



# HEAVENLY SANCTUARY

## AND INVESTIGATIVE JUDGMENT

*For The Modern World*

Timothy R. Jennings



The Setting

The Seventh-day Adventist (SDA) church was founded not only upon the belief in the imminent return of Jesus, but also upon the idea that the church has a special mission to take a specific message to the world as part of preparing the world for the second coming of Christ.

God’s truth never changes, yet its presentation adapts and advances to be most effective for all the various generations and cultures. The SDA church has been blessed with a beautiful message for every nation, people and culture of the world. In this document, timeless truths that penetrate denominational and cultural boundaries are presented in the language of the modern world.

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The War

The Scriptures disclose the cosmic conflict being waged between good and evil, which is a war of ideas centering on the truth about God:

“For though we live in the world, we do not **wage war** as the world does. The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world. On the contrary, they have divine power to demolish strongholds. We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up **against the knowledge of God**, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ.” (2Cor 10:3-5 NIV84).



If we accept lies from the father of lies, then we break trust with God and rebel into sinfulness. If we accept the truth as it is in Jesus, then we are won to trust and open our hearts for the indwelling of the Holy Spirit to cleanse, heal and restore us to God’s perfection.

Satan’s Root Lie

The SDA church was called to continue the Protestant Reformation by confronting and freeing people from believing Satan’s root-deception which has infected Christianity. This root deception is that

*God’s law functions like human law – imperial, imposed laws and rules that require judicial oversight and external legal / punitive enforcement*

but scripture teaches that

*God’s laws are design laws – the protocols upon which life, health and reality are built (law of gravity, thermodynamics; laws of health; law of love, liberty, worship, etc.) – which are an expression of God’s character of love, for they have been designed for the benefit and health of all His creation. However, deviations from God’s design-laws damage and destroy those who break His laws – without the need of external legal enforcement or inflicted punishment.*

“...before we can explore what is transpiring in the heavenly sanctuary, we must first understand the nature of the heavenly records and the three-part nature of humankind.

To familiarize yourself with the difference between design-law and imperial, imposed human-law concept and how Christianity became infected with the human-law construct, please read Addendum 1 (page 12 of this document), which contains in-depth explanation. This is foundational to understanding the rest of this article.

The Heavenly Records

The way we view God’s law (as design-law or imposed-law) determines how we understand essentially every Christian doctrine and ultimately how we understand the character and government of God. Thus our view of law impacts our view of the heavenly records and the events transpiring in the heavenly sanctuary.

Therefore, before we can explore what is transpiring in the heavenly sanctuary, we must first understand the nature of the heavenly records and the three-part nature of humankind.

The view that God’s law functions like human law (imposed rules) leads to the conclusions such as:

- The records in heaven are legal documents containing recorded lists of bad deeds (sins);
- The sins (historical acts of evil) are recorded in the books in heaven within the sanctuary, and these lists of sins contaminate the sanctuary;
- The cleansing of the sanctuary is the removing from books in heaven the recorded lists of sins of the righteous.

But if we view this doctrine through the lens of design-law – that God’s laws are the protocols upon which the Creator built reality to operate – then something much more profound is understood.

With design-law in mind, what are the heavenly records, and what is actually recorded in them? Do we believe that



there are scrolls in heaven, made of lambskin or parchment, containing handwritten lists of sins; or maybe printed books with glue- or stitch-binding, filled with long lists of evil deeds? Or is the Bible language of ‘books’ and ‘records’ a metaphor for some type of recording or data-storage system? And, if it is a data-storage system, what is stored therein?

Ellen G. White (EGW) wrote the following about what is actually recorded in the heavenly records:

“Remember, **your character is being daguerreo-typed** [photographed] **by the great Master Artist in the record books of heaven**, as minutely as the face is reproduced upon the polished plate of the artist. What do the books of heaven say in your case? Are you conforming your character to the Pattern, Jesus Christ? Are you washing your robes of character and making them white in the blood of the Lamb?” (TSB 62.1)

“Every passing hour of the present is shaping our future life. These moments spent in carelessness, in self-pleasing, as if of no value, are deciding our everlasting destinies. The words we utter today will go on echoing when time shall be no more. **The deeds done today are transferred to the books of heaven, just as the features are transferred by the artist onto the polished plate.** They will determine our destiny for eternity, for bliss or eternal loss and agonizing remorse. **Character cannot be changed when Christ comes, nor just as a man is about to die. Character building must be done in this life.**” (TM 429.3)

Is it possible that what is stored in the heavenly records are the individualities of people – the exact details of what makes up their specific and unique personality and character – and not lists of bad behaviors?

Since the investigative judgment deals with the dead – in addition to the living – let’s first examine what happens to the dead in relation to God’s record-keeping.

“Why is it, that killing of the body cannot destroy the soul? Because the soul is our psyche, our individuality, our unique personhood and is distinct from the body.



The Destination of the Dead

Have you considered where people go when they die? Do they return to dust? Do they go to God? Do they go to heaven? Or do they do all three?

According to the Bible, human beings are tripartite: “Now may the God of peace himself make you completely holy and may your **spirit** and **soul** and **body** be kept entirely blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.” (1Thes 5:23 NET). Is it possible that at death, one part of a human returns to dust, one part goes to God, and one part goes to heaven?

Interestingly, computers are also tripartite and serve as a very poignant object lesson. In order to have an **operational computer**, one needs **hardware**, **software**, and an **energy source**. Having only two of these three results in a computer that will not operate. All three are required for actual functioning.

In a similar way, to have an **operational** (functioning) human being, it requires all three components – **body**, **soul**, and **spirit**:

- The Greek word for **body** is σῶμα [soma] and is analogous to a computer’s **hardware** – the physical machine, including our brain.
- The Greek word for **soul** is ψυχή [psuche], from which we get psyche, as in *psychiatry* and *psychology*, and it means our individuality – our heart, unique personhood, character,

identity.<sup>1</sup> It is analogous to computer’s **software** (including database / datasets / data).

- And the Greek word for **spirit** is πνεῦμα [pneuma], from which we get pneumonia or pneumatic and it means wind, air or breath – as in the breath-of-life. This is our **energy source** – the life-energy originating from God.

If a computer runs out of power, what state does it go into? It sleeps. This is exactly how the Bible describes those who die the first death: they sleep, awaiting the resurrection (see Ps 7:5, 13:3; Mt 9:24; Jn 11:12-13; 1Thes 4:13). So, with this in mind, we can now answer what actually happens to the various components of a human being at death.

At the first death,

- the body returns to dust (see Gen 3:19, Ps 44:25, Ecc 3:20);
- the spirit – life energy – returns to God who gave the breath of life (see Ecc 12:7);
- but what about the soul (psuche / psyche) – the individuality / the software? Where does that go?

<sup>1</sup> The use of the term soul can be confusing, because sometimes the term soul refers to the entire living being. When someone sends out an SOS (save our souls), they are calling for their entire living selves to be saved. In this article, however, the soul as referenced in 1Thes 5:23 is not the entire living person, but one (the psuche / individuality) of the three components that make up the entire human being.

The Cloud-Servers

If someone stole your laptop and was threatening to destroy it, but you had a perfect copy of the data backed up on a cloud-server, you might say, “I’m not afraid of the one who can destroy my laptop (hardware / body / soma) but cannot destroy the software (soul / psuche).” This is what Jesus described in Matthew 10:28 when He spoke about those who might kill us for our faith in Him.

