that the 1843 chart was directed by the hand of the Lord, and that it should not be altered; that the figures were as He wanted them."^{2,3}

Any of Miller's fifteen proofs could be used as illustrations of the violation of this first principle of hermeneutics. It appears he completely ignored the context. Here is his proof number ten.⁴

TEN: It [second coming of Christ in 1843] can also be proved by the words of Christ, Lk. 13:32: "And he said unto them, Go ye and tell that fox, Behold, I cast out devils, and I do cures to-day and to-morrow, and the third day I shall be per-

fect. . . that hath part in the first resurrection: of such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years."

This time began with the "great dragon," Rev. 12:3: "And there appeared another wonder in heaven; and behold, a great red dragon, having seven heads and ten horns, and seven crowns upon his heads. And his tail drew the third part of the stars of heaven, and did cast them to the earth: and the dragon stood before the woman which was ready to be delivered, for to devour her child as soon as it was born."

This government will draw after him one third part of the time, which wicked men have power in the earth, viz. 6000 years; and the 7000th, the year of Christ will take possession and reign with his saints, in perfect bliss.

This dragon power began its power over the saints when the league was made with him, B.C. 158, and will end in 1842. Then the third day will begin 1843.⁵

If your head is spinning trying to follow Miller logic, it should be! Note that nearly every text is lifted from its context. This is the hermeneutic upon which Adventism was founded.

Ellen White herself often abused the biblical context. After the 1843 disappointment and "the mistake was explained" she said that the prophetic periods that pointed to 1843 now pointed to 1844—still endorsing Miller's fifteen "proofs."⁶ Then she said, "Light from the Word of God shone upon their position, and they discovered a tarrying time—'though it [the vision] tarry, wait for it.'"⁷ Here, Ellen White quotes Habakkuk 2:3 and applies Habakkuk's vision to the vision of Daniel, specifically Daniel 8:14 and the time between the first disappointment of 1843 and 1844. The problem is, however, that the context of Habakkuk's vision deals with the coming invasion of the Assyrians and has nothing to do with Daniel 8:14, 1843, 1844 or to the disappointment Adventists faced at the failure of their prophecies.

Before interpreting a given text, one should consider all the dimensions of context. "The first dimension of context of any verse is the entire Bible. This is what is meant by 'Scripture interprets Scripture.'"⁸ This dimension alone, however, without the other aspects of context can lead to

Any of Miller's fifteen proofs could be used as illustrations of the violation of this first principle of hermeneutics. It appears he completely ignored the context.

fect. "These two days, in which Christ casts out devils and does cures, are the same as Hosea's two days, at the end of which, the devil will be chained, and cast out of the earth into the pit, and shut up. This will take 2000 years of Roman power. Rev. 12:9: "And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world: he was cast out with him." And then the people of God will be perfected. Rev. 20:9: "Blessed and holy is he

prooftexting. The careful Bible student will consider all the dimensions of context.

The second dimension of context is to consider the Testament the verse is in. Here is an important and often violated rule: the New Testament interprets the Old and not the other way around. While the Old Testament points forward to the new, the new must always take precedence over the old.

“God, after He spoke long ago to the fathers in the prophets in many portions and in many ways, [indicating that the revelation in the O.T. was incomplete and fragmentary] in these last days [time of Christ to present] has spoken [indicating the finality of this revelation] to us in His Son, [Christ is the apex of God’s revelation]

I have suggested to a number of people that they will find the answer themselves if they read Galatians in its entirety once a day for thirty days.

whom He appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the world. And He is the radiance of His glory and the exact representation of His nature, [indicating a clear, complete, unclouded revelation] and upholds all things by the word of His power.” Hebrews 1:1-3

These verses show that the revelation of God in Christ recorded in the New Testament far surpasses that given in the Old Testament. While the OT has many shadows and types, one does not go to the shadow and type to define reality. Rather, from the perspective of the New Testament center, Jesus Christ, one is able to look back at the shadows and types and see pattern and purpose in what before often appeared random and unclear. It is here that many have erred. They have not made a distinction between the Testaments. Often they have no lucid reason for accepting and enforcing certain OT regulations and ignoring others. Adventists, for example, appeal to Old Testament laws for their seventh-day Sabbath keeping. Yet in their Sabbath keep-

ing, few—probably none—follow all the Old Testament Sabbath laws even though Ellen White said they should.⁹ What about the command “let no man go out of his pace on the seventh day”¹⁰, the command not to bake or boil on the Sabbath,¹¹ or “You shall not kindle a fire in any of your dwellings on the Sabbath day?”¹² Some who left the Worldwide Church of God and some independent Adventist groups not only observe the weekly Sabbath, but also the yearly sabbath feasts. Upon what basis does one accept certain OT laws and reject others? One must have some foundational reason, some hermeneutical principle to guide. I believe that principle is Christ-centered New Testament interpretation and application. The NT must interpret the OT.

The third dimension of context is to know the particular book in which the passage occurs. One should read through the book to discover the theme of the book, purpose of the author and try to discover the historical situation to which the author was writing. For example, there are certain writers today who seek to muddy the clear message of Galatians. I have had many people ask me about Paul’s so called “difficult statements” in Galatians. I have suggested to a number of people that they will find the answer themselves if they read Galatians in its entirety once a day for thirty days. Everyone I know who has done this has found his or her answer. Studying this book, as a whole, sheds life-changing light on the difficult texts. If you have questions on a few verses, try reading the book as a whole and see what happens!

The fourth dimension of context is to consider the immediate context. Carefully read the paragraph before and the paragraph after the text in question. If Miller and the early Adventists had followed only this one rule of interpretation, the SDA church would not be in the dilemma it now faces. Hundreds of SDA pastors and scholars have concluded after diligent study that Daniel 8:14 when studied in its context does not support Adventist sanctuary theology. As Adventist scholar, Dr. Raymond Cottrell, who has given years of study to this subject, has said, SDAs must choose the Adventist interpretation or the context of Daniel 8:14, they can’t have both.¹³ One sees, then, that theology turns on hermeneutics.

There are other dimensions of context to consider such as style or genre. Is the passage poetry, history, didactic teaching, prophecy or apocalyptic imagery? Of these, good hermeneutics has a priority. For example, one does (should) not go to

apocalyptic writings filled with uncertain symbols and images, to find the fundamentals of faith and doctrine. Rather, all important truths should find their foundation in didactic, contextual teaching, such as found in the epistles. Contrary to this, Adventism's foundation was built upon uncertain apocalyptic passages, often taken out of context—thus, the current dilemma.

So what is the bottom line? Two things: First, when seeking truth, study the Bible contextually the way it was written and the way it should be interpreted. Study book by book, chapter by chapter, paragraph by paragraph and text by text. Note its style or genre. Remember, all important truths are founded on contextual study.

Second, when someone seeks to indoctrinate you into his or her "special truths" and in doing so has to skip all over the Bible, reading a text here and quoting a text there, stop them. Force them to read the context and find out if the context of a given text clearly supports what they are trying to prove from the text. Chances are that if they

cannot show clearly their "truths" in contextual study, their "truths" are not truth, or at most, are of minor significance. We should be as careful in our interpretation of the Scriptures as the Hebrew scribes were in copying it.

¹ See Ellen G., White, Early Writings, pp. 229–231; *Spiritual Gifts*, Vol. 1, pp. 128–132.

² Ellen G. White, Early Writings, p. 74.

³ Miller's charts can be seen in Kai Arasola, *The End Of Historicism*, [Datem Publishing, Sigtuna, Sweden, 1990] p. 220, 221.

⁴ I list this proof because of its brevity.

⁵ *Ibid*, p. 224.

⁶ Ellen G. White, Early Writings, p. 236

⁷ *Ibid*.

⁸ Bernard Ramm, *Protestant Biblical Interpretation* [Baker Book House, Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1970,] p. 138.

⁹ Ellen G. White, *Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 296.

