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A Comparison of Certain Doctrinal Views of Martin Luther and Seventh-day Adventists in the Context of Present-day Dialogue

Kenneth L. Knosp

Andrews University

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ABSTRACT

A COMPARISON OF CERTAIN DOCTRINAL VIEWS OF MARTIN LUTHER AND SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTISTS IN THE CONTEXT OF PRESENT-DAY DIALOGUE

by

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Adviser: P. Gerard Damsteegt
ABSTRACT OF GRADUATE STUDENT

Project Document

Andrews University
Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary

Title: A COMPARISON OF CERTAIN DOCTRINAL VIEWS OF MARTIN LUTHER AND SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTISTS IN THE CONTEXT OF PRESENT-DAY DIALOGUE

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Martin Luther stood on the principle of Sola Scriptura or “Scripture Alone.” Based on this principle Luther declared the Reformation tenet of justification by faith. While both faiths, Lutherans and Adventists base their source for their beliefs and practice on Holy Scripture, Lutherans, however, have a strong respect for certain traditions. Careful research was done to fully investigate a thorough comparison of Luther’s beliefs with that of the Seventh-day Adventist beliefs.
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Presented in Partial Fulfillment

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Statement of the Problem

A basic hermeneutical principle of Martin Luther was *Sola Scriptura* or “Scripture Alone.” Based on this principle, Luther declared the Reformation tenet of justification by faith, and several other major doctrines that stand in striking similarity to those of Seventh-day Adventists. What is the source of these similarities and what are their implications for Seventh-day Adventists and Lutherans in the 21st century?

Statement of Purpose

To compare some central doctrines of Martin Luther with those of Seventh-day Adventists.

Justification for the Project Document

A. The writer knows of no other published writing in this area except for William M. Landeen’s *Martin Luther’s Religious Thought*.

B. Many Protestants, both Lutherans and non-Lutherans, trace their origins of key doctrinal beliefs to the teachings of Martin Luther. Therefore, this study should be of interest to a major segment of the Christian church.

C. For four years (1994-1998) representatives of the Seventh-day Adventist Church and the Lutheran World Federation held consultations, the last of which was in
Cartigny, Switzerland, on the themes of justification by faith, the law, Scripture and authority, ecclesiology, and eschatology.¹ This paper seeks to speak to these and other related areas.

D. This project document is a comparative study of the beliefs of Martin Luther and the beliefs of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, using a biblical, historical, and theological approach with an evangelistic objective to gain a deeper understanding of outreach to Lutherans. Winning souls to Jesus Christ by sharing the everlasting Gospel is a matter of urgency taking into account the time in which we are now living. The contribution of this paper could assist in greater mutual understandings among Adventist and Lutheran pastors, leaders, and believers throughout the world.

**Delimitation of the Project Document**

There are several Adventist books on the Reformation focusing on the roots of Seventh-day Adventist doctrines,² and at least one on Luther’s doctrines from a Seventh-day Adventist point of view, namely William M. Landeen’s book, *Martin Luther’s Religious Thought.*³ But no existent publication deals with specific parallels between Martin Luther and the Adventist doctrine in the depth that this dissertation will.


Methodology and Sources

A. The approach is biblical, theological, and historical.

B. Luther’s Works and some of the writings of Martin Luther are researched to reveal what Luther really believed about key teachings of the church. Particular attention is given to specific writings of Luther, such as those included in The Book of Concord, namely the Small Catechism and the Large Catechism. Other references, such as Conversations with Luther, Luther’s Correspondence and Other Contemporary Letters, and other writings of Luther are used.

C. Key resources from Seventh-day Adventist writers will include Ellen G. White, The Great Controversy, Seventh-day Adventists Believe . . . A Biblical Exposition of Fundamental Doctrines, Frank B. Holbrook, The Atoning Priesthood of Jesus Christ, G. Edward Reid, Sunday’s Coming, Kenneth A. Strand (ed.), The Sabbath in

5 Preserved Smith and Herbert Percival Galliger, eds., Conversations with Luther (Boston: Pilgrims Press, 1915).
6 Preserved Smith and Charles M. Jacobs, eds., Luther’s Correspondence and Other Contemporary Letters, vol. 12 (Philadelphia: Lutheran Publication Society, 1918).
9 Seventh-day Adventists Believe: A Biblical Exposition of Fundamental Doctrines (Silver Spring, MD: Ministerial Association, General Conference of SDA, 2005).
11 G. Edward Reid, Sunday’s Coming (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald, 1996).
Scripture and History,\textsuperscript{12} P. Gerard Damsteegt, \textit{Foundations of the Seventh-day Adventist Message and Mission},\textsuperscript{13} P. Gerard Damsteegt and C. Mervyn Maxwell, eds., \textit{Source Book for the History of Sabbath and Sunday},\textsuperscript{14} and Frank B. Holbrook, ed., \textit{Doctrine of the Sanctuary}.\textsuperscript{15}

D. The strategy of the dissertation is a comparison of the views of Martin Luther on central Bible doctrines, those of Seventh-day Adventists, and those or present-day Lutherans, using the \textit{Sola Scriptura} principle for evaluation.

\textbf{Expectations from This Project Document}

A. This project is designed to develop both a conceptual base in comparative theology and some effective ways of expressing those concepts that will facilitate my communication of Adventist faith to Lutheran friends and colleagues.

B. This project is to have a wider impact. The Lutheran World Federation, with its 122 member churches, presently comprises about 56 million members.\textsuperscript{16} The contribution of this project addresses Lutherans throughout the world.

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{12}Kenneth A. Strand, ed., \textit{The Sabbath in Scripture and History} (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald, 1992).
\item \textsuperscript{14}P. Gerard Damsteegt and C. Mervyn Maxwell, eds., \textit{Source Book for the History of Sabbath and Sunday} (Berrien Springs, MI: Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary, 1992).
\item \textsuperscript{15}Frank B. Holbrook, \textit{Doctrine of the Sanctuary–A Historical Survey} (Hagerstown, MD: Biblical Research Institute, 1989).
\end{itemize}
CHAPTER 2

SCRIPTURE AND AUTHORITY IN THE CHURCH

Introduction

Certainly any study of Luther’s views as they compare to Seventh-day Adventist views has to start with the Holy Scriptures. In this chapter I will show what views may be held in common or what views may vary as we consider comparison views on Scripture and authority. The Bible’s uniqueness is in the revelation of the God-man, the Son of God, Jesus Christ—the Saviour of the world and soon-coming King—from Genesis to Revelation

Luther on Scripture and Authority

William M. Landeen calls Martin Luther the greatest disturber of religious peace and troubler of established church institutions in the sixteenth century.1 Clearly, for Luther, his only source for his Reformation work was the Holy Scriptures.2 He felt that all of his ideas and beliefs were definitely anchored in the Bible.3 He believed that the


2Ibid.

3Ibid.
Word need only to be preached and read. For Luther, the Word is able to do everything.\footnote{Landeen, \textit{Martin Luther’s Religious Thought}, Preface.}

After much study, Luther wrote:

Indeed I for my part believe that I owe to the Lord this duty of speaking out against philosophy and of persuading men to heed Holy Scripture. . . . But I have been worn out by these studies for many years now, and having experienced and heard many things over and over again, I have come to see that it is the study of vanity and perdition.\footnote{Martin Luther, “Lectures on Romans,” (1516) in \textit{Luther’s Works}, vol. 25 (St. Louis, MO: Concordia, 1957-72), 361; from hereafter this edition of Luther’s writings will be abbreviated \textit{LW}.}

For Luther, Christ is the Word.\footnote{Luther, “Lectures on the Gospel of John,” \textit{LW}, 22:9-13.} R. E. Davies, in a study entitled \textit{The Problem of Authority in the Continental Reformers}, strongly feels that Luther upset the totalitarian, all-competent Church of the Middle Ages.\footnote{Rupert E. Davies, \textit{The Problem of Authority in the Continental Reformers: A Study in Luther, Zwingli, and Calvin} (London: Epworth Press, 1946), 54.} The Word of God is that Word which preaches or teaches Jesus Christ.\footnote{Luther, “Lectures on the Gospel of John,” \textit{LW}, 22:14.} For Davies, Luther’s Word in large part consists of certain books of the Old and New Testament, the New Testament Gospels, the letters of Paul, 1 John, 1 Peter, and Acts.\footnote{Davies, \textit{The Problem of Authority}, 56.}

For Luther, no writer of the Bible was lord over what he wrote. In a lecture on the Psalms (1513-1515) he stated, “All the words of God are weighed, counted, and measured” and in 1540, much later in his career, “Not only the words but also the
phrasing which the Holy Spirit and Scriptures use are divine.”

Luther held that the Holy Spirit Himself and God authored the Bible and man wrote it down. This book, the Holy Scripture, Luther believed, is the Holy Spirit’s Book.

Luther asserts that, as we have and believe the Bible as God’s Book, we will feel and find the Lordship of God. We will then yield to God’s authority. Luther declares, “No book, teaching, or word is able to comfort in troubles, fear, misery, death, yea, in the midst of devils and in hell, except this Book which teaches us God’s Word even in which God Himself speaks with us as a man speaks with his friend.”

Luther loved God’s Word so much that he translated both the Old and New Testament into German so that the German-speaking people could read God’s Word for themselves. He holds the Scriptures in highest esteem because it provides the ground and proof of the New Testament. Luther says that in the Scriptures we find” the swaddling clothes, but dear is the treasure, Christ, who lies in them.”

We are reminded of John 5:39, “You search the Scriptures, for in them you think you have eternal life; and these are they which testify of me.”

In his “Preface to the Epistles of St. James and St. Jude” (1546), Luther praises

10“Non solum enim vocabula, sed et phrasis est divina que Spiritus sanctus et scriptura utitur.” Martin Luther, “Vorlesung über die Stufenpsalmen, Ps. 127” (1532/33), in D. Martin Luthers Werke; Kritische Gesamtausgabe, 73 vols. (Weimar: Hermann Böhlaus, 1883-1906), 40, III:254; from hereafter this edition of Luther’s Works will be abbreviated as WA.

11Luther, “Lectures in Genesis” (1539), LW 5:351-356.

12Luther, “Von den Letzten Worten Davids,” WA 54:35.


14Unless otherwise noted, all Scripture quotations are from the New King James Version.
James because it set up no doctrine of man, but promotes the law of God.\textsuperscript{15} Yet Luther does not regard the Epistle of James to be the writing of an apostle. Luther feels that the Epistle of James is too much ascribing justification to works.\textsuperscript{16} Yet Luther gives direction to a friend of anointing, using James 5:14-15 as his text.\textsuperscript{17} On the book of Revelation he changes his earlier view where he actually denied inspiration of the book.\textsuperscript{18} This book offers comfort and no matter what, we will gain the victory and conquer at last. Secondly, this book is our warning against the offence that infidels themselves occupy Christendom. Luther believes that “the Christian Church” is the worst enemy of the Christian Church. This is his reference to the papacy.\textsuperscript{19}

Luther’s entire line of defense is consistently “Scripture Alone.” He rejects certain teachings of the church, asking that these teachings be proved by Scripture. He states, “Scripture alone is the true Lord and master of all writings and doctrine on earth,” and he further writes, “I am ready to trust them only when they give me evidence for their opinions from Scripture, which has never erred.”\textsuperscript{20} Salvation could not be earned by penitence or by doing good, or by indulgences. Luther realized that the theology of the church had been in conflict with the principle of \textit{Sola Scriptura}, for the church and the

\begin{quote}
\textsuperscript{15}Luther, “Preface to the Epistles of St. James and St. Jude,” LW 35:395.
\end{quote}

\begin{quote}
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\begin{quote}
\textsuperscript{17}B. L. Woolf, ed., \textit{Reformation Writings of Martin Luther}, 2 vols. (London: Lutterworth Press, 1952), 1:323, 324.
\end{quote}

\begin{quote}
\textsuperscript{18}Philip Krey, \textit{Luther’s Spirituality} (New York: Paulist Press, 2007), 47.
\end{quote}

\begin{quote}
\textsuperscript{19}Ibid., 55.
\end{quote}

\begin{quote}
\textsuperscript{20}Luther, “Defense and Explanation of All the Articles,” LW 32:11, 12.
\end{quote}
pope were given the final authority rather than the Bible.\(^{21}\)

Luther’s quarrel was that medieval Catholicism did not interpret Scripture according to its plain sense.\(^{22}\) Luther wanted Scripture to interpret Scripture.

When we consider Luther as theologian, we discover that all of his theological work presupposes the authority of Scripture and the derived authority of the genuine tradition of the church. Luther, in fact, felt that he had a better grasp of the Scriptures than the scholastic theologians or, in some cases, the early church fathers.\(^{23}\) He also believed that neither church nor any of her representatives have the authority to establish new articles of faith or new commandments.\(^{24}\) Theologically, he also believed that the authority of the Word of God which we meet in Scripture establishes itself in our hearts through experience. “The righteousness of God receives new meaning and the love of God becomes not primarily our love for Him, but His love for us, that which He effects in us.”\(^{25}\) Here is a description of Luther’s salvation unfolding

**Adventist Position on Scripture and Authority**

Seventh-day Adventists have always used the approach promoted by the Protestant reformers by which they sought the simple, plain, direct, or ordinary sense of


Scripture. The technical term for this is the historical-grammatical method, the term itself dating back to 1788. With the Holy Spirit’s help, interpreters seek to grasp the meaning of Scripture by discovering the historical, literary, and grammatical honesty of a given biblical passage in its historical context and in the wider context of the whole Bible. The interpreter then makes a responsible application to the contemporary situation.

Up until the eighteenth century Enlightenment, when some interpreters of Scripture questioned the full inspiration of Scripture and began to use higher criticism, most Bible-believing Christians simply used the plain sense approach to interpreting the Bible. The “historical-grammatical method” focuses on a detailed analysis of the Bible and text in keeping with the original language and the historical situation.

Adventists, in their plain reading of Scripture, believed the Bible to be absolutely trustworthy, solely authoritative, and thoroughly consistent in all its parts, as it comes from the same Holy Spirit. This approach to interpretation also takes into account poetry, parable, symbol, and letters in its approach to Bible study.

A 1995 General Conference discussion paper deals with some appropriate questions. How should we understand the Bible’s inspiration and authority? How

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27 Ibid.

28 Ibid.

29 Ibid.

30 Ibid., 39.
should the Scripture function in the faith and practice of the church? What hermeneutical principle should govern the Adventist’s interpretation of the Word?31

Scripture, even though human beings express it, still bears the mark of God. We come across expressions such as “the word of the Lord came to me.” Jesus, in His encounter on the Emmaus Road (Luke 24:13-35), accepted the Hebrew Scripture without question. We recall Paul’s counsel to Timothy, “All Scripture is given by inspiration of God and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work” (2 Tim 3:16, 17). Peter too confirms for us that prophecy comes not from human origin, but rather “holy men spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit” (2 Pet 1:21).

Sometimes the Bible writer was greatly perplexed over what the Lord had inspired them to write. The method and the content of the revelation varied. Sometimes the method was through visions and dreams (Num 12:6). God spoke to Samuel in his ears (1 Sam 9:15). Zechariah was given a symbolic message with explanation (Zech 4). Paul and John received oral instruction (2 Cor 12:1-4; Rev 4).

Scripture renders historical incidents as types or examples “written for our admonition, on whom the end of the ages has come” (1 Cor 10:11). Paul writes, “For everything that was written before was written for our learning, so that through patience and comfort of the Scripture we might have hope” (Rom 15:4). Abraham’s experience of justification is an example for the believer (Rom 4:1-25; Jas 2:14-22). Luke writes so that we may know the certainty of the things in which we have been instructed (Luke 31Koranteng-Pipim, *Receiving the Word*, 38.)
1:4). John writes with the express purpose “that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in His name” (John 20:31).

Adventists believe that the first chapters of Genesis are historical narratives and not mythological accounts. Many present-day interpreters reject stories of Adam and Eve, Jonah, and Noah as being historical. Jesus accepted these accounts as historical and so do the Adventist believers.

The Scriptures do have divine authority because the Holy Spirit spoke through each writer. It is the Word of the Lord “that came to Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Hosea, Joel, and Jonah” (Jer 1:1, 2, 9; Ezek 1:3; Hos 1:1; Joel 1:1; Jonah 1:1). God’s words give their message His divine credentials and authority. Peter calls Paul’s writings Scripture (2 Pet 3:15, 16). Paul writes, “For I neither received it from men, nor was I taught it, but it came through the revelation of Jesus Christ” (Gal 1:12 NKJV).

Jesus certainly stressed the authority of the Scriptures. In every one of His temptations Jesus quoted from Scripture. Jesus believed in the authority of the prophetic Word. The Scriptures, He said, “Testify of Me,” “If you believe Moses, you would believe me; for he wrote about me” (John 5:39). While relating to the two on the Emmaus Road, Jesus responded, “O foolish ones, and slow of heart to believe in all this the prophets have spoken! Ought not the Christ to have suffered these things and to enter into His glory?” (Luke 24: 25-26). Jesus Christ accepted the Scriptures as the authoritative revelation of God.

32Fundamental Belief 6, Seventh-day Adventists Believe, 69-77.
33Ibid.
34Ibid., 11, 12.
Adventists also see unity in the Scriptures. Written over many centuries, the Bible does not contradict but complements itself by a unity of purpose and design, always pointing to Jesus Christ. It is no wonder that Paul writes of the Scripture that “Through them we may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work,” and that the Scriptures are “profitable for every doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness” (2 Tim 3:16, 17).

Adventists believe that the Bible identifies the processes involved in revelation and inspiration. “Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the Scriptures is of any private interpretation. For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of men, but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit” (2 Pet 1:20-21). Paul wrote, “For this reason we also thank God without ceasing because when you received the word of God which you heard from us, you welcomed it, not as the Word of man, but as it is in truth, the Word of God, which also effectively works in you who believe” (1 Thess 2:13).

Adventists hold that the Scriptures are divinely conditioned and historically constituted. Ellen White clearly asserted that the Holy Spirit guided the Bible writers to record their accounts with “exact fidelity” that the Holy Scriptures are to be deemed as truthful history of the human race, not marred by “human prejudice or human pride.”

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35Fundamental Belief 6, Seventh-day Adventists Believe, 14.

36Ibid.

Adventists and Lutherans in Dialogue

Both Lutherans and Adventists see Scripture as the foundation for church authority. The very strong Reformation principle of *Sola Scriptura* lies at the heart of both communities. Adventists agree with Luther in his grammatical-literal approach to Scriptures. For Adventists, Scriptures are not difficult to understand and apparently obscure passages are made clear if compared with clear passages in other places. Like Luther, Adventists also believe that Bible should be understood in its plain language unless a symbolism is implied by the author of the text.

Adventists also believe in *Tota Scriptura* principle. The entire Scripture is authority and not only some parts. Adventists believe there is an intricate harmony between the writings of Paul and James and they both present the same view on faith and works but from a different angle and to a different audience. Also, Adventists believe in full importance and relevance of the book of Revelation and the Old Testament writings. Luther’s main principle of Scripture bearing witness of Christ is relevant for Adventists but Adventists often see Christ in places where Luther did not necessarily see Him. Thus, Adventists do not believe in Sola Scriptura only but in *Tota Scriptura* as well.

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38 Report of the Bilateral Conversation Between the Lutheran World Federation and the Seventh-day Adventist Church (General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists and the Lutheran World Federation, 2000), 42-62, 63.
CHAPTER 3

JUSTIFICATION BY FAITH

Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to investigate the topic of justification by faith alone through grace alone in Lutheran and Adventist thought. The doctrine of justification by faith alone is, without a doubt, Luther’s greatest contribution to Reformation Theology.¹ Luther’s theology is the theology of the cross, both that of the crucifixion and the resurrection of Christ.²

This chapter also gives a clear view of baptism and its significance for both churches. For both communions baptism is the introduction to the faith for the baptized. Here too is shared in depth an understanding of Holy Communion for both churches. Both see that this meal is more than a memorial meal.

While Luther speaks of a Great Cosmic Battle,³ Adventists speak of the Great Controversy,⁴ a great conflict between good and evil, God and Satan.

Both communions understand Law and Gospel in somewhat different ways.

¹Landeen, Martin Luther’s Religious Thought, 139.


³Ibid., 116.

⁴Seventh-day Adventists Believe, 99-105.
Lutherans and Adventists show some basic and distinctive differences.

In the study of incarnation, both faiths affirm that Jesus Christ is God in the flesh, born of the Virgin Mary to be our Savior.

The chapter concludes with strong Adventist-Lutheran dialogue on the doctrine of justification by faith. Ellen G. White praised Luther for his basic position on the righteousness of Christ bestowed on the believer through faith and grace alone.

**Justification by Faith**

**Law and Gospel**

Luther believed that down deep in our human spirit man knows that he is to worship God and love his neighbor. In the law and the gospel Luther sees the sum of all Christian doctrine. The law has a twofold function. One function is the civil one and the other is theological, spiritual, or holy in meaning and function.\(^5\) The law does not help a man become righteous, but the law is like a schoolmaster, which points us to Jesus Christ. The law leads us to repentance.

Sin is unbelief, disobedience to God’s law, especially the first commandment.\(^6\) Originally, the law was in our hearts through creation. The gospel presupposes the law and brings the forgiveness of sin. It takes the law for man to recognize his sickness. The law without Christ has no healing power. Everything in the first portion of the law relates to our relationship with God and in the second portion of the law to our


\(^6\)Luther, “Lectures on Genesis, Chapters 1-5” (1535), in LW 1:162.
relationship with others. Luther felt that no law can strike so deeply as the vision of God’s goodness in the gospel.7

In 1507 Luther was consecrated into the Roman Catholic priesthood as an Augustinian monk. Nine years later he became a doctor of theology and professor at Wittenberg University, where he took a solemn vow, “I swear to defend the Gospel with all my might.”8 He obviously kept this vow for the rest of his life.

Luther discovered that salvation could not be earned by penitence or by doing good. He also soon realized that the theology of his church was not going by Sola Scriptura, but rather by the church and the pope as the interpreter of the Bible.9 Luther was really in pursuit of the truth. He wanted to understand “the righteousness of God.” In the New Testament he found Romans 1:16-17, “For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also for the Greek. For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, ‘The just shall live by faith.'” Christ offers to us the gracious gift of His own work and perfect righteousness. By His grace He justifies us and pronounces us righteous. By believing this truth, Luther was freed from the weight of guilt and he became a free person. Here are Luther’s words:

I greatly longed to understand Paul’s Epistle to the Romans and nothing stood in the way but that one expression: “the justice of God,” because I took it to mean that justice whereby God is just and deals justly in punishing the injustice. My situation was that, although am impeccable word, I stood before God as a sinner troubled in conscience, and I had not confidence that my merit would assuage Him. Therefore I


9Luther, “Table Talk, no. 2962b, February 9-12, 1533,” in LW 54:185.
did not love a just and angry God, but rather hated and murmured against Him yet I clung to the dear Paul and hid a great yearning to know what he meant. Night and day I pondered until I saw the connection between the justice of God and the statement that “the just shall live by his faith.” Then I grasped that the justice of God is that righteousness by which through grace and sheer mercy God justifies us through faith. Thereupon I felt myself to be reborn and to have gone through open doors into paradise—the whole of Scripture took on a new meaning and whereas before the “justice of God” had filled me with hate, now it became to me inexpressibly sweet. In greater love, this passage of Paul became to me a gate to heaven. . . . If you have a true faith that Christ is your Saviour, then at once you have a gracious God for faith leads you and opens up God’s heart and will, that you should see pure grace and overflowing love!

For Luther, God’s promise was that “the just shall live by faith,” and the very salvation for which Luther was seeking.

The gospel transcends the law and faith and moves from the law to the gospel. Romans 1:17 is translated by Luther as following: “For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, the just shall live by (his) faith.” From “faith to faith” Luther explains as moving from the faith of the Old Testament to the faith of the New Testament. But he goes on to assert that the righteous do not live by faith of past generations, but “the just shall live by (his) faith.” He expresses that the Fathers believed the same Gospel, but it is clearer for us. There is constant growth and greater clarity. Luther is reminded of 2 Corinthians 3:18: “We . . . are changed unto the same image from glory to glory: the words from faith to faith signify that the believer grows in faith more and more, so that he who is justified becomes more and more righteous (in his life).”

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11Martin Luther, Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1934), 24, 25.
Luther discovered that God’s righteousness and Christ’s righteousness are one and that this righteousness is received by faith right now. “The Gates of Paradise” were open to Luther. The central passage was this, “He who is righteous by faith shall live.” He at last came to the realization that we are saved both now and in the judgment by our faith in Jesus Christ and His free gift of righteousness. Luther then came up with the term *Sola Gratia*—Grace Alone. He is saved by the unmerited favor of God and also by *Sola Fide*—Faith Alone. All of this was supported by *Sola Scriptura*—Scripture Alone. For so long he thought there was something he had to do to earn righteousness, but now he know God’s righteousness to be a free gift. With the help of Augustine he discovered that God’s righteousness is a divine free gift. But he still thought of the gift in terms of an indwelling Christ and a gradual increase of righteousness in the believer. This would mean that the believer was always partly righteous and partly sinful.

In 1535, in his “Commentary on Galatians,” Luther gives still more on his concept of justification: “It is the forensic or legal imputation of Christ’s righteousness to the repentant sinner.” So we are not given a partial righteousness, but a complete righteousness and, in fact, the righteousness of Christ, so that not through yourself, but through Christ will you be saved. All this comes about because the believer knows Jesus

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12LaRondelle, 7.
13Ibid.
14Ibid.
15Ibid., 7, 8.
17Luther, “Lectures on Galatians” (1535), LW 26:5-7.
Christ both in his mind and heart.\textsuperscript{18} This is the return to the apostolic meaning of faith.

It is held that “Luther’s doctrine of righteousness by faith alone is his greatest contribution to Reformation theology.”\textsuperscript{19} Luther believes that justification came to man from outside of himself. He believes that God alone determines our salvation. Here Luther declares, “We do not choose, we do not do anything, but we are chosen. We are equipped, we are born again, we accept, as Isaiah says (64:8): Thou art the Potter; we, thy clay.”\textsuperscript{20}

Luther’s theology is the theology of the cross. He speaks of the theology of the Cross as ones who see God crucified and hidden. He expresses that God is hidden in the sufferings of Christ.\textsuperscript{21} The wounds of Christ to which Staupitz pointed him had not become his saving wounds. Here the righteousness of God is truly given over to Jesus. Luther describes man in bondage to evil forces from which he cannot liberate himself, but whose power has been broken through Christ.\textsuperscript{22} Only as we receive Jesus as Savior are we able to follow His example.\textsuperscript{23}

\begin{flushleft}
\textsuperscript{19}Landeen, \textit{Martin Luther’s Religious Thought}, 139.
\textsuperscript{20}Luther, “Lectures on Genesis, Chapters 1-5” (1535), LW 1:85.
\textsuperscript{21}Luther, “Resolutiones disputationum de indulgentiarum virtute” (1516), in WA 1:613-23.
\textsuperscript{22}Luther, “Predigt am Ostertag,” (March 31, 1532), in WA 36:159; “Die Dritte Predigt Auff den Ostertag” (April 1533), in WA 37:63.
\textsuperscript{23}Watson, \textit{Let God Be God}, 104.
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Luther was not even helped by the Sacrament of Penance. In penance he made confession to a priest and received absolution. His confessor told Luther to just cast away his anxieties. Luther endeavored, after the manner of Bernard of Clairvoux, to lose himself in meditation on the Passion of Christ. Staupitz taught Luther that only God could affect his salvation by His prevenient grace. Luther felt that without Dr. John Staupitz he would have sunk into hell.

His discovering of Rom 1:17 led Luther to distinguish between law and gospel. Deliverance came through the gospel and Luther entered a new relationship with God on the basis of God’s righteousness extended to him. All was a gift, undeserved, by divine grace, and received by faith alone. “For the proper subject of theology,” he explains, “is man as guilty of sin on account of sin, and lost, and God the justifier and Savior of man as a sinner.” Philip Watson calls this “Luther’s Anthropology.” Luther began with an anthropocentric understanding of religion and concludes with a theocentric conception. God is now seen as not just majesty, but justifier of man’s sin. “In the Incarnate and

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24 Watson, Let God Be God, 17.
25 Ibid., 19.
26 Bainton, Here I Stand, 40, 41.
27 Ibid., 40.
29 Watson, Let God Be God, 34.
Crucified Saviour, we behold the supreme majesty of that uncreated love, which is God Himself.”

The Incarnation

All of Luther’s theology can stand or fall with the divinity of Christ. In Christ Jesus, Luther believed, we are confronted by God Himself. He declares Christ to be “very God.” Christ, for Luther, is God incarnate and clothed in man’s nature.

Luther speaks of incarnation as a mirror in which Christ is beheld. The incarnation is also like a veil where the God of majesty confronts us. He sees the divinity of Christ hidden in His humanity. Luther was the theologian of the cross and spoke of God crucified and hidden. It is not obvious that Jesus of Nazareth is actually the incarnate Son of God, that is God in the flesh, second Person of the Trinity. We can only understand this in faith. For Luther, God is more deeply hidden in Christ crucified than He is in creation. Luther feels that the natural man can deal directly with power and justice easier than with the humiliation and suffering of the cross.

As we consider the revelation of the divine, Luther regards Christ as represented

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30Luther, “Disputationem de sententia; Verbum caro factum est” (1539) Werke, 39/1, 15 translated in Watson, 137.

31Ibid., 57.

32Luther, A Commentary on St. Paul’s Epistle to the Galatians, ed. Erasmus Middleton (London: 1807), 78.

33Luther, “Resolutiones disputationum de indulgentiarum virtute” (1516), in WA 1:613-23.

34Luther, Galatians, 328.

35Ibid., 103.
in two different ways: as a Gift or Sacrament and as our Example. Christ also has a two-fold office—that of Lawgiver and Interpreter of the law and as Mediator and Savior. It is as we receive Him as our Savior that we are able to follow His example. Christ came to be our Mediator and Savior. “Others like Abraham, Isaiah, John the Baptist, Paul, and still others can be examples, but they cannot forgive sin, deliver men from the power of the devil and from death and they cannot give everlasting life.” In this proper office of Christ, Luther indeed finds essential divinity and the revelation of God. For Luther says,

to give grace, peace, everlasting life, to forgive sins, to make righteous, to quicken, to deliver from death and the devil, are not the works of any creature, but of the divine majesty alone. Christ hath the divine works not of creatures, but of the Creator, because He giveth grace and peace; and to give them, is to condemn sin, to vanquish death, and to tread the devil underfoot. Luther concluded, therefore, that Christ is “very God” by nature.