Why is it, that killing of the body cannot destroy the soul? Because the soul is our individuality, our unique personhood, and it is distinct from the body. The question is, *Where does the soul go when it is absent from the body?* The apostle Paul answers,

“Therefore we are always confident, knowing that, whilst we are at home in the body, we are absent from the Lord: (For we walk by faith, not by sight:) We are confident, I say, and willing rather to be **absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord.**” (2Cor 5:6-8 KJV)

But where would our souls / individualities / software be stored in heaven? Would it not be in the heavenly records – the Lamb’s Book of Life (“servers”)? Just like in EGW’s description above (TSB 62.1), our *characters* are recorded in the heavenly records – similar in precision of detail to a photograph. If someone destroyed your laptop but your data was safe on a cloud-server, the data would not be active and operational but dormant – awaiting download to new hardware. And when our bodies die and decay to dust; the breath of life returns to God; and our souls / individualities are safely stored on the heavenly “servers” in the presence of the Lord, in what state are they? They are asleep / dormant / in stasis, awaiting download into new bodies (hardware) at the resurrection. The apostle Paul brilliantly describes this very process:

“Brothers, we do not want you to be ignorant about those who **fall asleep**, or to grieve like the rest of men, who have no hope. We believe that Jesus died and rose again and so we believe that **God will bring with Jesus those who have fallen asleep in him.** The Lord himself will come down from heaven, with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet call of God, and **the dead in Christ will rise first.** After that, we who are still alive and are left will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And so we will be with the Lord forever.” (1Thes 4:13-18 NIV84)

Did you notice that the very same righteous dead who arise out of the ground are also coming down out of heaven with Christ, and that they are described as coming from heaven



in a state of sleep? How can this be? Because their souls / individualities / software, which are stored on the heavenly ‘servers,’ are coming down with Christ to be downloaded into their new immortal bodies during the resurrection at the Second Coming! Jesus, the Builder of our tripartite beings, understood this and proclaimed,

“I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in me will live, even though he dies; and whoever lives and believes in me will never die.” (Jn 11:25,26 NIV84)

The righteous may *sleep*, but they never *die*. Their individualities are safe with Christ in heaven!<sup>2</sup>

The Cleansing of the Records

So, what do the heavenly records (individualities stored on “servers”) have to do with the investigative judgment and the removing of sins from the sanctuary in heaven?

When Jesus raises the righteous at the first resurrection, will they arise defective and sinful, or perfect and sinless? Obviously, perfect and sinless, but did all the saved who have died throughout history die in perfect sinlessness, or did they die as sinners who loved Jesus and trusted Him for their salvation yet still struggled with defects in their lives?

Will they rise with those same defects? Will the thief on the cross, who found salvation in Christ, arise with the heart of a thief longing to steal? Will the great reformer Martin Luther, who held staunch hatred of the Jews, arise hating the Jews and longing to kill them? No! The righteous arise in sinless perfection.

Therefore, something needs to happen in these saved souls **before** the resurrection, so that at the moment of resurrection, their previous evil habits, selfish natures, addictive tendencies and lusts will be gone. Wouldn’t all the vestiges of sin need to be removed?

We could describe this process as a healing, cleansing, or removing of sins. And from where are these sins being removed? From the individualities / souls of the sleeping people who have trusted in Jesus. They are receiving from Jesus *His* perfection, so that when they arise, they arise perfected! EGW describes it this way:

“We believe without a doubt that Christ is soon coming. This is not a fable to us; it is a reality. **When He comes He is not to cleanse us of our sins, to remove**

2 This article does not address the fate of the unrepentant wicked. Nothing in this article speaks to the mortality or immortality of the soul – that is a different discussion. However, it is the author’s position that the soul is mortal and immortality is a gift from God for the saved (see Rom 6:23).

**from us the defects in our characters, or to cure us of the infirmities of our tempers and dispositions. If wrought for us at all, *this work will all be accomplished before that time.*”** (CCh 214.4)

And in addition to the metaphor of records, the Bible uses another metaphor for the safekeeping of the individualities of the righteous – the heavenly sanctuary! (see Eph 2:19-22; 1Pet 2:5; 2Cor 5:1). This cleansing of the individualities / souls of the dead is described in Revelation, using beautiful symbolism:

“When he opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar [in the sanctuary] the souls [individualities] of those who had been slain because of the word of God and the testimony they had maintained. They called out in a loud voice, “How long, Sovereign Lord, holy and true, until you judge the inhabitants of the earth and avenge our blood?” Then each of them was given a white robe [the cleansing of their characters at that time], and they were told to wait a little longer, until the number of their fellow servants and brothers who were to be killed as they had been was completed [cleansing of the living on earth].” (Rev 6:9-11 NIV84)

So, we could describe the process of removing of sins as the cleansing of the sanctuary. We could say that

*Jesus, our heavenly High Priest, is accessing and analyzing every individual record closely, and for all those who have trusted Him, He removes the sins from their account / individuality;*

which in modern language, means

*He examines in detail the stored data that constitutes every person, and for those who trust Him, He corrects all damaged code – removes all elements of selfishness, all tendencies to sin – and writes in His perfection!*

This cleansing process could be displayed and taught in a real-life theater – acted out in symbols – as a day in which the High Priest brings the people into perfect at-one-ment with God. We could call it the *day of at-one-ment* and symbolically act it out by the seven-fold application of Jesus’ blood (seven is the number of completion or perfection, and blood is a symbol for the perfect, sinless life of Jesus). This is exactly what was acted out on the Day of Atonement, and this is what the saints profess Jesus did for them (see Lev 16:14; Rev 1:5).

“He examines in detail the stored data that constitutes every person, and for those who trust Him, He corrects all damaged code – removes all elements of selfishness, all tendencies to sin – and writes in His perfection!

This is why in the ceremonial system, the law was in the ark in the Most Holy Place, where at-one-ment occurs; but in the New Covenant, the law is written by our High Priest into the hearts and minds of the saved (see Heb 8:10). EGW describes the object lesson of the temple as follows:

“**In the cleansing of the temple**, Jesus was announcing His mission as the Messiah, and entering upon His work. That temple, erected for the abode of the divine Presence, was designed to be an object lesson for Israel and for the world. From eternal ages it was God’s purpose that **every created being, from the bright and holy seraph to man, should be a temple for the indwelling of the Creator**. Because of sin, humanity ceased to be a temple for God. Darkened and defiled by evil, the heart of man no longer revealed the glory of the Divine One. But by the incarnation of the Son of God, the purpose of Heaven is fulfilled. God dwells in humanity, and through saving grace **the heart of man becomes again His temple**. God designed that the temple at Jerusalem should be a continual witness to the high **destiny open to every soul**. But the Jews had not understood the significance of the building they regarded with so much pride. They did not yield themselves as holy temples for the Divine Spirit. The courts of the temple at Jerusalem, filled with the tumult of unholy traffic, represented all too truly **the temple of the heart**, defiled by the presence of sensual passion and unholy thoughts. **In cleansing the temple from the world’s buyers and sellers, Jesus announced His mission to cleanse the heart from the defilement of sin – from the earthly desires, the selfish lusts, the evil habits, that corrupt the soul**. “The Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to His temple, even the Messenger of the covenant, whom ye delight in: behold, He shall come, saith the Lord of hosts. But who may abide the day of His coming? and who shall stand when He appeareth?





for He is like a refiner’s fire, and like fullers’ soap: and He shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver: and He shall purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver. Malachi 3:1-3.👉👉 (DA 161.1)

The “cleansing of the sanctuary” is the cleansing of souls / individualities, and EGW connects this cleansing of the temple / sanctuary directly to Malachi 3:1-3. This is critical, because Malachi 3:1-3 describes the same event as the one in Daniel 8:14, that began in 1844.

“The coming of Christ as our high priest to the most holy place, for the cleansing of the sanctuary, brought to view in Daniel 8:14; the coming of the Son of man to the Ancient of days, as presented in Daniel 7:13; and the coming of the Lord to His temple, foretold by Malachi, are descriptions of the same event; and this is also represented by the coming of the bridegroom to the marriage, described by Christ in the parable of the ten virgins, of Matthew 25.👉👉 (GC 426.1)

### The Significance of 1844

In 1844, Christ shifted the focus of His work from exclusively winning people to trust in Him, to the final removal of all defects from the soul / database of each individual who has died trusting in Him, so that at the resurrection, each saint will arise in total perfection of mind, body and spirit. However, He is only able to do this for those who have given Him the key to their hearts / souls / databases – those who have exercised trust in Him prior to their sleep-death. This provides Him the freedom to access and fix all residual traces of sin from the stored individualities of those who trust Him.<sup>3</sup> But for those who never in this life opened their hearts in trust to Him – inviting Him in – He can do nothing. He cannot write into their character ‘trust and love’ without their consent and desire for it. Trust and love must be chosen and developed by the individual while alive.