¹⁰ Ex. 16:29

¹¹ Ex. 16:23

¹² Ex. 35:1,3

¹³ Dr. Cottrell has made several presentations on this subject, cassette tapes of which are available from the San Diego Adventist Forum at PO Box 3148, La Mesa, CA 91944-3148.



Seventh-day Adventism's dogma of an investigative

A brief evaluation

BY DR. FRED MAZZAFERRI

Seventh-day Adventism gleaned its prime dogma through a review of William Miller's faulty forecast based on Dan. 8:14. Dr. Mazzaferri demonstrates that the SDA church may never have lost its way if it had not forced both Lev. 16 and the epistle to the Hebrews into its foolish mold.

The Seventh-day Adventist Church has long enjoyed the respect of many enlightened Christians as an organization making a good contribution to Christ's global cause. Then why does it stand so far apart, even claiming to be God's **sole** authentic church in the whole word, with a unique message to deliver to every last human inhabitant before Christ can return in glory to gather his elect?

The seventh-day Sabbath is not an issue as some other confessions like the Seventh Day Baptists respect it, too. Nor is the oblivious state of the dead, which is endorsed by respected, conservative Bible scholars like John Stott in Great Britain and Clark Pinnock in the United States of America.

What really sets it largely apart is its unique teaching that Christ began a new phase of his High Priestly ministry in 1844, moving from the Holy Place to the Most Holy Place of heaven's sanctuary. There the record books were opened, we hear, so that the suitability of every person who has ever professed faith in God and/or Christ to enter their eternal Kingdom may be assessed, starting with Adam and moving in due course to the living. It closes by obliterating the sins of all who have repented, claimed Jesus' atoning blood and perfected characters in harmony with God's law. Then probation closes and, soon afterwards, Jesus returns, terminates the fearful, final Time of Trouble.¹

The history of this dogma's development need not detain us, either as regards its genesis among Seventh-day Adventism's pioneers, or its refinement because of the epochal Glacier View Colloquium.² What is of particular interest here is that, at least prior to the Desmond Ford watershed, the Seventh-day Adventist Church claimed that it was presented best of all in Ellen White's writings.³

As the Seventh-day Adventist Church likewise stands apart from other denominations through its claim that Ellen White is its authoritative prophet,⁴ it

is doubly convenient to assess its dogma of a selective judgment starting in 1844 through her eyes. For no appeal can be made here to mere casual reading of Scripture. She must be offering what she considers strictly major, *literal* interpretations of the Word when she addresses any theological point crucial to this unique dogma. If she was truly inspired by the very same Holy Spirit who inspired Holy Writ, the decisive fact will certainly be evident here.

What comes to most Seventh-day Adventist minds when they speak of the investigative—more recently pre-Advent judgment—is their Church's confident claim that Dan. 8:14 reveals the precise time when heaven's sanctuary would begin to be cleansed of its amassed burden of human guilt. In fact, in a recent pamphlet to world-wide members, it boldly claims that, of all the Bible's forecasts, those centering on Daniel 8 and 9 are the most critical for Seventh-day Adventists. Here we find the 2300 days, the sanctuary, and its cleansing. These prophecies focused the message of William Miller and the pioneers of our movement, and they are still vital for understanding our times.⁵

It was through the study of Daniel 8:14 as a point of departure that Adventism came into existence as a historical movement, developed its doctrinal identity, and identified its mission. We are confronted here with a *foundational* and *vital* aspect of Adventist thought.⁶

However, that is certainly not where we should begin our assessment of Ellen White's treatment of this doctrine. First on the list is the foundation, if any, of this prime denominational "building".

Blood within the tabernacle—what Ellen White claims

The crucial question that should be considered before that of *cleansing* God's sanctuary is, when and how is it *defiled* by individual sins?

judgment through Ellen White's eyes:

That is, why must it be cleansed from their pollution at all? Looking back first to his earthly sanctuary, one of Ellen White's fuller answers to this question is:

The most important part of the daily ministration was the service performed in behalf of individuals. The repentant sinner brought his offering to the door of the tabernacle, and, placing his hand upon the victim's head, confessed his sins, thus in figure transferring them from himself to the innocent sacrifice. By his own hand the animal was then slain, and the blood was carried by the priest into the holy place and sprinkled before the veil, behind which was the ark containing the law that the sinner had transgressed. By this ceremony the sin was, through the blood, transferred in figure to the sanctuary. In some cases the blood was not taken into the holy place;* [asterisk sic] but the flesh was then to be eaten by the priest, as Moses directed the sons of Aaron, saying, "God hath given it you to bear the iniquity of the congregation." Leviticus 10:17. Both ceremonies alike symbolized the transfer of the sin from the penitent to the sanctuary.

... The sins of Israel being thus transferred to the sanctuary, the holy places were defiled, and a special work became necessary for the removal of the sins. God commanded that an atonement be made for each of the sacred apartments, as for the altar, to "cleanse it, and hallow it from the uncleanness of the children of Israel." Leviticus 16:19.

Once a year, on the great Day of Atonement, the priest entered the most holy place for the cleansing of the sanctuary. The work there performed completed the yearly round of ministration.

On the Day of Atonement two kids of the goats were brought to the door of the tabernacle, and lots were cast upon them, "one lot for the Lord, and the other lot for the scapegoat." The goat upon which the first lot fell was to be slain as a sin offering for the people. And the priest was to bring his blood within the veil, and sprinkle it upon the mercy seat...⁷

Ellen White here cites Lev. 16:16, then 21f., which treats the fate of the scapegoat. She then draws out the "important truths concerning the atonement" taught by these solemn ceremonies:

In the sin offerings presented during the year, a substitute had been accepted in the sinner's

stead; but the blood of the victim had not made full atonement for the sin. It had only provided a means by which the sin was transferred to the sanctuary. By the offering of blood, the sinner acknowledged the authority of the law, confessed the guilt of his transgression, and expressed his faith in Him who was to take away the sin of the world; but he was not entirely released from the condemnation of the law. On the Day of Atonement the high priest, having taken an offering for the congregation, went into the most holy place with the blood and sprinkled it upon the mercy seat, above the tables of the law. Thus the claims of the law, which demanded the life of the sinner, were satisfied.⁸

Ellen White now turns to the scapegoat, which does not concern us here. A long section follows, utilizing typology to justify her belief that, like the earthly, heaven's sanctuary has two apartments. She draws from this a doctrine of Christ's two-phase ministry within heaven's temple. These ideas will be assessed in due course. Whether or not biblical evidence supports them, she continues:

As Christ at His ascension appeared in the presence of God to plead His blood in behalf of penitent believers, so the priest in the daily ministration sprinkled the blood of the sacrifice in the holy place in the sinner's behalf. The blood of Christ, while it was to release the repentant sinner from the condemnation of the law, was not to cancel the sin; it would stand on record in the sanctuary until the final atonement; so in the type the blood of the sin offering removed the sin from the penitent, but it rested in the sanctuary until the Day of Atonement.

In the great day of final award, the dead are to be "judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works." Revelation 20:12. Then by virtue of the atoning blood of Christ, the sins of all the truly penitent will be blotted from the books of heaven. Thus the sanctuary will be freed, or cleansed, from the record of sin. In the type, this great work of atonement, or blotting out of sins, was represented by the services of the Day of Atonement—the cleansing of the earthly sanctuary, which was accomplished by the removal, by virtue of the blood of the sin offering, of the sins by which it had been polluted.⁹

...in a recent pamphlet to world-wide members, it boldly claims that, of all the Bible's forecasts, those centering on Daniel 8 and 9 are the most critical for Seventh-day Adventists.

What the Word of God States—Blood for Individual Sins

How does Ellen White's sectarian teaching compare with the sacred Word? Actually, an editorial note in the Appendix of her *Patriarchs and Prophets* all but concedes that she is quite astray here:

When a sin offering was presented for a priest or for the whole congregation, the blood was carried into the holy place and sprinkled before the veil and placed upon the horns of the golden altar. The fat was consumed upon the altar of burnt offering in the court, but the body of the victim was burned without the camp. See Leviticus 4:1–21.