Christ’s Ministry of Redemption and Atonement

Luther uses a variety of metaphors to tell us of the work of Christ, but most typical is that of a cosmic conflict between the Redeemer and the forces that oppose the will and purpose of God. These hostile forces are named by Luther in various lists, but

36Luther, Galatians, 343.
37Ibid.
38Ibid.
39Ibid., 14.
40Luther, “Predigt am Oestermontag am Nachmitag” (April 2, 1526), in WA 20: 337.
four are constantly given—sin, death, the Law, and the wrath of God. As Luther wrote of this cosmic conflict, the Adventists write of the great controversy.

Luther firmly believed that by His incarnation, cross, and resurrection, Christ has won the decisive battle against the tyrannical powers. On one hand, the warfare is not ended, but continues until the last day, yet the final outcome is assured.

In light of His atonement, Luther speaks of Christ’s satisfaction of the law, His merit, His sacrifice, and His pacification of the wrath of God. Left to ourselves, we would be damned and under the dominion of Satan. To be under the law is to be under a curse and subject to death. We are redeemed through the merits of Jesus Christ who freely took upon Himself the sins of the whole world. Here the boundless mercy of the Father did a divine work. Luther declared that Jesus Christ, rising from the dead, condemns sin and death and bestows on us His merits. Now we are keepers of the law and Christ has vanquished sin and death. Thus, all the Old Testament sacrifices point to the self-sacrifice of Christ, the Lamb of God. We do not repeat His sacrifice, but we remember it as sufficient and complete.

Here is what Luther shares with us concerning Christ’s atoning work:

Christ alone was able and satisfied for us, who of the infinite mercy of the Father was sent for the same cause, and that to us. . . . Without all doubt it was no merit, but only boundless mercy, that Christ came to us and merited and obtained for us remission of sins unto eternal salvation. Now he calls Him “the day-spring from on high,” which

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41Luther, *Galatians*, 185-95, 255.


43Ibid.

44“Resolutiones Lutheranae super propositionibus sui Lipsiae disputatis” (1519), in WA 2:427.

45Luther, *Galatians*, 188.
signifieth unto us His divinity . . . for He proceedeth from the Father, as the beams do from the sun. Moreover this He did of inestimable love: for Paul saith, “which loved me,” . . . for He delivered neither sheep, ox, gold nor silver, but even God Himself entirely and wholly, “for me”, even for “me”, I say, a miserable and wretched sinner. . . . These words (which are the pure preaching of grace and Christian righteousness indeed) Paul setteth against the righteousness of the Law. As if he said: be it so that the Law is an heavenly doctrine, and hath also his glory: yet, it accuseth me, terrifieth me, and driveth me to desperation. But I have now another which hath delivered me from the terrors of the Law, sin, and death, and hath brought me into liberty, the righteousness of God, and eternal life.46

Then Luther carefully describes how Christ’s atonement becomes effective for the Christian. Faith takes hold of Christ and as we hold onto Him in confidence, God will account us righteous. Because of our faith in Christ, we are accounted as righteous. Christ has delivered us from the law and all tyrants. The devil failed to perceive the divinity that was hidden in the humanity of Christ. Death could not prevail over Immortal Life.47

For Luther, all atonement is seen as having taken place in and around the cross of Calvary. There is only one phase of atonement in the writings of Luther. Luther cited the following:48

Romans 5:19
For as by one man’s disobedience many were made sinners, so also by one Man’s obedience many were made righteous.

2 Corinthians 5:21
For He has made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.

Galatians 3:13
Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, having become a curse for us; for it is written, “Cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree.”

46Luther, Galatians, 116.

47WA 55:30.

48Luther, The Small Catechism, 132.
1 Peter 2:24
Who Himself bore our sins in His own body on the tree, that we, having died to sin, might live for righteousness—by whose stripes you are healed.

All Lutherans believe that Christ was their substitute. Christ took the sinner’s place under God’s judgment against sin. By paying the penalty for our guilt, Christ atoned or made satisfaction for our sins; this is also called vicarious atonement. Watson affirms, “For the cross is the scene of the decisive encounter between Christ and the hostile tyrants,—between incarnate love and the forces of loneliness and selfishness.”

The enemies or tyrants had no right over Christ and that is why they had no ultimate power. For Christ was One in invincible and everlasting righteousness. Nothing could deter Christ from taking the part of sinful man and seeking and obtaining his salvation. Because Christ was divine and everlasting, it was not possible for death to hold Him. The defeat of the tyrants is sealed and is reached in the cross and resurrection of Christ. For Luther, the final outcome of the conflict is certain, though the end is not yet.

Baptism

Luther, in his Babylonian Captivity of the Church, written in 1520, delivers his most devastating blow against the sacramental system of the Roman Catholic Church. At the end of all this, Luther only kept two of the seven sacraments, baptism and the Lord’s Supper.

Between 1528-1539, Luther preached at least twenty-five sermons on the subject

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49 Watson, Let God Be God, 134.

50 Landeen, Martin Luther’s Religious Thought, 98.
of baptism.\textsuperscript{51} He regarded baptism as quite significant. For Luther, baptism is a sacrament, something sacred which comes wholly from the heart of God. Luther’s \textit{Small Catechism} defines baptism as not just plain water, but it is water included in God’s command and combined with God’s word.\textsuperscript{52}

Baptism comes from \textit{baptismos} in Greek, \textit{imercio} in Latin, and the root of this word means to plunge something completely into the water so that water covers it. It was customary in medieval times at first to dip infants into the font, but the practice soon changed to pouring the baptismal water with the hand.\textsuperscript{53} In German, \textit{taufe}, the word for baptism, also means to put in and sink completely into the water and draw out again.\textsuperscript{54} Even in the Babylonian captivity of the Church, Luther writes of immersing the person to be baptized. He spoke of the minister immersing the child in the water. He believed that baptism is a symbol of death and resurrection. The reader would think that Luther is a confirmed advocate of immersion, but this is not the case.\textsuperscript{55}

All three modes of baptism—immersion, pouring, and sprinkling—are practiced by the Lutheran Church.\textsuperscript{56} But in most cases it is the infant who is being baptized by sprinkling or pouring. Thus, the general practice is not that of believer’s baptism. The teaching is that, since salvation comes through grace, who can better illustrate this to us

\textsuperscript{51}Landeen, \textit{Martin Luther’s Religious Thought}, 98.
\textsuperscript{52}The \textit{Small Catechism}, 444.
\textsuperscript{53}Luther, “The Holy and Blessed Sacrament of Baptism” (1519), in LW 35:29.
\textsuperscript{54}Landeen, \textit{Martin Luther’s Religious Thought}, 99.
\textsuperscript{55}Ibid.
\textsuperscript{56}Luther, \textit{The Small Catechism}, 147.
than an infant who is helpless? In such a baptism, the parents or sponsors agree to raise the child in the Christian faith, and it is believed that faith is given to the child as a gift, for Jesus said, “Permit the little children to come unto me, for of such is the kingdom of God” (Mark 10:13-15).

“In medieval Catholic theology sacrament denotes a metaphysical change which occurs in the elements.” So a sacrament is considered inherently efficacious. In the example of baptism there is the cleansing from original sin, making rebaptism unnecessary. Since it is believed that the sacrament is necessary for salvation, infants must be baptized. That is why, in the case of a pastor or priest not being available, a layman can do the baptism.

Luther carefully writes: “So baptism gives every Christian enough to learn for a life time. He has to keep on working at it so that he really believes what baptism promises and provides—victory over death and the devil, forgiveness of sin, God’s favor, Christ in His totality, and the Holy Spirit with His gifts.”

At another point, Luther says that baptism is not tied to our faith, but to the word. For Luther, the baptized life also includes a third sacrament, that of penance, but in the

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58Luther, *Commentary on Galatians*, in *Martin Luther*, 100.


60Luther, *The Small Catechism*, 145.

end he retained two sacraments. The candidate must believe the promise of God. One is baptized not by man, but by the Triune God, with the pastor or priest acting on His behalf. Coming out of baptism, one is pure, without sin, and guiltless. God enters into a genuine covenant.

Here is an illuminating passage from *The Babylonian Captivity of the Church*:

> When the minister immerses the child in the water, it is death; and when he draws it forth again, it signifies life. Thus Paul expounds on it in Romans 6:4: “We were buried therefore with Christ by baptism into death, so that as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life.” This death and resurrection we call the new creation, regeneration, and spiritual birth. This should not be understood only allegorically, as the death of sin and the life of grace, as many understand it, but as actual death and resurrection. For baptism is not a false sign. Neither does sin completely die, nor grace completely rise, until the sinful body that we carry about in this life is destroyed, as the apostle says in the same passage (Romans 6:6-7). For as long as we are in the flesh, the desires of the flesh stir and are stirred. For this reason, as soon as we begin to believe, we also begin to die to this world and live to God in the life to come; so that faith is truly a death and resurrection, that is, it is that spiritual baptism into which we are submerged and from which we rise.

This baptismal covenant relationship continues as long as the baptized fights on after baptism for the rest of his life.

All of Luther’s writing and speaking on baptism centered on infant baptism. He resumes the complete practice of the Medieval Church. In 1528 Luther wrote, “Baptism shall be retained as hitherto and children are to be baptized.” Here we have Luther’s official pronouncement on the subject. Many would cite that infants cannot understand the promise of God in baptism, but that does not bother Luther.

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62 Luther, “The Holy and Blessed Sacrament of Baptism” (1519), in LW 35: 22.

63 Luther, “Instruction for the Visitors of Parish Pastors in Electoral Saxony” (1528), in LW 40: 288.

Luther also believed in the total depravity of man. He wrote, “After we were created and received all kinds of good things from God the Father, the devil came along and leads us into disobedience, sin, death, and all sorts of trouble, so that we lay there under God’s anger and disgrace, sentenced to be damned forever.” Thus, in Luther’s view, why not be covered with the grace of baptism and await the gift of faith, and be baptized as an infant. These infants are “aided by the faith of those who bring them, so that they are changed, cleansed, and renewed by inpoured faith.”

The Ordinance of Communion

Luther often calls Holy Communion the Sacrament of the Altar, the Lord’s Supper, the Body of the Bread, and very frequently the Eucharist, which means meal of thanksgiving.

Luther believed that Christ gave His true body and blood for the forgiveness of sins. This is a sacramental union or consubstantiation. The Body and Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ is present in, with, and under the consecrated bread and wine as the Christian eats and drinks in faith believing as it was instituted by Christ Himself.

No, the Body and Blood of Christ is not sacrificed over and over again in the sacrament. “The one perfect sacrifice offered to God once for all on the cross is now distributed to us in the Sacrament with all of the blessing and benefits which this sacrifice

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65Luther, “Instruction for the Visitors of Parish Pastors in Electoral Saxony” (1528), in LW 40:288.

66Luther, “The Sacrament of the Blood and Body of Christ-Against the Fanatics” (1526), in LW 36:73.

67Luther, The Small Catechism, 27.

68Ibid., 28, 161.
has won for us.” “Forgiveness, life, and salvation are truly offered to all who eat the Lord’s body and blood in the Sacrament, but only through faith can we receive the blessings offered there.”⁶⁹ In the Large Catechism Luther carefully writes, “The Sacrament is given as a daily food and refreshment so that our faith can revive and renew its strength and not fall back into this struggle, but keep on getting stronger and stronger.”⁷⁰ In reference to the Eucharist, the believer looks forward with celebration to the banquet meal with Jesus, the Lord and King of the great feast.

It is his preference that both the bread and wine be given to the communicant. And the words of Christ are “Take and eat, this is My body, which is given for you. Take and drink of it, all of you, this is the cup of the new and eternal testament in My blood, which is poured out for you and for many for the forgiveness of sins.”⁷¹ He Luther states that he cannot fathom how the bread is the body of Christ, yet he will take his reason captive to the obedience of Christ (2 Cor 10:5) and firmly believes not only that the body of Christ is in the bread, but that the bread is the body of Christ.⁷² And clearly the sacrament is not a good work or sacrifice. And it is also a memorial meal where we “Do this in remembrance of Me” (Luke 22:19).⁷³

And before communion there should be a public confession of sin so that there is full repentance of sin. And thus we are prepared for this holy communion meal of which

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⁶⁹Luther, The Small Catechism, 28.

⁷⁰Luther, The Large Catechism, 73, 191.

⁷¹Luther, The Small Catechism, 27.

⁷²Luther, “The Sacrament of the Blood and Body of Christ-Against the Fanatics” (1526), in LW 36:34.

⁷³Luther, “Blessed Sacrament of the holy and true Body of Christ” (1519), in LW 35:56.
we partake with all who are believers with Christ Jesus our Lord.\textsuperscript{74}

\textbf{Seventh-day Adventists on Justification by Faith}

The Great Controversy

Just as Luther writes of a Great Cosmic Battle, so the Adventists speak of the Great Controversy, a battle between good and evil, God and Satan. Of all places, war broke out in heaven.

Angels were created to enjoy fellowship with God (Rev 1:1; 3:5; 5:11). They are obedient to God’s word and they are servants and “ministering spirits” (Heb 1:14). It was one of these angel beings, Lucifer, son of the morning, who resided in the presence of God and became highly jealous of Christ. Ezek 28:12 declares of Lucifer, “You were the seal of perfection, full of wisdom and perfect in beauty . . . You were perfect in your ways from the day you were created, till iniquity was found in you.”

Lucifer was not satisfied with his exalted position and he coveted equality with God Himself.

Isaiah 14:12-14 says:

\begin{verbatim}
12 How you are fallen from heaven,
 O Lucifer, son of the morning!
 How you are cut down to the ground.
 You who weakened the nations!
13 For you have said in your heart:
 I will ascend into heaven,
 I will exalt my throne above the stars of God;
 I will sit on the mount of the congregation
 On the farthest sides of the north.
14 I will ascend above the heights of the clouds,
 I will be like the Most High.
\end{verbatim}

\textsuperscript{74}Luther, \textit{The Small Catechism}, 161.
One-third of the angels joined him in his rebellion (Rev 12:4). Rev 12:7 reports that war broke out in heaven. Michael or Christ prevailed and Satan and his angels were cast to the earth (Rev 12:9). Satan continued the spirit of rebellion when he led our first parents, Adam and Eve, into sin. And that is how all humanity became involved in the Great Controversy. Now Satan claims to be “Prince of this World” (Matt 4:8-9). Satan has challenged the justice and fairness of God right from his assumed dominion of Planet Earth. In the Garden of Eden, man lost his immortality.

Law and Gospel

God’s moral law is as basic to the universe as all of His natural laws that allow this earth to function. Adventists believe that sin is the transgression of the law (1 John 3:4 NKJV). Satan blames God and says that it is impossible to obey the law. Satan really wants to set up his own rule and overthrow God’s government, yes and even God Himself. John 14:5 declares that Jesus is the truth, but Satan wants us to understand truth apart from the Lord Jesus.

When mankind came under the mastery of sin, they came under condemnation and the curse of God’s law. Rom 3:23 states, “For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.” Scripture declares that the wages of sin is death (Rom 6:23).

Adventists believe that God’s law existed before the fall of man. Even before their unfallen state, human beings were subject to God’s law. God’s law wars against self-destruction and reveals the limits of freedom (Gen 2:17). The Lord wants to


safeguard our happiness and freedom. He longs for us to have inner peace as members of His kingdom (John 14:27; 16:33).

God’s law is unchangeable. Gen 3:19 states, “Dust you are and to dust you shall return.” Thus, man cannot disobey God’s law or change God’s law. We cannot consciously violate the revealed will of God. Sin is any deviation from the known will of God, either in neglect or doing what He has forbidden. Christ is ever concerned with our attitudes, intentions, desires, and thoughts in defining our transgressing of the law.

Even in the end time, we read of one who will change God’s day of worship and try to show his authority over God’s law. God’s law, given on Mt. Sinai, has been written by the finger of God in stone and cannot be changed (Exod 20:1-17).

The writer believes that the law reveals the character of Jesus Christ. It is also appropriate to express that the remorse, the repentance form sin, and the work of the Holy Spirit leads us to the Good News, the gospel found in Jesus Christ. Then we are able to come to a prayer life like that of David. “Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me” (Ps 51:3, 1, 10). Repentance precedes forgiveness, but even repentance is a gift of God (Acts 5:31; Rom 2:4). Oh the good news when the heart realized that, through Christ’s death and resurrection, we are not only pardoned, but fully acquitted. This is the grace and goodness of God that leads us to repentance and to the gospel of Jesus Christ.

The Incarnation

Fundamental Belief 4 speaks fully to the incarnation, God in the flesh:

[77Seventh-day Adventists Believe, 89.]
God the Eternal Son became incarnate in Jesus Christ. Through Him all things were created, the character of God is revealed, the salvation of humanity is accomplished, and the world is judged. Forever truly God, He became also truly man, Jesus the Christ. He was conceived of the Holy Spirit, and born of the virgin Mary. He lived and experienced temptation as a human being, but perfectly exemplified the righteousness and love of God. By His miracles He manifested God’s power and was attested as God’s promised Messiah. He suffered and died voluntarily on the cross for our sins and in our place, was raised from the dead, and ascended to minister in the heavenly sanctuary in our behalf. He will come again in glory for the final deliverance of His people and the restoration of all things.78

In God’s divine plan, His Son Jesus Christ was “foreordained before the foundation of the world.” He was to be the sacrifice for sin and the hope of the human race (1 Pet 1:19-20). He would bring us back to God and provide deliverance from sin. He would pay the penalty for the broken law and destroy the works of the devil (1 Pet 3:18; Matt 1:21; John 3:8).

As in the first Adam all sinned, so in this Jesus, called the second Adam, all who believed in Him would He make alive even as He died and rose again as the first fruits for all who believe. Men no longer needed to bring a sacrifice. Jesus was the Lamb of God who took away the sin of the world. “He who knew no sin became sin for us that we might be called the righteousness of God in Him” (2 Cor 5:21).

Isaiah prophesied that the Savior would come as a male child; He would be both human and divine. Isaiah 9:6-7 declares:

For unto us a child is born,
unto us a son is given; and
the government will be upon His shoulder.
And His name will be called Wonderful,
Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.
Of the increase of His government and peace
There will be no end,
Upon the throne of David and over his kingdom,
To order it and establish it with judgment and justice.

78Seventh-day Adventists Believe, 36.
From that time forward, even forever.
The zeal of the Lord of hosts will perform this.

Isaiah 53:2-4 prophesied that Jesus would be a man of sorrows and acquainted
with grief and that we did not esteem Him. Isaiah 53:4-8 continues:

Surely He has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows,
Yet we esteemed Him stricken,
Smitten by God, and afflicted.
But He was wounded for our transgressions,
He was bruised for our iniquities;
The chastisement of our peace was upon Him,
And by His stripes we are healed.
All we like sheep have gone astray;
We have turned, everyone, to his own way;
And the Lord has laid on Him the iniquity of us all.
He was oppressed and He was afflicted,
Yet He opened not His mouth;
He was led as a lamb to the slaughter.
And as a sheep before its shearsers is silent,
So He opened not His mouth.
He was taken from prison and from judgment,
And who will declare His generation?
For He was cut off from the land of the living;
For the transgression of My people He was stricken.

The Savior, Jesus Christ, the Incarnate One, has faithfully fulfilled these
prophecies. Matt 1:1 traces His genealogy back to Abraham. Paul, in Gal 3:16, states
that the promise to Abraham was fulfilled in Christ. Acts 2:20-30 affirms that this “Son
of David” would occupy the throne of David.

Jesus’ birth was miraculous, as He was born of the virgin Mary. He was born in
Bethlehem, the predicted birthplace. Another name for Jesus is Immanuel, meaning
“God with us,” fitting His incarnation. With His divine-human nature He was commonly
called Jesus, meaning Savior. Jesus read the Scripture, Isa 61:1-2, and declared, “Today
this Scripture is fulfilled in your hearing.”
Christ’s Ministry of Redemption and Atonement

It was for the purpose of redeeming us and making atonement for us that Jesus became God incarnate. Seventh-day Adventists view salvation and what Jesus did for us on the cross as essentially the same as Lutherans. But the Adventists do see the sacrifice Jesus made for us on the cross as part of a two-phase atonement, which continues in the heavenly sanctuary later after His ascension. We also believe in believer’s baptism, not the baptism of infants on which there will be further elaboration. Seventh-day Adventists believe the following:

In infinite love and mercy God made Christ, who knew no sin, to be sin for us, so that in Him we might be made the righteousness of God. Led by the Holy Spirit we sense our need, acknowledge our sinfulness, repent of our transgressions, and exercise faith in Jesus as Lord and Christ, as Substitute and Example. This faith which received salvation comes through the divine power of the Word and in the gift of God’s grace. Through Christ we are justified, adopted as God’s sons and daughters, and delivered from the lordship of sin. Through the Spirit we are born again and sanctified. The Spirit renews our minds, writes God’s law of love in our hearts, and we are given the power to live a holy life. Abiding in Him we become partakers of the divine nature and have the assurance now and in the judgment.79

But no one can express that he has arrived. All Spirit-filled believers have a continuing need for daily justification. Even 1 John 2:1 was addressed to the church when John wrote, “If anyone sins, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.”

Our salvation is fully completed in us when we are either glorified in the resurrection or translated to heaven. Christ will appear “to bring salvation to those who are waiting for Him” (Heb 9:28). Col 3:1-4 states that in Him we are already in the throne room of heaven. Second Cor 3:18 affirms that “we are being transformed into His

79 Fundamental Belief 10, Seventh-day Adventists Believe, 118.
likeness with ever increasing glory.” “Thus our final redemption and adoption as a child of God takes place in the future.” Romans 8:19, 23, “For the earnest expectation of the creation eagerly awaits for the revealing of the sons of God. Not only that, but we also who have the first fruits of the spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, eagerly waiting for the adoption, the redemption of our body.” This final redemption and adoption happens when Christ returns.

There will be more of Christ’s atonement ministry for us in the presentation on Christ’s exalted ministry in the Holy Place and the Most Holy Place.

Baptism

Seventh-day Adventist believers point to the fact that the Greek word *baptizo* means “to immerse”—to be buried to the old life and rise to new life in Jesus our Lord. Adventists want to be in keeping with the biblical faith and practice of baptism as practiced by the Apostolic Church. In the Apostolic Church baptism automatically followed acceptance of Jesus as Lord and Savior. Baptism was the confirmation of the new believer’s faith. Mark 16:16 records, “He who believes and is baptized will be saved.”

In the New Testament we only have baptism by immersion. For example, Philip the evangelist baptized the Ethiopian eunuch; they both went into the water and came up out of the water after the eunuch professed his belief in Jesus Christ. Even before the Christian era, the Jews baptized their proselytes by immersion. The Essenes at Qumran followed the practice of immersing both new members and converts. Jesus Himself is

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80 *Seventh-day Adventists Believe*, 129.
believed by some to have been a member of the Essene community. There are also drawings of immersion in the catacombs and churches, on the mosaics on the floor, the walls, and ceilings, in sculptural reliefs, and in drawings in ancient New Testaments for the first 10-14 centuries.\(^{81}\)

In the Seventh-day Adventist Church there are qualifications for baptism on the part of the baptismal candidate:\(^{82}\)

1. The candidate must have faith in Jesus’ atoning sacrifice as the only means of salvation from sin (Mark 16:16). In the New Testament only those who believed the Gospel were baptized. Since faith comes by hearing the Word of God, instruction is a vital part of baptismal preparation. Furthermore, Matt 28:19-20 tells us that we are to teach them to observe all things that Christ has commanded us.

2. There is the element of repentance. Instruction by preaching and teaching brings repentance (Acts 2:38). Then Peter said to them, “Repent and let everyone of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.” Without conversion there can be no personal relationship with Jesus Christ. Real repentance brings death to sin. Baptism is the symbol of Christ’s death and resurrection, buried to the old life, and rising to new life. The waters too can symbolize overwhelming trouble and affliction, but the born again Christian rises to new life in Jesus his Lord and Savior. Here is Paul’s clear teaching on Christian baptism in Romans 6:3-4:

Or do you know that as many of us as were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death?

\(^{81}\)Seventh-day Adventists Believe, 184.

\(^{82}\)Ibid., 187-190.
Therefore we were buried with Him by baptism and death, 
That just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory 
of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.

3. The baptismal candidate should show fruits of repentance. Matt 3:8 tells of fruits worthy of repentance. There should already be expressions of love to God and obedience to God’s commandments. Unless the candidate gives evidence of his relationship with Jesus, he is not ready for Christian baptism.

“Baptism incorporates the new believer into the church in the context of ‘being born again.’” 83 Karl Barth, the famous theologian, admitted that nowhere in the New Testament is infant baptism either permitted or commanded. 84 G. R. Beasley-Murray confessed, “I find myself unable to recognize in infant baptism the baptism of the New Testament Church.” 85

The writer is a strong advocate of believers being ordained into ministry at the time of their baptism by the laying on of hands as taught in the New Testament. The believer must enter the church with the clear understanding that Christ has called him into ministry. He is called from forgiveness to Christian ministry. 86

Foot Washing

On that same night as Jesus initiated His Lord’s Supper, He also said that we should wash the feet of one another. He also provided this blessing, “If you know these

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83 Seventh-day Adventists Believe, 188.

84 Ibid., 189.

85 Ibid.

things, happy are you if you do them” (John 13:17). The reader may ask, “What is the meaning of foot washing?”

1. Foot washing is a memorial of Christ’s condescension. Jesus emptied Himself by taking the form of a servant, and came in the likeness of men. In that same setting Jesus washed the feet of His disciples (Phil 2:7).

2. Foot washing is a type of higher cleansing. It represents not just the cleaning of the feet, but the cleaning of the whole heart.

3. Foot washing is also a fellowship of forgiveness. By forgiving one another we allow ourselves to be open for God’s forgiveness (Matt 6:14-15 NKJV). “For if you forgive men their trespasses, Your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.” In John 13:14 Jesus said, “You also ought to wash one another’s feet.” We are washed by fellow believers.

4. Foot washing is a fellowship with Christ and fellow believers. On this occasion Jesus said to His disciples, “If I do not wash you, you have no part with me” (John 13:8). It was on this same observance that Jesus also shared, “A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another” (John 13:34).87

We are reminded through Phil 2:3 to esteem others even better than ourselves. Here is a clear mandate to serve one another. One cannot wash another’s feet by standing up, thus a call to a life and attitude of humility. Here we live out the character of Jesus Christ and love as He loved.

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87Seventh-day Adventists Believe, 196-198.
The Ordinance of Communion

We should look forward to each opportunity to receive and celebrate the ordinance of the Lord’s Supper. Jesus instituted, in place of the Passover, this service to memorialize His great sacrifice (1 Cor 11:24-26). Now that the worshipers have prepared themselves by confession, foot washing, and prayer, they are ready to partake of a very special meal, namely the Lord’s Supper, the Ordinance of Communion, or the Eucharistic Meal. Here the mood can be both penitential and also can be one of expectation or even a joyful time of our celebrating in thanksgiving the banquet meal of the kingdom. The last comment may be a surprise for some Adventists.

Let’s look together at the meaning of the Lord’s Supper. 88

1. The Lord’s Supper commemorates deliverance from sin here in the deliverance from Egypt or the bondage of sin. Here is liberation from sure and certain spiritual death. This meal proclaims Christ’s death on the cross which provided our salvation, forgiveness, and guaranteed eternal life.

Our Lord instructs us to do this in remembrance of Him (1 Cor 11:24). He says to us, “This is my body, which is broken for you.” In light of Christ’s atonement, this is the substitutionary dimension. This is why He says, “broken for you.” Being no longer condemned, we by faith in Him are declared the righteousness of God.

We look at the bread and the fruit of the vine. Jesus declares to us that He is the Bread of Life. He also says, “I am the true vine” (John 15:1). “Only unleavened bread or

88Seventh-day Adventists Believe, 199-201.
unfermented wine could symbolize the spotless perfection of the cleansing blood of the Savior.89

It comes down to this in John 6:53-54 where Jesus says that unless we eat His body and drink His blood we have no life in us. We are as dependent on Him for spiritual life as we are on food and drink for physical life. This is truly the Cup of Blessing (1 Cor 10:16).

2. The Lord’s Supper is our corporate communion with Christ. We who are many are one body in Christ through this meal which He has instituted. The communion bread is broken into many pieces from the same loaf, this expressing our community in Him. As the Old Covenant was ratified by blood, so the New Covenant was ratified by Christ’s blood. “For this is My blood of the New Covenant that is shed for many for the remission of sins” (Matt 26:27-28; Luke 22:20; 1 Cor 10:16-17). This makes one great family.

Adventists believe that Christ meets His people and energizes them and gives them a new start. In this meeting of His people I still believe that Christ is present in, with, and under the communion elements that remain bread and wine. Ellen White believed that we do experience the presence of Christ in the communion meal.

3. The Lord’s Supper is also the Eucharistic Meal. It is as we eat and drink this meal together that we anticipate the second advent of Jesus Christ. “For as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord’s death until he comes” (1 Cor 11:26). This meal, we could say, is proleptic in that we participate in the celebration already, but not yet in the new kingdom He is preparing for us. We are reminded too of

89Seventh-day Adventists Believe, 199-201.
Matt 26:29, “But I say to you, I will not drink of this fruit of the vine from now on until that day when I drink it anew with you in My Father’s kingdom.”

This meal is for baptized members, not for children. No one should partake of this meal in an unworthy manner either in unbecoming conduct or in lack of vital faith. Those who partake in an unworthy manner eat and drink to their own condemnation (1 Cor 11:29). This meal is far more than a commemorative ceremony. We should not be fewer in numbers, but in even greater attendance at this ordinance. We do well on Sabbath to rightly prepare ourselves for this sacred meal.

Adventists and Lutherans in Dialogue on Justification

“This doctrine of justification by grace through faith alone is central to both Lutherans and Adventists.” Adventists do give a prominent place to law and obedience as a response to a strong life of faith. The Augsburg Confession declares that we cannot obtain forgiveness of sin and righteousness before God by our own merits, works, or satisfaction, but we receive righteousness before God by grace through faith.”

According to Fundamental Belief #10 of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, we express faith in Jesus as Lord and Christ as Substitute and Example, a gift of God’s grace.

Both affirm inter-related principles of the Reformation—Sola Scriptura, Solus Christus, Sola Fide, and Sola Gratia. Both see themselves as heirs of the

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90 “Adventists and Lutherans in Conversation,” 2.
91 Ibid.
92 Seventh-day Adventists Believe, 118.
93 “Adventists and Lutherans in Conversation,” 3.
Reformation. Both hold as fundamental Romans 3:21-26 as the basis to their understanding of justification by faith.

Lutherans understand the teaching on justification by faith as the criterion of all other key issues of belief. Adventists put the doctrine of righteousness and justification in the wider context of the experience of salvation. Adventists teach that, while salvation is all of grace and not of works, its fruit is obedience to the commandments (FB 18). Lutherans also hold that real faith produces good works. But neither teach a justification by works of the law.