Imagine the following scenario: You trust your doctor, and while you are asleep (under anesthesia), your doctor performs

3 Paul’s description in 1Cor 15 of the mortal putting on immortality and corruption being changed to incorruption in a moment is specifically talking about the body; it does not address the soul / individuality.

“In order to cleanse the living, the truth about our Creator God and His design-law of love had to be recovered...



Describing the resurrection of the unsaved, EGW confirms that their hearts and minds are *not* changed while they are asleep. As the wicked have rejected Christ, He can do nothing for them, and therefore when they are raised, their thought patterns remain unhealed.

“As they [the unsaved] come forth from their graves, they resume the current of their thoughts where it ceased in death. They possess the same desire to conquer which ruled when they fell.👉👉 (EW 293.1)

The wicked have not had their evil desires or selfish thought-patterns cleansed – as the righteous have – thus they arise still infected with sinfulness.

But why wait until 1844 to start this final work? Because Jesus needs to not only perfect the individualities of the dead / asleep who have placed their trust in Him, but He also has to do the same for those who are still alive on earth at the time of His Second Coming. An infinite God could fix individualities / datasets instantly, so it was not to provide Jesus with enough time to cleanse the records of the deceased that this work didn’t begin until 1844. But it was

because Satan counterattacked the work of Jesus and infected Christianity with his lies about God, and God foreknew it wouldn’t be until 1844 that enough truth would be recovered to reject the lies and return to worship of our Creator God.

In order to cleanse the living, the truth about our Creator God and His design-law of love had to be recovered in order for the final message to go out and lighten the world and for the lies about God to be refuted, so a people on earth could be prepared to take the message about God’s character of love throughout the world.

Jesus needs to not only perfect the individualities of those asleep in death who have placed their trust in Him, but He also has to do the same for those who are still alive on earth at the time of His second coming. This means He needs a people who have comprehended the truth sufficiently enough to expunge the lies about God from their minds and experience the transformation of their individualities / souls. Because of Satan’s counterattack on Christ’s work at the cross, it wasn’t until 1844 that people on earth were ready to begin this final preparation.

### The Little Horn’s Attack

After Christ’s victory at the cross, Satan’s *man of sin* – the little-horn power, as Paul and Daniel describe him – wages war against God’s people by attacking the truth about God. This evil power advances its assault on God’s character by changing people’s perception of God’s law – it replaces the truth of God’s design-law with the human imposed-law lie. This little-horn power – man of sin – thereby sets himself up in God’s temple, proclaiming himself to be God (see Dan 7:25; 2Cor 10:3-5; 2Thes 2:4), by getting humans to conceive of God as an authoritarian dictator – an imposer of rules, who, in order to be just, must use His power to inflict punishment and death on the unrepentant. This little-horn power is winning the war of ideas by filling hearts and minds of people with imperial, dictatorial views of God until the Ancient of Days comes and gives judgment / discernment to the saints (see Dan 7:22).

God, looking down the corridors of time, tells His friend Daniel that 490 years remain for the Jewish people to be the avenue for the Messiah. In the middle of the last week of their mission, the Messiah will come and end the ceremonial system, and He will provide the remedy for human salvation (see Dn 9:24-27). But the little-horn power will arise after Christ’s victory at the cross, and it will war against the saints until a message goes forth from God, proclaiming to the world: Be in awe of God, for the time has come for people to make a right judgment about God – to worship the Designer, Creator, Him who made the heavens, earth, seas and fountains of waters (see Rev 14:7).



The Three Angels’ Message is specific in its design to turn the minds of people away from the imperial dictator-god with its false, imposed Roman-law construct, back to our Creator God, whose laws are the design-protocols upon which life is built. Those who accept the truth about God and His design-law understand their need for healing and transformation, and they cooperate with Jesus in His work of cleansing the sanctuary – their souls – so that they will be prepared to meet Him face to face. Those who reject the truth about God and His design-law continue to perpetuate the lie of the little horn and teach the investigative judgment concept through legal lenses, subvert the church, and obstruct the final healing message.

Daniel 8:14 only specifies the starting point of the cleansing work. The other texts referenced above (GC 426.1) describe the actual events taking place. Notice how Malachi describes what happens during this time. Here is how EGW explains it:

“Says the prophet: ‘Who may abide the day of His coming? and who shall stand when He appeareth? for He is like a refiner’s fire, and like fullers’ soap; and He shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver; **and He shall purify the sons of Levi**, and purge them as gold and silver, that they may offer unto the Lord an offering in righteousness.’ Malachi 3:2, 3. **Those who are living upon the earth when the intercession of Christ shall cease in the sanctuary above are to stand in the sight of a holy God without a mediator. Their robes must be spotless, their characters must be purified from sin by the blood of sprinkling. Through the grace of God and their own diligent effort, they must be conquerors in the battle with evil. While the investigative judgment is going forward in Heaven, while the sins of penitent believers are being removed from the sanctuary, there is to be a special work of purification, of putting away of sin, among God’s people upon earth.** This work is more clearly presented in the messages of Revelation 14. **When this work shall have been accomplished, the followers of Christ will be ready for His appearing.**” (GC 425.1)

The At-one-ment

Notice that in the very context of describing the investigative judgment and the cleansing of the sanctuary, EGW defines the action taking place during this event as the *cleansing of the Levites*, which symbolizes the healing of God’s people, so that they / we will be ready to meet Him when He comes! This is the same process as described in DA 161.1 quoted earlier. But does the cleansing of the hearts and minds of the living (see DA 161.1, GC 425.1 above) also apply to the deceased? Yes! And it is described as *removing sins from the sanctuary*:

“The minds of all who embrace this message are directed to the **most holy place, where Jesus stands before the ark, making His final intercession for all those for whom mercy still lingers** and for those who have ignorantly broken the law of God. **This atonement is made for the righteous dead as well as for the righteous living.** It includes all who died trusting in Christ, but who, not having received the light upon God’s commandments, had sinned ignorantly in transgressing its precepts.” (EW 254.1)

Christ’s final intercession in the investigative judgment is to make at-one the individualities of both the dead and the living – fixing within the individualities of the dead the things upon which they had not received light but would be happy to have changed because they *trust* Jesus.

The Five Legal Virgins

This at-one-ment is taught in another parable, which describes the same event – the parable of the ten virgins. And what does EGW have to say about that parable?