When, however, the offering was for a ruler or for one of the people, the blood was not taken into the holy place, but the flesh was to be eaten by the priest, . . . Leviticus 6:26 . . . See also Leviticus 4:22–35.¹⁰

This clarification can scarcely be faulted. Lev. 4 details the offerings for the sins of a priest, 3–12, communal sins, 13–21, sins of a leader, 22–26, and sins of individuals, 27–35. In two cases alone, sins of a priest or of the whole community, the blood was taken inside the sanctuary, as Ellen White states, to be sprinkled in front of the inner curtain

The Priest and his Consumption of Portion of the Sacrifice

Nor does Ellen White present any persuasive case for her claim that a priest's eating the flesh of a sacrifice was any part of the process of atonement. For one thing, such food, ranging from flesh, Lev. 6:24–30; 7:1–6, to bread or grain, Lev. 6:14–18; 24:5–9; Nu. 18:8–19, was the regular food not only for the priests themselves—including those ineligible for sanctuary service through physical defects, Lev. 21:16–23!—but also for their families, 6:29; 7:6; 10:12–15, and even some of their slaves, 22:11. Nowhere here is there even the slightest hint that the eating itself had any cultic [ritual] import whatever. For another, the priests' effecting atonement through sacrifice is mentioned repeatedly. But even where the service is detailed, as in Lev. 1; 4:22–26, 27–35; 5:7–10; 9:7–24, eating is never cited. Why not, if it contributes to the atonement which is the very point of every reference? For yet another, God himself specifically affirms that "it is the blood that makes atonement"; Lev. 17:11b. So the consumption of blood was totally taboo, 10–14. How, then, could any priest possibly make atonement for sin by eating the flesh of any sacrificial animal after its blood had been completely drained at the altar?

Regardless, first sight Lev. 10:17 still seems to support Ellen White's case, above all because of the import of the verb *n_s_'* and its object, the noun *'_w_n*, which it used here. Time and again they have the sense bear the guilt /iniquity /consequence, as in Gen. 4:13; Lev. 5:1, 17; 7:18; 17:16; 19:8; 20:17, 19; Nu. 5:31; 14:34; 30:15; Eze. 14:10; 44:10, 12. This obtains even in a vicarious sense, as when Ezekiel, Eze. 4:4–6, or the scapegoat, Lev. 16:22, "bears" the iniquities of the people, or when God forgives a genuinely contrite sinner, as in Ex. 34:7; Nu. 14:18; Ps. 32:5; 85:2; Isa. 33:24; Hos. 14:2; Mic. 7:18. However, the use of this verb and noun in Lev. 10:17 is no proof that a priest bore the sin by eating his portion of a sacrifice. For one thing, simply by being a High Priest, Aaron was to "bear" his people's sins, Ex. 28:38. And this duty fell upon every priest, Nu. 18:1. Yet nowhere is there even the slightest hint that eating their portion of the sacrifice was in any way crucial in this vicarious duty. In fact, God gives the priests the entire sacrifice "to make atonement for yourselves on the altar"; Lev. 17:11, not by eating any of it. Maybe this is why, though no blood enters the sanctuary from the sin offering mentioned in

How, then, could any priest possibly make atonement for sin by eating the flesh of any sacrificial animal after its blood had been completely drained at the altar?

and put upon the horns of the altar of incense, 6f, 17f. The rest of the blood was poured out at the base of the external altar of burnt offering, 7b, 18b.

Yet in the case of individuals whom alone she specially discusses, "the priest is to take some of the blood . . . and put it on the horns of the altar of burnt offering, and pour out the rest of the blood at the base of the altar"; 30. That is, this blood never entered the sanctuary, so an individual's sins never defiled it.

5:7–10, the priest is not directed to eat any portion of this sacrificial bird.

For another, though Moses was angry with Aaron's sons for burning the sacrificial goat instead of eating it, nothing clarifies that his concern was that the efficacy of the atonement ceremony itself had been compromised. In fact, when Aaron clarified that he had assumed that being upset at the time over the death of his sons was an exceptional circumstance, 19, "Moses... was satisfied!"²⁰

There is no pathway, then, into the sanctuary for pollution from any individual's sin. So Seventh-day Adventism appears to have no theological basis whatever for its distinctive dogma of cleansing heaven's sanctuary, polluted day by day by individual sinners. Yet a final decision is unwise until the Day of Atonement rituals are fully comprehended. Here the primary passage is Lev. 16, of course.

The Two Altars

In broad perspective, Ellen White's case can still survive if the altar cleansed by blood, 18f., is the altar of burnt offering outside the sanctuary proper, as most commentators state, where the blood of a sacrifice for individual sins remained. But if it is the altar of incense within the Holy Place, her case has no Bible basis whatever. So it is crucial be quite clear about both the differences between these altars and the precise details of the High Priest's duties on the climactic Day of Atonement.

Several different altars feature in the history of the Children of Israel and the patriarchs. All that concerns this study, though, are the two distinct altars associated with the wilderness sanctuary. A number of subtle variances exclude even Solomon's and Ezekiel's theoretical, post-exilic temples.¹¹

First was the great bronze altar of burnt offering in the sanctuary's courtyard. Measuring five by five by three cubits, with a projection at each corner, it was elaborately equipped, Ex. 27:1–8; 38:1–7. It perpetual fire, Lev. 6:8–13, received the evening and morning burnt offerings, 29:38–43; Nu. 28:1–8, the special Sabbath offering, Nu. 28:9f., specific atonement offerings (different Hebrew nouns for burnt, guilt and sin offerings), Lev. 1; 4:1–6:13; 6:24–7:10; 9, grain offerings, Lev. 2; 6:14–18, and fellowship offerings, Lev. 3; 7:11–21. Its special rôle on the Day of Atonement will be considered shortly.

The second, smaller, golden altar was in the

Holy Place, right before the curtain before the Most Holy Place. Measuring just one by one by two cubit, with horn on each corner, Ex. 30:1–6; 37:25–28, a specially prepared, fine-ground, fragrant incense, 30:34–38, was to be burnt on it every morning and evening, 7f. No burnt, grain or drink offerings were allowed, 9. However, it did receive some of the blood of the sin offering for any priest, Lev. 4:7, or for the entire nation, 18. Its special contribution to the solemn ceremonies of the Day of Atonement will shortly be considered separately. Which of these was most important?

But if it is the altar of incense within the Holy Place, her case has no Bible basis whatever.

Certainly the altar of incense. At very least, this is implied by the gold in comparison with the bronze. But above all, the sweet incense that ascended from it before the inner curtain of the sanctuary symbolized the prayers of the faithful, Ps. 141:2 (compare Rev. 5:8; 8:3f.). That is, the bronze altar focused on the external features of the ritual of dealing with the perpetual problem of human sinfulness, while the gold altar focused on its internal features. As Micah the prophet reminded his rebellious nation, Mic. 6:6–8, 12 in pointed personal style:

With what shall I come before the LORD and bow down before the exalted God?

Shall I come before him with burnt offerings, with calves a year old?

Will the LORD be pleased with thousands of rams, with ten thousand rivers of oil?

Shall I offer my firstborn for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul?

He has showed you, O man, what is good. And what does the LORD require of you?

To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God.

In short: "Does the LORD delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices as much as in obeying the...LORD? To obey is better than sacrifice, and to heed is better than the fat of rams"; 1 Sam. 15:22.¹³

A final distinctive detail is that the golden altar is also designated at times as the one before the

Lord, Lev. 4:7, 18; 16:12. In contrast, nowhere is it certain that the bronze altar is so designated. The significance of this phrase in Lev. 16:18 will be considered shortly, in its very instructive context.