Both churches do understand justification as God’s gracious declaration of the forgiveness of sins for the sake of Jesus, crucified and risen. Both communions lead the believer into sanctification. This describes the indwelling of Christ and the new life in the Spirit. In this growth in grace we are becoming more like Jesus. Adventists express that the Spirit renews our minds, writes God’s law of love in our hearts, and we have the assurance of salvation both now and in the judgment (FB 10). Adventists admit that one can still sin. Lutherans admit that believing Lutherans still sin.

In regard to the law, both Lutherans and Adventists affirm that justification rests wholly on the grace of God in that the keeping of the law cannot bring merit. The Ten Commandments are given importance by each, but the connotation of the law differs for each. Lutherans want to affirm a kind of Christian freedom. Adventists want to show

\[\text{\textsuperscript{94}}\text{“Adventists and Lutherans in Conversation,” 3.}\]

\[\text{\textsuperscript{95}}\text{Ibid., 4.}\]

\[\text{\textsuperscript{96}}\text{Ibid.}\]

\[\text{\textsuperscript{97}}\text{Ibid., 4.}\]
that the Ten Commandments are part of the everlasting covenant. But it is faith alone
that apprehends grace and forgiveness of sin. Adventists see sanctification lived out in
the character of Christ when love to God and love to others is the ruling motivation.

Both communions teach the doctrine of the Final Judgment, but Adventists place
more emphasis on this belief. Both agree that it is our standing in Christ, that of
justification, which alone gives us hope.

**Summary**

Augustine once said, “Man is restless until he finds his rest in God.” Luther, the
Augustinian monk and later professor at Wittenberg and scholarly Reformer, expressed
what Augustine meant when he was born again. Rom 1:17 came alive for Luther as he
discovered that he who through faith is righteous shall live. This is justification by faith
alone through the merits of Jesus Christ. I emphasize again that both communions see
themselves as heirs of the Reformation.

Lutherans believe that the real spiritual purpose for the law is that it is our
schoolmaster to bring us to Christ. Lutherans and Adventists strongly hold that God was
incarnate in Jesus Christ on the cross and in His resurrection, reconciling the world unto
Himself.

Luther comes down so strong on God’s grace that, although he taught all the right

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99 Ibid.

100 Ibid.

101 “Lutherans and Adventists in Conversation,” 91.
things about baptism, he did not leave the practice of baptizing infants whom he declared are given the gift of faith later. Adventists dedicate infants and children, but practice believer’s baptism and baptize by immersion. All of Luther’s presentations on baptism centered on infant baptism.

Lutherans believe in the real presence of Christ in the communion meal, while Adventists believe that they do experience the presence of Christ as believers commune together. Both place strong emphasis on being prepared to receive the communion meal.

Adventists believe that God’s law existed even before the fall of man, and that even before man’s fallen state, we were subject to God’s law. But we have fallen short of God’s law and this required Jesus to die on the cross as our substitute. Differing from Luther, Adventists believe that no part of God’s law can be changed. We cannot violate the revealed will of God. Both communions would agree that Jesus Christ was chosen before the foundation of the world to be our Savior and sacrifice for sin. Jesus is the fulfillment of all Old Testament prophecy as the Messiah.

Both communions understand justification by faith as that which leads us to grow in our sanctification, our growth in grace, to take on the character of Jesus and serve Him faithfully in the church with our spiritual gifts. Both believe that our knowing Jesus as both Lord and Savior will lead to lives of service and ministry for Him. Both believe in a coming judgment, but Adventists believe that judgment is taking place right now.
CHAPTER 4

LAW AND SABBATH

Introduction

There is enormous evidence to conclude that Dr. Martin Luther certainly is not a systematic theologian. We more often tend to catch his beliefs and interpretation in the midst of his teaching lectures and his writings, each written for a specific purpose. Thankfully, because he has written over 90 volumes, we can still capture the essence of Luther as the young Luther, middle-aged reformer, and the older Luther. Thus, we cannot find the full research on any of these themes in one place; however, Luther does have much to share on Law and Sabbath.

The Adventists have their material more together in one organized place, and seem to be more consistent in allowing Scripture to interpret Scripture. The Adventists also see the Old and New Testaments as related together and the commandments as an everlasting covenant. Adventist believers tend to be together in their fundamental beliefs.

Luther on Law and Sabbath

The Origin of Sin on Earth

Genesis 2:3: “Then God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it, because in it He rested from all His work which God had created and made.” We often read of how sin
came into the world. Luther deals as well with when sin came into the world.\(^1\) He acknowledges, in keeping with Christ in Matt 12, that the Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath. He interprets Gen 2:3 to mean that God has a special purpose in making us understand that the seventh day, in particular, should be devoted to divine worship. This day, he declares, has been made “holy,” that is, set aside by God for sacred purposes and for the worship of God.

Luther states that if man had remained in the state of innocence, he would have held the seventh day sacred. He would have given his descendants instruction about the will and worship of God; he would have praised God, he would have given thanks; to be sure man was especially created for the knowledge and worship of God, for Luther clearly affirms that the Sabbath was not made for sheep and cows, but for man, in order that the knowledge of God might be developed and might increase. God really wanted the command about sanctifying the Sabbath to remain in focus. It was on the seventh day that God wanted men to busy themselves both with His word and with other forms of worship established by Him, so that we might give first thought to the part of our nature that was created chiefly for acknowledging and glorifying God.\(^2\)

Here by the tree of life Adam praised God and thanked Him for the dominion over all the creatures on earth which had been given to mankind. Psalm 148 suggests a kind of liturgy for such thanksgiving when the sun, the moon, the stars, the fish, and the dragons are commanded to praise the Lord.

Praise the Lord
Praise the Lord from the heavens;

\(^1\)Luther, “Lectures on Genesis, Chapters 1-5” (1535), LW 1:79-81.

\(^2\)Ibid., 80.
Praise Him in the heights!
Praise Him, all His angels;
Praise Him, all His hosts!
Praise Him, sun and moon;
Praise Him, all you stars of light!
Praise Him, you heavens of heavens,
And you waters above the heavens!
Let them praise the name of the Lord,
For He commanded, and they were created.
He has established them forever and ever;
He has made a decree that shall not pass away.
Praise the Lord from the earth,
You great sea creatures and all the depths;
Fire and hail, snow and clouds;
Stormy wind, fulfilling His word;
Mountains and all hills;
Fruitful trees and all cedars;
Beasts and all cattle;
Creeping things and flying fowl;
Kings of the earth and all peoples;
Princes and all judges of the earth;
Both young men and maidens;
Old men and children.
Let them praise the name of the Lord,
For His name is exalted;
His glory is above the earth and heaven.

If only we could have been begotten by Adam in innocence.

Life on the start of this Sabbath was like a perfect picture. Luther believes that all this was written about the original Sabbath so that we might picture in our minds a scene of hope for the future and eternal life. Certainly “all the things God wants done on the Sabbath are clear signs of another life after this life.”

Because the Sabbath command remains for the church, it denotes that spiritual life is to be restored to us through Christ. Here is a taste of heaven in advance.

Luther states that he can readily imagine that Adam and Eve fell on the seventh

3Luther, “Lectures on Genesis, Chapters 1-5” (1535), LW 1:79-81.
day. On the sixth day they were both created. It was early in the morning on the seventh day, which had been sanctified by the Lord, that God speaks with Adam, giving him direction concerning His worship, and He forbids him to eat the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. The real purpose of the seventh day, Luther goes on to express, is that the word of God be preached and heard. Thus, the morning time was set aside for prayer and preaching.⁴

About noon, Luther clarifies, God also convenes with Eve, “Where the Word of God is there Satan also makes it his business to spread falsehood and false teaching, for it grieves him that through the Word we, like Adam in paradise, became citizens of heaven.”⁵ Now the text clearly states that the Lord came among them as the heat of the day ended; the Lord came and condemned Adam, together with his descendants, to death. Luther writes, “I am easily convinced that these events took place on the very Sabbath—and that one not complete—on which Adam lived in Paradise and enjoyed its fruit.”⁶

Even after the fall, Adam kept the seventh day sacred, instructing his family. Therefore, from the beginning of the world, the Sabbath was intended for the worship of God.

**Ten Commandments, Sabbath, and Law**

Now we move to Exod 20:1-17, where we read the Ten Commandments as given by Moses to Israel. The writer notes that Luther numbers the commandments differently:

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⁴Luther, “Lectures on Genesis, Chapters 1-5” (1535), LW 1:81.

⁵Ibid.

⁶Ibid., 80.

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The First Commandment – “You shall have no other gods before Me. You shall not make for yourself any carved image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth; you shall not bow down to them nor serve them. For I the Lord your God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children to the third and fourth generations of those who hate Me, but showing mercy to thousands, to those who love Me and keep My commandments.” Second Commandment (verse 7) – “You shall not take the name of the Lord your God in vain, for the Lord will not hold him guiltless who takes His name in vain. Third Commandment (verse 8) – “Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days you shall labor and do all your work, but the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord your God. In it you shall do no work: you, nor your son, nor your daughter, nor your manservant, nor your maidservant, nor your cattle, nor your stranger that is within your gates. For in six days the Lord made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that is in them, and rested the seventh day. Therefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day and hallowed it.”

In volume 6 Luther writes, “In the third commandment it is stated that in six days you shall labor and do all your work—that is care for your property.” But he goes on to say that on the seventh day you must keep the Sabbath, rest, and listen to the voice of the Lord your God. (Compare to Exodus 23:12)

They had to be still, serve God, and keep the Sabbath as stated in Psalm 46:10: “Be still and know that I am God; I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth.” Luther translates it this way, “Listen to me, leave your work, stop, and let Me have My way.”

Luther speaks very positively of the Ten Commandments when he says, “For God will not give revelation to everyone; He will not promulgate a new Decalogue, but He had bound us to this commandment which resounded from heaven.”

7Luther, “Lectures on Genesis; Chapters 31-37” (1539), in LW 6:177.
8Ibid., 35.
9Luther, “Genesis; Chapters 26-30” (1538), in LW 5:348.
Abraham observed the Decalogue, the rite of the Sabbath, and the law of circumcision.\textsuperscript{10}

Luther also writes, “This is the proper celebration of the Sabbath, to rest from our work and be full of God’s works.”\textsuperscript{11}

Professor Luther of Wittenberg teaches us that the third commandment governs how a person should act toward God, that is in worshiping. “We should sanctify the day of rest. The first three commandments teach a person how to govern himself toward God in thought, and deed, in word and action, that is all of life.”\textsuperscript{12}

Luther also speaks positively of what the Old Testament prophets express concerning the Sabbath. Isaiah commends the Sabbath to us in Isaiah 56:2-8:

2. Blessed is the man who does this,
   And the son of man who lays hold on it;
   Who keeps from defiling the Sabbath,
   And keeps his hand from doing any evil.

3. Do not let the son of the foreigner
   Who has joined himself to the Lord speak, saying,
   “The Lord has utterly separated me from his people,”
   Nor let the eunuch say,
   “Here I am, a dry tree.”

4. For thus says the Lord;
   “To the eunuchs who keep My Sabbaths,
   And choose what pleases Me,
   And hold fast My covenant,

5. Even to them I will give to My house
   And within My walls a place and a name
   Better than that of sons and daughters;
   I will give them an everlasting name
   That shall not be cut off.

6. “Also the sons of the foreigner
   Who join themselves to the Lord, to serve Him,
   And to love the name of the Lord, to be His servants—
   Everyone who keeps from defiling the Sabbath,

\textsuperscript{10}\textsuperscript{Luther, “Genesis; Chapters 26-30” (1538), in LW 5:20.}

\textsuperscript{11}\textsuperscript{Luther, “Selected Psalms II; Psalm 68” (1521), in LW 13:25.}

\textsuperscript{12}\textsuperscript{Luther, “Personal Prayer Book,” (1522), in LW 43:15.}
And holds fast My covenant—
7. Even them I will bring to My holy mountain,
   And make them joyful in My house of prayer,
   Their burnt offerings and their sacrifices
   Will be accepted on My altar;
   For My house shall be called a house of prayer for all nations.”
8. The Lord God who gathers the outcasts of Israel, says,
   “Yes, I will gather to him
   Others besides those who are gathered to Him.”

In response to all that Isaiah says here in the 56th chapter, Luther states that the sum of the law is to keep the Sabbath and to hold out our hand to our neighbor. Sabbath was instituted for Word and prayer. In this way we should be well disposed toward the Sabbath and service toward our neighbor.\(^{13}\)

Luther next cites Isaiah 58:13-14:

13. “If you turn away your foot from the Sabbath,
   From doing your pleasure on My holy day,
   And call the Sabbath a delight,
   The holy day of the Lord honorable
   And shall honor Him, not doing your own ways,
   Not finding your own pleasure,
   Nor speaking your own words,
14. Then you shall delight yourself in the Lord;
   And I will cause you to ride on the high hills of the earth,
   And feed you with the heritage of Jacob your father.
   The mouth of the Lord has spoken.”

In regard to verse 13, Luther states that this is not the right way to observe the Sabbath, to do what pleases you. They fasted in accordance with their own will. This is what it means to turn the foot from the Sabbath. To go and to walk means to work and to walk God’s way, not our own. If we turn away, we will end up in gross sins on the Sabbath, as we were accustomed to committing, such as guzzling and whoring. If we take heed and keep the Sabbath, then we will call the Sabbath a delight and the holy day

\(^{13}\)Luther, “Lectures on Isaiah; Chapters 40-66” (1543), in LW 17:261.
of the Lord honorable. The Sabbath is indeed a Sabbath when we abstain from our own good works.\textsuperscript{14}

Luther believes that the true Sabbath consists in doing the work of God, hearing the word, praying and doing good in every way to our neighbor. The duties of the Sabbath are to sanctify God by hearing the word, by means of praise and thanksgiving. Thus, the Sabbath is to be celebrated by us like a holiday.\textsuperscript{15}

Commenting on verse 14, Luther teaches that we will ride and be carried high above the earth. We shall have the upper hand. The Lord shall put our enemies under our feet and we shall control them. Even if calamity should come, the Lord will be with us and carry us; we will be in control and prevail over all our ills and calamities.

**Luther’s Exegetical Problem and Blind Spot**

I fully believe that Luther has an exegetical problem. Based on his reading and interpretation of salvation, he stated, “You are not under the law, but under grace.” The law does not apply to the new man in Christ. For the law had its limits until Christ, or, as Paul says in Gal 3:24-25, “Therefore the law was our school master to bring us to Christ, that we might be justified by faith. But after faith has come, we are no longer under a school master”. Luther holds the position that when Christ came, Moses and the law stopped, and so did all the prophets.\textsuperscript{16} For Luther, there is no everlasting covenant.

Luther writes, “Christian righteousness applies to the new man, and the

\textsuperscript{14}Luther, “Lectures on Isaiah; Chapters 40-66” (1543), in LW 17:292-293.

\textsuperscript{15}Luther, “Lectures on Galatians, Chapters 1-4” (1535), in LW 26:411.

\textsuperscript{16}Ibid., 7.
righteousness of the law applies to the new man who is born of flesh and blood.”

Dr. Luther teaches that there are two kinds of righteousness, distinct and separate from each other. The righteousness of the law is earthly and deals with earthly things; by it we perform good works. We must first be justified by Christian righteousness. With the other, we ascend beyond laws and works. He states that, as we have become the image of the earthly Adam, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly One. Here we come into another kingdom.

If only Luther would have found the convincing truth of Acts 24:14-16 stated by Paul the apostle:

14. But this I confess to you
   that according to the way which they call a sect, so I worship the God of my fathers, believing all things which are written in the Law and in the Prophets.
15. I have hope in God, which they themselves also accept, that there will be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and the unjust.
16. This being so, I myself always strive to have a conscience without offence toward God and man

Luther further states that the law of Moses is no longer binding on us because it is given only to the people of Israel. He believes that the role of Moses ended when Christ came. Luther writes, “We will regard Moses as a teacher, but we will not regard him as a

\[\text{\scriptsize 17} \text{Luther, “Lectures on Galatians, Chapters 1-4” (1535), in LW 26:8.}\]

\[\text{\scriptsize 18} \text{Ibid., 8, 11.}\]
lawgiver unless he agrees with the New Testament and the natural law.”

Luther even goes so far as to say that he dismissed the commandments given to the people of Israel, saying what Moses gave was already implanted in him by nature. Even things like the tithe do not belong to the Gentiles.

The astute researcher carefully notes that in Luther’s Small Catechism, as mentioned before, the commandments are numbered differently, all of which makes the third commandment read, “Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy.” Luther writes that this commandment means that we shall fear and love God so that we do not despise the purity of His word, but hold it sacred and gladly learn and love it. He also writes that the Old Testament set aside the seventh day (Saturday) as a required day of rest (Sabbath means “rest”) and worship. References are the following:

Exodus 20:8:
Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy.
Six days you shall labor and do all your work, but the seventh day is a Sabbath to the Lord neither you, nor your son or daughter, nor your manservant or maidservant, nor your animals, nor your alien within your gates. For in six days the Lord made the heaven and the earth, the sun, and all that is in them, but He rested on the seventh day. Therefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy.

Exodus 35:2:
For in six days work is to be done, but the seventh day shall be your holy day, a Sabbath of rest to the Lord.

19Luther, “How Christians Should Regard Moses” (1525), in LW 35:164-166.

20Ibid., 164.


22Ibid., 53.
Leviticus 23:3:  
There are six days when you may work,  
but the seventh day is a holy day, a  
Sabbath of rest, a day of sacred assembly.

Then Luther went on to say that the Sabbath was a sign pointing to Jesus who is our rest. But since Jesus has come as our Lord and Savior, God no longer requires us to observe the Sabbath day and other holy days of the Old Testament. Reference is also made to the following:

Matthew 11:28  
Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest.

Col 2:16-17:  
Therefore let no one judge you in food or drink, or regarding a festival or a new moon or Sabbath, which are the shadow of things to come, but the substance is of Christ.

I went on to study the third commandment in Luther’s Large Catechism. Here the commandment is rendered, “You should sanctify God’s holiday.” Lutheran feels that this commandment does not apply to us Christians on the surface. He believes that this commandment is limited to special customs, people, times, and places. All of these have now become free through Christ. The day, he believes, is not limited to a special time as it was among the Jews. He declares that Sunday has been set aside for the purpose of worship and rest since early times and nobody should cause confusion by making


unnecessary changes.\textsuperscript{25} The real function of this day is to preach for the sake of the young people and the person on the street.\textsuperscript{26}

Luther further states that “the day itself does not need keeping holy, for it was created holy in itself. . . . So a day becomes holy or unholy because of you, depending on whether or not you spend it doing holy or unholy things. But he also states that we need to realize that God insists on our keeping this commandment to the letter.”\textsuperscript{27}

Luther cites a number of passages as proof of his position on the Sabbath. For example, he believes that there is and should be no law regarding food or drink, festivals, new moons, or Sabbaths. Any Sabbath observance, he feels, merely foreshadowed the real Sabbath with Jesus in the New Jerusalem. That is why Luther cited Col 2:16-17, “Therefore let no one judge you in food or drink regarding a festival or a new moon or Sabbaths, which are a shadow of things to come, but the salvation is of Christ.”\textsuperscript{28}

In Luther’s view, the very coming of Christ was enough to replace anything Jewish. For example, he refers to all of Matt 12:1-12, but then he particularly referred to verse 6, “I tell you that one greater than the temple is here.” In all this long passage of Matt 12:1-12 Jesus does not retract the keeping of the Sabbath, but instead we have these words coming from the lips of Jesus, the Christ, in Matt 12:8 and 12b, “For the Son of man is Lord even of the Sabbath. . . . Therefore it is lawful to do good on the Sabbath.”\textsuperscript{29}

\textsuperscript{25}Luther, \textit{The Large Catechism}, 53.

\textsuperscript{26}Ibid., 376.

\textsuperscript{27}Ibid., 40, 42.

\textsuperscript{28}Luther, “How Christians Should Regard Moses,” in LW 35:165.

\textsuperscript{29}Ibid.
Luther believes that Christ was no longer the keeper of the Sabbath. He cites two passages where Jesus heals on the Sabbath as His proof of His Sabbath position, while Jesus clearly stated that we should do good on the Sabbath. For the above reason of healing on the Sabbath, Luther referred to the gospel of John 7:23-33: “Moses therefore gave you circumcision (not that it is from Moses, but from the Father), and you circumcise a man on the Sabbath. If a man receives circumcision on the Sabbath, that the law of Moses should not be broken, are you angry with Me because I have made a man well on the Sabbath?” (John 7:23).

Second, Luther chooses John 9:14-16:

And it was Sabbath when Jesus made the clay and opened his eyes. Then the Pharisees also asked him how he had received his sight. He said to them, “He put clay on my eyes and I washed and I see.” Therefore some of the Pharisees said, “This man is not from God, because He does not keep the Sabbath.” Others said, “How can a man who is a sinner do such miracles.” And there was a division among them.30

All of the above, Luther believes, spoke to the abolishing of the Sabbath. He further writes that it was not necessary to observe the Sabbath or Sunday because of Moses’ commandment.31 Nature also shares and teaches that one must now and then rest a day so that man and beast may be refreshed. Moses places the Sabbath under man as Christ also does. For where it is kept, for the sake of rest alone, it is clear that he who does not rest may break the Sabbath and rest on another day. The Sabbath is also to be kept for the purpose of preaching and hearing the word of God.

In another instance, Luther writes, “Well, you say Sunday shall be held in reserve for the sake of Christ’s resurrection; this is the Lord’s Day since Christ arose on the day

31Luther, “Against the Heavenly Prophets” (1525), in LW 40:98.
after the Sabbath.’”\textsuperscript{32} Luther means to show that, for the Christian, the rather legalistic Sabbath has been superseded by the more joyous and festive Sabbath.\textsuperscript{33} Here Luther begins the use of the word \textit{feiertag} or “holiday” to replace the word holy day. And in his “Against the Sabbatarians” he wrote, “All this mentioned by Moses of keeping the Sabbath day is a temporal adaptation or temporary addendum intended solely for the people brought out of Egypt. Nor was the Sabbath to endure forever any more than the whole law of Moses.”\textsuperscript{34} All of this Luther states, even though we read in Isa 66:22-23: “‘As the new heavens and the new earth that I will make endure before Me,’ declares the Lord, ‘so will your name and descendants endure. From one new moon to another and from one Sabbath to another, all mankind will come and bow down before Me,’ says the Lord.”

I believe that Luther fails to realize that the same Christ who is our Savior is also the Lawgiver at Sinai. Luther, we acknowledged earlier, is able to see that Abraham also kept the Decalogue, thus establishing the idea that both there, at Sinai, and in the Great Sermon on the Mount, the law, that is the Ten Commandments, are both the foundation for both the Old and New Covenant.

\textbf{Origin of Sunday Worship}

The famous historian, Josephus, in his book \textit{Antiquities}, writes: “Moses tells us, the world and everything in it was made in six days in all; and on the seventh God rested

\textsuperscript{32}Luther, “The Councils and the Church” (1539), in LW 41:64.

\textsuperscript{33}Luther, “A Treatise on Good Works” (1520), in LW 44:54.

\textsuperscript{34}Luther, “Against the Sabbatarians” (1538), LW 47:92.
and had respite from His labors, for which seems we also pass this day in repose from toil and call it the Sabbath, a word which in the Hebrew language means ‘rest’” (written A.D. 93-94).³⁵

In fact, from the second to the fifth century, while Sunday was rising in influence, Christians continued to observe the seventh-day Sabbath everywhere throughout the Roman Empire. “It is also true that not one writer of the second and third centuries ever cited a single Bible verse as authority for the observance of Sunday in place of the Sabbath.”³⁶

Historically, the popularity of sun worship of the pagan Romans accorded Sunday a growing acceptance. The fourth century sees the introduction of Sunday laws. These were laws of a nature and religious character under Constantine—March 7, 321 A.D. Constantine the Great made a law for the whole empire, he himself being a sun worshiper:

On the venerable day of the sun let the magistrates and people residing in cities rest, and let all workshops be closed. In the country, however, persons engaged in agriculture may freely and lawfully continue their pursuits; because it often happens that another day is not so suitable for grain sowing or for vine planting; lest by neglecting the purpose meant for such operations the bounty of heaven should be lost.³⁷

Not until Eusebius do we have Sunday presented by any church father. Eusebius was also the special friend and colleague of Constantine. In this way he writes: “They


³⁶Seventh-day Adventists Believe, 259.

³⁷Kenneth A. Strand, The Sabbath in Scripture and History (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald, 1982), 328.
(the patriarchs) did not, therefore, regard circumcision nor observe the Sabbath, nor do we, Neither do we abstain from certain foods, nor regard other injustices which Moses subsequently delivered to be observed in type and symbols, because such things as those do not belong to Christians.”

Eusebius also stated, “All things whatsoever that it was duty to do on Sabbath, these we have transferred to the Lord’s Day.” (A.D. 335-380). The way this is stated shows the Roman Catholic Church was very much behind all of this transference to the “Lord’s Day.” In fact, Sylvester, Bishop of Rome, declared in A.D. 325, “The day of the Sun is the Lord’s Day.”

In A.D. 538, the Roman Catholic Third Council of Orleans issued a law more severe than that of Constantine, the sun worshiper. Canon 28 of that Council says that on Sunday “even agricultural labor ought to be laid aside in order that the people may not be prevented from attending church.” We can well say that the observance of Sunday had its origins in “the mystery of lawlessness” (2 Thess 2:17).

Dan 7:25 depicts an attack on God’s people and on His law. The Scriptures speak of the little horn who attempts to “change the time and law.” But the same chapter, Dan 7:11, 22, 26, tells us that judgment will ultimately decide against it.

Roman Catholicism set forth a two-fold basis for weekly Sunday observance

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39Eusebius, Commentary on the Psalms; Psalm 22, in Migne, Patrologia Graeca, Vol. 23:1171, 1172.

40Robert L. Odom, Sunday in Roman Paganism (Brushton, NY: TEACH Services, 2003), 196, 197.

41Seventh-day Adventists Believe, 260.
(1) first by the Council of Laodicea (A.D. 364) that the Sabbath commandment of the Decalogue was still binding on Christians, and (2) in A.D. 539 the Roman Catholic Third Council of Orleans issued a law that the day of the week for such observance (which included regular work) had been transformed from Saturday to Sunday by the authority of the Roman Catholic Church. Even at the Council of Trent (1545-1563), convened by the pope to counter Protestantism, we find the wording, “The Sabbath, the most glorious day in the law, has been changed into the Lord’s Day. . . . These and other matters have not ceased by virtue of Christ’s teaching (for He says that He has come to fulfill the law, not to destroy it), but they have been changed by the authority of the church.”

Cited in the Council of Trent, the Archbishop of Reggio made a speech in which he openly declares that tradition stood above Scripture.

The authority of the Church could therefore not be bound to the authority of Scripture, because the church had changed circumcision into baptism, Sabbath into Sunday, not by the command of Christ, but by its own authority. With this, to be sure, the last illusion was destroyed, and it was declared that tradition does not signify antiquity, but continued tradition.

Luther, His Colleagues, and Sunday Worship

Now Martin Luther and his colleagues at Wittenberg broke with the Roman Catholic two-fold basis for Sunday observance. They emphasized salvation through faith and rejected anything that could be interpreted as legalism and they severed any

42Seventh-day Adventists Believe, 260.

43Ibid., 261.

Sabbatarian restrictions that had been related to Sunday observance. In no way did they own any practice of keeping Sunday for worship services as a creation of the Roman Catholic Church.

In 1520, in his famous Address to the Christian Nobility of the German Nation, Luther encouraged a reduction in the number of ceremonies and festival days inherited from Roman Catholicism, stating that all festivals should be abolished, and Sunday alone retained. Of significance is his emphasis on Sunday as the main weekly day for Christian worship. But he does not believe that Sunday was especially appointed by God for worship.

Luther does conceive of the Old Testament Sabbath as a pre-figuration of eternity itself or an era of “sleeping” prior to the eternal age, patterned after Christ’s resting in the tomb on the Sabbath and resurrection on Sunday. Luther’s followers, however, do not emphasize this “era of sleeping.”

Luther looks upon the Sabbath commandment itself as having both moral and ceremonial aspects—God’s command to rest being moral, the specific day of the week he believed to be ceremonial. With this view, he could justify his position that a Christian could keep any day, just as long as he keeps one. In a sermon at Torgau in 1554, Luther explained, “Since our Lord has come, we have the liberty, if Sabbath or Sunday does not please us, to take Monday or another day of the week and make a Sunday out of it

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45 Strand, The Sabbath in Scripture and History, 216.

46 Ibid.
because God wants to rule the world orderly and peacefully.”

His Wittenberg followers followed his orientation with certain refinements. Luther’s close associate, Phillip Melanchthon, stated the concept that the Sabbath commandment in the Decalogue was ordained of God to provide for preaching and public worship. He strongly felt that it was a commandment binding on all men, but the specific day designated in the commandment pertained, in his opinion, only to Israel. In this way Melanchthon heightened Luther’s treatment of the Sabbath commandment.

The writer gets the clear sense that Melanchthon in his heart sees the Sabbath as binding for Christians, but rather than return to Israel, he will stay with Sunday for good order. He writes in *The Augsburg Confession*, “Such is the observation of the Lord’s Day, of Easter, of Pentecost, and like holidays and rites.” For they who think that the observation of the Lord’s Day was appointed by the authority of the church, instead of the Sabbath, as necessary, are greatly deceived.

During the Reformation, John Eck challenged Luther on the Sabbath: “Yet the church has changed the Sabbath to Sunday as its own authority on which you Luther have no Scripture.” One of Luther’s key foundations of belief was *Sola Scriptura*—Scripture Alone.

47Luther, “Predigt am 6 Sonntag nach Trinitatis” (August 11, 1538), in WA 16:478, 479. English translation in Landeen, 196.


50Ibid.

Luther’s older colleague, Andrew Rudolf Karlstadt of Bodenstein, certainly heightened Luther’s emphasis on keeping the Sabbath commandment. Karlstadt wrote a major treatise in 1524 on the subject, “Concerning the Sabbath and Commanded Holy Days,” two years after a breach between him and Luther. Karlstadt was very much inclined to keep the real seventh day Sabbath.\textsuperscript{52} In the treatise Karlstadt deals with the nature of the Sabbath and the manner of Sabbath observance, and includes a protest against such activities as personal entertainment, joy riding, normal minimal tasks, and making horses and oxen work on the Sabbath. In the tenth chapter Karlstadt refers to Sunday as a day which men have established. As for the seventh day of the week, Saturday, he indicates that this is a disputed question.\textsuperscript{53}

Luther responds to Karlstadt by saying, “Yes, if Karlstadt were to write more about the Sabbath, even Sunday would have to give way, and the Sabbath, that is Saturday, would be celebrated. He would truly make us Jews in all things, so that we also would have to be circumcised.”\textsuperscript{54}

This type of reaction is also displayed by Martin Luther in regard to real Sabbath keepers who lived in Moravia and Austria. Concerning them, he responded, “In our time there are in Moravia a foolish kind of people, the Sabbatarians, who maintain that the Sabbath must be observed after the fashion of the Jews. They may well insist on circumcision too for a like reason.”\textsuperscript{55} The German reformer tended to classify any

\textsuperscript{52}Strand, \textit{The Sabbath in Scripture and History}, 217.