“In the parable, all the ten virgins went out to meet the bridegroom. All had lamps and vessels for oil. **For a time there was seen no difference between them.** So with the church that lives just before Christ’s second coming. **All have a knowledge of the Scriptures. All have heard the message of Christ’s near approach, and confidently expect His appearing.** But as in the

parable, so it is now. A time of waiting intervenes, faith is tried; and when the cry is heard, “Behold, the Bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet Him,” many are unready. **They have no oil in their vessels with their lamps. They are destitute of the Holy Spirit.**” (COL 408.2)

“Without the Spirit of God, **a knowledge of His word is of no avail.** The theory of truth, unaccompanied by the Holy Spirit, **cannot quicken the soul or sanctify the heart.** One may be familiar with the commands and promises of the Bible; but unless the Spirit of God sets the truth home, **the character will not be transformed.** Without the enlightenment of the Spirit, men will not be able to distinguish truth from error, and they will fall under the masterful temptations of Satan.” (COL 408.3)

“The class represented by the foolish virgins are not hypocrites. They have a regard for the truth, they have advocated the truth, they are attracted to those who believe the truth; but they have not yielded themselves to the Holy Spirit’s working. They have not fallen upon the Rock, Christ Jesus, and permitted their old nature to be broken up. This class are represented also by the stony-ground hearers. They receive the word with readiness, but they fail of assimilating its

principles. Its influence is not abiding. The Spirit works upon man’s heart, according to his desire and consent implanting in him a new nature; but the class represented by the foolish virgins have been content with a superficial work. They do not know God. They have not studied His character; they have not held communion with Him; therefore they do not know how to trust, how to look and live. Their service to God degenerates into a form. “They come unto thee as the people cometh, and they sit before thee as My people, and they hear thy words, but they will not do them; for with their mouth they show much love, but their heart goeth after their covetousness.” Ezekiel 33:31. The apostle Paul



Christ’s final intercession in the investigative judgment is to make at-one the individualities of both the dead and the living.

points out that this will be the special characteristic of those who live just before Christ’s second coming. He says, “In the last days perilous times shall come: for men shall be lovers of their own selves; ... lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God; having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof. 2 Timothy 3:1-5.” (COL 411.1)

The foolish virgins have a form of godliness – they have the Word of God, they have their rules, a legal / penal / human religion – but they have not experienced a change of heart. They have not internalized the design-law of God – His principles – into their character.

The Last Great Conflict

The battle between Christ and Satan has always been a battle for hearts and minds, fought over ideas – the truth of God versus the lies of Satan. And Satan’s lies have always been over God’s law. EGW explains it like this:

“The last great conflict between truth and error is but the final struggle of the long-standing controversy concerning the law of God. Upon this battle we are now entering, – a battle between the laws of men and the precepts of Jehovah, between the religion of the Bible and the religion of fable and tradition.” (GC 582.2)

“There is no such thing as weakening or strengthening the law of Jehovah. As it has been, so it is. It always has been, and always will be holy, just, and good, complete in itself. It cannot be repealed or changed. To ‘honor’ or ‘dishonor’ it is but the speech of men.” (PK 625.1)

“Between the laws of men and the precepts of Jehovah will come *the last great conflict* of the controversy between truth and error. Upon this battle we are now entering – a battle not between rival churches contending for the supremacy, but between the religion of the Bible and the religions of fable and tradition.” (PK 625.2)

What kind of law **cannot** be weakened or strengthened, has always been, and will always be? None other than



the design-laws upon which reality is built to exist! Imposed rules, like *humans* make – which require external enforcement – can be changed, updated and altered. It is only when we reject this imperial Roman lie about God’s law and return to worship our Creator that we can finish our end-time work and experience the cleansing offered to us by God.

The Blood Metaphor

Some may ask: If this is so, why use a metaphor of blood, where blood contaminates the sanctuary at one point (please see below), yet cleanses it at another point? Because the metaphor was needed to communicate concepts beyond the comprehension of the people at the time it was given – yet remained true to reality – and with which people of all time could connect: All people have blood containing their DNA, and every person’s DNA is unique – a unique transcript of them – but it is filled with many defects. The blood metaphor of the sin offering symbolizes the transfer of each individuality to heaven with all their residual defects (which signifies the contaminating of the sanctuary). EGW describes it this way:

“Day by day 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. The animal was then slain. ... **The blood, representing the forfeited life of the sinner,** whose guilt the victim bore, 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.” (GC 418.1)

Symbolically described above, the individualities of all who have trusted in God have been safely recorded in the sanctuary in heaven, yet those records contained all their residual defects. During the investigative judgment, those who trust in Christ have His ‘blood’ / character / perfect code used as the template to fix and heal all residual defects / corrupt code in them. This blood metaphor is brilliant, because the DNA not only codes for our physical bodies, but

“ There is a real sanctuary in heaven, where the individualities of the saved are stored on the heavenly ‘servers.’



illustration by Louis Johnson

within the DNA, memories can be stored.<sup>4</sup> Thus, the blood symbolizes the unique individuality of every person!

The Present Truth Applied

So, my position is this: There is a real sanctuary in heaven, where the individualities of the saved are stored *on the heavenly ‘servers.’* Since 1844, Christ has been opening the individual accounts / recorded data-sets of all who have trusted Him, and removing all residual traces of sin that were left when they fell asleep in death, so that every one of the saved will be perfect and sinless when they arise at the resurrection.

The message of God for this time is the message of His character of love and His design-law of love, including the work of Jesus in His heavenly temple to prepare all who trust Him to live in His presence for eternity. Jesus won the victory at Calvary; He procured the remedy to sin, and He is now in heaven, applying His

perfection to the hearts, minds and characters of all who trust Him. This is all in harmony with His character, methods and design-law of love. This is not a legal, judicial process but an actual fixing of what sin has broken within us. A legal, judicial process *cannot* fix our damaged characters.

The SDA church has a mission of taking the ‘Three Angels’ Messages to the world – to prepare people for Christ’s return – and central to that mission is the rejection of Rome’s imperial view of God’s law, and leading people back to worshipping Him who made the heavens, earth and fountains of water!

I invite you to worship our Designer, Creator and Savior, and give glory to Him by revealing His character of love in your life, because the hour in human history has come for people to make a right judgment about God – to reject the dictator-view of God, with its false imperial-law construct – and worship Him who made the heavens, earth, seas and fountains of water.



4 Goldman, N.; Bertone, P.; Chen, S.; Dessimoz, C.; Leproust, E. M.; Sipos, B.; Birney, E. (2013). "Towards practical, high-capacity, low-maintenance information storage in synthesized DNA." Nature. 494 (7435): 77–80. doi:10.1038 / nature11875. PMC 3672958. PMID 23354052.

ADDENDUM 1:

The Little Horn, God’s Law, and How You Have Been Deceived

A time-tested military strategy is *diversion*: create a ruckus in one area, get the enemy focusing on a distraction, and then attack from their blind spot. Magicians, charlatans and hucksters rely upon misdirection as the bedrock of their deceptive craft. Get your attention focused on one action so you don’t notice their true intent, and before you know it, you are conned into believing they have power or wisdom, or the best place to invest your money.

Yes, the greatest deceivers throughout history have learned the importance of giving your mind something tangible to embrace, something concrete to find wrong, some actual danger to guard against. Then, when your mind is focused on the perceived problem, they hit with their real attack. They know that when you believe you have identified the ‘trick,’ figured out the ‘con,’ or uncovered the ‘deceit,’ you will be vulnerable to their real exploit. Satan, the greatest deceiver in the universe, uses this strategy with near perfection.

For years, like many other Christians, I was bamboozled into believing I knew the devil’s lie about God’s law, but recently, I discovered that I had only identified his misdirection. What about you? Have you discovered Satan’s actual lie, or are you merely locked onto Satan’s diversion, and therefore continue to embrace his real deceit?

Daniel 7:25 predicts that an evil power would arise and try to ‘change’ God’s law. Protestant Christians have historically understood that this change occurred when a religious power changed the Ten-Commandment-law by removing the second commandment, which prohibited making and worshipping images; splitting the tenth commandment into two parts (to keep the total number of commandments at ten, after deleting number two); and by changing the Sabbath from Saturday to Sunday. It is without question that these ‘changes’ to the Decalogue were instituted, and the organization that made the changes proudly points to them as proof of its ecclesiastical authority on earth. Any student of church history can quickly document the historical evidence for this ‘change.’ But these changes – this open change to the Decalogue – are Satan’s diversion or master misdirection: make an overt, admitted and endorsed change in the law, get everyone focusing on this obvious modification, arguing for or against it, and then infect their minds with the real change they never even notice – diabolically brilliant!

So what is the real change to God’s law – the change Christians almost universally accept as true? That God’s



laws are imposed-laws placed upon His creatures to govern their lives and test their obedience, rather than the truth that God’s laws are design-protocols upon which life is built to operate. The little-horn power didn’t merely change two commandments; it changed the way we understand very nature of the law itself!