The Day of Atonement Ritual

What, precisely, did the High Priest do during the climactic Day of Atonement?

The first Hebrew noun of interest is *q_d_s*, which makes manifest reference in Lev. 16:2 to the Most Holy Place of the sanctuary complex. This is so since it is “behind the curtain in front of the atonement cover on the ark”. This noun

The crucial question then becomes, Where does the ritual detailed in Ex. 30:10 fit?

recurs in 3, 16, 17, 20, 23, 27, 33. It is also used in 4, 32 for the sanctity of the High Priest’s attire. These apart, consistency implies that reference throughout this chapter is always to the inner room, except in 3, where the total complex, including the courtyard, appears to be in mind because the sacrificial animals were all slaughtered there, at the bronze altar.

This conviction gains strength when it is observed that the sanctuary building itself is described throughout the chapter by the pair of nouns *’ohel mō’ed* (literally, tent of assembly), 7, 16, 17, 20, 23, 33. This specificity does not invite the lightest notion that on occasions the noun which denote the almost completely forbidden Most Holy Place is employed in its stead, thus creating confusion.

Secondly, the various verbs of motion which describe the High Priest’s movements are of assistance in following him in his solemn duties. The first is *bō*, with the sense enter in 2, 3, 17, 23 [twice], and the similar nuance carry in 12, 15, 23. In 17 alone are we not immediately confident that we comprehend precisely which part of the sanctuary complex the High Priest is entering.

The second verb, with the complementary sense emerge is *y_s_*, 17, 18, 24. But only in 24 is it immediately certain which part of the complex he exits, for sacrifice was made in its courtyard alone.

The prime question for this study, in brief, is this. For which altar was atonement made, 18f.? Was it the altar of incense, 12, or that of burnt

offering, 25? The most popular choice by far among commentators is the latter, even though it depends on the sheer supposition that in 17 it is the sanctuary building, not just its Most Holy Place, which the High Priest enters then leaves. The Hebrew text certainly permits that reading in isolation. However, there are other pressing considerations.

For one thing, mention of the altar before the LORD 12, certainly suggests at least the possibility if not the probably that it is the very same altar before the LORD of 18, especially as the Hebrew text is virtually identical in both cases, while the bronze altar is never so denoted elsewhere. For another, twice over we have a survey of the day’s solemn rituals as they relate to the sanctuary complex itself, atoning for “the Most Holy Place, (...) the Tent of Meeting and the altar”; 20, 23. By no means does this repetition hint that any salient feature of this aspect of atonement is excluded. Nor does it invite the notion that the one sprinkling of blood in the Most Holy Place atoned as well for the Tent of Meeting. The manifest meaning is that there were three distinct, sequential ceremonies.

The crucial question then becomes, Where does the ritual detailed in Ex. 30:10 fit? With specific reference, in context, to the altar of incense, the divine directive is: “Once a year Aaron shall make atonement on its horns. This annual atonement must be made with the blood of the atoning sin offering for the generations to come. It is most holy to the LORD.” Note carefully that both the bull and the goat sacrificed on the Day of Atonement were for sin offerings, Lev. 16:3, 9. The sacrifice for each burnt offering was a ram—one for the High Priest, 13, and one for the people, 5. But only the blood of the bull, mixed with that of the goat, provided atonement for the altar itself, 18f.

It is interesting to note here that, while Seventh-day Adventism naturally stands with the bulk of commentators in viewing the altar, Lev. 16:18f., as that of burnt offering, 14 it follows its scholarly instinct to the reverse conclusion in carefully analyzing the atonement ceremony of Ex. 30:10: “This refers to the great Day of Atonement... when the high priest was to take the blood and put it on the horns of the altar of incense ‘and make an atonement for it’ (Lev. 16:18, 19).” 15 More interesting still, G. F. Hasel, probably Seventh-day Adventism’s most prestigious OT apologist for its distinctive dogma, faces the full force of the evidence with complete candor, albeit in a mere footnote:

It is not entirely certain which altar is in view in Lev 16:18–19. The distinction between “tent of meeting” and “the altar” in vs 20 and 33 may suggest that the altar in view is that of the burnt offering in front of the sanctuary... It should be noted, however, that in Lev 4:7, 18 where the “sin offering” is brought in the daily service the only altar that is sprinkled is the “altar which is in the tent of meeting before the Lord.” Thus the “altar which is before the Lord” in Lev 16:18 can be understood as an abbreviation of the “altar which is in the tent of meeting before the Lord,” i.e., the altar within the sanctuary. In Ex. 30:10 the altar of incense is said to be cleansed on the day of atonement.¹⁶

It may be opined that this ceremony featuring the altar of incense is implied in the atonement of the Tent of Meeting. However, this conjecture survives no close scrutiny. For one thing, it is hardly conceivable that the detail of the solemn edict of Ex. 30:10 would be relegated to a mere inference when the lesser, bronze altar basks in replete detail. For another, the Hebrew text clearly indicates that the ceremony for the atonement of the Most Holy Place was repeated precisely in atoning for the Tent of Meeting per se “He is to do the same for the Tent of Meeting,” Lev. 16:16b. That is, the entire Tent of Meeting as an entity was cleansed by sprinkling the sacrificial blood of both the bull and the goat the second time in its Most Holy Place. There is no compelling cause whatever, then, to include the bronze altar in the ritual of cleansing on the annual, climactic Day of Atonement.

Yet the question remains, Why ignore it? W. H. Shea, another prominent apologist for Seventh-day Adventism’s distinctive doctrine, offers us food for very careful thought in drawing instructive parallels between the corporate sin offerings of Lev. 4 and 16:

The corporate nature of these sin offerings should be compared and emphasized. Four categories of sin offerings (not two) are listed in Leviticus 4. The first two involved the priest and the entire congregation; the latter two involved the individual... The manner in which the rites for the last two classes was conducted was also different. Thus the sin offering for the priest or for the whole congregation is emphasized by the parallels with the Day of Atonement blood rites. The Day of Atonement was not the time for dealing with individual sin (although... forgiveness was available through the morning and evening sacrifice). In a sense that opportunity had come and gone during the cultic year. Now, on the Day of Atonement, it was time to deal

with all the sins of the children of Israel as a corporate activity.¹⁷

The Ritual in Summary

The flow of the day’s ceremonies may therefore be summarized as follows:

- The High Priest brings a young bull for his own sin offering and a ram for his own burnt offering to the courtyard of the sanctuary, Lev. 16:3;
- He bathes in water, then dons sacred linen attire, 4;
- His people provide two male goats and a ram for their sin and burnt offerings respectively, 5;
- He offers the bull for his sin offering, 6, 11;
- He casts lots over the goats at the entrance to the Tent of Meeting, one for the Lord and one as the scapegoat, 7f.;
- He sacrifices the rest goat as the people’s sin offering but preserves the other alive, 9f.;
- He enters the Most Holy Place with the bull’s

There is no compelling cause whatever, then, to include the bronze altar in the ritual of cleansing on the annual, climactic Day of Atonement.

blood, shielded from the atonement cover of the ark with incense activated by a censer of coals from the golden altar, 12f.;

- With his finger he sprinkles the bull’s blood about the ark, 14;
- He duplicates this sprinkling with the slaughtered¹⁹ goat’s blood, thus atoning for the Most Holy Place, made necessary by the people’s sins, 15f.;
- This complete ceremony is repeated within the Most Holy Place to atone for the Tent of Meeting itself, 16b, which must be otherwise empty of people at the time, 17;
- He exits from the Most Holy Place and, with a mixture of the bull’s and goat’s blood, he sprinkles the altar of incense to cleanse it of the nation’s sinfulness, 18f.;20

- He emerges from the Tent to transfer the total burden of national sinfulness to the live goat, 20f.;
- He re-enters the Tent, sheds the sacred linen garb, bathes and re-robes in his regular clothes, 23f.;
- He leaves the Tent for the final time to further atone for himself and his people in turn by sacrificing the ram for his own burnt offering and the one for the people's, 24a.;
- Finally, he burns the fat of the sin offering on the bronze altar, 25.;
- The scapegoat is released as an atonement into the desert, 10, 21bf., 26.;
- The bodies of the sin-offering bull and goat are burned outside the camp, 27.