\textsuperscript{53}Ibid.

\textsuperscript{54}Ibid.

\textsuperscript{55}Luther “Lectures on Genesis; Chapters 6-14” (1536), in LW 2:361.
Christian emphasis on Saturday observance as part of a reversion to an Israelite way of life. He remained quite suspicious of his own former colleague, Karlstadt. On the manner of observing the Sabbath, Karlstadt comments:

What man on the Sabbath is to do or to leave undone and how he has to behave toward God and his brethren is easy to say, for the Scripture is clear. But it is more difficult to perceive and examine then to understand because it is beyond all natural abilities. Man must be at rest and at peace with God and must ask of God and await all sanctification. . . . Moses also speaks (Exodus 35:2) of a Sabbath of rest to the Lord. The rest consists of this, that man knows that he cannot attain any sanctification except through Christ and yet is to be as holy as God is holy, which, however, he is unable to do. Therefore man becomes irritable and full of unrest, roil and drudgery, and can find neither peace nor rest nor leisure until he surrenders irrevocably to God—until he knows that God sanctifies only through Christ and without merit and work. When he knows this and understands it correctly, namely that God sanctifies gratuitously, then he is satisfied with God and arrives at rest in God.56

In Luther’s “Table Talk” he writes this concerning the Sabbath: “Keep it holy, for its use sake, both to body and soul! But if anywhere the day is made holy for the more day’s sake—if anywhere anyone sets up observance upon a Jewish foundation, then I order you to work on it, to ride on it, to do anything that shall reprove this encroachment on the Christian spirit and liberty.”57

In a Wittenberg edition of the Augsburg confession of 1535, Luther writes, in regard to the Sabbath:

As for Sabbath, we be lords of the Sabbath, and may yet change it to Monday, or any other day as we may see need; or we may make every tenth day holy, if we see cause why. Neither was there any cause to change it from the Saturday, save only to part a

56 Andreas Rudolf Karlstadt, Von Dem Sabbat und Gebotten Feyertagen, 1524, ch. 4, cited in Source Book for the History of Sabbath and Sunday.

difference between us and the Jews. Neither NEED WE ANY HOLY DAY AT ALL, if the people might be taught without it. 58

I conclude this portion with a very significant statement by Dr. Philip Schaff, noted theological and historical writer on the Reformation Era:

This view of Christian Sabbath, which was held by all the reformers, and still prevails on the continent of Europe, overlooks the important fact that the Sabbath has a moral as well as a ceremonial aspect, and is part of the Decalogue, which the Lord did not come to destroy, but to fulfill (Matt 17:18; comp xxiii 37-40; Romans iii:31; x 4). As a periodical day of rest for the body, and worship for the soul, the Sabbath is founded in the physical and moral constitution of man, and reflects the rest of God after the work of creation (Gen II:3). Under this view it is of primitive origin, like the institution of marriage, and of perpetual obligation, like the other commandments of the Decalogue. A lax theory of the Sabbath naturally leads to a lax practice, and tends to destroy the blessing of this day. 59

Adventists on Law and Sabbath

Origin of Sin on Earth

We can learn much on this subject from both the Scriptures and from The Great Controversy by Ellen G. White. 60 We begin this portion of our study by looking at Revelation 12, beginning with verse 7, as we receive a glimpse of the cosmic picture:

7 And war broke out in heaven: Michael and his angels fought against the dragon; and the dragon and his angels fought, 8 but they did not prevail, nor was a place found for them in heaven any longer. 9 So the great dragon was cast out, that serpent of old, called the Devil and Satan, who deceives the whole world; he was cast to the earth, and his angels were cast out with him.

58Luther, “Table Talk,” 13.

69
Ellen White records that Satan took one-third of the angels with him, a very large number, yet there remains of the loyal angels myriads of myriads and thousands of thousands.\textsuperscript{61}

Satan is called by various names. He is Lucifer, Light Bearer, Day Star, Son of the Dawn, and the Devil himself. He was one of the glorious living creatures beside God’s throne, who wanted to sit on God’s throne and take the place of God. Satan proclaimed, “I will make myself like the Most High” (Isa 14:12-20). I am reminded, too, of Isaiah 44:24:

Thus says the Lord, your Redeemer, and He who formed you from the womb:
“I am the Lord who makes all things,
Who stretches out the heavens all alone,
Who spreads abroad the earth by Myself;
(Is 45:5-6) I am the Lord, and there is no other,
There is no God besides Me.
I will gird you, though you have not known Me,
That they may know from the rising of the sun to its setting
That there is none besides Me.
Isaiah 45:11-12 – Thus says the Lord, the Holy One of Israel, and his Maker: “Ask Me of things to come concerning My sons; And concerning the work of My hands, you command Me. I have made the earth, and created man on it. It was I—My hands—that stretched out the heavens, And all their host I have commanded.
Isaiah 45:21 – And there is no other God besides Me, A just God and a Savior; there is none besides Me.
Isaiah 46:8-10 – Remember this, and show yourselves men; Recall to mind, O you transgressors. Remember the former things of old, For I am God, and there is no other; I am God, and there is none like Me, Declaring the end from the beginning, And from ancient times things that are not yet done, Saying, ‘My counsel shall stand, And I will do all my pleasure.’
Isaiah 47:19 – ‘No one sees me;

\textsuperscript{61}White, The Great Controversy, 238.
Your wisdom and your knowledge have warped you;  
And you have said in your heart,  
‘I am, and there is no one else besides me.’”

The point is this: the Lord will not share His position as Creator, Redeemer, or His ministry of the Holy Spirit with anybody.

In Genesis, Satan desires God’s authority and portrays Him as selfish and a liar; Satan grossly misrepresents God’s character. He convinces Eve that God really does not mean what He says. Adam, in turn, falls for the trap and deception of Satan. He must have used the same scheming approach with the angels. He persuaded the angels that they ought not to obey God. What does God really know about meeting people’s needs or even sacrificing Himself to meet people in need? Satan felt that he should be placed on the throne instead of Michael the Son. That is how war arose in heaven. Michael and His angels won the battle. There was no longer any place for the dragon and his angels in heaven. “The great dragon and his angels were thrown down” (Rev 12:7-9).

A shout of victory went up. The accuser of our brethren has been thrown down. “Therefore rejoice, O heavens, and you who dwell in them! Woe to the inhabitants of the earth and the sea! For the devil has come down to you, having great wrath, because he knows that he has a short time” (Rev 12:12).

Here are some questions raised in *The Great Controversy*:

1. Is God fair?
2. Is God so merciful and patient that He need not be obeyed?

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63Ibid., 35-43; see also Rev 12.
3. Does God demand more than we can possibly achieve, so that He cannot be obeyed?

Heaven answered the question by sending Jesus.

The Great Controversy reached its climax when Satan’s cruelty to Jesus forever destroyed his credibility with the unloving universe. Humility, self-sacrifice, and being raised from the dead gave Jesus an unqualified victory.

Ten Commandments, Sabbath, and Law

Let us now look at what Adventists believe about the Sabbath in the context of our chapter title. Our key source here is both the Scriptures and the text *Seventh-day Adventists Believe*.

1. God rested on the Sabbath.

God created the world in six continuous days. Then the Scripture records that He rested from all that He had done; He rested on the seventh day from all of His work of creating. God is really setting an example for all of us to follow. We may well say that the Sabbath was His finishing touch in that marvelous Creation Week.\(^{64}\)

2. God blessed the Sabbath.

By blessing His day, God declared this day to be a special day of divine favor. The keeping of this day would also bring blessing to those who would keep this day holy.\(^{65}\)

3. God sanctified the Sabbath.

\(^{64}\) *Seventh-day Adventists Believe*, 249.

\(^{65}\) Ibid., 250.
This means that this day alone was made sacred and holy, or consecrated for the Lord’s worship. This day was set apart for enriching divine-human relationships. God rested on this day from all His work and expected mankind to do the same. The personal presence of God permeates this day.\footnote{Seventh-day Adventists Believe, 250.}

4. The Sabbath at Sinai and the Miracle of Manna.

At this time in history Israel had generally lost sight of the Sabbath. All the requirements of slavery made Sabbath keeping quite difficult. No wonder the Lord said, “Remember the Sabbath.” With Israel, they were reminded through the providing of manna and the proclamation of the Ten Commandments. God even promised protection against disease if they would give attention to His Ten Commandments and keep all His statutes (Exod 15:26; cf., Gen 26:5). Each week day God would provide sufficient manna, but on Friday they were to gather twice the amount, but they were not to harvest on the Sabbath. This makes the sixth day a day of preparation. Only on the seventh day could the manna be kept without spoiling (Exod 16:23). For forty years or more the manna provision reminded them of six days of work and one day of rest.\footnote{Ibid.}

5. The Sabbath and the Law.

The Sabbath command is right in the center of the Decalogue (Exod 20:8-11). Although all of the commandments are important, this apparently is the one which we are most apt to not remember. All of humanity is alerted to not neglect this commandment and to be alert to the danger of forgetting its importance.

The commandment begins, “Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy.” This
shows beyond doubt that this commandment was not instituted at Sinai. This commandment originated at Creation. We are called upon to acknowledge His sovereignty as Creator and King.

Here, too, is the seal of God’s law. Seals contain three elements: the name of the owner of the seal, his title, and jurisdiction. His name is given: “the Lord you God;” His title: the one who made—the Creator--; and His territory: “the heavens and the earth.” (Exod 20:10, 11). This was given as a commandment of perpetual and personal obligation. The Creator has set the example; we are to follow in His steps.68

6. The Sabbath and Christ.

Whenever God acted to do major events, He did these events through Christ. Christ was the Creator, as confirmed by 1 Cor 8:61, Heb 1:1, 2, and John 1:3. Thus, Christ was the One who set the seventh day apart as a day for worship and rest and called it the Sabbath Day.

In time, Christ associated the Sabbath with His redemptive work. Note the redemption of His people (Deut 5:14, 15). Thus, the Sabbath marks those who have accepted the received Jesus, the Christ, as Creator and Savior. This Jesus is the Son of Man and also Lord of the Sabbath (Mark 2:28). And in the previous verse (27), instead of doing away with the Sabbath, He declared, “The Sabbath was made for man.” As His followers, we rejoice over Christ’s works of creation and redemption.69


The disciples had great respect for the Sabbath. His followers interrupted their

68 Seventh-day Adventists Believe, 251.

69 Ibid., 253.
burial plans and rested on the Sabbath. They continued on Sunday where they left off.  
The apostles worshiped on the seventh-day Sabbath. Throughout all of the New  
Testament Scripture, their weekly worship continued to be on the Sabbath. The apostle  
Paul attests to this faithful practice (Acts 13:14; 17:1, 2; 18:4). Christ fully accepted the  
Sabbath and worshiped faithfully on the Sabbath. Rev 1:10 reads that John was in the  
spirit on the Lord’s Day. In the Bible, the only day referred to as the Lord’s Day is the  
Sabbath. According to Isaiah 66:22-23, the Sabbath will be observed in heaven. Jesus  
asks us to pray using this model, “Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven” (Matt  
6:10).  

8. The Sabbath is a Perpetual Memorial of Creation.  

The basic significance here is that we memorialize the creation of the world through Christ. Our world did not evolve through evolution, but Christ spoke our earth into existence through creation. God never wants us to forget that He is the Creator. This commandment was not given to any particular people, but to all of humanity.  

9. The Sabbath is a Symbol of Redemption.  

Having delivered the children of Israel from bondage, the Sabbath became a memorial of deliverance as well (Deut 5:15). Now view the cross and see the Sabbath as a special symbol of redemption. Since sin cannot enter into the presence of a holy God, forgiven people can enter into Sabbath rest.  

10. The Sabbath is a Sign of Sanctification. 

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70Seventh-day Adventists Believe, 253-254.  
71Ibid., 255.  
72Ibid.  

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The Sabbath is a sign of God’s transforming power, that of holiness and sanctification (Exod 31:13; cf., Ezek 20:20). “Surely My Sabbaths you shall keep, for it is a sign between me and you throughout your generations, that you may know that I am the Lord who sanctifies you.” The Sabbath is a sign of the believer’s acceptance of the blood of Jesus for his forgiveness. The Sabbath is set aside for a holy purpose as well, so that His people can be a special witness for Him. The Sabbath, too, is a sign of obedience. If one’s heart obeys the fourth commandment, he will want to obey the whole law.\(^7\)

11. The Sabbath is a Sign of Loyalty.

Every human being’s loyalty will be tested by the Sabbath commandment. *The Great Controversy* reveals that before the second coming of Jesus, everyone will be in one of two classes of people. There will be those who are loyal and keep the commandments of God and those who worship “the beast and his image” (Rev 14:12, 9). In the end, God’s truth will be made clear to all the world.\(^7\) Look more closely at Rev 14:12 and 9, 10, 11:

\(^{12}\)Here is the patience of the saints; here are those who keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus.

\(^{9}\)If anyone worships the beast and his image and receives his mark on his forehead or on his hand,

\(^{10}\)he himself shall also drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out full strength into the cup of His indignation. And he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of his holy angels and in the presence of the Lamb.

\(^{11}\)And the smoke of their torment ascends forever and ever; and they have no rest day or night, who worship the beast and his image, and whoever receives the mark of his name.

\(^{73}\)*Seventh-day Adventists Believe*, 255, 256.

\(^{74}\)Ibid., 256.
12. The Sabbath is a Time of Fellowship.

On the Sabbath we experience companionship with God our Creator. It is the coming of Sabbath which brings hope, joy, meaning, and courage to our hard driven lives. We need this time to commune with God through worship, prayer, song, and study. O the cherished moments of Sabbath when we can experience God’s presence.

13. The Sabbath is a Sign of Righteousness by Faith.

We keep the Sabbath out of faith and implicit trust in the Lord Jesus Christ. In this we are able to accept God’s will for our lives. Believers observe the Sabbath as a result of their relationship with Christ as Creator and Redeemer.

14. The Sabbath is a Symbol of Resting in Christ.

Just as Israel was delivered from Egypt to earthly Canaan, the Sabbath is a sign of the Christian’s deliverance from sin to God’s rest. Thus, the redeemed are set apart from the world. Resting in Him, we are qualified for eternal rest. Heb 4:9 declares, “There remains therefore a rest for the people of God.” It is also the saving grace received by faith in Jesus that brings us into this rest.

We do not believe that man has the authority to change God’s moral law. The Ten Commandments show the character of God. At the same time, we know that the law is the object of Satan’s attack. The Scriptures teach that the saints will rally to defend God’s law (Rev 14:12). Christ’s death fulfilled the prophetic symbolism of the sacrificial system, but it offered the continued validity of the moral law.

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75 Seventh-day Adventists Believe, 256.

76 Ibid.

77 Ibid., 256, 257.
Christ Jesus Himself had the highest regard for the Ten Commandments. Christ also instructs us in John 14:15, “If you love Me, keep my commandments.” There are many other references to the moral law along with the fact that Rev 14:12 tells us that the saints are those who keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus. Heb 8:10 tells us, “I will put my laws into their mind and write them on their hearts: I will be their God, and they shall be my people.”

We of the Seventh-day Adventist faith have no article of faith, creed, or discipline aside from the Bible. Adventists do believe in the perpetuity of the law of God as summarily contained in the Ten Commandments, and therefore believe in the seventh day of the week as the Sabbath of the Lord.

In this regard, I hold before the reader the following propositions expressed by Seventh-day Adventists in 1892 as these concise statements relate to Law and Sabbath and our Seventh-day Adventist beliefs.78

Proposition XI

That God’s moral requirements are the same upon all men in all dispositions; that they are summarily contained in the commandments spoken by Jehovah from Sinai, engraved on tables of stone, and deposited in the ark, which was in consequence called the “ark of the Covenant,” or testament. Num 10:33, Heb 9:4, etc. that this law is immutable and perpetual, being a transcript of the tables deposited in the ark in the true sanctuary on high, which is also, for the same reason, called the ark of God’s testament; for under the sounding of the seventh trumpet we are told that “the temple of God was opened in Heaven, and there was seen in His temple the ark of His testament” Rev 11:19.

Proposition XII

That the fourth commandment of the law requires that we devote the seventh-day of each week, commonly called Saturday, to abstinence from our own labor, and to the

78A Declaration of the Fundamental Principles Taught and Practiced by the Seventh-day Adventists (Battle Creek, MI: Seventh-day Adventist Publishing Association, 1872). This is a series of Fundamental Principles that includes beliefs on Law and Sabbath.
performance of sacred and religious duties, that is the only weekly Sabbath known to the Bible, being the day that was set apart, before paradise was lost, Gen 2:2, 3 and which will be observed in paradise restored, Is 66:22, 23; that the facts upon which the Sabbath institution is based confines it to the seventh day, as they are not true of any other day; and that the terms, Jewish Sabbath and Christian Sabbath, as applied to the weekly rest day, are names of human invention, unscriptural in fact, and false in meaning.

Proposition XIII

That as the man of sin, the papacy, has thought to change times and laws (the law of God), Dan 7:25, and has misled almost all Christendom in regard to the fourth commandment, we find a prophecy of a reform in this respect to be brought among believers just before the coming of Christ. Is 56:1, 2; 1 Peter 1:5; Rev 14:12, etc.79

The Enforcing of a Sunday Law

The following passages clearly speak to the Sabbath and Bible prophecy:

Exod 20: 8-11 (NKJV): Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days you shall labor, and do all your work, but the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord your God. In it you shall do no work: you, nor your son, nor your daughter, nor your manservant, nor your maidservant, nor your cattle, nor your stranger who is within your gates. For in six days the Lord made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that is in them, and rested the seventh day. Therefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day and hallowed it.

Acts 20:29-31: For I know this, that after my departure savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock. Also from among yourselves men will rise up, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after themselves. Therefore watch, and remember that for three years, I did not cease to warn everyone night and day with tears.

2 Thess 2:3-7: Let no one deceive you by any means; for that day will not come unless the falling away comes first, and the man of sin is revealed, the son of perdition, who opposes and exalts himself above all that is called God or that is worshiped, so that he sits as God in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God. Do you not remember that when I was still with you I told you these things? And now you know what is restraining, that he may be revealed in his own time. For the mystery of lawlessness is already at work; only He who now restrains will do so until He is taken out of the way.

Concerning 2 Thess 2:4, Luther himself wrote that antichrist is exalted above every God, that is, he will set up his own worship of God, which he will receive above every true and false worship of all gods, because the word of no one is more feared and adored.⁸⁰ Here Luther had tremendous insight, but he failed to make the link between the papal system and the false Sabbath set up by the Roman Catholic Church.

Dan 7:24-26: The ten horns are ten kings who shall arise from this kingdom. And another shall arise after them; He shall be different from the first ones, and shall subdue all three kings. He shall speak pompous words against the Most High, shall persecute the saints of the Most High, and shall intend to change times and laws, then the saints shall be given into his hand for a time and times and a half time. But the court shall be seated, and they shall take away his dominion, to consume and destroy it forever. Then the kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people, the saints of the Most High. His kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey Him.

Daniel 7:26, 27 reads that after the 1,260 days, the judgment would sit and take away the power of the Roman Church. Rev 13 provides the startling additional information that, before the completion of the judgment, the church’s deadly wound is to be temporarily healed and everyone who is not registered in the Book of Life will worship or bow down to his image. The same chapter speaks of a false prophet, a wolf in sheep’s clothing, a lamb-horned beast who in the end time persuades the world to worship the beast and his image and to receive its deadly mark. Rev 12:17, “And the dragon was enraged with the woman and he went to make ware with the rest of her offspring, who keep the commandments of God and the testimony of Jesus Christ.”

There seems to be the clue or hint here of a revival in commandment keeping in the last days. There is the sense that there are many more who are catching on to the

⁸⁰Luther, “Lectures on Deuteronomy” (1523-1525), in LW 9:67.
deception that has been taking place through the years in regard to the false day of worship.

Rev 13:1-4: Then I stood on the sand of the sea. And I saw a beast rising up out of the sea, having seven heads and ten horns, and on his horns ten crowns, and on his heads a blasphemous name. Now the beast which I saw was like a leopard, his feet were like the feet of a bear, and his mouth like the mouth of a lion. And the dragon gave him his power, his throne and great authority. I saw one of his heads as if it had been mortally wounded, and his deadly wound was healed. And all the world marveled and followed the beast. So they worshiped the dragon who gave authority to the beast: and they worshiped the beast, saying, “Who is like the beast? Who is able to make war with him?”

Certainly under Napoleon and his General Berthier the papacy received its mortal wound. But now in these times the mortal wound of the papacy is in the process of being healed. In fact, with all of the ecumenical mergers and conversations, it is apparent that the entire world is drawn to the papacy once again. This was very apparent in the funeral proceedings of the late John Paul II. What an unforgettable picture it was with all of the living U.S. presidents kneeling together and facing the body of the late John Paul II, all the while the flags of the United States were flying at half-mast.

Rev 13:16-18: And he caused all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and slave, to receive a mark on their right hand or on their foreheads, and that no one may buy or sell except one who has the mark or the name of the beast, or the number of his name. Here is wisdom. Let him who had understanding calculate the number of the beast, for it is the number of a man: His number is 666.

Adventists believe that either we will be keeping God’s biblical Sabbath holy or we will be worshiping on Sunday after the image of the beast. Adventists also believe that those who worship on Sunday either do not know the Sabbath truth or they are bearing homage to the mother church of Rome. In the case of the number 666, studies have been made in regards to the numerical value of the title “Vicar of the son of God”, which appeared in the Donation of Constantine and numerous other Papal documents.
The number comes out to 666, the number of the beast.

\[
\begin{array}{cccccccccc}
V & I & C & A & R & I & V & S & F & L & I & I & D & E & I \\
5 & 1 & 100 & 1 & 5 & 1 & 50 & 1 & 1 & 500 & 1 \\
\end{array}
\]

TOTAL: 666

Rev 4:12 says, “Here is the patience of the saints; here are those who keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus.” This is the measuring bar by which the saints of God will be judged; we are to reflect the very character of Jesus Christ. Once we receive Jesus Christ and are baptized in His name, we need to grow in our walk with Him and have our wedding garment on. We may not keep nine of the commandments and change one of them, for we may not change that which was written in stone by the finger of God and given by Christ Himself.

In contrast, any devout Lutheran may well believe that he is worshiping on the Lord’s Day, but this claim cannot be in keeping with Scripture, using Luther’s own hermeneutical approach—Sola Scriptura. Adventists believe that there is only one Lord’s Day and that is the Sabbath. Our Lord and Christ never changed the Sabbath Day.

Listen carefully to Isaiah 58:13, 14:

If you turn your foot from the Sabbath,
From doing your pleasure on My holy day,
And call the Sabbath a delight,
The holy day of the Lord honorable,
And shall honor Him, not doing your own ways,
Nor finding your own pleasure, nor speaking your own words,
Then you shall delight yourself in the Lord;
And I will cause you to ride on the high hills of the earth,
And feed you with the heritage of Jacob your father.
The mouth of the Lord has spoken.

\[\text{81For an excellent study on this subject see Edwin De Cock, The Truth About 666 and the Story of the Great Apostasy (Edinburg, TX: Edwin De Cock, 2011).}\]
Adventists believe that the remnant church is defined in the three angels’ message of Rev 14:6-12:

6Then I saw another angel flying in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach to those who dwell on the earth—to every nation, tribe, tongue, and people—
7saying with a loud voice, “Fear God and give glory to Him, for the hour of His judgment has come; and worship Him who made heaven and earth, the sea and springs of water.

I believe that verse 7 is a direct allusion to Exod 20:1, where we read:

For in six days the Lord made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that is in them, and rested the seventh day. Therefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day and hallowed it.

So we could also express then: “Worship Him who in six days made heaven and earth, The sea and the springs of water—Worship Him!”

Adventists believe that this is a clear call to keep God’s biblical Sabbath. The Adventist Church is proclaiming the everlasting gospel of salvation through Jesus Christ throughout the world. In keeping the Sabbath, the Adventists are restoring true worship of God as Creator, Redeemer, and Sanctifier. Scripture sets the practice, not human tradition. Adventists believe that they have the Bible as their guide, and that they are living the faith of the Apostolic Church. The Adventists believe that Christ is in His sanctuary, the Most Holy Place, and that the judgment has already begun as of 1844. Adventists are preparing the church for the second and soon coming of Jesus. Adventists believe themselves to be the remnant church:

12Here is the patience of the saints; here are those who keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus.
The Adventists are warning the world that the hour of God’s judgment has come, and the church needs to be prepared to meet the soon coming King. Adventists are calling any who have fallen for an unbiblical teaching to come out of her, for Babylon has fallen. Babylon has fallen for tradition over the Word of God.

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

Rev 18:4, 5:
And I heard another voice from heaven Saying, “Come out of her, my people, Lest you share in her sins, and lest You receive of her plagues. For her sins have reached to heaven And God has remembered her iniquities.”

I believe these verses are expressing that we are to come out of the papal system, come out from false teaching in the Protestant Church which has come from that system, and come out of all the humanistic teaching that has led into the so-called “New Age Movement,” which is really not new, but indeed the abomination of Babylon. Even the United States is the nation that helps back up the renewed papal system, the scarlet beast. Rev 17:5 gives the title: “Mystery, Babylon the Great, The Mother of Harlots and of the Abominations of the Earth.”

The Adventist Church is employed in a worldwide mission to complete the divine witness to humanity. The cry in paraphrase is this, “Do not worship the beast or his image, but worship the Lord, our Creator, Redeemer, and soon coming King.”

G. Edward Reid, in his book *Sunday’s Coming*, asks the question, “What is the mark of the Beast?” Here is his answer: “The mark of the beast is willful, knowledgeable, end-
time approval of coercive Sunday observance in opposition to the clear light on the Sabbath question and in harmony with classic Roman Catholicism. As such, the mark of the beast is evidence of personal character matured in opposition to God.”\textsuperscript{82}

Or, as Ellen G. White states, “When the test comes, it will be clearly shown what the mark of the beast is. It is the keeping of Sunday. Those who, after having heard the truth, continue to regard this day as holy bear the signature of the man of sin.”\textsuperscript{83}

Rev 13:11, 12:
Then I saw another beast which rose out of the earth; it had two horns like a lamb and it spoke like a dragon. It exercises all the authority of the first beast in its presence, and makes the earth and its inhabitants worship the first beast, whose mortal wound was healed.

Ellen G. White says that we should find a country that is rising to power around 1798, the time when the papacy received its “deadly wound.” She makes this keen observation in \textit{The Great Controversy}, “What nation of the new world was in 1798 rising into power, giving promise of strength and greatness?”\textsuperscript{84}

Yes, the writer believes that the United States, through the Evangelical Coalition and its becoming a part of the Babylonian captivity of the church, shall participate in bringing about laws concerning the Sabbath and history will repeat itself as Satan once again aligns himself with the papal system against God’s holy day. This is the image of the beast insisting on worship on Sunday, man’s false day of worship.\textsuperscript{85}

\textsuperscript{82}G. Edward Reid, \textit{Sunday’s Coming} (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald, 1996), 248.

\textsuperscript{83}Ellen White, Letter 12, 1900, quoted in \textit{The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary} (Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1957), 7:980.

\textsuperscript{84}White, \textit{The Great Controversy}, 440.

\textsuperscript{85}Reid, \textit{Sunday’s Coming}, 216-224.
Origin of Sunday Worship

There is no doubt that God wants us to understand prophecy. In Dan 7:20 we read of that little horn which spoke pompous words and who was making war against the saints and prevailing against them. This little horn shall intend to change times and laws. This little horn would become greater than his fellows (vs. 7, 8, 20, 24). It would put down three kings, the Heruls, the Vandals, and the Ostrogoths. In speaking great words against the Most High, the context means to take on the prerogatives of God or blaspheme His name. Pope Leo XIII asserted that complete submission and obedience is to be given to the Roman pontiff as to God Himself and that the popes upon this earth hold the place of God Almighty.

The little horn would view God’s law as needing certain changes and would attempt by her own authority to change His law. This civil and religious authority would not go by the Bible only as the standard of faith and practice. At the great Council of Trent (1545-1563) it was asserted that the legal precepts of the Scriptures taught by our Lord have ceased by virtue of the authority of the church. The law has been changed by the authority of the church. The Roman Catholic Church has, through the years, taken up the change in the biblical Sabbath made by Constantine and supported by Eusebius back on March 7, 321 A.D. In Peter Geiermann’s catechism it is stated, “We observe Sunday instead of Saturday because the Catholic Church transferred the solemnity from Saturday to Sunday.” This day has also come to be called the Lord’s Day. Apart from

86Reid, Sunday’s Coming, 209.

87Ibid., 210.

88Ibid., 211.
this, the second commandment is dropped completely.\textsuperscript{89}

Rev 13 is quite significant. After ruling for 1,260 years, during the Middle Ages until 1798, the papacy appears to receive a deadly wound. But this same chapter reveals that the deadly wound heals and the entire world wonders after the beast, indicating that the papacy will play a major role in the end time.

**Adventists and Lutherans in Dialogue on Covenant, Law, and Sabbath**

Both Lutherans and Adventists recognize the importance of the Ten Commandments, but the connotations of the law differ in each.\textsuperscript{90} Although our salvation is through grace, Adventists still believe that there must be fruitage or obedience to the commandments.\textsuperscript{91} This obedience shows up as Christian character. Adventists also want to show the Ten Commandments as part of the everlasting covenant. The Holy Spirit moves the heart to do good works. Adventists see the new life in Christ, sanctification, to be lived out in love to God and our fellow human beings with love as the ruling motivation.

Both communions teach the final judgment, with Adventists placing more emphasis on this belief.\textsuperscript{92} Both hold that it is our standing in Christ, namely justification that alone gives hope.


\textsuperscript{90}‘Adventists and Lutherans in Conversation,” 4.

\textsuperscript{91}Ibid., 5.

\textsuperscript{92}Ibid.
Both take seriously the third and fourth commandments, but the practical observance of the commandment draws divergence. Lutherans keep the holy day on the day of resurrection, while Adventists keep the Sabbath remembering God as both Creator and Redeemer. Adventists strongly feel that both Old and New Testaments teach us to observe the seventh day as the Sabbath.\textsuperscript{93} For Lutherans, the law is seen from the perspective of Christian freedom. Adventists share that at no time did Jesus or His disciples ever change the Sabbath day, originally written by the finger of God on tablets of stone.