Take a moment and answer the question: What type of law did God build reality upon: *imposed-law* or *design-law*? Does God’s law of love have a beginning point when God enacted it, or is it an extension of God’s character and therefore is eternal? Is God’s law like human law, put in place by government and enforced by government? Or are all of God’s laws – the laws of health, the laws of physics, and the moral laws – the laws upon which the great Creator actually built the universe to operate upon and which are for the health and welfare of His creation, and thus are an expression of His supreme law of love?

It only makes sense that when the God who is love *created*, He constructed, built and designed everything to operate in harmony with His own nature and character of love, because it is by Him that all things hold together (see Col 1:17). This is exactly what Inspiration reveals:

“Love does no harm to its neighbor. Therefore **love is the fulfillment of the law.**” (Rom 13:10; see also Gal 5:14; Jm 2:8; Pr 12:28; Pr 21:21; Ps 19:7)

“‘**Love the Lord your God with all your heart** and with all your soul and with all your mind.’ This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’ **All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments.**” (Mat 22:37-40)

This love is not merely emotional but functional – a principle upon which life is built to operate. Paul describes it this way: “[Love] is not self-seeking.” (1Cor 13:5)

If love doesn’t seek self, what does it seek? Others! Love is giving, outward moving, beneficent. And God, who is love, built reality to operate in harmony with His nature and character of love. As Paul says in Romans 1:20, “For since the creation of the world **God’s invisible qualities – his eternal power and divine nature** – have been clearly seen, **being understood from what has been made**, so that men are without excuse.” All through nature, we see that the law of love – the principle of giving – is the law life is built upon. Every breath we take, we give away carbon dioxide to the plants, and the plants give oxygen back to us – a never-ending circle of giving, which is the foundation of life. Understanding this, EGW wrote:

“In living for self he [the rich man] has rejected that divine love which would have flowed out in mercy to his fellow men. Thus he has rejected life. **For God is love, and love is life.**” (COL 258.3)

“**The law of love being the foundation of the government of God**, the happiness of all created beings depended upon their perfect accord with its great principles of righteousness.” (GC 493.2)

“But turning from all lesser representations, we behold God in Jesus. Looking unto Jesus we see that it is the glory of our God to give. “I do nothing of Myself,” said Christ; “the living Father hath sent Me, and I live by the Father.” “I seek not Mine own glory,” but the glory of Him that sent Me. John 8:28; 6:57; 8:50; 7:18. In these words is set forth **the great principle which is the law of life for the universe**. All things Christ received from God, but He took to give. So in the heavenly courts, in His ministry for all created beings: through the beloved Son, the Father’s life flows out to all; through the Son it returns, in praise and joyous service, a tide of love, to the great Source of all. **And thus through Christ the circuit of beneficence is complete, representing the character of the great Giver, the law of life.**” (DA 21.2)

God’s law is the law of love, and this law is the law upon which life is designed to operate. Break this law, and it automatically results in ruin and death unless the Designer intervenes to heal and restore. Other design-laws include:

- The law of worship – by beholding we are changed. We actually become like the God we admire and worship, characterologically and neurobiologically – our brains rewire based on who we worship.
- The law of liberty – love can only exist in an atmosphere of freedom. Violate liberty in a relationship, and love is damaged, rebellion is incited, and individuality is eroded.
- The law of exertion – if you want something to get stronger, you must exercise it: “If you don’t use it, you lose it,” be it physical or mental.
- The law of sowing and reaping – one reaps what they sow.
- The law of restoration – after a finite being expends a resource, they must rest and recover before they have more to expend. Failure to do so results in burnout and injury.
- The laws of health – physical health requires harmony with the physical laws of health, i.e. nutrition, hydration, respiration, sleep, exercise, etc.

All design-laws are protocols upon which reality is constructed to operate, and violations of these laws of God always damage the ‘offender.’

The false system introduced a change in our understanding of God’s law – the idea that God’s government is like earthly governments, that He imposes law like we impose law. This idea undermines how we see and understand God, because instead of seeing God as Creator and His laws as design-protocols, we view Him functioning no differently than a human dictator – a being who imposes rules and then punishes rule-breakers. As such, we develop theologies organized around this change in God’s law and construct solutions based on this lie. It is by accepting this change to God’s law that the little-horn power has infected Christianity with a false gospel and false god concept. This one change in the law has resulted in teaching that

- God, in order to be just, must impose penalties for sin, and therefore must inflict punishment upon sinners.
- In order to avoid punishing sinners, God must have a legal penalty paid by someone; God sent His Son to pay our legal penalty and punished Him in our place.
- God will be required to exterminate His sinful children in the end if their legal penalty isn’t paid.<sup>5</sup>

This lie has so perniciously infected Christianity that theologians of all denominations viciously defend it and aggressively promote it. It is this lie that distorts the character of God. It is this lie that obstructs the people of God from lighting the world for Christ’s return.

In the book *Education*, EGW again describes God’s design-law:

“The same power that upholds nature, is working also in man. **The same great laws that guide alike the star and the atom control human life. The laws that govern the heart’s action, regulating the flow of the current of life to the body, are the laws of the mighty Intelligence that has the jurisdiction of the soul. From Him all life proceeds.** Only in harmony with Him can be found its true sphere of action. For all the objects of His creation the condition is the same – **a life sustained by receiving the life of God, a life exercised in harmony with the Creator’s will. To transgress His law, physical, mental, or moral, is to place one’s**

<sup>5</sup> Please do not construe this article to say that if God doesn’t inflict punishment upon sinners then there is no punishment for sin. This article supports the reality that sin results in untold suffering and ultimately death, but argues that it is a result of unremedied sin rather than an infliction by God. This article supports the reality that salvation is only achieved through the life, death and resurrection of Christ, but argues that it was not for the purpose of paying a legal penalty, but for other purposes necessary for salvation.



illustration by Louis Johnson





**self out of harmony with the universe, to introduce discord, anarchy, ruin.”** (Ed 99.2)

EGW writes that violation of God’s design-law automatically results in ruin and death, and that we are not to view God as needing to punish sinners for sin:

**“We are not to regard God as waiting to punish the sinner for his sin. The sinner brings the punishment upon himself. His own actions start a train of circumstances that bring the sure result. Every act of transgression reacts upon the sinner, works in him a change of character, and makes it more easy for him to transgress again. By choosing to sin, men separate themselves from God, cut themselves off from the channel of blessing, and the sure result is ruin and death.”** (1SM 235.2)

The law is the principle of righteousness, originating in the mind of God, and upon which life is built. Deviations from it do not require God to punish, but result in ruin and death, unless God intervenes to heal (see Rom 6:23; Jm 1:15). Christ was sent to do just that – heal and restore, “For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him.” (Jn 3:17). But those who have accepted the lie of an imposed-law misunderstand the purpose of God’s written law. They fail to see that the Ten Commandments were added after sin as a diagnostic tool specifically written for sinful human beings in order to convict us of our condition and lead us to Christ for healing (see Rom 5:20). Instead, the legal proponents see the Commandments as a concrete proof of an enacted set of rules to which we must adhere.

Satan – the diabolical deceiver – by diverting our attention to the concrete change in the Ten Commandments, has blinded our minds to his real attack and has successfully infected Christendom with his twisted and utterly false concept of God’s law. Until we free ourselves of Satan’s imposed-law concept, we will be unable to take the gospel to the world and prepare the world for Christ’s return. We will be just like the Jews 2000 years ago, who, believing in an imposed-law, crucified Christ and wanted Him off the cross so they could observe the Sabbath. If we don’t change our understanding of God’s law, and if we insist on promoting an imposed-law concept, then we will be like those misguided Jews, keeping the ‘law’ while living in total opposition to the God of love!

I challenge you to reject the little horn’s distortion of God’s law, embrace the truth about God’s law / character of love, and take the truth about God to the world!