Conclusion

Ellen White is emphatic that day by day, the sins of individuals polluted both the earthly sanctuary and its heavenly reality, though thus far we have considered in detail no more than the former.

Scripture makes it quite clear, in stark contrast, that the blood of the sacrifice for the sins of individuals never entered the sanctuary building

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itself. Rather, all this blood went no further than the bronze altar in the courtyard outside the building. Before the Day of Atonement the only blood ever to enter the tent was that of the sacrifice for the priest or for the entire nation. Nor is there any definitive Bible evidence whatever that the sanctuary was polluted by a priest's eating part of the individual's sacrifice. That is, there is absolutely no pathway for individual sinners to pollute the sanctuary. Furthermore, as the bronze altar enjoyed no cleansing whatever on the Day of Atonement, there is no legitimate sense in

which it can be said that the pollution of individual sins was cleansed at that time.

It follows that here we have another major theological error within the writings of Ellen White. The manifest inference is that, quite apart from the veracity of its interpretation of Dan. 8:14, the Seventh-day Adventist Church has no biblical basis, at least in the earthly sanctuary, for its dogma of a protracted review of the heavenly records of every believer, one by one, before Christ returns.

¹ For a convenient summary, including historical developments of the teaching, see D. F. Neufeld, ed., "INVESTIGATIVE JUDGMENT," *Seventh-day Adventist Encyclopedia* (Washington, 1976), 669b–673b.

² I. T. Blazen, "Justification and Judgment," *DARCOM* 3, 339–388, seeks to remove all suspicion of salvation by works from the doctrine of judgment. Cf. fn. 5.

³ Neufeld, art. cit., 673a.

⁴ Fundamental Belief no. 17: "her writings are a continuing and authoritative source of truth"; stress supplied. In fact, this involves quite a striking elevation of her authority at the expense of Scripture! Prior to 1980, her life and ministry merely displayed "the gift of the Spirit of prophecy," while God's Word was the Church's "all-sufficient revelation of His will and... the only unerring rule of faith and practice." Ever since that epochal year, it has been merely "the infallible revelation of His will... the authoritative revealer of doctrines." The exclusiveness has been totally spurned in Ellen White's specific interests.

⁵ A. M. Rodriguez, "Daniel 8, 9: The Sanctuary and its Cleansing," supplement, *RECORD*, 15th February, 1997, 2. He also endeavors to paint the investigative judgment in lofty, positive terms, 14f.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 14a, stress supplied.

⁷ PP 354f. The asterisk is a pointer to a note in the Appendix, to be considered shortly. All stress is supplied here and in the following group of quotations. Cf. GC 418–422. At this point GC 419 adds: "The blood was also to be sprinkled upon the altar of incense that was before the veil." All abbreviations are standard throughout.

⁸ PP 355f.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 357f.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 761, referring to the text at 354.

¹¹ E.g., Eze. 43:13–27 describes the altar of burnt offering and its dedication ritual in considerable detail. The material is not specified, and it is far larger than Moses' bronze altar. Within the Holy Place was to be a wooden altar, 41:22, far larger than his incense altar. But no ritual is described. In fact, the key word incense is absent.

¹² Cf. Am. 5:21–24.

¹³ Cf. Hos. 6:6.

¹⁴ F. D. Nichol, ed., *Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary* 1 (Washington, 1953), 776bf.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 658b.

¹⁶ "Studies in Biblical Atonement II: the Day of Atonement," *The Sanctuary and the Atonement: Biblical, Historical, and Theological Studies*, ed. A. V. Wallenkampf (Washington, 1981), 127f.

¹⁷ "Literary Form and Theological Function in Leviticus," *DARCOM* 3, 158, all stress supplied. However, my accepting this insight does not imply that I also accept all the parallels he suggests in support.

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Have you ever said something like the following?
 “It’s like stepping off a cliff.”
 “I felt like I was leaving everything.”
 “I didn’t know anyone else was going through what I was feeling.”

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FormerAdventist.com features the stories of people who have left Adventism, detailing their unique journeys of study and soul-searching as they discovered the gospel and walked toward the light of truth.

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Contacts through the forum website have yielded Christian fellowship and support for many people who felt isolated and uncertain. Many who participate on the forum say they feel for the first time that they aren’t alone. It is a safe place in which to ask questions, tell their stories, offer support, and grow.

One couple in North Carolina found the website and read it late at night for several months. They

began to understand the problems they sensed in the Adventist doctrines, and when they moved to California a few months later, they were able to join the weekly group in Redlands.

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God also brings people to the weekly Bible study who need friendship and spiritual growth.

“We praise God for the people who come and for the growth we see in them,” says Richard Tinker. “Former Adventist Fellowship is the most vivid example I’ve ever seen of the body of Christ in action.”

For more information about Former Adventist Fellowship, or for help in starting a group in your area, please email Richard Tinker at: webmaster@formeradventist.com

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Avoiding Biblical Fender Benders CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1



6. Overspecification, means “milking” more out of a word or verse than it really says, like a pedestrian who takes ‘Don’t Walk’ to mean ‘Run!’ The JW’s affirm “Jesus said not to pray to Himself, see Matt 4:4:” But the verse says we must worship *only Jehovah God*. He didn’t deny being God, or to be prayed to. Instead He said ‘ask Me’ in Jn 14:14 (Gk. text) which they omit in their New World Translation.

7. Word Play: This means performing ‘tricks’ with words, as combining the etymological meanings of a word to give its definition, or using a similar sound in another word to prove its relationship. We often hear ‘Atonement means at- one- ment (with God); but it really means a covering for sins. Some hold the Sabbath came from Babylonian ‘*shappatu*’ since these sound similar, but they’re unrelated.

8. Confused definition of terms, refers to applying a different meaning to a word than required by the context. SDA apply the *redemptive use* of ‘sancti-

10. Term Swapping, speaks of trading terms from one place to another, or using a different term from the Bible writer. SDA change ‘*Kuriakos Hemera*’ (Lord’s day) for ‘*Hemera tou kuriou*’ (the day of the Lord). JW’s tell us that ‘*Horao*’ is the word for ‘see’ at Rev 1:7, but it’s really ‘*Optomai*’. (*Finished Mystery*, p.14, Rutherford; *Studies in the Scriptures*, vol 2 p. 138, C.T. Russel).

11. Figurative Fallacy: Mistaking literal language for figurative, or visa versa. Liberals say Gen 1–11 is ‘myths’ or ‘parables’ since there’s figures of speech in the text. However, 6 times Moses says ‘This is the History of...’ showing it is historic! JW’s cry ‘personification’ against ‘He, Him, His’ used for the Holy Spirit, to deny He’s a Person of Deity. Acts 5:3+4; 13:1+2; Heb 3:7–11, etc., shows their error.

12. Speculative Reading of Predictive Prophecy, is a different reading and interpretation of a Bible prophecy from what it calls for. JW’s use Daniel 4 to launch their ‘presence’ of Jesus in 1914, & SDAs use Dan 8:14 for their 1844 return of Christ, or investigative judgment. They use Rev 13:3–5 to teach 1260 years of Papal supremacy from 538 to 1798 AD, though its historically wrong in every way, and they reverse the order for the ‘deadly wound’ and the ‘time to continue’ as they appear in Rev 13.

13. Saying but Not Citing: Like those who make up their own ‘rules for the road’, this is claiming the Bible says something, but giving no reference, since there is none! For example, it nowhere speaks of a ‘moral law’ or a ‘ceremonial law’ or that there are ‘two laws’, which SDAs affirm. Many claim ‘the decalogue is the foundation of God’s government’, but Mt 22:34–40 and Mk 12:28–34 show Love is.