Lutherans believe that Christians are not under the law in the same way as the Jews. Lutherans view the law from the perspective of Christian freedom.\textsuperscript{94} They believe that Paul opposes any attempts to impose the Jewish law on Gentile Christians. Adventists believe that the moral law is an everlasting covenant and that the Sabbath began with God’s rest at Creation.\textsuperscript{95} It is noted that Paul also accepted Jewish Christians who kept the law (Romans 14: 1-10), a practice, which calls Lutherans to hold in respect the Adventist view.

**Summary**

It is interesting to note that Luther pictured sin being committed on that very first Sabbath. We would say a loud Amen to much that Luther wrote about the Sabbath, but as soon as the reader picks up at the resurrection of Jesus, it is as if the moral law died

\textsuperscript{93}``Adventists and Lutherans in Conversation,” 4.

\textsuperscript{94}Ibid., 6.

\textsuperscript{95}Ibid.
and Moses with it. Luther did not think in terms of an everlasting covenant. Luther, who so often wanted to go by Scripture alone, came down more on the side of tradition over Scripture when it came to the Sabbath. Luther did not allow Scripture to interpret Scripture. He had no strong liking for the Jews and would give Karlstadt no serious consideration. Luther in his writings clearly saw the papacy as the antichrist, but could see no clear relationship between the Sabbath and Sunday, the image of the beast. If only Luther could have realized that the Lord was able to work through his colleagues as well. Luther failed to see the complete sacredness of the Sabbath as he was willing to even call the Sabbath a holiday. He somehow failed to see that Jesus Christ, who gave the law, also faithfully kept the Sabbath throughout His ministry and taught His disciples to do the same.

The remnant will have the faith of Jesus and will keep the commandments of Jesus (Rev 14:12). The Bible indicates that the remnant appear on the world scene following the great persecution, historically the pope was taken captive with his mortal wound in 1798 by Napoleon’s General Berthier. All of the church will need to recognize the time of the end. Adventists believe that the remnant will escape the wrath of the dragon and stand together with the Lord on Mt. Zion (Rev 14:1; 7:2, 4). But the worshipers of the beast and his image receive the full wrath of God and die in the presence of the holy angels and the Lamb (Rev 14:9, 10:20:14). Blessings are promised for those who faithfully keep the Sabbath. It is a matter of which master we are under. It is a matter of loyalty to Jesus Christ who is Lord of the Sabbath. Adventists believe that we ought to be able to say with Paul, “He is able to keep that which I have committed to Him against that day” (2 Tim 1:12).
CHAPTER 5

SANCTIFICATION AND CHRISTIAN BEHAVIOR

Introduction

In this chapter a comparison is made between Luther on sanctification and Adventists on sanctification. We will see the relationship of sanctification to justification. We will see how growth in grace leads to growth in character and how this affects our walk with the Lord. We will see how our being sanctified leads Adventists into a strong health message and a faithful walk with the Lord in light of the pre-advent judgment. Both Lutherans and Adventists emphasize the gifts of the Spirit, but the gift of prophecy is of strong influence for Adventists.

Luther on Sanctification

Baptism of the Holy Spirit

Although the wording “Baptism of the Holy Spirit” is not usually associated with Luther, yet he clearly writes in “Ein Feste Berg” (“A Mighty Fortress”), “The Spirit and the Gifts are Ours.” Bengt R. Hoffman, former professor from Lutheran Theological Seminary at Gettysburg, writes about the role of mysticism in the theology and life of Martin Luther. There were many times that Luther had a revelation or a vision as he describes:

Occasionally, when I come to a certain part of Our Father or to a situation, I sink into such rich thoughts that I abandon all set prayers. When such rich good thoughts
arrive, then one should leave the other commandments aside and offer room to those thoughts and listen in stillness and, for all the world, not put up obstructions. For then the Holy Spirit himself is preaching and one word of his sermon is better than a thousand of our prayers. I have alas learned more from one such prayer than I would have received from much reading and writing.¹

Luther offers still additional glimpses from his experience of the invisible through inner prayer:

If the Holy Spirit would come in the course of such thoughts and begin to preach in your heart with rich illumined thoughts, do him the honor, let these rationally formulated thoughts, reflections, and meditations fade away. Be still and listen for he [the Holy Spirit] knows better than you. And what he preaches note that and write it down. In this way you will experience miracles.²

The devil could sometimes take the form of an animal in Luther’s visions:

I looked from my cell window, and saw a big black sow running over the courtyard of the castle. But no swine could come into the courtyard of the castle. It was the devil. . . . Once I saw a dog in my bed. . . . I threw him out through the window. He did not bark. Next morning I asked whether there were any dogs in the castle and the warden said no. Then it must be the devil, said I. . . . Believe me, I am subjected to a thousand devils in this uneventful solitude. It is so much easier to combat the incarnated devil, that is to say, people, than evil spirits in celestial Christians.³

Nathan Söderblom (1866-1931), Swedish Archbishop, writes that Luther must have had a vision at age 22. Luther promised Saint Anne during a thunderstorm that he would become a monk. Söderblom suggests that this promise “had come about in a vision. Perhaps God had spoken through one of his holy ones.”⁴ In a conversation

¹Luther, “A Simple Way to Pray” (1542/43), in LW 43:198.


³Luther, “Table Talk 6816” (1546), in WA Tr 6:209, “Table Talk 5358” (1540), in WA Tr 5:87, 88; “Luther an Nicolaus Gerbel in Straßburg” (1521), WA Br 2, 397 (1521), all translated in Hoffman, 41.

⁴Nathan Söderblom, Humor och melankolic och andia Lutherstudier [Humor and melancholy and other Luther studies] (Stockholm, Sweden: Propium, 1919, 1983), 81.
between Luther and Cochlaeus in 1521 at Worms, there was the subject of personal vision. Together they looked at a passage from Paul: “If a revelation is made to another sitting by, let the first be silent” (1 Cor 14:30). Cochlaeus questioned Luther: “Have you had a revelation?” Martin Luther looked at him for a moment and answered: “Est mili revelatum.” Yes, he had had revelation.  

Luther proceeds to give directives for anointing of the side according to Jas 5.

In the life of another . . . this must be counteracted by the power of Christ and with the prayer of faith. This is what we do and we have been accustomed to do this for a cabinet member who was similarly affiliated with madness and we cured him by prayer in Christ’s name.  

Here is exorcism—the driving out of spirits or deliverance. The words “to feel” and “experience” frequently are found in Luther’s theology. Luther often describes the inner, personal side of God’s redemption. The general focus of reference is “Mysticism.” Luther borrows his term from Bernard of Clairvaux—“Mystical Theology.”  

Luther so frequently speaks from a subjective point of view. Luther has a powerful and personal understanding of the visible and the invisible and the angelic. The forms of good and evil that could not be seen are just as real for Luther. When he would pray, he would be put in another dimension and would totally forget about set prayers. There were many times that Luther had a revelation or a vision

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7Hoffman, 20, 21.
as he describes. Luther had a strong sense of communing in the Holy Spirit. Luther, too, knows what it was to pray vigorously for another like Philip Melanchthon and see them miraculously live.\(^8\) Luther, under the power of the Holy Spirit, knows all about deliverance from demons or exorcism in the life of another.

According to Luther and the mystics, the soul “knows” those things that are of God. Luther expresses, “The eternal majesty submerges himself deep into my poor flesh and blood and unites fully with me.”\(^9\) Luther, too, knows of the experience he calls ecstasies or ecstasy: “Christ faith is being taken away (raptus) and a being carried off (translation) from all that is experiential (fuhlbar), inwardly and outwardly, to that which is experiential neither inwardly or outwardly, toward God, the invisible, the totally exalted, incomprehensible.”\(^10\)

Luther believes that all persons could change totally. He even talks about partaking of God’s nature and becoming as Christ. This change he calls “divinization” or becoming in God’s image.

Much has been written about how one shall become divinized. . . . Here [in the gospel of justification by faith in grace] you are shown the right way to get there, so that you will be filled, yes, filled with God, so that you are in need of nothing, but you have everything at once, so that all you speak, think, undertake to do to sum up, your whole life becomes completely divinized.\(^11\)

Luther speaks of a close spiritual inspiration:


\(^9\)Ibid., 97.

\(^10\)Luther, “Lectures on Hebrews” (1516-1518), in LW 29:149.

No one can correctly understand God in His Word unless he has received such understanding immediately from the Holy Spirit. But no one can receive it from the Holy Spirit without experiencing, proving, and feeling it. In such experience the Holy Spirit instructs us as in His own school outside of which nothing is learned just empty words and outside of which nothing is learned just empty words and prattle.\textsuperscript{12}

Luther often uses the words “experience” and “inner transformation.”\textsuperscript{13} When God moves into one’s life, that person feels it and begins to grow in conformity with Christ. This is the theology of the heart.

Luther writes further about this mystical union: “You are so bonded to Christ that He and you are as one person, which cannot be separated but you forever remain attached to Him, and declare, ‘I am as Christ.’ And Christ in turn says: ‘I am as that sinner who is attached to Me, and I to him. For by faith we are joined together into one flesh and one bone.’\textsuperscript{14}

Luther’s mystical experience permeates all of his life—Christ’s mystical presence in Holy Communion, in baptism, and in prayers for protection and healing. Luther, I believe, would still see the gifts of grace as pertinent for today.

Even at Worms in 1521 the certainty about the calling and presence of Christ made him unafraid. Spiritual baptism is to experience “Christ’s birth” in the soul, as Luther puts it.\textsuperscript{15} The ministry of the Holy Spirit becomes a function of Christ’s presence as dynamic power and loving support.


\textsuperscript{13} Hoffman, \textit{Theology of the Heart}, 113.

\textsuperscript{14} Luther, “Lectures on Galatians” (1535), in LW 26:168.

\textsuperscript{15} Hoffman, \textit{Theology of the Heart}, 255.
The Gifts of the Spirit

Luther speaks to this area of sanctification by means of the Third Article of the Apostles’ Creed. Luther writes that: “The Holy Spirit has called me by the Gospel, enlightened me with His gifts, sanctified and kept me in the true faith. In the same way He calls, gathers, enlightens, and sanctifies the whole Christian church on earth and keeps it with Jesus Christ in the one true faith.”

Luther further chooses Rom 8:9, “But you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you”; 2 Cor 5:17, “If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation.” He also speaks of the fruit of the Spirit (Gal 5:22-23)—love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control.” But Luther does not necessarily agree that the gifts of the Spirit are given for every time and place. Yet in “Ein Feste Berg” (“A Mighty Fortress”), he writes, “The Spirit and the Gifts are Ours.” In the Large Catechism Luther says that the Ten Commandments are a model of God’s teachings so that in so doing we may please God. In general, Luther was strong on justification by faith through grace, but sometimes weak in fully articulating a full understanding of sanctification. Yet he does point out Phil 1:6, “He who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus.” And Luther further states that the church is made up of holy people, saints or believers who have been cleansed by the blood of Christ and who serve God with holy living.

It is from Luther’s lectures on Rom 12 that we receive direct insight into his

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16Luther, The Small Catechism, 144.
17Luther, The Large Catechism, 19.
18Luther, The Small Catechism, 155.
teaching on the gifts of the Spirit. Luther speaks of one faith, one baptism, one church, one Lord, one God, but there are various kinds of gifts in this faith.

Luther begins with the gift of prophecy, given in proportion to our faith. This is the first gift mentioned by Paul. Luther notes that the church is busy about all kinds of things of lesser importance, but we neglect the gifts. Some prophesy on the basis of human judgment or according to the workings of nature, or according to the stars, or from their own opinion. But the prophecy which comes from God may be against all reason, sometimes resulting in unbelief. We must always prophesy in proportion to our faith. Prophecy, too, must always be in harmony with our faith. Prophecy also may not go beyond the bounds of faith.

Second, Luther speaks of service, or in our serving as in ministry. Each should be content in our serving or ministry. He relates that there are many who preach or teach, but who are stupid and incompetent. Then there are those who are faithfully assisting others. Always make sure you are really called into your ministry. No one should ever pretend to be overlord or seek to be obeyed. We should only act or speak for God.

Third, Luther speaks of “He who teaches, in his teaching.” Many, he feels, do have the ability to teach even if they do not have great learning. There are those who have both the ability to teach and have great learning, and this is better. If one has the

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19Luther, “Lectures on Romans” (1516), in LW 25:444.
20Ibid., 446.
gift and neglects it, he sins against God. He takes note that Paul put the order of teachers in third place.\textsuperscript{22}

Fourth, “He who exhorts, in his exhortation.” Luther clarifies that teaching is for those who do not know, but exhortation applies to those who know. The one builds the foundation, the other stimulates and moves his hearers in the right direction. “I planted, Apollos watered” (1 Cor 3:6).\textsuperscript{23}

Fifth, “He who contributes in simplicity.” He agrees that it is more blessed to give than to receive. We are to take care of those who minister the Word. The laborer deserves his wages (Matt 10:10; 1 Tim 5:18). We also need to contribute with the right motivation.\textsuperscript{24}

Sixth, “He who rules with carefulness.” One must rule in diligence. We are asked to rule, not look out for our own interests, but considering the welfare of others.\textsuperscript{25}

In the seventh place, “He who does acts of mercy, with cheerfulness.” Here we are going to the poor and needy.\textsuperscript{26}

In the eighth place, “Let love be without dissimulation.” Love must be true and not false. Love must be there for everyone.\textsuperscript{27}

In the ninth place, “Hate what is evil, hold fast to what is good.” “Test

\textsuperscript{22}Luther, “Lectures on Romans” (1516), in LW 25:447.

\textsuperscript{23}Ibid., 448.

\textsuperscript{24}Ibid.

\textsuperscript{25}Ibid., 450.

\textsuperscript{26}Ibid., 451.

\textsuperscript{27}Ibid., 451, 452.
everything, and hold fast what is good” (1 Thess 5:21). 28 “Love one another in brotherly affection” (Rom 12:10). The love among Christians ought to be a more perfect thing than among strangers or enemies. Gal 6:10, “So then as we have opportunity, let us do good to all men, especially to those of the household of faith.” The idea is to be kindly affectionate toward others. 29

The Disposition of Sin

Luther believes that the Holy Spirit not only convinces us of the truth of the Gospel, but that He makes us holy. Luther sees the Holy Spirit as a living entity indwelling the believer. The Holy Spirit works out the redemption activity in our lives. For Luther, the Christian is not one who is perfect, but rather one who fights; daily the new man in Christ must arise and subdue the old Adam. It is at this point that the sanctification, once begun, “daily increases.” The believer receives forgiveness, till he “reaches that life where there is no more forgiveness, all persons there being pure and holy.” 30

Luther believes that the Christian is at one and the same time both a righteous man and a sinner. He is righteous through the forgiveness of sin, but as a human being, he is a sinner. This state continues until death. 31


29Ibid., 454, 455.


Our weakness lies in our nature, completed through Adam’s fall. Natural man is flesh, and a voluntary sinner. The devil and the world persecute God’s truth. The devil is the great opponent of God and Christ. Luther frequently cites the Romans passage that he calls “Bondage of the Will,” Rom 7:19-25:

19 For the good that I will to do, I do not do; but the evil that I will not to do, that I practice.
20 Now if I do what I will not to do, it is no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells in me.
21 I find then a law, that evil is present with me; the one who wills to do good.
22 For I delight in the law of God according to the inward man.
23 But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members.
24 O wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death?
25 I thank God—through Jesus Christ our Lord! so then, with the mind I myself serve the law of God, but with the flesh the law of sin.

Growth of Character and Walk with the Lord

Our sanctification does find expression in our life and relationship with our neighbor. The church in this sense can be defined as a: “Holy people in which Christ lives, works, and reigns . . . through grace and forgiveness of sins, the Holy Spirit, through daily purging of sins and renewal of life, so that we do not remain in sin, but can and should lead to a new life in all kinds of good works.”

For Luther, justification and sanctification, distinguishable in theory, are quite

32Luther, “Bondage of the Will” (1525), in Dillenberg, 106.
inseparable in practice. They are like different aspects of the same thing for Luther. Justification means a participation in Christ’s victorious strife against sin and evil. It means that the Holy Spirit comes to dwell with sinners and He continues in their hearts and lives His redeeming work.34

Luther goes assert that the “new man” created by the Spirit loves God and keeps His commandments. Luther would also assert that the Holy Spirit’s work in us takes a lifetime.35

In his explanation of the Second Petition of the Lord’s Prayer, Luther writes, “We pray in this petition that the kingdom may also come to us. May the Heavenly Father give us His Holy Spirit so that by His Holy Word, we may lead a godly life, both now and hereafter.”36

We should practice gentleness, patience, love toward enemies, chastity, kindness, and so forth toward our family, our neighbor, and the world.37

**Seventh-day Adventists on Sanctification**

**The Baptism of the Holy Spirit**

The baptism of the Holy Spirit describes a special infilling of the Holy Spirit into the life of the believer. This is also called an anointing, available to Christians since the


35Luther, *The Large Catechism*, 62.


37Luther, “Lectures on Galatians; Chapters 5 an 6” (1535), in LW 27:55-63.
Day of Pentecost. In Luke 11 Jesus promised that the Father would give the Holy Spirit to any who would ask Him.

In the life of Jesus, who is our example, we see the baptism of the Holy Spirit as a separate but related event following His baptism (John 3:13-17). From this point on He was filled with the Spirit. Jesus was then prepared to confront Satan and gain His greatest victories.

As believers, we are to follow Christ as our example. The Christian is born of the Spirit and baptized (John 3:5-8). But the believer must also be baptized by the Holy Spirit (Luke 3:16). This infilling is given to the believer so that he can live a victorious life and witness faithfully for Christ (Acts 1:8). Satan has done much to confuse this teaching:

There is nothing that Satan fears so much as that the people of God shall clear the way by removing every hindrance, so that the Lord can pour out His Spirit upon a languishing church and an impenitent congregation. When the way is prepared for the Spirit of God, the blessing will come.\(^{38}\)

The Spirit fell on a group while Peter spoke to them (Acts 10:44-46; 11:15-17). The church also received the baptism by the laying on of hands (Acts 8:12-17; 19:1-6).

Ellen White states,

What we need is the baptism of the Holy Spirit. Without this, we are no more fitted to go forth to the world than were the disciples after the crucifixion of our Lord. Impress upon all the necessity of the baptism of the Holy Spirit, the sanctification of the church, so that they will be living, growing, fruit bearing trees of the Lord’s planting.\(^{39}\)

\(^{38}\)Ellen White, “The Church’s Great Need,” in The Review and Herald, March 22, 1887, par. 7.

\(^{39}\)Ellen White, “How to Meet a Controverted Point of Doctrine,” in The Review and Herald, February 18, 1890.
It is clear that Ellen White urged every believer to seek the baptism.

LeRoy Froom, in his book *The Coming of the Comforter*, writes, “I am persuaded that this is our colossal blunder, I confess it has been mine. We are not to go until we are endued with power from on high. All true service begins at our personal Pentecost.”40 He continues: “For there is an experience beyond and above the initial step by which the Holy Spirit first reveals sin, and begets a new life in the soul, and that is to be filled with the Spirit. For the lack of this, one’s testimony is feeble and the spiritual life but partial. Alas, many today have gone as far as the baptism of repentance, but no farther.”41

The inward man is renewed daily (2 Cor 8). Ellen White writes of the baptism of the Spirit in Christ’s daily life: “Daily He received a fresh baptism of the Holy Spirit. In the early hours of the new day the Lord awakened Him from His slumbers, and His soul and His lips were anointed with grace, that He might impart to them.”42

The Gifts of the Spirit

The Holy Spirit bestows special gifts to members for the purpose of ministry, and the building up of the body of Christ. All are not given the same gifts. In 1 Cor 12:4-6 Paul relates that the Spirit gives to one wisdom, to another knowledge, to another faith, to another miracles, to another prophecy, to another the discerning of spirits, to another tongues, to another the interpretation of tongues. The Spirit distributes to each one as He


41Ibid., 142-143.

42Ellen White, *Christ’s Object Lessons* (Battle Creek, MI: Review and Herald, 1900), 139.
wills. All gifts are needed in the body of Christ just as all parts of the body are needed by each physical being.  

God has also appointed in the church first apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then workers of miracles, healers, helpers, administrators, speakers in various kinds of tongues (vs. 28; cf., Eph 4:11).

These gifts are not sufficient by themselves. All ministry must be done in love—self-sacrificing with unconditional love (1 Cor 13:4-8). Paul tells us that faith, hope, and love remain, but the greatest of these is love. Paul also teaches that we are to live a life worthy of the calling that we have received. Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love. Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace (Eph 4:1-3).

Spiritual gifts help the church to grow. Both pastors and believers are to minister together to allow the church to grow. Believers who refuse to employ their spiritual gifts will not only lose their giftedness, but also forfeit their eternal reward (Matt 25:26-30). “In the great Judgment day, those who have not worked for Christ, who have drifted along thinking of themselves, caring for themselves, will be placed by the Judge of the whole earth with those who did evil. They receive the same condemnation.  

Emphasis on the Gift of Prophecy

To be a participant in the church’s mission, each member must understand his gift. But one gift is to be desired above all; it is the gift of prophecy (1 Cor 14:1, 39).

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43Seventh-day Adventists Believe, 209.

44White, The Desire of Ages, 641.
This gift is given a most prominent place among the gifts, once ranked first and then second among the ministries (Rom 12:6; 1 Cor 12:29; Eph 4:11). In the New Testament, prophets had the following functions:45

1. They assisted in founding the church. The church was “built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the Chief Cornerstone” (Eph 2:20-21).

2. They instituted the church’s mission outreach. Prophets selected Paul and Barnabas for the first missionary journey (Acts 13:1, 2) and also directed where they should work.

3. They edified the church. Prophecies are spoken “to men for their up-building and encouragement and consolation” (1 Cor 14:3, 4). God wanted to prepare believers for the work of ministry.

4. They united and protected the church. Prophets protected the church against false doctrine. Believers were not to be tossed around by every wind of teaching (Eph 4:12).


6. They confirmed the faith in times of controversy. The Holy Spirit guided the church to reach out to the Gentiles. The Holy Spirit reaffirmed the believers in true teaching.

45Seventh-day Adventists Believe, 218, 219.
Adventists do not believe that in these last days the gifts would not be found. Scriptures reveal that in the end there would be a very special need for this gift of prophecy. Believers are warned to “quench not the Spirit or despise prophecies” (1 Thess 5:19, 20). In 1 Cor 14:1 it shares, “Desire spiritual gifts, but especially that you may prophesy.”

Adventists clearly see in the ministry of Ellen G. White a tremendous prophetic role. The Lord has given her counsel in matters of health, education, family life, temperance, evangelism, the publishing ministry, prophet diet, medical work, and many other areas.  

Christian Behavior, Sin, and the Health Message

Sanctification is, in part, giving God honor and glory “with your body.” 1 Cor 6:19-20 relates:

Or do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and you are not your own?
For you were bought with a price; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God’s.

Such empowering by the Holy Spirit can only come through the Gospel of Jesus Christ. No wonder Jesus taught John 16:14, “He will bring glory to me by taking from what is mine and making it known to you.” Hans LaRondelle writes that we belong twice to God through Christ—first, because God created us and second, because God redeemed us from the bondage of sin.

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46Seventh-day Adventists Believe, 227.

As we read Paul’s writings, we see that the redemptive work of Christ restores the original purpose of God’s creation of man. We are no longer defiled by guilt because of the precious blood of Christ.\footnote{Partaking of the Sinner’s Nature,” Seventh-day Adventists Believe, 125.} By the power of the Holy Spirit we are no longer enslaved to sin’s power. By faith alone Christ’s righteousness is imputed to us and His righteousness is wrought in us. Both aspects of Christ’s righteousness must always stand together. Ellen White spoke of this dual meaning when she writes: “When the Spirit of God takes possession of the heart, it transforms the life. Sinful thoughts are put away, evil deeds are renounced; love, humility, and peace take the place of anger, envy, and strife. Joy takes the place of sadness, and the countenance reflects the light of heaven.”\footnote{White, Desire of Ages, 173.}

Christ not only redeems us from sin, He redeems us for God!\footnote{Seventh-day Adventists Believe, 125-127.} Christ, because of His redemptive blood, has bought us free from death, condemnation, and sin bondage. Even our bodies belong to God because of Christ. Note 1 Thess 5:23, 24:

Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you completely; and may your whole spirit, soul, and body be preserved blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. He who calls you is faithful, who also will do it.

Jesus claims you in all of your thinking, willing, and acting. God wants to transform you in all aspects of your total existence. God has every right to your mind, soul, body, and spirit. We are His by creation and redemption. Jesus Christ is our Lord,
Master, Ruler, and King of our new life. The baptized believer no longer belongs to Satan or himself, but he is under the authority of Christ when he obeys with a new heart.

Galatians 2:20:
I am crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh, I live by faith in the Son of God who loved me and gave Himself for me.

Ephesians 3:17-19:
That Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith: that you, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the width and length and depth, and height—to know the love of Christ which passes knowledge; that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.

2 Corinthians 7:1:
Therefore, having these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.

We are to carry out our baptismal vows, come out from among them, and be separate and touch not the unclean thing.

1 Corinthians 6:19-20:
Or do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and you are not your own?

For you were bought at a price; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God’s.

It is in this context that the reader is reminded of Ellen White’s *Counsels on Health*. Even the Gospel is a cure for the maladies that originated in sin. Mal 4:2, “The

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51LaRondelle, *Christ Our Salvation*, 57.

Son of Righteousness arises, ‘with healing in His wings.’”

Ellen White urges us to be workers together with God for the restoration of health to the body as well as to the soul. We should teach others how to preserve and recover health. The very meaning of salvation is restoration, and Jesus would have us bid the sick, the hopeless, and the afflicted to take hold upon His strength. Ellen White points out that it is a sin to be sick for all sickness is the result of transgression. She writes:

By allowing ourselves to form wrong habits, by keeping late hours, by gratifying appetite at the expense of health, we lay the foundation for feebleness. By neglecting to take physical exercise, by overworking mind or body, we unbalance the nervous system. Those who thus shorten their lives by disregarding nature’s laws are guilty of robbery before God. We have no right to neglect or misuse the body, the mind, or the strength which should be used to offer God consecrated service.53

She goes on to say that meat should not be placed before our children. Grain and fruit should be emphasized. This is all a work of sanctification.54

Fresh air will also be a healing agent. Deep breathing is healing for the body.55

She calls upon us to avoid gluttony, drunkenness, and to refuse tobacco which is a slow poison.56 She counsels to avoid tea and coffee, expressing that these quicken the body to unnatural action. Tea and coffee do not nourish the body.57 Children should have a daily bath or at least twice a week.58

53White, Counsels on Health, 41.
54Ibid., 41-44.
55Ibid., 57-59.
56Ibid., 71, 77-83.
57Ibid., 79 and throughout the book.
58Ibid., 104.
Food should not be washed down with cold water. Eat fruit with meals. Use pure water. Do not partake of tea, coffee, beer, wine, or any liquor. Food should be eaten slowly. In our diet we should return to the Garden of Eden, that of a vegetable diet.59

Ellen White affirms that the presentation of this message shall result in the conversion and sanctification of souls.60 Where there is true conviction, there will be changed lives.61 She presents an all out call for medical missionaries to share and care for others.62 The physician who is the greatest is the one who walks in the footsteps of Jesus Christ.63

Growth in Character and Walk with the Lord

Jesus said, “He (the Holy Spirit) will glorify me, for He will take of what is Mine, and declare it to you” (John 16:14). Paul wrote, “For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ” (Gal 3:26-27). In other words, we have been clothed with Christ. The believer in baptism is declared legally dead to sin.64

Romans 6:3-4, 6-7:
Or do you not know that as many of us as were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death? Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk

59White, Counsels on Health, 473.
60Ibid., 402.
61Ibid., 581-583, 447.
62Ibid., 541, 542, 392-397.
63Ibid., 331-332.
64Luther’s Works, in “Lectures on Galatians, Chapters 1-4” (1535), 26, 352.
in newness of life. Knowing this, that our old man was crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves of sin. For he who has died has been freed from sin.

“Therefore, we should purify ourselves from everything that contaminates body and spirit, perfecting holiness out of reverence for God” (2 Corinthians 7:11). “Grateful obedience to the Lord is therefore the sign of a redeemed people, by which God is glorified.”65 An ultimate purpose of Christ’s seeking to save the lost was something still beyond deliverance from sin and Satan; it was that we would be a living temple of the Holy Spirit of God. Indeed, when we take up the cross to follow Jesus, we are giving up personal ambition and self-centered purposes. That was the difficulty with the rich young ruler; he could not give to Christ his total commitment.

The believer will not let sin rule in his mortal body so that you obey its evil desires. No part of the believer’s body can be offered to sin or wickedness. Redeeming grace leads to moral obedience.66

Exod 19:5, “Now therefore if you will indeed obey my voice and keep my covenant, then you shall be a special treasure to Me above all people.” Deut 28:9, “The Lord will establish you as a holy people to Himself, just as He has sworn to you, if you keep the commandments of the Lord your God and walk in His ways.” Lev 26:12-13, “I broke the bars of your yoke,” and “enabled you to walk with hands held high.”

“Be holy, because I am holy” (Lev 11:44-45). Here is a call to moral integrity as well as cultic purity. God’s holiness transforms the repentant believer.

65LaRondelle, Christ Our Salvation, 59.

66White, Counsels on Health, 238, 239.
The Sabbath, too, was considered a “lasting covenant” (Exod 31:16). The Sabbath was created so man would have communion with God.

In line with the believer’s walk with the Lord, Paul calls the church members “the saints,” not because they are sinless, but because they are in Christ. Peter is reminded of the Siniatic Covenant and thus calls the church “a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God” (1 Pet 2:9). By our understanding of sanctification and saints, ethical holiness is developed. According to Heb 10:10, we have been sanctified; we have been made holy.

All of this allows for the apostle Paul to call for the highest standards in sex and behavior. Rom 8:9, 12, 13, as translated by LaRondelle:67

You, however, are controlled not by the sinful nature, by the spirit, if the Spirit of God lives in you. But if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Christ. Therefore, brothers, we have an obligation, but it is not to the sinful nature, to live according to it. For if you live according to the sinful nature, you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the misdeeds of the body, you will live.

Or hear Paul in 1 Thess 4:3-5, 7:

For this is the will of God, your sanctification: that you should abstain from sexual immorality: That each of you should know how to possess his own vessel in sanctification and honor, not in passion of lust, like the Gentiles who do not know God . . . For God did not call us to uncleanness, but in holiness.

In yielding to Christ as Lord and Savior, we submit our selfish will to His will. We cannot govern any area by ourselves. In 2 Corinthians 10:5 it declares that we take

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67LaRondelle, Christ Our Salvation, 72.
captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ. We are to be living sacrifices to God.