## ADDENDUM 2:

### Investigative Judgment Quotes

The following are several quotes from EGW’s writings, which the adherents to the penal / legal view often cite as proof that the imperial, imposed human-law model is correct and that the investigative judgment is a legal process of removing lists of deeds from ledgers in heaven. Comments in red explain the design-law understanding of these quotes.

“Important truths concerning the atonement are taught by the typical service. A substitute was accepted in the sinner’s stead; but the sin was not canceled by the blood of the victim. [The defect in the individuality of the sinner was not cancelled by the perfect righteousness of Jesus’ victory. The victory of Jesus still needed to be applied to the individuality of the sinner in order to remove from the sinner the defects of character and write in the perfection of Christ.] A means was thus provided by which it was transferred to the sanctuary. [The sanctuary is a metaphor for the place where the souls / individualities of the sinners are kept and ultimately cleansed; the record books are another metaphor.] By the offering of blood, the sinner acknowledged the authority of the law, confessed his guilt in transgression, and expressed his desire for pardon through faith in a Redeemer to come; but he was not yet entirely released from the condemnation of the law. [Through the act of offering the blood, we acknowledge our own infection with sin – a terminal state – and desire to be healed and restored; we acknowledge that God is trustworthy, and that Jesus is sinless and He is the solution for our terminal condition (see notes at the end of this Addendum, documenting that pardon is not extended until the heart is transformed). We are not entirely released from the condemnation of the law, because the law condemns everything that is out of harmony with it. Thus, the law “requires righteousness – a righteous life” (see notes documenting that law requires righteousness, at the end of this Addendum) and until the individuality of each sinner was cleansed by Jesus in the Sanctuary to eliminate all defects, they are still out of harmony with God’s design-law.] On the Day of Atonement, the high priest, having taken an offering from the congregation, went into the most holy place with the blood of this offering, and sprinkled it upon the mercy seat, directly over the law, to make satisfaction for its claims. [The law claims (or requires) perfection – that we become perfect and sinless – because it is the law upon which life is built. Thus, the blood is sprinkled seven times to represent the truth and the life of Jesus being written into the souls / individualities of those who have died in trust to Jesus, so that all defects from sin are removed,

and they are purified to rise in sinless perfection of not only body, but also mind, heart, attitude, character.] Then, in his character of mediator, he took the sins upon himself and bore them from the sanctuary. [As our substitute, not only did Jesus take our sinful condition upon Himself, but He developed a perfect character, expunging the carnal desires. Now, as our High Priest in heaven, He removes the remnant defects of each trusting soul and places the responsibility back upon Satan – the author of the rebellion.] Placing his hands upon the head of the scapegoat, he confessed over him all these sins, thus in figure transferring them from himself to the goat. The goat then bore them away, and they were regarded as forever separated from the people.” (GC 420.1)

“As anciently the sins of the people were by faith placed upon the sin offering, and through its blood transferred, in figure, to the earthly sanctuary, so in the new covenant the sins of the repentant are by faith placed upon Christ, and transferred, in fact, to the heavenly sanctuary. [Through Jesus, we have re-connection to the Father and heaven. It is through placing our trust in Jesus that we have hope of salvation and thereby have our names (characters / souls / individualities) written in the Lamb’s book of life. Thus, those who put their trust in Jesus have their souls / individualities safely transferred to the Sanctuary of God. They become part of the living stones that make up the temple of God. But because they died as sinners, not all defects were removed. Thus, their residual sinfulness – selfishness, lusts, earthly desires – were still in their souls and also transferred to the Sanctuary. Because they have trusted in Jesus, He has access to their souls / individualities and does for them that which they cannot do for themselves: during the Investigative Judgment, while they sleep, He removes all residual defects from those who trust in Him.] And as the typical cleansing of the earthly was accomplished by the removal of the sins by which it had been polluted, so the actual cleansing of the heavenly is to be accomplished by the removal, or blotting out, of the sins which are there recorded. [By removing the residual defects from the souls of those recorded therein.] But before this can be accomplished, there must be an examination of the books of record to determine who, through repentance of sin and faith in Christ, are entitled to the benefits of His atonement. [This is the process of accessing each individual account / record / soul data-base and correcting the damaged code, and thus perfecting the soul.] The cleansing of the sanctuary therefore involves a work of investigation – a work of judgment. [There are two elements here: (1) a judgment / assessment confirming those who have trusted Jesus and those who have not, thus determining who Jesus has the freedom to cleanse and who he does



not; and (2) the judgment / determining which elements need to be removed in order to purify the soul.] This work must be performed prior to the coming of Christ to redeem His people; for when He comes, His reward is with Him to give to every man according to His works. Rev 22:12. [It is only because we have had all residual defects removed, that we will be able to stand in His unveiled glorious presence and see Him face to face when He returns!]] (GC 421.3)

“Christ imparts His righteousness to those who consent to let Him take away their sins. We are indebted to Christ for the grace which makes us complete in Him.” (7BC 971.9)

Notes Documenting that Pardon Is Not Extended Until the Heart Is Transformed

Pardon and justification only happen after the heart is changed:

“As penitent sinners, contrite before God, [heart change takes place first] discern Christ’s atonement in their behalf, and accept this atonement as their only hope in this life and the future life, their sins are pardoned. This is justification by faith. Justification is the opposite of condemnation.” (CTr 150.3)

“David was pardoned of his transgression because he humbled his heart before God in repentance and contrition of soul and believed that God’s promise to forgive would be fulfilled. [Heart change happens first.]” (CTr 150.5)

“But while God can be just, and yet justify the sinner through the merits of Christ, no man can cover his soul with the garments of Christ’s righteousness while practicing known sins or neglecting known duties. God requires the entire surrender of the heart, before justification can take place; [again, heart change before justification] and in order for man to retain justification, there must be continual obedience, through active, living faith that works by love and purifies the soul.” (FW 100.1)

“In order for man to be justified by faith, faith must reach a point where it will control the affections and impulses of the heart; and it is by obedience that faith itself is made perfect.” (FW 100.2)

“Christ imbues men with the attributes of God.

“The atonement of Christ is not a mere skillful way to have our sins pardoned; it is a divine remedy for the cure of transgression and the restoration of spiritual health. It is the heaven-ordained means by which the righteousness of Christ may be not only upon us, but in our hearts and characters.” (7BC 464.2)

Notes Documenting that the Law Requires Righteousness

“The law requires righteousness, – a righteous life, a perfect character; and this man has not to give. He cannot meet the claims of God’s holy law. But Christ, coming to the earth as man, lived a holy life, and developed a perfect character. These He offers as a free gift to all who will receive them. His life stands for the life of men. Thus they have remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God. More than this, Christ imbues men with the attributes of God. He builds up the human character after the similitude of the divine character, a goodly fabric of spiritual strength and beauty. Thus the very righteousness of the law is fulfilled in the believer in Christ. God can “be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus.” Romans 3:26.” (DA 762.2)

“But the law requires that the soul itself be pure and the mind holy, that the thoughts and feelings may be in accordance with the standard of love and righteousness.” (2MCP 564.1)

“God offered them, in His Son, the perfect righteousness of the law. If they would open their hearts fully to receive Christ, then the very life of God, His love, would dwell in them, transforming them into His own likeness; and thus through God’s free gift they would possess the righteousness which the law requires.” (MB 54.2)

“The law requires us to present to God a holy character. It demands of men today just what it demanded of Adam in Eden, – perfect obedience, perfect harmony with all its precepts in all relations of life, under all circumstances and conditions.” (ST, May 30, 1895 par. 2)

ADDENDUM 3:  
The Origins of Penal Substitution Theology

Imperial / imposed-law requires punishment for wrongdoing and thus the church of the Dark Ages taught that sin must be punished. This led to the doctrine of purgatory, where after death, conscious souls have their sins purged through punishment. In Roman Catholic theology, entrance into heaven requires the “remission before God of the temporal punishment due to sins whose guilt has already been forgiven,” for which indulgences may be given which remove “either part or all of the temporal punishment due to sin,” such as an “unhealthy attachment” to sin.<sup>6</sup> Those who die in grace, but who have not yet fulfilled the temporal punishment due to their sin, can do so in purgatory.