14. (a) A Selective Citing of Scripture: Is picking only certain Scriptures for a doctrine, since ‘All Scripture’ (2 Tim 3:15, 16) would show the doctrine false. Many cults use 1Cor 15:55 KJV to show ‘hades’ is the grave, instead of “Hell” as seen from its other uses! Some mistranslate the other uses from this!

14. (b). Selective Citing of Authority: This is partially quoting an authority, since the rest of his statement would disprove your position, as those using Hysslop’s *Two Babylons* to show all pagans had ‘trinities’, to prove the Trinity is ‘pagan’, while Hysslop continues “...but did they worship the True Triune Jehovah God, so clearly revealed in Genesis?” proving pagans had perverted the True God!

15. Redefining Terms: Speaks of giving a different definition to a Bible or Theological term than the Bible’s own definition. Some define ‘born again’ as ‘recreation’ or ‘reincarnation’ instead of ‘regeneration of one’s spirit by the Holy Spirit’. Others say ‘you don’t have a soul, you *are* a soul’, whereas Gen 2:7 lit-

...it nowhere speaks of a ‘moral law’ or a ‘ceremonial law’ or that there are ‘two laws’, which SDAs affirm.

fy’ in Ex 31:13, but God is speaking of setting Israel apart from other nations, instead of *from sin*. Others confuse the OT *political use* of ‘Savior’ with the NT *redemptive sense*. Yet OT prophets (as Isaiah) spoke of the coming NT Redemptive Savior, as well. Thus we must ask ‘does it speak of redeeming Israel from Egyptian captivity, or is it speaking of redeeming Israel and the World from (*figurative*) slavery of Sin?’

9. Equivocation, speaks of changing the meaning of the same word, within the same context! This is close to #8 (above) but here the meaning of the *same word* is switched in its subsequent uses in the same context, as in ‘Rivers have banks and banks have money, so...’ The JW’s Bible at Jn 1:1 says “the Word was a god”. So we ask “Is He a true God, or a False god? And how many gods are there?”

erally reads 'man became a living creature.' (see also Matt 10:28; 26:38).

16. Inadequate Evidence is when not enough material has been given to base a new doctrine or practice, as the JW's using Acts 15 to support refusing blood transfusions, or the Mormons using 1 verse in 1 Cor 15 for their 'baptism for the dead' and making it a criteria for themselves being the only true church. Likewise the snake handlers as in West Georgia take Mk 16:17, 18 literally, to support their snake handling and drinking poison, while Jesus

In naming Ellen G. White with Jeremiah, Daniel, etc., SDAs try to place her above Bible scrutiny, as a true prophet of God.

repeatedly used 'serpents' to speak of Satan and his followers. Paul's experience of Acts 28:5, 6 didn't relate to Mk 16, but was a miraculous event!

17. Virtue by Association, means implying the qualities of 'A' to 'B' since they're associated together as any car brought into a demolition derby is assumed as already a virtual wreck, though still running! In naming Ellen G. White with Jeremiah, Daniel, etc., SDAs try to place her above Bible scrutiny, as a true prophet of God. Joseph Smith wrote the *Book of Mormon* in Old English, lacing it with some Bible verses to make it sound as Scripture, so it will be thought to be from God, and he a true prophet. But any claimed 'prophet' must meet the Biblical tests of a true prophet of God: as all predictions in God's name coming to pass, their writings neither contradict the Bible or themselves, etc. We could as well name Ellen White with Joseph Smith, Charles T. Russel, Jean Dixon and other false prophets.

18. Ignoring Alternate Explanations: JW's ignore Daniel 4 as it explains its own prophecy, as SDA do with Dan 8:14, to establish their own view. Mormons make themselves 'Ariel' of Isaiah 29:1-4 to show their Book of Mormon has a familiar spirit, and is thus inspired! (but alas!—not of God!)

19. Obvious Fallacy: This involves using words as 'obviously' or 'doubtless' or 'beyond dispute' or 'clearly' or 'didn't you know that...' or 'certainly', etc., instead of Bible proof, because there is none! JW's reason 'Since the Word was with God, then obviously He can't be the God he was with, so He's not God'. The SDAs affirm that the identification of America as

the '2-horned beast' of Revelation 'is beyond dispute' (see *Great Controversy*). Is it? Why don't all others agree? They gave no evidence!

20. Esoteric Interpretation: This is giving a new or reinterpretation to Bible passages, through an 'inspired' prophet. This is one identification of a Cultic system. For the JW's it's the Watchtower Society, while for the SDAs it's Ellen G. White's writings (selectively cited by the White Estate) that established the 'pillars of their faith'. They claim her a 'canonical' and 'infallible' and 'authoritative' reinterpreted of the Bible. "It's Christ, through this agency, who gives us the real meaning..."

21. Supplementing Biblical Authority: Like someone pulling a travel trailer and a boat behind their car, this is adding the writings of a 'prophet' to the Bible. The *Watchtower* used to say "If you study the Bible by itself, without the aid of *Studies in the Scriptures*, you'll go into darkness within 2 years." The Mormons add all the writings of all their prophets to the Scriptures, as do the SDAs with Ellen G. White's writings, holding her interpretations over and above the historical-grammatical exegesis.

22. Rejecting Biblical Authority: Like ignoring all the 'rules of the road' because I don't like them or they're inconvenient, some take their prophet, or reason, or archaeology *over and above the Bible*, as do the JW's who reject Hell, because 'it's not logical'. Liberals reject Jesus' miracles, because 'they're not believable', and the Inspiration of the Bible, because they won't believe that God really exists!

23. World-View Confusion, speaks of *unique teaching* centered theology, not Christ's cross-centered theology. The Christian's view of the Bible centers on Christ's death, burial and resurrection. But cults center their 'faith' or 'truth' on some event at Comorah, or in 1844, or 1914, or Arabia, or Korea, etc., instead of Christ!

24. Misuse of Ellipses: This is taking parts of a verse or passage, but omitting words in the middle affecting its contextual meaning. SDAs leap from Acts 18:4 to 11 to show Paul in the synagogues for 78 Sabbaths, but the context shows he taught at Justis' house for 1+ years. Similarly they jump from Jes 2:8a to vs 10 to show the Perfect law of liberty is the Decalogue, but 8b says it's 'love your neighbor'. Catholic literature quotes Galatians "...God sent forth His Son born of a woman...to redeem those under the law" to imply Mary as co-redeemer, but Paul said "...born under the law, to redeem those..."

25. Not accounting for Analogy of Scripture: This is teaching which is contrary to God's plan of the ages, or dispensations, sometimes called the covenants in 'salvation history'. For example, SDAs

hold we'll have New Moons and Sabbaths in the New Heaven and New Earth. But these feasts, with their blood sacrifices were ended by Christ, and in Heaven 'time shall be no more' for 'there is no night, and neither sun nor moon for the Lord God Almighty is its light. Likewise forwarding the Old Covenant priests, or dietary laws, or Jewish feasts, or Abrahamic Circumcision, all err in this account!

26. Exegeting the English instead of Original Languages: William Millar, endorsed by Ellen White's visions took the days of Dan 8:14 to be 24-hour days (Heb 'yom') instead of 'evening-morning sacrifices' (Heb 'ereb-boqer'). Thus he erred by using a

the deponent verb, to have Jesus as 'the Word *made flesh*' and deny His pre existence. JW's ignore Granville Sharpe's rule at Titus 2:13 and other places since it shows Jesus is "our Great God and Savior"; as do the Mormons at Rev 1:6 to make God *have a Father!* Many ignore the rule of concord, calling God or Christ or the Spirit 'which' instead of 'Who!' JW's also ignore Colwell's rule at John 1:1c.