Romans 12:1-2:
I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service. And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.

Ponder the following passage:

The Spirit of God does not create new faculties in the converted man, but works a decided change in the employment of those faculties. When mind and heart and soul are changed, man is not given a new conscience, but his will is submitted to a conscience renewed, a conscience where dormant sensibilities are aroused by the working of the Holy Spirit.68

No wonder Paul wrote in Gal 5:25, “If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit.” To live like this we need constant prayer. In Col 1:9-10 Paul says that “we have not stopped praying for you.” He prays that the Colossians may live a life worthy of the Lord and may please Him in every way. Jesus taught in John 15:5, 7:

I am the vine; you are the branches.
He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing. . . . If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, you will ask what you desire, and it shall be done for you.

Ellen G. White comments on John 6:53-56: “We are to be living interpreters of the Scriptures, doing honor to Christ by revealing His meekness and His lowliness of heart. . . . We must know the practical application of the word to our own individual

68White, “Letter 44, 1899,” in Our High Calling (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald, 2000), 104.
character-building. We are to be holy temples, in which God can live and walk and work.”

Eph 5:5 warns us that immoral or impure men or idolators will not inherit the kingdom of God. “Make every effort to live in peace with all men and to be holy; without holiness no one will see the Lord” (Heb 12:14).

Yes, justification is our title to the kingdom, but sanctification, where we wear the wedding garment, the character of Jesus, and walk with the Lord, that is our fitness for the kingdom. Phil 1:21 declares, “For to me, to live is Christ, and to die is gain.”

**Adventists and Lutherans in Dialogue on Sanctification**

Lutherans tend to understand this new life essentially as being received by baptism and the Lord’s Supper in the Word and Sacrament of the church. I express this, even though Luther believes in such a deep prayer life that would lead to being filled with the Spirit of God. Adventists express that, through the Holy spirit, we are born and sanctified; the Spirit renews our minds, writes God’s law of love in our hearts, and we become partakers of the divine nature.

Adventists teach that the new life does not exclude the possibility of sinning, while Lutherans stress that even as justified, the believing person remains a sinner.

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69White, “Letter 64, 1900,” in *SDA Bible Commentary*, 5:1135.


73Ibid.
Adventists recognize God’s provision of salvation in the cross of Christ and its appropriation through faith as declared in John 3:16. Adventism recognizes that Christ’s intercession provides the believer with the peace of complete assurance of salvation, but one’s eternal destiny is still described as being legally unconfirmed until the final judgment of God. The presence of discipleship is the primary issue with regard to the approval of the saints in the judgment.74

Adventism has integrated the eschatological dimension of the Final Judgment in their understanding of atonement, while Lutheran theology has excluded it.

Justification is the source of sanctified fruit, a strong Adventist view. Adventists relate present justification to both sanctification and the Final Judgment. The pre-advent judgment is seen by Adventists as the consummation of the Apostolic Gospel.75

**Summary**

While Luther writes, “The Spirit and the gifts are ours,” we find a number of references in Ellen White as to the importance of the baptism of the Holy Spirit. Luther connects on the gift of prophecy, but in Ellen White we see a prophet who is able to speak and write on almost any subject; she is the most translated writer in history. In Luther, the redeemed seem not to be raised to the level of spiritual maturity that we find in Adventism. In Adventism there is a much stronger emphasis on both the moral life and a strong health message. Both Lutherans and Adventists emphasize a closer walk with the Lord as part of our understanding of sanctification, but in Adventism a much

74“Adventists and Lutherans in Conversation,” 126-128.

75Ibid., 173.
stronger word of judgment is found. In Adventism, as we find the atonement service in Leviticus, so we shall find in heaven the sanctuary service of atonement that matches Leviticus, with Christ as our attorney.
CHAPTER 6

CHRIST’S HIGH PRIESTLY MINISTRY

Introduction

In this chapter we will take a detailed look at Christ’s ascended ministry as Prophet, Priest, and King, as viewed by Lutherans and Adventists. In all of this we will see Jesus in preparation for His coming again for the church. Many do not understand the manifold ministry that Jesus has been performing in His ascended ministry. And most do not realize that the judgment is actually taking place right now.

Luther on Christ’s High Priestly Ministry

Christ’s Ascended Ministry

Christ’s office as our High Priest did not come to an end when He was exalted. Heb 7:24 states that His priesthood is unchangeable. Consider Heb 7:35: “Therefore He is also able to save to the uttermost those who come to God through Him, since He ever lives to make intercession for them.” “Christ now intercedes for the redeemed that the salvation purchased for them once for all may be applied to them.”  

First John 2:1 says, “And if anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.” Rom 8:34b states, “It is Christ . . . who is even at the right

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1F. Pieper, *Christian Dogmatism* (St. Louis, MO: Concordia, 1951), 382-383.
hand of God, who also makes intercession for us.”

It is also the understanding of Luther that the ascended Christ would also reopen the closed Paradise and prepare a permanent inheritance for us in heaven. John 14:2 declares, “In my Father’s house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you.”

There is also the description of the ascended Lord, sitting on the right hand of God. Here is the highest degree of glory. Luther states that the exalted Christ “assumed dominion at the right hand of the Father. The devil and all power, therefore, must be subject to Him and lie beneath his feet until finally, at the last day, he will completely divide and separate us from the wicked world, the devil, death, sin, etc.”

In his comments on Hebrews, Luther expresses how fitting it was that we should have such a high priest, that Christ would be clearly heard in our stead. Then he goes on:

For Thou are not a God who delights in wickedness, for no evil will sojourn with Thee” (Ps. 5:4). In the second place, for our sakes, in order that He might be able to sanctify us, to make us blameless, untainted, separated, and like Him in all respects. This happens when we cling to Him with faithful hearts and set our minds “not on things that are on earth but on the things that are above, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God (Col. 3:1-2).

Luther writes that a Christian must be sure, completely sure, that Christ appears and is a priest before God on his behalf. Whenever we ask in prayer, we are to believe that we receive it.

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2Luther, The Large Catechism, 414.
3Luther, “Lectures on Hebrews” (1516-1518), in LW 29:196.
4Ibid., 217.
Christ as Prophet, Priest, and King

In the time of His flesh, Christ taught in person, but now in the state of exaltation, He executes His prophetic office through the ministry of the gospel. Christ taught of His own divine knowledge and with great authority. We can say that Christ is executing His royal office by teaching through His servants or messengers or we could say that the teaching that takes place in the church is a continuation of Christ’s prophetic office. “If any man would preach, he suppresses his own words, and speaks the words of the Head of the Family,” Luther wrote.

Christ, who was our Priest, offered up His own life on our behalf. Then, upon His ascension, He continues to intercede on our behalf.

Isa 53:12 says, “He bore the sins of many and makes intercession for the transgressors.” “Christ intercedes for all, also for the wicked, just as He also bore their sins.” It is His sole business as Priest to assist men in restoring them from sin and bringing them to a pure life. Christ Jesus wants to gather and preserve the church.

As to His kingly office, Christ, the Redeemer, executes dominion in all the world and universe. “All things are delivered unto Me of My Father” (Matt 11:27). “All power is given unto Me in heaven and in earth” (Matt 28:18). “Thou hast put all things under His feet” (Ps 8:6; Eph 1:22; 1 Cor 15:27). “He left nothing that is not put under Him” (Heb 2:8). There is no territory in the universe that is exempt from His dominion.

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6 Ibid., 340.
7 Ibid., 382.
The State of the Dead

Luther ascertained that the body accompanies the soul through baptism and the sacrament, and on the last day it will abide where the soul abides. But all of this cannot come to pass before that day, when a new essence comes into being all of a sudden; this is to happen not only in human beings but also in all creatures.

The reason the Savior arose from the dead was for the very purpose of raising believers on the last day and presenting them as glorious and resplendent as He Himself is. Christians should comfort, sustain, and fortify their hearts with this assurance. Luther declares that Christ wants to confide a secret to us, revealing how things will be on the last day when we arise. It is as Paul writes in 1 Cor 15:51-54: “Lo! I tell you a mystery. We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the dead will be raised imperishable, and we shall all be changed. For this perishable nature must put on the immortality.”

Here the reader should know that Luther was inclined to agree that the souls of the just are asleep and that they do not know where they are up to the Day of Judgment. He cites 2 Sam 7:12 and 1 Kgs 2:10: “They sleep with their fathers.”

In another reference Luther expressed that, even if his last day may not come immediately, there will be no other proclamation and it will not be revealed or set forth

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9Ibid., 194.

10Ibid., 198.

11Ibid., 199 (this is Luther’s translation).

better than it has been set forth and revealed. “But now no more glorious and no clearer proclamation has come into the world than the Gospel. Therefore this is the last one. All the time has come and gone, but now the gospel has been revealed to us for the last time.”

**Adventists on Christ’s High Priestly Ministry**

**Christ’s Ascended Ministry**

The high priestly ministry of Jesus actually began on earth, but He completed the ministry in heaven. Jesus suffered humiliation on earth as God’s suffering servant, thereby qualifying Him to be our High Priest in heaven (Heb 2:17, 18; 4:15; 5:2). Prophecy records that Christ was to be a priest on God’s throne (Zech 6:13). Thus, it is no surprise to find that our humiliated High Priest is exalted “at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens.” Christ Jesus ascended to ministry in the heavenly sanctuary (Heb 8:1, 2).

In Christ’s ascended ministry He is “able to save to the uttermost those who come to God through Him, since He ever lives to make intercession for them” (Heb 7:25). Christ Himself actually intercedes for us (Rom 8:34). Speaking of His role as Mediator, Christ has given us the assurance, “Whatever you ask the Father in My name He will give you” (John 16:23). Any of Satan’s accusations no longer have any legal appeal (1 John 2:1; cf., Zech 3:1).

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Christ as Prophet, Priest, and King

Christ as Prophet

Amos 3:7 declares, “Surely the Lord does nothing unless He reveals His secret to His servants the prophets.” Just as the Lord faithfully spoke through the prophets in the Old Testament, so He continues to speak in this dispensation in the New Covenant.

In His role as a prophet, the ascended Christ continues to send out His clear prophetic Word. The ascended Christ appeared to Saul who became Paul on the Damascus Road, and Paul became the key apostle to the Gentiles. The ascended Christ also called the reformers of the Reformation to preach and teach and write so that they would rightly divide the Word of God. The ascended Christ continues to call pastors, evangelists, missionaries, and others to proclaim the everlasting Gospel throughout the world.

The 2300 days, the longest prophetic period in the Bible, locates the time of God’s prophetic judgment hour message in connection with the second coming of Jesus. The date is 1844. As the Millerite movement progressed, they pondered the words, “then shall the sanctuary be cleansed”—the typology of the Hebrew tabernacle and its cleansing on the Day of Atonement came into focus. Christ, they rightly concluded, had begun a further phase of His ministry in the Most Holy Place of the heavenly sanctuary on October 22, 1844.  

These faithful servants of the Word organized themselves as the Seventh-day Adventist Church in 1863. The Lord had formed the nucleus of His remnant movement

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which John the Revelator described as keeping the commandments of God and having the faith of Jesus (Rev 14:12).\(^{16}\)

Now a significant element was needed to complete the divine mission; the ascended Christ called a prophet to apply prophetic truth to help organize a remnant of believers who would also organize a remnant church, which would also present characteristics given by inspiration.

In December of 1844, the ascended Christ allowed the prophetic gift to be given to a frail, unlettered girl of seventeen, living in Portland, Maine. The prophetic gift was given to Ellen G. Harmon (White). Ellen White received more than 2,000 visions between then and her death in 1915. James and Ellen White helped to found the Seventh-day Adventist Church. Ellen White appeared at the precise moment when a true prophet was expected.\(^{17}\)

It can truly be said that the Adventists have not followed cunningly devised fables in their acceptance of “the Spirit of prophecy” as exercised by Ellen G. White. Ellen White never pointed to herself, but always pointed others to Jesus Christ. All of Ellen White’s speaking and writing is according to the law and the testimony of Jesus.

In His role as prophet, the ascended Christ gave to the apostle John the Three Angels’ Message—a powerful message for the remnant church—to prepare a faithful people for the second coming of Christ. In this prophetic role, Christ sends the everlasting gospel out to all nations and peoples. The whole world is being warned that

\(^{16}\)Damsteegt, *Foundation of the Seventh-day Adventist Message and Mission*, 255.

\(^{17}\)Seventh-day Adventists Believe, 224.
the hour of His judgment has come. We are urged to come out of false teaching and keep the Sabbath of the Lord God (Rev 14:6-13).

Christ in His ascended prophetic role has not left Himself without strong prophetic witness. That is why there has been the rise of 3ABN on television and radio, International Radio 74, Life Talk Radio, and the Hope Channel, because the everlasting gospel is going forth around the world. “And this Gospel of the kingdom will be preached in all the world as a witness to all the nations, and then the end will come” (Matt 24:14).

Christ as High Priest

This doctrine of Christ as our High Priest in the heavenly sanctuary grants to all believers assurance and hope. It opens up to all tremendous meaning and spiritual growth. Seventh-day Adventists believe:

There is a sanctuary in heaven, the true tabernacle which the Lord set up and not man. In it Christ ministers on our behalf, making available to believers the benefit of His atoning sacrifice offered once for all on the cross. He was inaugurated as our great High Priest and began His intercessory ministry at the time of His Ascension. In 1844, at the end of the prophetic period of 2300 days, He entered the second and last phase of His atoning ministry. It is a work of investigative judgment which is part of the ultimate disposition of all sin, typified by the cleansing of the ancient Hebrew sanctuary on the Day of Atonement.18

God used the service of the earthly sanctuary to proclaim the gospel (Heb 4:2). This service was to prove the way for Christ’s first advent. Through symbol and ritual, God prepared the way for the Redeemer of the world, the Lamb of God,19 who would take away the sin of the world (Gal 3:23; John 1:29).

18Seventh-day Adventists Believe, 312.

19Ibid., 314.
The sanctuary clearly depicted three phases of the ministry of Christ: (1) the substitutionary sacrifice, (2) the priestly mediation, and (3) the final judgment.\textsuperscript{20}

Christ Jesus is our Priestly Mediator. On the one hand, as every sacrifice foreshadowed Christ’s death, so every priest was a reminder to us of Christ’s mediatorial ministry of high priest in the heavenly sanctuary. First Timothy 2:5 teaches that there is one God, and one Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus.

Christ is our Mediator and Atonement. When the priest applied the blood during the ministry, this was seen as a form of atonement, as in Leviticus 4:35. “The atoning death of Christ reconciled the world to God, so His mediation and substitutionary death makes reconciliation or atonement a personal reality for the believer.”\textsuperscript{21}

It is in the Levitical priesthood that we see the saving ministry carried on by the ascended Christ, the High Priest who functions as a minister of the sanctuary. Heb 4:16 encourages us to come boldly to the throne of grace that we may obtain mercy and find grace in time of need.

In the sanctuary on earth the priest carried out two ministries—a daily ministry in the Holy Place and a yearly ministry in the Most Holy Place. These ministries illustrate Christ’s ascended ministry.

In the ministry in the Holy Place, we find a ministry of intercession, forgiveness, reconciliation, and restoration. This continual ministry gave the repentant sinner immediate access to God. In the Holy Place on earth and in heaven, ministry centers on

\textsuperscript{20}Seventh-day Adventists Believe, 224.

\textsuperscript{21}Ibid., 315, 316.
the individual. Christ’s priestly ministry provides for forgiveness and reconciliation to God (Heb 7:25). “For Christ’s sake God forgives the repentant sinner, imputes to him the righteous character and obedience of His son, pardons his sin and records his name in the Book of Life as one of His children” (Eph 4:32; 1 John 1:9; 2 Cor 5:21; Rom 3:24; Luke 10:20).

Adventist pioneers were able to see through their study of Leviticus, Daniel, Hebrews, Revelation, and other scriptures that Christ was not just only ministering in the sanctuary above, but Christ has also entered the final phase of that ministry like that of the Day of Atonement in Lev 16.\(^{22}\)

This was the new doctrine that “unlocked the mystery of the disappointment of 1844.”\(^{23}\) Adventists had hope again and an exciting message to proclaim. Here is full assurance that God is on the side of the believer (Heb 10:22).

Christ is able to “sympathize with our weakness” (Heb 4:15). He is able to send forth help from the throne of grace (Heb 2:18; 4:16). This allows the believer to come boldly to the throne of grace and trust in the merits of our Mediator.

Only in Jesus Christ could sin be removed. Christ is our High Priest and also our sacrifice in that He is the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world (John 1:29). He is also the promised Lamb sacrificed for us (1 Cor 5:7). The blood of Christ is expiation for all humanity (Rom 3:21-25).

In phase 1 of the heavenly ministry, Christ has quite an active role.\(^{24}\) As

\(^{22}\)Seventh-day Adventists Believe, 317.

\(^{23}\)White, The Great Controversy, 423.

\(^{24}\)Ibid., 229.
Mediator, He applies the benefits of His sacrifice for us. He directs the affairs of the church (Rev 1:12-20). He sends forth the Holy Spirit (John 16:7). Christ is the leader in the forces of right against Satan (Rev 19:11-16). All heaven worships Him (Rev 5:11-14). Christ upholds the universe (Heb 1:3; Rev 3:21). He intercedes for believers. All of these blessings flow out from the benefits of Christ’s sacrifice. The believer has access to the presence of God all the time and our sin is thoroughly removed. Christ has opened up for all believers the door to the very presence of God. The privileges for the believer are greater than for those in the Old Testament. Our High Priest is in heaven itself, in the presence of God (Heb 9:24). He is “within the veil,” meaning we have full, direct, and free access to God (Heb 6:19-20; 9:24-28; 10:1-4). There is no longer any need for offerings and sacrifices. The sacrifice of the Priest and Lamb did what human sacrifice could not do.

After His ascension, Christ ministers at the right hand of the Father in the heavenly sanctuary as High Priest and Mediator between God and man. In both roles, Christ is doing the work of reconciliation or atonement.

Christ, who at various times and in different ways spoke in times past to the fathers by the prophets, has in these last days spoken to us by His Son, whom He has appointed him to all things. . . . When He had by Himself purged our sins, sat down at the right hand of the majesty on high (Heb 1:1-3).

Here the reader can see Christ in the capacity of both sacrifice and priest, which is in complete fulfillment of all the Old Testament types and ceremonies these two, the


27Ibid.
offering of Himself as a sacrifice and His priestly ministry, belong together.

The first duty of a priest is to offer sacrifices: For every high priest taken from among man is appointed for men in things pertaining to God that He may offer both gifts and sacrifices for sin. . . . So also Christ did not glorify Himself to become High Priest (Heb 5:1-5).

Christ had offered Himself as a sacrifice and ascended to the heavenly sanctuary. But not until He shed His blood could He represent sinful man before the Father. Now Christ’s entrance has efficacy.28 Now Christ can mediate between God and man. Christ, in the power of His sacrificial offering, entered upon His work as our High Priest.

“Therefore He is also able to save to the uttermost those who come to God through Him, since He ever lives to make intercession for them” (Heb 7:25).

This makes the risen Jesus Christ our advocate. He represents us, the accused, as an attorney in our defense. In the Old Testament the high priest of the earthly sanctuary carried the names of the tribes engraved on his breastplate.29 Christ carries us upon His heart. We could say that Christ’s blood in heaven cries to God on our behalf.

But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, to an innumerable company of angels . . . to Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling that speaks better things than that of Abel (Heb 12:22-24).

In Exod 12:12 the Lord said, “When I see the blood I will pass over.” Heb 9:22 declares that without the shedding of blood there is no remission of sins. Now look at Heb 9:14: “How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?” Our sins are forgiven, our guilt is removed, and our judgment averted

28Heppenstall, Our High Priest, 51.

29Ibid., 57.
solely by the blood of Christ. Jesus ever lives to make intercession for us. Christ is our attorney for the defense against Satan, “the accuser of our brethren” (Rev 12:10).

By means of Christ’s intercession for us, believers transform sin to righteousness. We learn to love what God loves. In the heavenly sanctuary our High Priest sees our dependence on self-come to an end. This is in keeping with His promise:

And I will pray the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may abide with you forever . . . for He dwells with you and will be in you. I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you (John 14:16-18).

The priest as our High Priest also ministers on the Day of Atonement. The priest would go into the most holy place once a year to make a final atonement for the children of Israel and for the sanctuary. Taken into account was every sin committed and confession made since the last Day of Atonement. Hence, was given on that day a final judgment from God. There were two goats on that day—one pointed to the atonement Christ made for our sins. The other goat, whose blood was not shed, pointed to the total banishment of sin relating to Christ’s redemption.

Both goats serve as an integral part of the sin problem, one to serve as the goat for the Lord and the other for Azazel:

The Hebrew word for scapegoat is “azazel.” . . . Many modern scholars hold, with the Jews, that Azazel denotes a personal, wicked, superhuman spirit, and nearly all agree that its root meaning is, “one who removes.” . . . As one goat is for the Lord, a personal Being, so the other goat must also be for a personal being; and they are evidently antithetical, the most consistent view would be that Azazel stands in opposition to the Lord, and hence can be no other than Satan.

“On that day the priest shall make atonement for you to cleanse you. . . . Also on

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30 Heppenstall, *Our High Priest*, 77.

31 *SDA Bible Commentary*, 1:775.
that same day the high priest shall make an atonement for the Holy Sanctuary, and he shall make atonement for the tabernacle of meeting and for the altar, and he shall make atonement for the priests and for the peoples of the congregation” (Lev 16:30-34).

Everyone on this Day of Atonement saw to their settlement of human accounts before God, the final vindication of both the people and the sanctuary. It was a day of great solemnity. Many who had not been forgiven had great anxiety and fear. All of Israel waited anxiously for the high priest to return from the presence of the Lord in the Most Holy Place. They would watch and hear the confession of sins over the live goat and see the goat led into the desert. They would know nothing more of those sins from that past year.

The symbolism in all of this pointed to the high priestly work of Christ. The Day of Atonement taught the final solution of the sin problem. The blotting out of sin means more than forgiveness. The Lord wants not only to forgive sin, but to banish sin and Satan. The Lord wants to triumph over sin and eradicate sin. God did not fail at the cross, but He must effect Satan’s end and final destruction.

So he shall make atonement for the Holy Place, because of the uncleanness of the people of Israel . . . and so he shall do for the tabernacle of meeting which remains among them in the midst of their uncleanness. . . . And he shall go out to the altar that is before the Lord, and make atonement for it (Lev 16:16-22).

With very daily sacrifice there was a growing necessity for an annual cleaning on the Day of Atonement. The counterpart of all this is found in the heavenly sanctuary.

32 SDA Bible Commentary, 1:80.
33 Ibid., 81.
34 Ibid., 82.
Then likewise he sprinkled with blood both the tabernacle and all the vessels of ministry. And according to the law almost all things are purged with blood, and without the shedding of blood there is no remission. Therefore it was necessary that the copies of the things in the heavens should be purified with these, but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifice than these (Heb 9:21-23).

“As sin defiles, blood cleanses. Cleaning is an essential aspect of the atonement.”

If we walk in the light, as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin... If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness (1 John 1:7-9).

The believer can be certain that he is forgiven and cleansed, for Rom 8:1 declares that there is therefore no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus. The earthly sanctuary teaches a wider cleansing. The confessed sins are represented as resting in the sanctuary until the final cleansing on the Day of Atonement.

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 remands the sin from the penitent, but it rested in the sanctuary until the day of atonement.

In the typical service, only those who had come before God with confession and repentance, and whose sins, through the blood of the sin-offering, were transferred to the sanctuary, had a part in the service of the day of atonement. So in the great day of final atonement and investigative judgment, the only cases considered are those of the professed people of God.

35 SDA Bible Commentary, 1:83.
36 White, Patriarchs and Prophets, 357.
37 White, The Great Controversy, 480.
Yes, Jesus the Christ bore our sins at the cross, but in His priestly ministry He continued His work of salvation and reconciliation, indeed a complete eradication of sin, all this to the glory of God and to the sanctification of all the creatures of the universe.\textsuperscript{38}

Let us have a clear understanding of the investigative judgment. Involved in this judgment is “complete satisfaction, obedience to God’s will, purity of life, perseverance in the faith by means of the divine power made accessible through the priestly ministry of the living Christ.”\textsuperscript{39}

Those who would share the benefits of the Saviour’s mediation should permit nothing to interfere with their duty to perfect holiness in the fear of God. . . . The subject of the sanctuary and the investigative judgment should be clearly understood by the people of God. All need a knowledge for themselves of the position and work of their great High Priest. Otherwise it will be impossible for them to exercise the faith which is essential at this time, or to occupy the position which God designed them to fill. Every individual has a soul to save or to lose. Each has a case pending at the bar of God. Each must meet the great Judge face to face. How important, then, that every mind contemplate often the solemn scenes when the judgment shall sit and the books shall be opened, when, with David, every individual must stand in his lot, at the end of days.\textsuperscript{40}

Christ is not expressing that His followers are going to have a bad time in the judgment. Christ does not desire to be an accusing judge, but a loving, saving friend. In the Levitical Day of Atonement Israel was called upon to make sure of their standing with God. You and I are now living in that Great Day of Atonement.

We too are required to afflict our souls by repentance of sin and humiliation before the Lord, lest they be cut off from among the people. In like manner, all who would have their names written in the book of life, should now, in the few remaining days of their probation, afflict their souls before God by sorrow for sin and true repentance. There must be deep, faithful searching of heart. The light, familiar spirit indulged by so many professed Christians must be put away. There is earnest warfare before all

\textsuperscript{38}Heppenstall, \textit{Our High Priest}, 84.

\textsuperscript{39}Ibid., 85.

\textsuperscript{40}White, \textit{The Great Controversy}, 488.
who would subdue the evil tendencies that strive for the mastery. The work of perfection is an individual work. . . . He will examine the case of each individual with as close and searching scrutiny as if there were not another being upon the earth. Everyone must be tested and found without spot or wrinkle or any such thing. . . . The judgment is now passing in the sanctuary above. . . . In the awful presence of God our lives are to come up in review. At this time above all others it behooves every soul to heed the Savior’s admonition, “Watch and pray: for ye know not when the time is.”

The investigative judgment will reveal whether we are in Christ or not in Christ. The committed Christian must believe that Christ will testify to his triumph and final cleansing before the watching universe. You must believe that nothing can change that verdict.

All who have truly repented of sin, and by faith claimed the blood of Christ as their atoning sacrifice, have had pardon entered against their names in the books of heaven; as they have become partakers of the righteousness of Christ, and their characters are found to be in harmony with the law of God, their sins will be blotted out, and they themselves will be accounted worthy of eternal life. . . . Said Jesus, “He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment, and I will not blot out his name out of the book of life, but I will confess his name before my Father, and before His angels.”

This is the final Day of Atonement message. No wonder Paul writes, “Who shall lay anything to the charge of God’s elect” (Rom 8:33) and Rev 7:14, “These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.”

**Christ as King**

“Upon Christ’s ascension to the heavenly realm, God made him sit at his right

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42Ibid., 483.
hand” (Eph 1:20). Christ occupies a kingship “far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and above every name that is named, not only in this age, but also in that which is to come” (Eph 1:21). Eph 1:22 states that God has put all things under His feet. God continues to do this until His messianic reign is accomplished.

The expression “to sit at God’s right hand” shows up 20 times in the New Testament. Here is the fulfillment of Ps 110:1.

Remember what Jesus said to Pilate, “My kingship is not of this world; if my kingship were of this world, my servants would fight, that I might not be handed over to the Jews, but my kingship is not from the world” (John 18:36). No wonder Jesus spoke and taught of the Kingdom of God. As believers accept Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior, “they are delivered from the dominion of darkness and transferred . . . to the kingdom of His dear Son” (Col 1:13-14). Study these kingly verses from 1 Cor 15:24-25: “Then comes the end, when He delivers the kingdom to God the Father, when He puts an end to all rule and all authority and power. For He must reign till He has put all enemies under His feet.” “When at the end of the age—at the end of Christ’s reign of peace—the seventh angel blows the trumpet; ‘the kingdom of the world will become the kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ.’”

Christ comes into the rulership of the kingdom of glory and “He shall reign forever and ever” (Rev 11:15) upon His glorious throne.

All of this makes Jesus humanity’s King-Priest, or our royal High Priest. He pleads before the Father the merit of His sinless life and His atoning death on behalf of


44Ibid., 5.
Thus, we are able to come to Jesus through prayer. First John 2:1-2 states that we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous; and He is the expiation for our sin, and not for ours only, but for the sins of the whole world.

The Pre-Advent Judgment

Fundamental Belief 23 goes on to give further detail. Christ in His ascended ministry participates in the pre-advent or investigative judgment.

In that typical service the sanctuary was cleansed with the blood of animal sacrifices, but the heavenly things are purified with the perfect sacrifice of the blood of Jesus. The investigative judgment reveals to heavenly intelligences who among the dead are asleep in Christ and therefore, in Him, are deemed worthy to have part in the first resurrection. It also makes manifest who among the living are abiding in Christ, keeping the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus, and in Him, therefore, are ready for translation into His everlasting kingdom. The judgment vindicates the justice of God in saving those who believe in Jesus. It declares that those who remained loyal to God shall receive the kingdom. The completion of this ministry of Christ will mark the close of human probation before the Second Advent.46

The concept of a pre-advent judgment followed by a second advent, “executive judgment” was first argued in 1840 and 1842 by the Methodist minister, Josiah Litch.47 Sabbatarian Adventists perceived that Dan 8:14 was the heavenly sanctuary where Christ ministered since October 22, 1844, that of the Most Holy Place. They focused on the open temple and the ark of the covenant (Rev 11:19). Their attention was drawn to the Ten Commandments and the observance of the seventh-day Sabbath. It was Joseph


46Seventh-day Adventists Believe, 312.

Bates, along with James White, who employed the term “investigative judgment.”

Paul declares in Acts 17:31 that God has fixed a day on which He will judge the world. In Dan 7 both the Ancient of Days and the Son of Man came to a new place in heaven for judgment.

At the second coming of Christ, those whose names are in the Book of Life are resurrected to receive eternal life. There is evidence that the judgment precedes the second coming of Jesus, thus allowing the true saints to be sorted out prior to the resurrection. In Matt 22, Christ portrayed His wedding guests as having been examined by the King to see whether they were wearing the wedding garment or Christian character. He marries His church and establishes His kingdom. The writer knows, too, that in Rev 21 Jerusalem, the Holy City in heaven which will house the saints is also called His bride. He returns to earth to take His church to the Wedding Supper. First Peter 4:17 declares that judgment must begin with the household of God.