One of the major doctrines that the great reformer Martin Luther rejected was the teaching that conscious souls are punished in purgatory. He disagreed with this doctrine in two ways:

- First, he did not believe in a conscious soul that could experience punishment, and instead taught that the saints sleep peacefully: “It is enough for us to know that souls do not leave their bodies to be threatened by the torments and punishments of hell, but enter a prepared bedchamber in which they sleep in peace.”<sup>7</sup>
- Second, Luther put forth a new theory designed to free people from both the fear of purgatory and the exploitation of indulgences to buy loved ones their freedom from further punishment in purgatory. He expanded Anselm’s *satisfaction theory of atonement* by adding inflicted punishment. Luther taught the idea that all sin by all humans from all time were placed on Christ at the cross and punished by God at the cross. Thus, for the saints, there were no unpunished sins remaining to be punished, thus there was no need for purgatory.<sup>8</sup>

Unfortunately, the same root lie underpins both purgatory and Luther’s solution – that God’s law functions like human law and that breaking the law (an act of sin) requires punishment. This is Satan’s lie about God’s law from the beginning. Describing Satan’s opening lies, EGW writes:

6 Catechism of the Catholic Church, “The celebration of the Christian Mystery.” The Holy See. The Catholic Church. Retrieved March 14, 2017.  
7 Weimarer Ausgabe, 43, 360, 21–23 (to Genesis 25:7–10); also Exegetica opera latina, Vol 5–6 1833 p. 120 and the English translation: Luther’s Works, American Edition, 55 vols. (St. Louis: CPH), 4:313.  
8 Paul Althaus, Die Theologie Martin Luthers, 7th ed. (1994), 179, 191-195.







“In the opening of the great controversy, Satan had declared that the law of God could not be obeyed, that justice was inconsistent with mercy, and that, should the law be broken, it would be impossible for the sinner to be pardoned. **Every sin must meet its punishment, urged Satan;** and if God should remit the punishment of sin, He would not be a God of truth and justice.” (DA 761.4)

The completion of the Reformation requires the rejection of this imposed-law lie in order to take the eternal gospel to the world to prepare the world for Christ’s return. We must return to worship our Creator and Designer and realize that His laws are the protocols upon which life is built. We must realize that sin changes the sinner, causing a state of being which is incompatible with life in God’s universe because the sinner is no longer operating upon the law (protocols) that God constructed life to exist. Thus God, through Christ, has been working to heal and restore sinners back into perfection. This is the message of the Three Angels of Revelation 14. This is the true mission of the SDA church – one that we will only fulfill when we eliminate imposed-law with its penal substitutionary lie from our pulpits, books, doctrines, universities and institutions.

#### ADDENDUM 4:

##### Sabbath – Imposed Rule or Design for Life?

**M**any of my friends were raised Seventh-day Adventist and were taught to observe the Bible Sabbath from Friday sunset to Saturday sunset – the same Sabbath hours the Jewish people observe. But a number of them have found the day to be a day of restriction, a day filled with lists of all the things they cannot do. I believe this is due to reading the fourth commandment through the lens of imperial, imposed human-law – rules enacted, rather than through design-law – protocols upon which life is built.

God is Creator, and God built the universe – space, time, matter, energy and life. God’s design-law of love encompasses laws upon which all reality operates, e.g. the law of gravity, thermodynamics, as well as the laws that govern our minds and relationships – the moral laws. Breaking a design-law always injures and requires healing, while breaking imposed rules requires punishment be inflicted by the ruling authority. Sadly, the fourth commandment has been understood through the lens of imposed-law, causing the commandment to sound like some prohibition:

“Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy.” (Ex 20:8)

The key word in this verse is ‘it.’ The Hebrew translation of it is: הוא, היא [huw’, hiy’ / hoo / ] pron 3ps. A primitive word; TWOT 480; GK 2085 and 2115; 38 occurrences; AV translates as “that”, “him”, “same”, “this”, “he”, “which”, “who”, “such”, and “wherein.” 1 he, she, it. 1A himself (with emphasis).<sup>9</sup> This allows for a completely different insight, focused not merely on the grammatical but on the actual application:

- Remember the Sabbath day, keeping *yourself* holy or
- Remember the Sabbath day *in order to stay* holy.

Think about it: If we were to build a golden calf and have an orgy of pagan worship during the Sabbath hours, have we made the Sabbath *less* holy? If we spent the Sabbath hours in total righteous living, would we make the Sabbath *more* holy? We cannot *keep* the Sabbath holy, for we didn’t *make* it holy and we can’t make it unholy – we can only keep *ourselves* holy. And can a person keep themselves holy only one day in seven?

What I am suggesting is not a change to the meaning of the Hebrew text, but an *additional* insight to the truth about Sabbath’s holiness. The *Sabbath’s* holiness doesn’t change – regardless of what we do – but *our* holiness does change depending on what we do. We are sinners who need to be restored to holiness. This only happens through Christ, and the Sabbath is a gift from God to assist us in our restoration to holiness.

The Sabbath was made for man – for what reason? To aide humankind in holiness – in keeping *themselves* holy! And what is holiness? Holiness is the state of *being holy* – being in harmony with God in all aspects of our being. Thus, being holy is living in harmony with God’s character, protocols, methods – His design-laws! And how is the Sabbath related to this?

When was the Sabbath created (remember that the Sabbath was *made* for man)? At the end of creation of planet earth and this solar system. What was happening in the rest of the universe during that week? War! What kind of war and over what?

“And there was **war** in heaven. Michael and his angels fought against the dragon, and the dragon and his angels fought back. But he was not strong enough, and they lost their place in heaven. The great dragon was hurled down – that ancient serpent called the devil, or Satan, who leads the whole world astray. He was hurled to the earth, and his angels with him.” (Rev 12:7-9)

<sup>9</sup> Strong, J. (2001). Enhanced Strong’s Lexicon. Bellingham, WA: Logos Bible Software.

The Greek word translated war is πόλεμος [polemos / pol-em-os], from which we get polemic – it is a war of words, a war of ideas. And Satan is the father of lies (see Jn 8:44). What has been the focus or target of Satan’s lies and where is this war fought?

“For though we live in the world, we do not **wage war** as the world does. The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world. On the contrary, they have divine power to demolish strongholds. We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up **against the knowledge of God**, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ.” (2Cor 10:3-5)

The war is over the truth about God – whether we can trust God and whether He is worthy of our love, devotion, loyalty. God wants our love, trust, loyalty and devotion, but can any being get this from another by threat, coercion, or infliction of punishment? In fact, what happens to love, trust, loyalty and devotion when one threatens and coerces another? Love and trust are broken and rebellion ensues. So, if Satan could get intelligent beings to believe that God is coercive, threatening, the source of inflicted pain, suffering, torture and death, then love and trust would break down and rebellion against God ensue.

How could Satan get intelligent beings to conclude this about God? By alleging that God’s laws are not the design-protocols the Creator built life to operate upon, but instead they function no differently than the rules enacted by human beings – imperial-laws that require the ruling authority to inflict punishment for disobedience. Then how does the Sabbath fit in?

What does it say about God, that in the context of an assault on His right to rule, rather than using His power to force all beings to bow to Him, He creates a day of freedom to think?

Who was watching as God created planet earth?