30. Abusing Greek Grammar: Like saying the 'speed limit' signs are only for truckers, this speaks of twisting a rule of Grammar, as the JW's do to turn "The Word was God (by nature)" into "a god". But more reprehensible is Dr. John McArthur's doing the same in *The Truth about Tongues*, at 1 Cor 14: 'He who prays in a tongue...prays to a god' to teach praying in tongues is praying to demons! Here, McArthur studied Greek and knows this is grammatically wrong, and would refute a JW at John 1:1c. George Watkins a Foursquare minister, in *Women in Today's Church* takes a present tense to mean "I do not presently allow a woman to teach" to show in the future it will be allowed, but not presently!

31. Reversing Order of Biblical Hermeneutics: Like using your 'rear-view mirror' for freeway driving, some use the OT to define the New, instead of the New (as God's greatest revelation) to define the Old. Some use the 'Sabbath' to define 'the Lord's day'; and others use Gen 2:8 KJV to hold man's body is his soul, and his spirit is merely his 'breath'. But many NT references define the soul or spirit as the 'inner man' that reasons, loves, has form and speaks with God. In Matt 10:28 Jesus showed the body can be destroyed, but not the soul; and Abraham, Isaac, etc., are among the living—not dead!

32. Appeal to Questionable Authorities: Like using an outdated road map this speaks of using authorities whose work can be shown inadequate, as the JW's using the *Emphatic Diglott* as an Interlinear, to prove the Word was 'a god'; while even the Christadelphians (as Benjamin Wilson was) reject it there. SDAs use Ellen White as authority, though admitting 'serious errors' in her books and she reinterprets the Bible. The JW's use Greber's spiritualist New Testament as a guide for Jn 1:1; Heb 1:8; and other references where Jesus is God, or received worship! Their *New World Translation* was made by questionable authorities: a secret committee of 6 and Freddie Franz, having final say, couldn't read Hebrew.

33. Value Judgments to Question Authorities: As drivers who only follow the speed limits they like, many refuse to accept qualified scholarship in Bible Exegesis for some personal reason. A JW makes appeal to *Vine's Expository Dictionary* to prove Jesus

SDAs 'parse' Lk 1:1–4 from the Living Bible to show the Bible came by copying sources, and deny it was God-breathed.

'year=day' principle, and the 2300 years to 1844 fails! In the same way, Mormons trip over Rev 1:6 '...to God and His Father' teaching this proves God also has a Father so we have gods begetting gods to infinity! The Greek says 'to His (Jesus') God and Father'.

27. Exegeting Paraphrases, is worse yet, because of additions or changes to the text! SDAs 'parse' Lk 1:1–4 from the *Living Bible* to show the Bible came by copying sources, and deny it was God-breathed. They emphasize 'biographies of Christ', 'source material' and 'pass this summary' all added into the *Living Bible*, but which aren't in the Greek text! And it changes 'Anothen' (from above), that shows from where Luke received his perfect understanding to 'from the first to the very last' (not in the text).

28. Restricted Definition(s) of Original Words: Like a driver keeping his car in first gear on the freeway, cults will only take one of several uses or meanings of a Greek or Hebrew word. The *Emphatic Diglott* used by JW's does this often, so Dr. F. F. Bruce calls it a 'stiff wooden' translation. To illustrate, it uses 'immersion' everywhere 'baptize' appears, so 'baptize with the Holy Spirit' is 'immerse' while God said "I will pour out My Spirit" when defining *how* He'd 'baptize' believers, in Joel, Acts, etc.

29. Ignoring Rules of Grammar: Even as we must follow the 'rules of the road' when driving, Bible teachers should know some basic grammar to rightly exegete the Bible. Christadelphians ignore

died on a stake, not a cross. But he'll reject this same authority as 'pagan Trinitarian' where it proves Jesus is God by nature! Similarly, many SDAs refuse to read any commentaries or Bible dictionaries, or Lexicons, etc. that don't uphold their truths established by the demonstration of the Holy Spirit (Ellen White's visions). Their book *Light Bearers to the Remnant*, like the Mormon's book *They Lie in Wait to Deceive* tries to prejudice their readers from reading the works of those seeking to bring Christian Reformation into their church.

34. Eisegesis: Reading one's meaning Into the Text. This is one of the most difficult pitfalls to avoid, for most adults already have an established set of beliefs, which we feel are all Biblically based. So we tend to interpret the Scriptures within that framework of our beliefs. Thus it's only natural for an SDA to read 'the Sabbath' into Genesis 2:2,3, although it's not in the Hebrew text at all! Even many others do the same. But it's worse to read 'the Word' of John 1 as 'Christ' to make him the Christ at creation, so we can make the decalogue 'the commandments of Christ' and eternal life depends on Sabbatizing! God repeatedly warns against adding to His Word, which also prohibits reading my interpretation into the text! Thus we must come to the Bible with clean slates, and ask God to help us derive its meaning from its words, which is exegesis.

Sometimes we may be shocked at what we'll find, when we do this, as this writer can testify he has been time and time again, not only as God's Word has set him free from OT Sabbath keeping, but in many other doctrines in which he was raised as an Adventist, for many of these are intertwined. But as the Bible has presented its truth in

these areas, it has also shown what errors had to be forsaken. There are reasons why we had developed a number of these errors in our teachings, for having begun like we did, with the prophetic teachings of 1843 and 1844, and the Great Disappointment, we were led into a number of changing views, from the basis of our understanding of Bible Prophecy, which itself was in error. But Sound Doctrine should begin from a solid foundation of the Fundamental Bible Teachings, historically, being Christ-Cross Centered, and systematically developing, as seen in Hodge's *Systematic Theology*, for example. Then finally after establishing the foundation and other important Bible teachings, one should reach the Apex of Bible Prophecy—first that which is direct discourse, then at last that which is figurative (as in Daniel and Revelation).

Sadly, our forefathers with the Millarites, started in the very reverse, hanging all other beliefs upon the sky hook of our prophetic interpretations. So whether one believed the Bible was God's inspired word and without error, whether one believed in Adamic Sin or not, whether one believed in the Deity of Jesus or not, whether one believed in the Trinity or not, whether one held to Christ's atonement for our sins or not, whether one believed in Christ's work and salvation by faith in Him alone, or not— was of no import for them. Their fellowship was based on Daniel 8:14, the 1843 and 1844 event, and subsequently holding to this and the new views which its failure generated, as well as to Ellen, as God's prophet to guide his 'little flock' into the uncharted waters of learning theology through Bible Fender-Benders! **!**

Tolerance in the church—a sign of hope!

Recently I have had conversations with several employed Seventh-day Adventist pastors who have shared, confidentially, that they no longer believe a number of the "special truths" of Adventism. They do not believe in the 1844 sanctuary doctrine, they do not believe that the Seventh-day Adventist church is the remnant church of Bible prophecy, they do not believe that Ellen

white is a "continuing and authoritative source of truth". They do not believe that the Sabbath is the seal of God nor that Sunday keeping is, or will become, the mark of the beast. The fact that these pastors can remain within the SDA church is a sign of hope that change is coming. However, not all experience this kind of tolerance. Some, are facing opposition, having to study in secret and feel

they are in the process of "studying their way out"—like hundreds have done before them. Adventist leaders face difficult challenges. How can Adventist leadership admit doctrinal error after so many years of claiming doctrinal purity? Let us pray that God will guide Adventist leaders who face difficult decisions.

I believe the doctrines are biblical and true and when Jesus comes back we will see who is right and who is wrong.

Editor's note: because many of the people who write to LAM Inc. are employed within the SDA church, I have chosen to make it a policy not to include initials or any other information which could be used to identify the writer. We want *Proclamation* to be a place where people can be free to say what they feel and believe without any other concerns. Occasionally, when it is evident that the writer is not employed in the SDA church and would like appropriate information included, we will do that.