This pre-advent judgment precedes the second coming. At the second coming, sinners will be destroyed; no more sin. Believers must endure to the end. In Rev 14 the second of the three angels calls the saints to keep the commandments of God and separate themselves from false Babylon, who will receive the mark of the beast.

The investigative judgment is the first phase of the final judgment. It begins when Jesus enters into the second area of the heavenly sanctuary. Ever since 1844 the records of all the people of God have been open so that angels and other intelligent

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49Ibid., 122.
beings can see the fairness of God. God will be vindicated. Unanswered questions will be settled. God will be viewed as true and righteous. The investigative judgment results in a vast enlargement of the powers of the Son of man; Christ received His kingdom.

The investigative judgment also brings to light any who have violated their privileges; their names will be blotted out of the Book of Life.

But the good news is that God’s true followers will be vindicated. Their sins are blotted out. As part of the examination, all the faithful must have retained their wedding garment.

Both the Sabbath and the Spirit of Prophecy are inseparable in preparing people for the investigative judgment. Adventists believe that their concept of the pre-advent judgment is deeply rooted in Scripture.

Before 1850, Bates and his group of Sabbatarian Adventists went on to enhance the pre-advent judgment. They related the judgment to the Sabbath, the seal of God, and the three angels’ message. All of this was dated prior to Ellen White’s bridegroom vision of mid-February 1845.

Bates believed that commandment keepers must endure prior to the completion of the sealing work. When the sealing work is finished, Jerusalem would be cleansed from every impurity. Bates also emphasized that the second coming of Christ could not have occurred at the close of the 2300 days, for God in His judicial character had to decide the

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51 Ibid., 124.

52 Ibid., 125.

53 Ibid., 131.
cases of all the righteous that their names may be registered in the Lamb’s Book of Life and that they be fully prepared for that moment when they would change from mortal to immortality.\textsuperscript{54}

Ellen White had a vision in January 1849:

I was taken off in vision to the most holy place, when I saw Jesus still interceding for Israel. . . . I saw that Jesus would not leave the most holy place until every case was decided [a reference to the pre-advent judgment] either for salvation or destruction, and that the wrath of God could not come until Jesus had finished His work in the most holy place, laid off His priestly attire, and clothed Himself with the garments of vengeance. . . . I saw that the anger of the nations, the wrath of God, and the time to judge the dead were separate and distinct, one following the other, also that Michael had not stood up, and that the time of trouble, such as never was, had not yet commenced. The nations are now getting angry, but when our High Priest has finished His work in the sanctuary, He will stand up, put on the garments of vengeance, and the seven last plagues will be poured out.\textsuperscript{55}

Ellen White’s \textit{The Great Controversy} deals with Christ in His heavenly sanctuary.

She says this of Christ, “He ‘shall sit and rule upon His throne; and He shall be a priest upon His throne.’ Not now ‘upon the throne of His glory;’ the kingdom glory has not yet been ushered in. Not until His work as a mediator shall be ended will God ‘give unto Him the throne of His father David,’ a kingdom of which ‘there shall be no end.’”

About the Day of Atonement, Ellen White says:

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. Then in his character of mediator, he took the sins upon himself and bore them from the sanctuary. Placing his hands upon 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.\textsuperscript{56}


\textsuperscript{55}White, \textit{Early Writings}, 36.

\textsuperscript{56}White, \textit{The Great Controversy}, 420.
Frank Holbrook so aptly words it this way:

As we humbly “walk” in union with the Lord, we believers can be fully assured that Christ not only intercedes in our behalf, but in the awesome, preadvent judgment now in session. He will represent us and reaffirm our justification and faith in God before the loyal universe. We cannot escape final judgment, but what greater assurance can genuine believers have than to know by faith that Christ is both our personal Savior and high priest, and that His last ministry in the heavenly courts is on our behalf?57

It was James White who, in January of 1857, published the term “investigative judgment” by which the pre-advent judgment had been principally known among Seventh-day Adventists. Both James White and Joseph Bates are described as co-founders along with others of the Seventh-day Adventist Church.58

The State of the Dead

Adventists believe that the righteous in Christ, when they physically die, go to sleep and await the coming of Jesus for the church. Death is a state of temporary unconsciousness while the believer awaits the resurrection. The believer does not go directly to heaven, but he receives immortality when Jesus comes for the believers at His second coming.59

The Old Testament calls the place where people go at death sheol (Hebrew) and the New Testament hades (Greek) meaning the grave. The whole person is received at death. The dead are not conscious in the grave, but rather death is a sleep.60

57Frank D. Holbrook, The Atoning Priesthood of Jesus Christ (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald, 1996), 97.


59Seventh-day Adventists Believe, 351.

60Ibid., 353.
The Bible description of death is quite clear. “The dead know nothing” (Eccl 9:5). “His breath goes forth, . . . in that very day his thoughts perish” (Ps 146:4). “There is no work or device or knowledge or wisdom in the grave where you are going” (Eccl 9:10). “The dead do not praise the Lord” (Ps 115:17). Solomon said of death, “The dust will return to the earth as it was, and the spirit will return to God who gave it” (Eccl 12:7). Here spirit means breath.

But there is hope. “The hour is coming in which all who are in the grave will hear His voice and come forth” (John 5:28-29). Paul writes that he does not want us to be ignorant. He confirms that God will bring with Him them that sleep in Jesus. Paul clarifies that we who are alive and remain until the coming of the Lord will by no means precede those who are asleep. But he goes on to say that the dead in Christ shall rise first. Then in 1 Thess 4:17, “Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And then we shall always be with the Lord.”

The unrighteous do not go to hell right upon death. They, too, physically die or sleep and rest in the grave. When Jesus comes for the church, the unrighteous are not raised to be or go with Jesus, for their names are not written in the Book of Life.

After the thousand-year millennium with Christ, the unrighteous participate in the second resurrection. This resurrection moves along to the final judgment and condemnation (John 5:29). These will be “cast into the lake of fire” and experience the second death (Rev 20:14-15). The Lord takes no pleasure in the death of the unrighteous. Jesus Christ promises, “He who overcomes shall not be hurt at all by the second death” (Rev 2:11).
Adventists and Lutherans in Dialogue on Christ’s High Priestly Ministry

Lutherans believe that Christ will return openly to judge the living and the dead. He will give eternal life to all who believe and He condemns ungodly men and the devil to hell and eternal punishment.  

Adventists believe that they who blaspheme against the Spirit are those who will not be forgiven. First Cor 8:2 is where Paul writes of the saints who will judge the world. Adventists also believe that the wicked will perish, but not suffer for eternity.

In Acts 20:32 Paul writes of God who is able to build you up and give to the righteous the inheritance among those who are sanctified. Adventists simply believe that when Jesus comes the second time the inheritance He brings at that time has been decided by a pre-advent judgment in heaven.

Summary

Both Lutherans and Adventists agree that the high priestly ministry of Jesus did not come to an end when Christ was exalted, but the Adventists have a developed doctrine about the pre-advent judgment or investigative judgment. Both agree that Christ in His ascended ministry serves in the role of Prophet, Priest, and King, but each communion has a distinctive way of spelling that out. Adventists alone speak of an investigative judgment. Ellen White saw clearly in vision the work and ministry of the ascended Christ.


62 Ibid., 254-276.
CHAPTER 7

ECCLESIOLOGY—THE CHURCH AS A
COMMUNITY OF BELIEVERS

Introduction

In this chapter we examine what Luther believes about the church—her purpose, her mission, her authority, her gifts, her sacraments, and her leadership in the church. It will be shared how the church is not simply an organization, but a community of faith in which the love of Jesus is to be felt and ministered to one another. All issues are to be looked at through the mirror of Word and Sacrament. All of this is done in and through the community of faith until in His time Christ returns for the faithful, both the living and the dead.

We also look in considerable depth at what Adventists believe about the origin, the authority, the mission, and character of the church of Jesus Christ. We look at the various metaphors for the church. Biblical principles of church government are also studied. Adventists believe that they have been raised up in the last days to live out biblical leadership with elders and deacons and spiritually gifted leaders to lead out in the ministry.

Luther on the Church

Luther has this to say about elders in the church: “Let the elders who rule be
considered worthy of double honor.” ¹ He means that they should be respected with double honor, meaning honor or support. Elders rule well when they visit the sick and practice other works for the church and for the weak. Special honor should be given to those who meditate on the Word day and night. These are the elders who watch over the church.

On the one hand, a bishop of pastor should not gather much treasure, but a laborer deserves his wages. To minister in the Word is work. He notes that Paul does not tell Timothy to go and be a farmer. Luther says that the preacher labors and therefore he should eat. First Corinthians 9:14 teaches that those who preach the Gospel should live from the Gospel.

The bishop or pastor must be prudent, not a respecter of persons, yet he should respect persons. A bishop should have good judgment so that he may not easily believe those who have wagging tongues. He should not be rash, but act with good reasoning.

In the matter of discipline, there should be two witnesses. Those who persist in sin in the church should be rebuked publicly. A witness should bring proof of the matter. All should be done ahead of time in order to stave off worsening the problem.

In regard to leadership in the church, Luther admonishes that we should not be hasty in the laying on of hands, nor should we participate in another man’s sins. ² At all times, a leader is to keep himself chaste and pure. No pastor should perjure a report and then exalt himself. No pastor is to engage in the sharing of sins, in not keeping confidence, or the exalting of himself. A pastor must prove himself first in his leadership


²Ibid., 354-355.
before he practices the laying on of hands or ordination. Luther says that a pastor is not to go to excess in drinking or in fasting.

We are to preserve the health and welfare of our bodies. Our body exists for the ministry of the Word. If we deprive the body of health, then we deprive the church of the ministry of the Word.

Because Luther calls for faithful leadership in the church, the Word of God should be present in all purity. “God has preserved Baptism, the Sacrament of the Lord’s Supper and the Church which He uses to declare His Word.”3 The church is the foundation for proclaiming the Word of God throughout the world. Always walk faithfully so as to firmly establish your bishops (pastors), deacons, and their wives.

Now all Christians are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, indeed God’s own people.4 All Christians in the church are also saints. All Christians are also kings, but not of an earthly nation. A Christian is also a priest and he is to proclaim how he came out of darkness into the marvelous light. Once we were no people, but now we are God’s people. We should walk as though we are not citizens of this world, mainly in pure and sinless lives according to the faith.5

In the ministry of the church, there should be one mind and many works—one heart and many hands. Before God no work is better than another. Before God a bishop’s role or position is no better than that of a common man. Man judges appearance but God judges the heart.

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3Luther, “Lectures on 1 Timothy” (1527/28), in LW 28:302.
5Ibid., 67.
In the true Christian church, life proceeds in faith since everybody serves through love and bears the holy cross. This is the true color, adornment, treasure, and honor of the Christian church. The Church seeks to love the neighbor.

Luther urges the church to build itself up in the most holy faith; pray for the Holy Spirit. The Church is not to do anything to merit favor. Everything must be done for the benefit of one’s neighbor. The Christian must constantly long and wait for the future life. As Jude shares, we should have compassion on some and show mercy to many.

Luther asserts that there are those that bear witness on earth: the Spirit, the water, and the blood, and these are one. In baptism there is the blood and the Spirit. In baptism with water, the blood of Christ is sprinkled through the Word. In the church these are accepted as one testimony. Through the Word there is daily immersion and a perpetual baptism and a perpetual shedding of the blood of Christ and of the Holy Spirit, and a continual cleansing from sin.

Luther fully accepts the three historic creeds—the Apostles Creed, the Nicene Creed, and the Athanasian Creed—believing that each fully conforms to Scripture. Luther praises the Apostles Creed as “the fruit of all, a brief and true summary of the articles of faith.” He values the Athanasian Creed as a creed that gives protection to the Apostles Creed. Luther’s theology is a commentary on the Scriptures and the Creeds. Luther’s theology is the theology of the cross.

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64Luther, “Lectures on the First Peter” (1523), in LW 30:182.

7Ibid., 316.

8Ibid.

Luther is well aware of the Christian community or the community of faith. The believer needs the faith of others. The Christian must believe for himself, but the Christian community can help remove his sense of loneliness. He means that each of us must die his own death and that some may feel completely alone. The church, too, is the community of saints.

The church’s authority, according to Luther, always stands beneath the Word of God. It is not the church which authorizes Scripture, but rather it is Scripture which validates the church. Scripture must interpret itself, interpreted in its simple literal sense.\(^{10}\) Since Jesus and the apostles argued on the basis of Scripture, it must certainly be clear. God’s Word cannot exist without His people. God’s people cannot exist without His Word.

Luther fully believes that the church anxiously awaits the last day when Christ will come again and destroy the power of the devil.

Christians still remain subject to the attacks of Satan. Christ in this regard must fight the battle as well upon Him. The cross of Christ has defeated the tyrants. Faith in Christ set men free from demonic power. So the believer is righteous and a sinner at the very same time. He is righteous through the forgiveness of sin, but he is a sinner as he exists as a human being.\(^{11}\)

Luther fully loved the church. For Luther, the church is a fortress, a castle, and his chamber. Whoever would find Christ must also find the Church. He must observe

\(^{10}\)“Scriptura sui ipsius interpres,” Luther, “That These Words of Christ, ‘This Is My body,’ etc., Still Stand Firm Against the Fanatics” (1527), in LW 37:17.

\(^{11}\)Luther, A Commentary on St. Paul’s Epistle to the Galatians, 185-195.
what the true church teaches, prays, and believes.

The Christian obedience to the church must take the form of obedience to Christ. The official and servant church are identical and are the same at the point of the Gospel, the sacraments, and the office of the keys. The preached word is given to all in general, while the sacrament is given to the individual.

Christ lives in and through His community of faith. Luther, in fact, calls believers to be “little Christs” one to another. All of this defines the church as a “Communion of Saints” even as it is defined in the Apostles Creed. Luther really prefers the word “community” to the word “church” because this directly refers to all believers. The church is the community or “holy people of God.”

The community of saints also expresses a loving give-and-take relationship and a sharing community. Goods and suffering are shared in common. No one possesses anything, which is his own. Each Christian is called upon to actively bear the burden and suffering of others. Each Christian is called to defend, act, and pray. Each Christian should work for the renewal of the church and intercede before God and man. We are to be transformed by the love of Christ. Luther believes that every man was created and born for the sake of the other. Luther also condemns selfish Christians.

When the community of faith gathers to receive His body and blood, faith must preside over reason as the real presence of Christ is experienced in the communion meal. The worshiper must accept what Christ offers, His presence, and His forgiveness. There

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14Luther, “Lectures in Genesis; Chapters 1-5” (1536), in LW 1:165.
is one communion and it is called holy because of the ministry of the Holy Spirit. It is
catholic because the church is composed of all members scattered and in all times and
places. The church is apostolic, resting upon the faith of the apostles. Only those
belonging to this communion are certain of their salvation. To this communion is given
the promise that it shall endure for all time. This communion cannot fail because the
Word of God is eternal truth. The church is comprised of all visible and invisible
believers.\textsuperscript{15}

Luther believes that Christ, by going Himself up to death, has made a
congregation of the redeemed possible.\textsuperscript{16} These members are intimately joined together
by a common faith and reciprocal love. All make up a single great community of faith or
community of saints. Even though separated by space and time, all have the same faith
and hope in Christ.

“The church is where the pure preaching of the divine Word and the proper
administration of the Sacraments are, therefore, the marks by which we may recognize
the church as a true one.”\textsuperscript{17}

The church is also the inn and the infirmary for those who are sick and in need of
being made well.\textsuperscript{18}

Christ shall judge the household of faith and shall come for the righteous. There

\textsuperscript{15}Althaus, \textit{The Theology of Martin Luther}, 297, 298.

\textsuperscript{16}Heinrich Schmid, \textit{Doctrinal Theology of the Evangelical Lutheran Church}
(Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg, 1899), 582-584.

\textsuperscript{17}Ibid., 585.

\textsuperscript{18}Luther, “Lectures on Romans” (1516), in LW 25:263.
shall be a resurrection of the righteous and they shall be with the Lord forever.

Adventists on the Church

Seventh-day Adventists believe:

The Church is the community of believers who confess Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior. In continuity with the people of God in Old Testament times, we are called out from the world; and we join together for worship, for fellowship, for instruction in the Word, for the celebration of the Lord’s Supper, for service to mankind, and for the worldwide proclamation of the gospel. The Church derives its authority from Christ, who is the incarnate Word, and from the Scriptures which are the written Word. The church is God’s family; adopted by Him as children, its members live on the basis of the new covenant. The church is the body of Christ, a community of faith of which Christ Himself is the Head. The church is the bride for whom Christ died that He might sanctify and cleanse her. At His return in triumph, He will present her to Himself a glorious church, the faithful of all the ages, the purchase of His blood, not having a spot of wrinkle, but holy and without blemish. Fundamental Belief 11.19

Jesus Christ used the image of the rock when referring to the church. Matt 16:18 declares, “On this rock I will build My church, and the gates of hades shall not prevail against it.” So the Christian church was established on Himself, on the Living Rock. Nothing could prevail against the church.

Thank God that the church was not founded on the disciples, but on Jesus Christ, the Rock of Ages. Nothing could destroy the church nor keep it from leading men and women to the Lord Jesus (cf., Ezek 47:1-12; John 7:37, 38; Rev 22:1-5).

The Greek word for church, ekklesia, means “a calling out.” In the Old Testament the Hebrew qahal means “gathering,” “assembly,” or “congregation” (Deut 9:10; 18:16; 1 Sam 17:47; 1 Kgs 8:14; 1 Chr 13:2).

The use of the word “church” was broadened in the New Testament. Examples are as follows:

19Seventh-day Adventists Believe, 134.
1. Believers assembled for worship in a specific place (1 Cor 11:18; 14:19, 28)

2. Believers living in a certain locality (1 Cor 16:1; Gal 1:2; 1 Thess 2:14)

3. A group of believers in the house of an individual (1 Cor 16:19; Col 4:15)

4. A group of congregations in a given geographical area (Acts 9:31)

5. The whole body of believers throughout the world (Mark 16:18; 1 Cor 10:32; 12:28; Eph 4:11-16)

6. The whole faithful creation in heaven and on earth (Eph 1:20-22; Phil 2:9-11).

The church is a divine institution called “the Church of God” (Acts 20:28; 1 Cor 1:2). The church has been given divine authority by Jesus (Matt 18:17-18). When Israel was brought out of Egypt, she was called “the church in the wilderness” (Acts 7:38). The members were called “a kingdom of priests and a holy nation” (Exod 9:5), “God’s holy people” (Deut 28:9; Lev 26:12)—His church. God called Israel out of bondage so that they would call other nations into the freedom of the Gospel (Isa 56:7).

In Romans 11:17-25 Paul speaks of the Gentiles who accept Christ as branches from the wild olive tree grafted into the good tree. As disciples come from all nations, that is the dynamic that happens.

Metaphoric Description of the Church

1. The Church as a Body. All believers are reconciled “to God in one body” (Eph 2:16). Through the Holy Spirit the believer is “baptized into one body” (1 Cor 12:13). The Church is Christ’s body (Eph 1:23). Believers are members of His body (Eph 5:30). Christ is the head of the body (Col 1:18). Christ is the head of the church

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20Seventh-day Adventists Believe, 137.
(Eph 5:23). Each member of the body is given at least one spiritual gift.  

2. The Church as a Temple. The church is “God’s building,” “the temple of God.” Jesus Christ is the foundation and chief cornerstone (1 Cor 3:9-16; Eph 2:20). Believers are “living stones” that make up a “spiritual house” (1 Pet 2:4-6). Now living stones are being added to the temple that is “being built together to become a dwelling in which God lives by His Spirit” (Eph 2:22). Paul urges believers to use the best building materials so that we will pass the fiery test at the Day of Judgment (1 Cor 3:12-15). “If anyone defiles the temple of God, God will destroy him” (1 Cor 3:17). Paul also notes that close alliances with unbelievers are contrary to her holy character and should be avoided, “for what fellowship has righteousness with lawlessness?” (2 Cor 6:14). (His counsel pertains to both business and marriage relations.)

3. The Church as a Bride. The church is seen as a bride with Christ as the bridegroom. Hos 2:19 states, “The Lord solemnly pledges, ‘I will betroth you to Me forever; yes, I will betroth you to Me in righteousness and justice, in loving kindness, and mercy.’” And in John 3:14, “I am married to you.” I “present you as a chaste virgin to Christ” (2 Cor 11:2). Christ gave Himself for her (Eph 5:25). Christ gave His life “that He might sanctify and cleanse it with washing of water by the Word” (Eph 5:26). In preparing the church to be His bride—“a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but . . . holy and without blemish” (Eph 5:27). The church will be seen in all her splendor when Christ returns.

21Seventh-day Adventists Believe, 138.

22Ibid., 138, 139.

23Ibid., 139.
4. The Church as “Jerusalem Above.” Scripture calls the city of Jerusalem, Zion. Ps 9:11 states that God dwells there with His people. Salvation comes from Zion (Ps 14:7; 53:6). Zion will be the “joy of the whole earth” (Ps 48:2). The New Testament sees the church as the “Jerusalem Above,” the spiritual type of the earthly Jerusalem (Gal 4:26). Phil 3:20 clarifies that the citizens of this Jerusalem have their citizenship in heaven. Then these citizens are the “children of promise” (Gal 4:28, 29; 5:1). These saints “have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and church of the firstborn who are registered in heaven” (Heb 12:22-23).

5. The Church as a Family. Both the church in heaven and on earth are called a family (Eph 3:15). People join the family by adoption (Rom 8:14-16; Eph 1:4-6) and by new birth (John 3:8). The newly baptized are called children of the heavenly Father (Gal 3:26-4:7). They now belong to the “household of God” (Eph 2:19) or the “household of faith” (Gal 6:10). Members of His family address God as Father and they call each other brother and sister (Jas 2:15; 1 Cor 8:8; Rom 16:1). In 1 Cor 4:15 Paul remarks, “I became your father through the Gospel;” Paul refers to those he brought into the church as “my beloved children” (1 Cor 4:14; Eph 5:1).

The family experiences fellowship or koinonia in the Greek—“a fellowship in the Gospel” (Phil 1:5). Members give to one another “the right hand of fellowship” (Gal 2:9). There is fellowship with God the Father, Jesus, and the Holy Spirit (1 John 1:3; 1 Cor 1:9; 2 Cor 13:14) and with believers (1 John 1:3-7).

24Seventh-day Adventists Believe, 139, 140.
Here is a caring church where people are concerned one for the other. There is always a deep love and unity and a support one for another.  

6. The Church as the Pillar and Foundation of Truth. The church is “the pillar and foundation of truth” (1 Tim 3:15). All brothers and sisters will want to yield to this Scripture-based judgment, for “in the multitude of counselors there is safety” (Prov 11:14).

Jesus, in the Sermon on the Mount, speaks of the church as “the light of the world,” “a city that is set on a hill that cannot be hidden,” and the “salt of the earth” (Matt 5:13-15).

7. The Church as an Army—Militant and Triumphant. Eph 6:13 directs that believers must “take up the whole armor of God” in order to “withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand.” Thus, we are engaged in a spiritual battle against darkness. “We do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places” (Eph 6:12). The battle continues, for we are not yet the church triumphant. In the future, there will be tribulation and strife. Christ will deliver everyone who is found in the Book of Life (Dan 12:1). Matt 24:13 confirms that “he who endures to the end shall be saved.” It is at Christ’s return that the church triumphant will emerge. Christ will present to Himself a glorious church, “the faithful of

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25Seventh-day Adventists Believe, 140.
26Ibid.
27Ibid., 140, 141.
all ages, the purchase of His blood, not having spot or wrinkle, but holy without blemish” (Eph 5:27).  

Adventists speak of the church visible and invisible. The visible church is Christ’s church organized for ministry. The church carries the Gospel to the world (Matt 28:19-20) and prepares His followers for the glorious return of Jesus (1 Thess 5:23; Eph 5:27). Throughout the world the church ministers just like Jesus did. We are reminded of the ministry of Jesus as described in Luke 4:18-19:

The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me,  
Because He has anointed Me to preach  
the Gospel to the poor.  
He has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted.  
To preach deliverance to the captive  
And recovery of sight to the blind,  
To set at liberty those who are oppressed,  
To preach the acceptable year of the Lord.

The invisible church is compared to those people throughout the world who may not belong to a church organization, but have followed all the light Christ has given them (John 1:9). These responded to the Holy Spirit and “by nature to the things contained in the law of God” (Rom 2:14). Like Paul was converted, these, too, the Holy Spirit can lead into the visible church.

Organization of the Church

1. Church Membership Qualifications. When thoroughly taught, converts become members of the new community. They repent of their sin and accept Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior and they are baptized (Acts 2:36-41; 4:10-12). These, having

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28 *Seventh-day Adventists Believe*, 138-141.

29 Ibid., 141.
experienced the new birth, become disciples of the Lord Jesus and, in turn, disciple others (Matt 28:20).

Members relate to one another on an equal basis, not counting themselves better than another. Believers are to minister to the needs of others, leading others to Jesus.  

2. Priesthood of All Believers. The church has become “a holy priesthood” (1 Pet 2:5). Then see 1 Pet 2:9, “You are a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light.”

All of this means, too, that each is accountable to the others, and that we essentially believe the same thing.

3. Allegiance to God and State. Believers give allegiance to both God and state, being members of both kingdoms at the same time (Rom 13:4, 7). The Bible expects believers to obey civil authorities. God places leaders in civil authority. We are to give honor to whom honor is due.

Major Functions of the Church Organization

1. Worship. The church faithfully worships the Creator on the Sabbath. We are not “to forsake the assembling of ourselves together, . . . but exhorting one another, and so much the more as you see the Day approaching” (Heb 10:25; 3:13). The worshiper

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30Seventh-day Adventists Believe, 143.

31Ibid.

32Ibid.
finds rest, refreshment, encouragement, and joy in the Lord.\textsuperscript{33}

2. Fellowship. Christian fellowship brings full satisfaction as brothers and sisters in the faith relate in Christ (Phil 1:5). Here is fellowship with God and others in the faith (1 John 1:3, 6, 7).\textsuperscript{34}

3. Instruction in the Scriptures. Whether through home groups, Sabbath School, elective courses, prayer meeting, seminars, etc., we are to be instructed in the Scriptures. The Christian is to live “by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God” (Matt 4:4). Christians are to teach all nations “to observe all things that I have commanded you” (Matt 28:20).\textsuperscript{35}

4. Administering of Divine Ordinances. The church presides over the ordinance of baptism, entrance into church membership, the ordinance of foot washing, and the communion service.\textsuperscript{36}

5. Global Proclamation of the Gospel. The church must fulfill the work and mission that Israel failed to do. This means reaching the whole world with the everlasting Gospel and preparing the church for Christ’s return. We “witness to all nations (Matt 24:14), empowered by the baptism of the Holy Spirit.”\textsuperscript{37} The message involves preparing for Christ’s return.

\textsuperscript{33}Seventh-day Adventists Believe, 144.

\textsuperscript{34}Ibid.

\textsuperscript{35}Ibid.

\textsuperscript{36}Ibid.

\textsuperscript{37}Ibid., 144, 145.
Biblical Principles of Church Government

1. Christ is the head of the church.

Christ has been given “all authority” in “heaven and earth” (Matt 28:18). God has put “all things under His feet, and given Him to be head over all things to the church” (Eph 1:22; Phil 2:10, 11). Christ is “Lord of lords and King of kings” (Rev 17:14).

The church is His body (Eph 1:23). From Christ the church is nourished and fit together by joints and ligaments (Col 2:19). 38

2. Christ is the source of all its authority.

Christ demonstrates His authority in:

a. the establishment of the Christian church (Matt 16:18),

b. the instituting of ordinances administered by the church (Matt 26:26-30; 28:19, 20; 1 Cor 11:23-29; John 13:1-17),

c. the bestowing of the Holy Spirit to guide His church under His authority (John 15:26; 16:13-15),

d. the giving to the church special gifts, thereby allowing individuals to minister as apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors (shepherds), and teachers to prepare for service and to build up “the body of Christ” (Eph 4:7-13) till all experience unity in the faith and reflect “the Fullness of Christ.” 39

3. The Scriptures carry Christ’s authority.

“The Word of God is the sole standard by which the church operates. All

38 Seventh-day Adventists Believe, 145, 146.

39 Ibid., 146.
traditions, customs and practices are subject to the authority of the Scriptures” (2 Tim 3:15-17).\(^{40}\)

4. Christ’s Authority and the Officers of the Church.

These officers and leaders function as representatives of the people and their authority comes from Christ. The leaders are to carefully follow the biblical mandate for all of the proclamation of the Gospel and the administration of the church.\(^{41}\)

The New Testament Officers of the Church

The New Testament only mentions two church offices—that of elder and deacon. Very high moral and spiritual requirements are set forth for those who would fill these positions. Both of these leadership positions are recognized by ordination, the laying on of hands.

1. The Elders. The elders or bishops are the most important officers of the church. The term elder (Greek, *presbuteros*) means “older one”, indicating dignity and respect. Bishop (*episkopos*) means “overseer” (Acts 20:17, 28; Titus 1:5, 7). By these Scriptures we can see that Paul used these titles interchangeably. Elder was the title, while bishop reminded others of his responsibility. There were local elders and itinerant elders (1 Pet 5:1; John 1; 3 John 1).\(^{42}\)

To qualify for elder, a person must be “blameless, the husband of one wife, temperate, soberminded, of good behavior, hospitable, able to teach, not given to wine,  

\(^{40}\)Seventh-day Adventists Believe, 146.

\(^{41}\)Ibid.

\(^{42}\)Ibid., 146, 147.
not violent, not greedy for money, but gentle, not quarrelsome, not covetous, one who
rules his own house well, having his children in submission with all reverence (for if a
man does not know how to rule his own house, how will he take care of the church of
God?); not a novice, . . . he must have a good testimony among those who are outside
(1 Tim 3:1-7; Titus 1:5-9). Then Paul writes in 1 Tim 5:22, “Do not lay hands on anyone
hastily.”

The elder is first a spiritual leader. He is chosen “to shepherd the church of God”
(Acts 20:28), support weak members (Acts 20:3-5), admonish the wayward (1 Thess
5:12), be alert for any teachings that would create division (Acts 20:29-31). Elders must
model the Christian lifestyle (Heb 13:7; 1 Pet 5:3) and be an example of liberality (Acts
20:35).

We are to respect leaders of the church “to esteem them for their work’s sake”
(1 Thess 5:13). Paul says that the elders are “to be counted worthy of double honor,
especially those who labor in Word and doctrine (1 Tim 5:17). First Peter 5:5 teaches,
“Obey those who rule over you, and be submissive, for they watch out for your souls, as
those who must give account.” Heb 13:7 urges us to imitate their faith.