“Where were you **when I laid the foundation of the earth?** Tell me, if you possess understanding! Who set its measurements – if you know – or who stretched a measuring line across it? On what were its bases set, or who laid its cornerstone – **when the morning stars sang in chorus, and all the sons of God shouted for joy?**” (Job 38:4-7)

The heavenly beings were watching as God created earth while a war over God’s right to rule was raging. Why would God create planet earth at this point in universal history? To demonstrate by actions (give evidence) that Satan’s allegations



were wrong. Earth was created as the pinnacle of Godliness – a world of procreative power to operate upon love; a place where angels could look to find answers to the questions raised by Satan – “We have been made a spectacle to the whole universe, to angels as well as to men.” (1Cor 4:9). Adam and Eve were created in perfect love, to give of themselves in love and create beings in their image, and rule over the planet in other-centered love. In sinless perfection, Adam and Eve would have had children, not to abuse or enslave, but to care for and nurture, thus the way they governed this world would be a microcosm of the universe, revealing how God lovingly rules His entire creation.

And after six days of overwhelming display of creative power, the Godhead says to all the watching beings, “You have heard the allegations against us, you have seen the evidence we have just given; now universe – we rest our case! Take 24 hours aside and think for yourselves, come to your own conclusions, and decide who you are going to trust.”

On days one through six of creation week we learn that God has incredible power, but God doesn’t want His intelligent creatures to be intimidated, to be afraid, to follow Him because of power. God wants His creatures to love Him, trust Him, and be devoted to Him in loyal admiration. Thus, after six days of creation, God created a day of freedom, a day where God stops using power and steps back, giving His creatures space and time to consider and think. Day seven reveals the character of the One who wields the power: God presented evidence (truth) in love while leaving His creatures free to decide for themselves. No coercion, no intimidation, no pressure – freedom!

Then what is the purpose of the Sabbath commandment? It is a reminder of the gift (the Sabbath) God has given us to aid humanity in keeping ourselves holy – in how one lives their life – in harmony with God and His design for life. Do we present truth in love and leave others free, or do we use imperial rules and coerce others with threats of punishment?

All week long we are to *Remember the Sabbath to keep ourselves holy*. We are to be beings who present truth in love while leaving others free. Only those who practice these principles of God in their lives are true Sabbath-keepers. Those who crucified Christ had the right day of the week but did not have God’s principles written into their characters. They were not Sabbath-keepers.

With this in mind, we realize that God is Creator and His laws are the protocols upon which all life is built to operate. As the Creator of time, God built into time a day for human health, holiness, growth, development; a day of evidence to reveal truth about how God governs. Every seven days, every human being passes through this day – this reminder,

this piece of evidence, this opportunity for healing, growth, renewal, transformation, contemplation, and freedom from the lies about God.

We can only experience these blessings if we throw off the lies about God and His law and accept His design protocols for life. But if we insist on viewing the Sabbath as an “arbitrary test of obedience” – a rule enacted by a powerful potentate who is watching to see if we break his rule – then the Sabbath becomes, not a sign of godliness, but a mark of beastliness.

The historic two days of worship within Christianity – Sabbath and Sunday – stand as two banners, signs, flags, marks, pennants that represent two divergent systems of governing. Just as the US Flag – the grand old Stars and Stripes – is a symbol or sign of the United States of America, so these two days of worship are signs of two different systems of governing. However, the flag is not the *reality* for which it stands. The US flag is only a *symbol* of the USA. And a person can wave the flag of America while being an enemy of the US. During WWII, German soldiers donned American uniforms with the US flag and infiltrated American lines to sow discord and disrupt the US war effort. Just because someone waves the flag doesn’t mean that they support what the flag actually stands for. Likewise, Sabbath and Sunday are signs of two different systems of governing. The Sabbath is a day of rest by its creation: it was *made* by God for this purpose at the end of creation week. The Sabbath is an evidence of design-law – truth, presented in love while leaving others free – and is a sign of God’s method of governing. Sunday, however, became a day of rest by *legislative action*, by human authorities making rules. Therefore, Sunday is a mark of imperialism – of law and government that functions like sinful humans who impose rules that require infliction of punishment for disobedience.

These two days of worship, whose significance was established by their origins, are just like the US flag – symbols, signs, marks – but they are not the *governments* they represent. So, a person could be a Sabbath-keeper but practice the imposed-law model and teach that Sabbath-breaking requires God to inflict punishment on the violator of the law. That person would be like the German soldiers described above, infiltrating God’s church to sow discord and confusion. They would not be on God’s team, and actually promoting the methods of the beast. These religious traitors to God’s kingdom would be most powerfully exemplified by the Sabbath-keepers who crucified the Lord of the Sabbath. Conversely, a person who worships on Sunday but promotes truth in love while leaving others free is promoting the principles of the Sabbath and is on God’s team.

Understanding all of this, we can see that Sabbath is a sign of something larger than a day to go to church upon – it is an

evidence of a system of governing to which we adhere and live in harmony with God and His government all week long, not just one day in seven.

Salvation in Christ is about restoring sinners to holiness; it is not about restoring the Sabbath to holiness. And rightly understood, the Sabbath is a “sign” that God makes us holy: “You must observe my Sabbaths. This will be a sign between me and you for the generations to come, so you may know that **I am the Lord, who makes you holy.**” (Ex 31:13). We can’t be holy only one day in seven, so the Sabbath is a sign of a way of living, a loyalty, an embracing of and transformation back into God’s design, to which we live all week long. Further, every seven days, the Sabbath affords an opportunity for us to exercise our trust in God and rest in Him, thus choosing to identify with His kingdom of love.

The real question is, Who do we understand God to be:

- Creator / Designer whose laws are the protocols upon which life is built and who created the Sabbath for our spiritual health, or
- an imperial dictator who makes up rules and then enforces those rules with threats of punishment – just like the church of the Dark Ages did for those who violated her Sunday?

I invite you to reject the imperial-law lie that makes God appear to be an arbitrary dictator and the source of inflicted pain, suffering and death, and embrace the truth that God is Creator; His law is love; and His design-laws are the protocols upon which all life is designed to operate. Embrace the seventh-day Sabbath as a gift designed by God for all human beings to experience health, peace, joy, rest, healing and growth, as every day of the week we *Remember the Sabbath to keep ourselves holy* by practicing the methods of God – presenting truth in love, while leaving others free!



List of abbreviations pertaining to reference sources (Ellen G. White writings)

1SM	Selected Messages Book 1
2MCP	Mind, Character, and Personality, volume 2
7BC	SDA Bible Commentary, volume 7
CCh	Counsels for the Church
COL	Christ’s Object Lessons
CTr	Christ Triumphant
DA	The Desire of Ages
Ed	Education
EW	Early Writings
FW	Faith and Works
GC	The Great Controversy
MB	Thoughts from the Mount of Blessing
MS	Manuscript
PK	Prophets and Kings
ST	The Signs of the Times
TM	Testimony to Ministers and Gospel Workers
TSB	Testimonies on Sexual Behavior, Adultery, and Divorce

Note: All emphasis (bold font) in quotations, as well as the red explanatory notes in parenthesis, have been supplied by the author of this article.

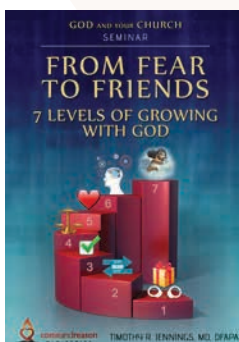




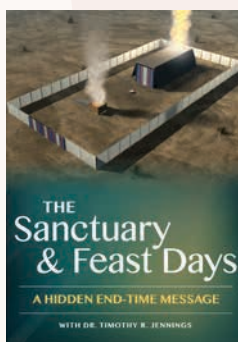
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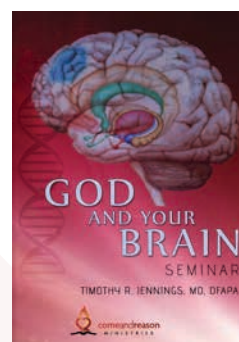
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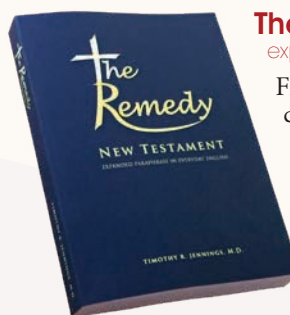
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