Thank you for sending me your new journal. I appreciate your Mission, Motto and Message. I am so glad to be out of Adventism after a lifetime of fear and legalism that I appreciate your efforts in helping others escape. I have been an evangelical Episcopalian for four years now, these years have been the best of my life. Your *Sabbath in Crisis* book helped me make the final break. Blessings to you for your dedicated work. The Lord will surely continue to bless you as you proclaim your good news.

It was great to see your new magazine and Life Assurance Ministries still operating... Keep those of us who are still trying to spread the gospel of grace within Adventism in your prayers. I don't know how much longer I will last but signs of the gospel's spread (including growing persecution and controversy about worship) are readily apparent.

Please remove my name from your mailing list. I am not a former Adventist but a current one and I know the Lord led me to the Seventh-day Adventist church in answer to my prayer to lead me to the church that preached the truth. I believe the doctrines are biblical and true and when Jesus comes back we will see who is right and who is wrong. In the meantime, you are being used by a different spirit to accuse the brethren (especially Sister White) and I can only say I'm sorry if you got into legalism in the church but I have only seen love for the Lord, but know that obedience is very important to show that we love Him. I believe you are on the wrong track, ... My prayer is that the Holy Spirit will guide you and that you will be set from the spirit that controls you to work so hard to destroy the faith.

Thanks so much for sending me the first issue of your Proclamation! I really enjoyed the article on the faith of Abraham and how Paul used the illustrations to emphasize righteousness by faith. You've opened a whole new avenue of thought for me on the subject. I also read your appeal for new Former Adventist Fellowship groups and I'd like to offer my

time and services in starting one in the Fresno area... I have already received permission from one of the pastors to hold the meetings at the church. In fact, the pastor is eager to participate if needed. There is also another former Adventist at E Free who is willing to help start the group. I would be happy to talk with you further about this exciting opportunity to reach out to former Adventists in the heart of the Central California Conference. I feel that the Lord has been calling me to do this for some time now, and your newsletter served to reinforce this feeling. I know first hand how difficult it is to release the bonds of legalism and false teaching (I was 3rd generation SDA), and no one was there to guide me through the doubts and the anxiety. If it's the Lord's will, I would like to be that guide for those who are earnestly seeking the truth.

Dear Dale & Carolyn, First of all, thank you so much for sending me the books... I just received the Proclamation in the mail... I read every bit of it. I appreciated most the book on the Sabbath. I have been able to understand and have no problem with the doctrinal error and the EGW issue, but the Sabbath has always been hard for me to understand and get away from, even with a fairly good previous understanding of the Covenant Issue through my own study. I think that because the day to day life of an SDA incorporates the Sabbath, it becomes more of ones cultural heritage than the other issues. It is more part of who we are and whom we have been growing up. So it is like getting rid of the fact that I have German or French in me! Hard to do!... Last year, when we did Romans, (taking 32 weeks and only a few verses each week), I became absolutely convinced of all the issues you bring forward. I think the Sabbath day was finally put to rest, however, your book is helping me to solidify my thoughts and defend my position to those who ask. I grieve for my parents because they will not even look at the issues and study for themselves. I am so glad I feel free... I think the thing that I am sad about the most is the fact that for some reason, growing up SDA, I missed who Christ really was. We were so caught up in rules. When I think about it, I feel like I was like the Children of Israel; I was given the Word of God, I had parents who did their best to instill Godly values, family, church, etc., in me. But I missed the most important thing: Who Christ really was. I knew and believed in Him, I understood what He had done for me and accepted Him into my life. But I did not really KNOW HIM in a way that I could apply His life to mine and live out

His will through His power & not my own, and receive the covenant blessings His grace gives me to be a witness for Him. Israel was like that, they carried the Law & the Prophets, they knew the prophecies concerning their Messiah, but they missed the person He was. I am most sad about that, and I am sad because I see it in my parents, as good of people as they are, I think they miss the greatest blessings because they are so wrapped up in trying to keep SDA laws... I will pray for your ministry and have sent a check in the mail. Keep in touch

Thank you so much for the recent Life Assurance Ministries Publication. After attending Bible studies with friends questioning Adventism, we, through the guiding of the Holy Spirit, discovered truth in Paul's writings. After 23 years of error, I am no longer under bondage, but am free in Christ.

After 40 year in the SDA church, academy and college included, I am now beginning to see clearly. Your correct pastor D., it has taken me about 2 years of study to cut the "cord" mentally with the SDA church. And also, as referenced in the news

letter, I felt a plethora of emotions as I left the circle. Most, I can deal with. Others are tougher. Family ties cause the most concern. My own family members have stated they know that heaven is not only for the SDA's, but I will be held accountable and not allowed in because I know what the "truth" is and yet refuse to follow. What I know is what I was raised with, which does not make it the truth. What I know is that I was taught to never question this (and now I know why). During my "departure" over the last 2 years, I have felt a loss, the reason for which I could not exactly put my finger on. I believe it must have been the loss of that system which I was raised in—a feeling of being let down by that system. Having recently found a "home" where the emphasis is in understanding the word grace and all that it implies, I am having a great time. I am free of the works based theology that I could never keep up with. Now I find, I never had to. The gift is there for the taking. Pastor D, thanks for allowing yourself to be used and leading those of us who need your insight. I will support your efforts because I know there are others like myself. Pray for my family. I want them to know how great this is. THIS is Christianity. Its good stuff!!

Mail letters and donations to:

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

Will You Join Us in This Ministry?

We want to thank those who contributed funds to support this ministry. Without you we could not continue. You should have received a donation receipt in the mail and you will also receive one just after the end of the year showing the total donations for the year.

As we said in the last *Proclamation!*, this is a faith ministry and is supported only by the contributions of you, the readers. Several things need to be made clear. No one is making any money on this ministry. I have not taken anything for my work. Richard Tinker, who formats this journal, has not received anything for his many hours of skilled computer work nor have any others on our board. Also,

we have not paid anyone to write for *Proclamation!*. Several former SDA theologians have expressed an interest in becoming contributing writers. I hope we will soon be able to pay all those who are working to make *Proclamation!* a success. The laborer is worthy of his wage. We have chosen to publish a quality journal and that is expensive. We believe we are doing God's will and we believe the funds will come in. We printed 3000 issues of *Proclamation!* last time, and since then we have received literally thousands of new names which you have sent in. We were not able to increase the amount of copies printed, however. If you believe in this ministry, or

if you want to continue to receive *Proclamation!*, why not partner with us?

If everyone would just send in a little as you are able, it would be enough. We know that many cannot help financially, and for one reason or another, many will not. We believe some will want to send in large amounts to make up the difference. In any event, we wish to continue to offer *Proclamation!* free of charge to anyone who requests it and to the names you send in. We want to exalt Christ and his gracious work in all we do. Mail donations to: Life Assurance Ministries, Inc. PO Box 11587, Glendale AZ 85318. Thanks for your support and prayers.

—Dale Ratzlaff

Resources to help you know and grow

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**Ellen White's
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Pre-Advent
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A Brief Appraisal

Fred Mazzaferri, Ph.D.



Latest News on "A Theologian's Journey"

A Theologian's Journey from Seventh-day Adventism to Mainstream Christianity, by Jerry Gladson, Ph.D. is now, at last, in stock. This is a must-read eye opener! Dr. Gladson was an SDA theologian, professor and pastor serving an important role at the central core of Adventist scholarship for many years.

Drawing from his meticulously kept journals, Dr. Gladson describes events at the center of the recent crisis in Adventism. Dr. Gladson has done something few other scholars have been able to do. He has combined careful, detailed research with a gripping, narrative style of writing. The reader is forced to crawl under the skin of Dr. Gladson, see through his eyes and feel the trauma of having to choose between career and conscience. One cannot put the book down until finished.

This book, more than any other book published to date, uncovers the hidden, toxic, core of Adventism. This book will powerfully affect those who read it. You will hurt with Dr. Gladson and rejoice with him at what he calls, "God's crazy grace."

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