2. Deacons and Deaconesses. Deacon means servant or helper. Deacons, by
carrying out their responsibilities, allowed the apostles to give themselves to prayer and
ministry. They were to care for temporal affairs, but also evangelistic work (Acts 6:8;
8:5-13, 26-40). The feminine form is found in Rom 16:1 as deaconess or servant. This
office, too, is selected on moral and spiritual qualifications.

The Discipline of the Church

The church is called to discipline in the midst of calling forth a “holy priesthood”
and a “holy nation.” Christ commends the church of Ephesus “because He cannot bear those who are evil” (Rev 2:2). If a member fails to follow the wisdom of Christ’s church, he severs himself from the fellowship.

In dealing with public offences, Paul feels that flagrant and rebellious offences bring a reproach on the church. There is sometimes need to disfellowship, removing evil from the church and bringing redemption to the offender. Paul also admonishes, “Do not associate with anyone who calls himself a believer, but is sexually immoral, or greedy, an idolater or slanderer, a drunkard or a swindler . . . with such a man do not eat. . . . Expel the wicked man from among you” (1 Cor 5:11, 13).

A member who causes “division and offence” (Rom 16:17), “who walks disorderly,” and who refuses to obey biblical counsel should be avoided so that “he may be ashamed” of his attitude. Such a man should be admonished as a brother (2 Thess 3:6, 14, 15). If he refuses to listen to the second admonition, he should be rejected.

Church members should always be open to and ministering to bring the disfellowshiped back into the fold. Christ longs for all to be part of His family. He says, “I stand at the door and knock, If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and dine with him, and he with Me” (Rev 3:20).43

Adventists and Lutherans in Dialogue on Ecclesiology

Lutheran Perspective

Authority for preaching and teaching resides in God who has revealed Himself in Jesus Christ and who calls pastors and leaders to lead His church. Called leaders, like

43Seventh-day Adventists Believe, 148-149.
prophets of old, have a kind of charismatic authority.\textsuperscript{44} In the Lutheran context, the worshiping congregation gathers around the word and sacrament, and the Gospel is the authority of the community. Article 7 of the Augsburg Confession states that the church is “the assembly of all believers among whom the gospel is preached in its purity and the holy sacraments are administered according to the gospel.”

The church authority can be summed up as follows:

The gospel is the essence of authority in the church . . . \textit{sola fide} and \textit{sola gratia}. The Scriptures of the Old and New Testament are the documented basis of this authority—\textit{sola scriptura}. The Sacraments of Baptism and Communion are the external and visible signs of authority. The ministry has been instituted for the sake of teaching the Gospel and administering the sacraments. The ordained ministers are the public bearers of the authority of the Gospel. The Spirit is finally what creates faith and loyalty to the Gospel. Through the word and the sacraments, he is the acting agent of this authority.\textsuperscript{45}

\textbf{Sola Scriptura: Gospel and Canon}

The public reading and preaching of the Word play a significant role in Lutheran worship. The readings follow the ecclesiastical year from Advent to Ascension Day and Pentecost and then emphasizes the life of the church in the world in the period from Holy Trinity to Advent. There are three cycles of lectionary readings, one for each separate year.\textsuperscript{46}

Luther is strong on education in his \textit{Small Catechism}, containing five elements with exposition of the Ten Commandments, the faith as found in the Apostolic Creed, the Lord’s Prayer, Baptism, and Communion.

\textsuperscript{44}Lutherans and Adventists in Conversation, 150-165.

\textsuperscript{45}Ibid., 152.

\textsuperscript{46}Ibid., 153.
Martin Luther spoke of two uses of the Decalogue: a guide for civil life, and in revealing sin. Philip Melanchthon and others added a third use—a guide for Christian living.47

For Luther, the Sabbath could be any day, but he kept it on Sunday.

The ordination of women is accepted in a majority of Lutheran churches.48 In some Lutheran churches there has been a drive to accept a monogamous homosexual partnership as a valid form of cohabitation.49

Gospel and Confession

Lutheran churches are united in their adherence to the Apostles Creed, Nicene Creed, Athanasian Creed, Luther’s Small Catechism, and the Augsburg Confession. These only have their authority through the Holy Scripture.

Lutherans always want to define issues and concerns as they relate to the teachings of the Gospel and the administration of sacraments. Coming as a challenge to church authority are the following: female pastors, issues on homosexuality, questions relating to abortion, euthanasia, genetic engineering, ethical implications of the consumer society, and environmental concerns.50

Adventist Perspective

The Adventists reflect on the historic nature and origin of the church throughout

47Lutherans and Adventists in Conversation, 155.

48Ibid., 156.

49Ibid.

50Ibid.
the Old and New Testament. The writer cites a series of metaphors which relate to Christ—same as we emphasize in this chapter. The writer George W. Reid also shares the Adventist fundamental belief on the church cited in this chapter.51

The basic Adventist organization is the local congregation, governed by elders and deacons, working with conference-appointed pastors, move forward the work of the church. The conference works with the union office, and all relate as well to the General Conference office.

The Adventist commitment to the Scriptures is of such importance that it appears as the first fundamental belief. Adventists see the Old and New Testaments as a unit. The Ten Commandments and the Sermon on the Mount testify to one communication from God. Ellen White shared that the Bible points to God as the author, with each book written by human hands. Adventists accept the biblical account of creation and the world-wide flood and show that these were accepted by the prophets, apostles, and Christ Himself.

Adventists believe that the Holy Spirit gives special gifts to Christians for the leadership of the church—from the equipment of the saints for the work of ministry, for the building up of the body of Christ. Adventists accept Ellen White as one having the authentic gift of prophecy. Ellen White affirms that it is the Bible only that forms the standard for all doctrine and reforms. Adventists believe themselves to be the remnant church, called to proclaim the Three Angels Message and prepare the world and the church for the second coming of Christ.

Summary

Luther fully believes that the Holy Spirit, through the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, founded the church for the preaching and teaching of His Word and the administration of the sacraments. He sees the church as the conduit of our faith. Luther also sees the church as the community of faith by which we minister in the gifts of the Spirit until Jesus comes for His church. The church receives her authority from Christ Himself and He calls pastors and leaders who are ordained and dedicated along with the priesthood of all believers to lead the church to know Christ throughout the world.

Adventists receive their biblical mandate from Christ Himself to reach the whole world with the global message to prepare for the coming of Christ. Adventists come across with a strong hope and rejoice in the salvation message. They strongly believe in the writings of Ellen White, who was gifted with the gift of prophecy and pointed all to Jesus Christ. Adventists are quite serious about the Word of God and believe themselves to be the remnant church. Adventists believe that the authority of Christ is vested in His church. Adventists clearly believe that the Lord called them in these last days to bring the everlasting Gospel to the world.
CHAPTER 8

ESCHATOLOGY—THE LAST DAY AND THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST

Introduction

To grasp Luther’s understanding of eschatology, the reader must go to his sermons on the eschatological passages of Holy Scripture. Luther preached these sermons over a period of twenty years, thus offering the reader a picture of the development of his ideas on the last day and the end of the world. These sermons do not represent all of Luther’s views on last things, but they are a good starting point. The rest are to be found in passages scattered throughout his writings.

The Last Day

The matter of the last day was, for Luther, as he phrases it:

Especially since the apostles themselves prophesied that in those latter days many mockers would arise in Christianity who would ridicule our belief and the article pertaining to the last day, the resurrection, the future life, and who would surely deride us as the biggest fools to hope for this, and to suffer every peril and because of it, such as we already see comes to pass.1

Luther could recall the time in his life when he was converted, a time when he did not know Christ. Concerning the last day, he would much rather have heard all the devils

1Luther’s Works, “Commentary on First Corinthians 15” (1523), in LW 28:60.
in hell than about the last day. He acknowledges that his hair stood on end when he thought of it. The whole world, too, he believes, was loath to relinquish their life and to die and was frightened when the subject turns to death and yonder life. He holds, too, that human beings are submerged in the mire of their holiness and that they are of the opinion that they might silence God’s judgment and merit heaven with their life and work. Human beings become ever more adverse and hostile to the last day. Then Luther goes on to express:

For us, however, it is pure joy, because we hear that our greatest treasure, over which we rejoice, is already in heaven above, and that only the most insignificant part remains behind; and that He will awaken this too, and draw it after him as easily as a person awakes from sleep. . . . Their lot will be everlasting lamentation, but we will rejoice eternally. For since Christ is to be judge both of the good and the evil, they too will have to come forth on that Day to receive their judgment and their punishment for whatever they perpetuated in their impenitent and devilish malice against Christ and us.²

Luther affirms, in reference to that day, that the believer must believe it today without seeing it, especially since a believer knows that Christ had already arisen as the Head and the First Fruits of them that slept. Meanwhile, the church is required to wait for the time when believers too shall follow Him.

The reformer believes that Christ must complete His kingdom and not annihilate His enemies before He has brought all into His kingdom who belong there. Only after that will Christ destroy everything at one time. Meanwhile, Christ lets the Word be preached, and He is able to govern the Christian Church with Word, Sacrament, Faith, and the Holy Spirit amid His enemies who continue to oppress and harass us. In the midst of all this, Luther holds that Christ preserves and protects the church against these

²¹Luther’s Works, “Commentary on First Corinthians 15” (1523), in LW 28:115.
enemies with the sure conclusion that He will put them completely under His feet on that day. Luther sees Christ as the believer’s valiant warrior, striking the factions for us spiritually, repelling the devil, dethroning tyrants, subduing the raging of the world, and depriving sin and death of their strength and might. Christ pursues His work daily until the last day. But clear understanding is given that on the last day Christ will put an end to everyone at one time.

In still another reference, Christ is described as sitting at the right hand of the Father and occupying the office in which He battles death and the devil for all of Christendom as He has already done for His own person. For the believer, this work of Christ is already activated and it continues until the last day. In this sense, Luther taught that a Christian is already more than halfway out of death. In the world, people are destined for death. Knowing all of this that Christ is doing, the Christian awaits the resurrection with joy.

Luther feels that it is scripturally sound to believe that everything must be subject to Christ who has subjected all things under Him until the last day. Then Christ will abolish all of this and subject Himself with His entire kingdom to the Father and say to Him, “Until now I reigned with you by faith. This I deliver to you, that they may see that I am with you and you in Me, joined together with the Holy Spirit in one divine Majesty, 

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3 *Luther’s Works*, “Commentary on First Corinthians 15” (1523), in LW 28:129.
4 Ibid.
5 Ibid.
6 Ibid., 132.
7 Ibid., 141.
and that they have and enjoy visibly in you what they hitherto believed and looked forward to.”

In this reflection, Luther was reminded of the triumphant way in which the dead are escorted to the grave with honor. He thought of how the priest walks behind the corpse, sings and prays in profession and token of the belief that these same dead and believers with them will rise on the last day.\(^8\) The resurrected will look forward to these recognizable bodies, though changed and glorified.

This special hope serves to warm their hearts to the idea of forgetting this temporal life, but human beings cling to it as though they want to remain here forever. The Christian is one who comforts and delights himself with the lofty and inexpressible treasure to be received.\(^9\) He clarifies that sin and weakness are not a part of the life to come. What must perish is all the evil derived from flesh and blood. “On that Day we will be completely new and pure in body and soul.”\(^10\)

The reformer feels that the world was running in such a determined way to its end that the last day could come before the Holy Scriptures are completely translated from Latin to German.\(^11\) Luther believes that there was nothing yet that needed to be fulfilled in this life. The Roman Empire had passed. The Turkish Empire had reached its highest

\(^8\) \textit{Luther's Works}, “Commentary on First Corinthians 15” (1523), in LW 28:141.

\(^9\) Ibid., 151.

\(^10\) Ibid., 191.

\(^11\) Ibid., 190.

\(^12\) Ibid.
point. The pomp of the papacy had certainly fallen away.\(^{13}\) All this reminds Luther of a light about to go out, a light that once burned so brightly. But he expresses gratitude that Christendom at least has the light of the Gospel.

In some correspondence of Luther, his thoughts on the last day can be seen. Here is his actual wording:

Moreover all prophets in and out of the Bible write that after this time, namely, after the present year of 1530, things will go well again. That which they so rightly point to and prophesy will be, I hope, the last day, which will free us from all evil and help us to everlasting joy. So I reckon this epoch of the Gospel light is none other than the time in which God shortens and restrains tribulation by means of the Gospel, as Christ says in Matthew XXIV: “If the Lord shortened not these days, no Men would be saved.” For if the world had to stand longer as it hitherto stood, the whole world would become Mohammedan or skeptical, and no Christian would be left, as Christ says (Luke 18:8), “When the Son of man cometh, shall He find faith on the earth?” And, in fact, there was no more right understanding nor doctrine in the Christian faith present, but mere error, darkness and superstition with the innumerable multitude.\(^{14}\)

**End of the World**

Luther writes that Peter calls the era from Christ’s ascension to the last day as the end of all times.\(^{15}\) I believe that this is essentially what Luther means to express when he speaks of the end of the world.

The reformer fully believes that the end of the world is not far away, considering what little time remained. He contemplates 2 Pet 3:8, “With the Lord one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day.” Then he declares, “The end of the

\(^{13}\)Luther, “Preface to the Book of Revelation” (1546), in LW 35:406; see also Althaus, *The Theology of Martin Luther*, 421-423.


\(^{15}\)Luther, “Sermons on the First Epistle of St. Peter” (1522), in LW 30:38.
times is already at hand.” Salvation has already been revealed and completed, but he feels that God permits the world to continue to stand in order that His name may be honored and praised more widely, even though in His own eyes it has already been revealed most perfectly.

Luther feels that we can praise God, having arrived at the point where the enemy has practically no more teeth and where he has lost his sword. The enemy has already almost devoured the world. Then he writes:

[The enemy] had killed the larger part of the human race, the head, the Christ, the belly and the legs, almost the feet too. For today we are no more than the last toes of the great image of which Daniel speaks in chapter 7 [chapter 2, Luther made lapsus here]. For the four monarchies or empires are already past history, and all the prophets and fathers and Christ Himself with His apostles and saints are all gone. In brief, the largest part of the entire body of Christendom and, in addition, the greatest and weakest princes and lords and kings are gone, so that only the last little drink remains to be taken, and it is only a short leap to the end.

Luther states that most of the harvest has been gathered. Death, he feels, has almost completed her slaughter and has almost finished her reign.

The hour will strike when believers are to rise and follow Him; all is accomplished, and the end to which Scripture points is at hand. Before long, all the believer knows of earthly life will cease, the devil’s rule will come to an end, and that which all the saints have desired and waited for since the beginning of the world will be ushered in. “This is the time when God Himself will be Lord alone and rule alone in us, His children. To this rule there will be no end.” Melanchthon once said to Luther, “Our

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\item \textsuperscript{16}Luther, “Sermons on the First Epistle of St. Peter” (1522), in LW 30:38.
\item \textsuperscript{17}Luther, “Commentary on 1 Corinthians 15,” in LW 28:119.
\item \textsuperscript{18}Ibid., 123.
\end{itemize}
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empire will live till 1548.” Luther replied, “The world won’t last so long, for Ezekiel says it won’t. . . . The end is at hand, at the very threshold. Let him who will do anything begin it betimes.”

“All of this,” declares Luther, “is our consolation, and it was done for our benefit, that Christ did not strike down His enemies immediately a thousand years ago. He postponed this until we should appear.” Not all who belong to His kingdom have been born yet. Christ Jesus must reign in order to gather all the children of God, as the Scripture declares elsewhere.

The Time of Christ’s Coming

In discussing Luther and eschatology, Luther gives high priority to the second coming of Christ. The objective of his teaching and preaching was to prepare the believer for Christ’s triumphant advent. He states, “Whatever we teach, appoint or establish, is done to the end that the pious may look forward to the coming of their Savior on the Last Day.”

The reformer gives three reasons for emphasizing the second coming of Christ. First, he feels that, as the believers reflected upon the second advent of Christ, there would be a purifying effect on their lives. As there would be a time of preparation, the

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19 Preserved Smith and Herbert P. Gallinger, eds., *Conversations with Luther* (Boston, MA: The Pilgrim Press, 1915), 229.


result would be Christians called to holy living. The church would be like a bride preparing herself for the bridegroom.  

Second, Luther believes in the two-kingdom theory. Christians are members of two kingdoms at the same time—the kingdom of this world and the kingdom of heaven. He feels that if the believers have a strong hope in Christ’s advent that would make them even better citizens of this world. The church would now have a reason for living.  

Third, the genuine hope of Christ’s return would also bring joy and happiness to the believers in this life. Luther observes people in Germany who knew only too well the sorrow and suffering that this life could bring. Christians would know that whatever they needed to suffer, it would only be in this life.  

In keeping with the Scriptures, that no man knows the day nor the hour of Christ’s appearing, Luther never set a particular day or year for the time of Christ’s coming. Christians are to be in a mode of expectation as they await the most joyful day of their lives.

While Luther was against any particular date and year being set, he nevertheless felt that the time of Christ’s coming was near at hand. Regardless of the reference concerning the nearness of Christ’s coming, it becomes quite clear that Luther believes that Christ’s second coming was imminent.  

22Luther, “Preface to the Book of Revelation” (1546), in LW 35:409.

23See William Wright, Martin Luther’s Understanding of Two Kingdoms (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2010), 79-147.


25Luther, “Lectures on Isaiah; Chapters 1-39” (1527), in LW 16:46.
By 1520, Luther expresses the hope that the judgment day might not long be delayed. “It is so much like that now that I verily believe the judgment day is at the door, though men are thinking least of all about it.”

Two years later, in 1522, when he left the castle at Wartburg, Luther appeared again in his pulpit at Wittenberg. In clear, ringing sincerity he declared, “I do not wish to force anyone to believe as I do; neither will I permit anyone to deny me the right to believe that the last day is near at hand.”

In the midst of the translation of the prophet Habakkuk, in the year 1525, he wrote in the preface, “Habakkuk is a prophet of comfort, who is to strengthen and support the people and prevent them from despairing of the coming of Christ, however strangely things may go.” He described further the team ministry toward believers by saying, “In like manner we must support Christians in anticipation of the last day.”

In the years 1528-1530 Luther centers even more on the second coming of Christ. The Turks were ever widening their hold and all Christendom was living in fear. Luther is even more convinced that the coming of Christ is very near at hand. While working on the prophetic book of Daniel, he states that the little horn of Dan 7:8 points directly at the pope. He reports that the pope is a liar and the Turk is a murderer. He believes that

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28Luther, “Preface to the Prophet Habakkuk” (1526), in LW 35:327.

29Luther, “Lectures on Genesis; Chapters 31-37” (1539), in LW 6:432.

only the return of Christ would defeat the Turk.\textsuperscript{31} When he did receive the message of the defeat of the Turks, he responded by saying that the Turk would fight against the believers until the judgment shall come.\textsuperscript{32} His thoughts are so much on this subject that he publishes the book of Daniel before some other books in the Old Testament. He longed for this book to be read by every Christian.\textsuperscript{33}

By 1531 Luther is so filled with the strong conviction that Christ would return soon. He used Titus 2:13 and says that Christians must look for that blessed hope and the glorious appearance of the great God and our Savior Jesus Christ. He urged Christians to endure and be steadfast.

In the last seven years of Luther’s life (1539-1546), there are indicators that he still believed in the nearness of the second coming. In these years he discussed Matthew 24 at great length and concluded, “In as much as the signs have been fulfilled, the trumpet will also sound and the day will not be delayed.”\textsuperscript{34}

Julius Kostlin, in writing about the last years of Luther’s life, reached the following conclusion concerning Luther’s hope:

His confident belief in the near approach of the last day, when the Lord would solve all these earthly doubts and difficulties, and manifest Himself in the perfect glory and bliss of His kingdom, remained in him unaltered from the beginning of his struggle to

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\textsuperscript{31}Luther, “Heerpredigt Wider dem Türken,” in J. G. Walch, \textit{Sämtliche Schriften}, 23 vols. (St Louis, MO: Concordia, 1890-1910), 20:2157, 2160. See also Luther, “Table Talk 3055a,” in WA Tr 3:158.

\textsuperscript{32}Luther, “Preface to the Prophet Daniel” (1530), in \textit{Luther’s Works}, 35:315.


\textsuperscript{34}Luther, “Auslegung über die Evangelisten Johannes” (1532, 1537), in Walch, \textit{Sämtliche Schriften}, 7:1367.
\end{flushright}
the end of his labors. We recognize in this belief the intensity of his own longings, wrestlings, and strivings for this end as also the sincerity of his own convictions.  

**Signs of Christ’s Coming**

Such an event as Christ’s advent would certainly have great signs. In his sermon on Matt 24:15-28, in 1537, Luther says that Matthew tells of tribulation preceding Christ’s coming and the end of the world, and that Jerusalem would be destroyed. But Luther prefers Luke 17 and 21, for he feels that Luke describes the signs of Christ’s coming more clearly (1522). The areas that follow form, for Luther, the signs of Christ’s coming:

1. **Unbelief and Indifference.** Luther bases this sign, unbelief and indifference, on prophecies of Christ and the apostles. He sees all about him much unbelief and indifference. People would blaspheme and mock God’s Word even though they knew it was God’s Word and truth.

2. **Excessive Eating and Drinking.** A further prevailing sign was excessive eating and drinking. He infers from Christ’s words that the end-time people would indulge excessively in gluttony and drunkenness and cares of this life. It would be like the days before the global flood in the time of Noah. This eating and drinking was so bad among the German people that he feels it was a sure sign of the approaching judgment day.

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36Luther, “Auslegung die Evangelisten Johannes…,” 1367.


38Ibid., 42.
3. Anti-Christ. Luther clearly saw the anti-Christ as an indication of the nearness of Christ’s return. He believes that the anti-Christ has appeared in both the pope of Rome and the Turk. This may sound confusing to the reader, but Luther spoke of the spirit of the anti-Christ as the pope with his flesh being the Turk; the pope has infected the church spiritually, the Turk bodily, but both come from the devil.\(^{39}\) Luther, however, pays more attention to the pope. He feels that tribulation already came upon the believers through the pope.\(^{40}\)

4. Spreading of the Gospel. A further sign of Christ’s second coming is the spread of the Gospel. He feels that at the time of the apostles the Gospel had already gone forth into the regions most favorable to its population. He did not believe that the whole world would become Christian; this understanding of the whole world becoming Christian was a falsehood promoted by Satan. When Christ does come, Luther believes that there would be a small flock of believers.\(^{41}\)

5. Achievements of the Human Mind. There are, Luther feels, many achievements of the human mind. He knows that there has been no period of human history compared to his. It was Luther’s opinion that there had never been so much building and planting in the world—business enterprises, the invention of the printing press, expensive clothing, firearms, and implements of war. The Renaissance had

\(^{39}\)Luther, “Lectures on Genesis; Chapters 6-14” (1536), in LW 2:181.

\(^{40}\)Ibid., 181-189; see especially M. Luther, “Treatise versus Ambrosius Catharinus” (1524), in Walch, Sämmtliche Schriften (1910), 18:1434-1441.

\(^{41}\)Luther, “The Sermon on the Second Sunday in Advent” (1522), 42, 43.
brought many changes. Many were studying Latin and Greek and the liberal arts with a general renewal of the outlook on life.\textsuperscript{42}

A new economic revolution took place, medieval feudal corporations and guilds vanished. There was more desire for leisure and ease moving into moral degeneration. Preserved Smith best represents the historic view on Luther’s era. Smith writes, “During Luther’s lifetime the world passed through a transition such as men have rarely, if ever, passed through in an equal period before or since.”\textsuperscript{43}

6. Signs in the Sun, Moon, and Stars. Luther studies Luke 21:25 and knows that there are to be signs in nature, namely, the darkening of the sun and the moon, and the falling of stars. He comes to understand that the darkening of the sun and the moon, of which Christ spoke, would be fulfilled through eclipses. This was happening more frequently in his lifetime. Very frequently he would see the falling of the stars.\textsuperscript{44}

7. The Powers of Heaven Shaken. Luke 21:26 speaks of the powers of the heaven being shaken. Luther felt that this fulfillment might come about through conjunction of the planets expected to occur in 1524.\textsuperscript{45}

8. Distress of Nations. Luther admits that there had always been distress of nations, but he sees all the world conditions of his day as ones which should prepare the believer for the approaching judgment.\textsuperscript{46}

\textsuperscript{42}Luther, “The Sermon on the Second Sunday in Advent” (1522), 43.


\textsuperscript{44}Luther, “The Sermon on the Second Sunday in Advent” (1522), 45-48.

\textsuperscript{45}Ibid., 50, 51.

9. Other Signs. Frequent storms at sea, Luther feels, are fulfilling Luke 21:25b, with storms more frequent and severe. Other phenomena regarded as signs by Luther were earthquakes, famines, pestilences, and wars. He feels that wars in his day made former wars look like child’s play.47

The Nature of Christ’s Coming

Concerning the nature of Christ’s coming, Luther emphasizes that it will be a bodily coming in great power and glory, and the hosts of heaven will accompany Him.48 Christ will be made manifest to all creatures. While His first coming took place in humility, His second coming will be a glorious appearing. Presently, the believer can see Christ by faith in the Gospel. At the last day, Christ will be seen in all His greatness and majesty.

The Resurrection

The reformer believes that there will be a general resurrection of the just and the unjust, all of which is to take place at the last day.49 The dead will rise together, those in Christ to everlasting life, and all others to everlasting damnation. Luther has a vivid picture of Christ’s second advent. Christ will descend with a shout, with a voice of the archangel and with the trumpet of God, as Paul describes in 1 Thess 4:13-18. After all of this, those who are still alive will be changed and caught up together with the Lord.

47Luther, “The Sermon on the Second Sunday in Advent” (1522), 52.
48Ibid, 52, 53.
Luther pictures Christ engaging in the final judgment at the general resurrection. According to Luther, all people will have to stand before Him. The judgment will separate the righteous and the wicked. The basis of the judgment will be the attitude human beings have assumed with regard to the Gospel and Christ during their lifetime.\(^{50}\)

For the believer, the final judgment is a joy and special comfort. Indeed, to the believer, Christ will be a Brother and Protector.\(^{51}\)

Luther believes that the renewed earth will become the inheritance of the saints. It will be for the redeemed of God a new paradise, an eternal home for the people of God. The righteous, he believes, will see Christ face-to-face in this everlasting kingdom. In the new kingdom there will be restored all that Satan destroyed in the beginning. Our transformed body will no longer be liable to change, weakness, or suffering. The transformed will enjoy blessedness in God. The righteous will be able to travel quickly from place to place just like the risen Savior.

The wicked will be excluded from the glorious kingdom. Luther declares that the future punishment of the wicked would be eternal.\(^{52}\) Luther described hell as a place of fire and darkness into which the wicked are cast and endure terrible torments. There are other times in which Luther said that the wicked are only punished with their conscience. It could be concluded that Luther did not have a well-developed doctrine on the final destruction of the wicked.

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\(^{50}\)Luther, “Lectures in Galatians,” in LW 26:21, 22.

\(^{51}\)Luther, Predigt: “In der hohen Schriftmesse” (1527), in Walch, \textit{Sämtliche Schriften}, 11:2057.

Adventists on Eschatology

The Last Day

In Seventh-day Adventist theology the first phase of the final judgment begins the last day. “In this classic portrayal of judgment day in heaven, both Ancient of days and Son of man ‘comes’ to a new place in heaven for judgment. The context locates the judgment later than 1260 year-days of the little horn, but prior to the second advent.” This first phase of the final judgment hour comes to be called the investigative judgment. It commenced after the cleansing of the 1260 year-days of Dan 7, coincidental with the terminating in 1844 of the “2300 evenings-mornings” of Daniel 8 when Jesus entered triumphantly into the inner area of the heavenly sanctuary.

Going on since 1844, this judging process has been one of opening before angels and other intelligent beings the records of all the “professed people of God” recorded in the book of life. William Miller, founder of the American awakening, was the first to relate the judgment to the concluding 2300 days. He concluded that this is the time for the judgment scene. He began to preach, “The hour of His judgment has come.” He gradually concluded that the whole church would be cleansed. Josiah Litch was the first American Adventist to teach that the judgment must precede the second coming. Joseph Bates believed that a pre-advent judgment or investigative judgment, as the term

54Ibid., 123.
55Dan 2:1; 7:11-12; Rev 13:8; White, The Great Controversy, 385, 400.
56Maxwell, 119.
was later published by James White, was taking place since 1844 where both the dead in Christ and the righteous living would be judged.

All the above, plus the elaborate evidence of prophecy fulfilled, confirm for the Adventist that indeed we are living in the last day and the end of the world.

The Time of Christ’s Coming

Adventists believe that

the second coming of Christ is the blessed hope of the church, the grand climax of the gospel. The Savior’s coming will be literal, visible, and world wide. When He returns, the righteous dead will be resurrected, and together with the righteous living, will be glorified and taken to heaven, but the unrighteous will die. The almost completed fulfillment of most lines of prophecy, together with the present condition of the world, indicates that Christ’s coming is imminent. The time of that event has not been revealed and we are therefore exhorted to be ready at all times.57

The certainty of the Second Advent is rooted in the trustworthiness of the Scriptures. John 14:3 gives us the promise of Jesus, “I will come again.” The second coming of Christ is foretold throughout all of Scripture. Jude 14, 15: “Behold the Lord comes with ten thousands of His saints, to execute judgment on all, to convince all who are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have committed in an ungodly way, and of all the harsh things which ungodly sinners have spoken against Him.”

Recall the prophecy of Ps 50:3-5, given one thousand years before the first coming of Christ: “Our God shall come, and shall not keep silent; a fire shall devour before Him, and it shall be very tempestuous all around Him, He shall call to the heavens from above, And to the earth, that He may judge His people: ‘Gather My saints together

57Fundamental Belief 24, Seventh-day Adventists Believe, 332.
to Me, Those who have made a covenant with Me by sacrifice.”

It is in the first advent of Christ where Christ was a decisive victor over sin and Satan (Col 2:15). But in His second coming Christ will end Satan’s dominion over this world.

Already in 1844, Christ had begun His ministry in the Most Holy Place (Rev 1:12, 13; 3:12; 4:1-5; 5:8; 7:15; 8:3; 11:1, 19; 14:15, 17; 15:5, 6, 8; 16:1, 17). Christ has begun His final ministry on behalf of sinners; this adds to the assurance that Christ desires to consummate all things.

Signs of Christ’s Coming

Christ stated that there would “be signs in the sun, in the moon, and in the stars” (Luke 21:25)—namely, that “the sun will be darkened and the moon will not give its light; the stars of heaven will fall, and the power in heaven will be shaken.” John also saw that a great earthquake would precede those signs in heaven. There would be signs in the natural world.

1. The witness of the earth. The largest known earthquake occurred on November 1, 1755—the Lisbon earthquake. The impact on property was tremendous. Many recognized this as a prophetic sign of the end.58

2. The witness of the sun and the moon. Twenty-five years later these things took place—the darkening of the sun and the moon. Christ had pointed out that this was to follow 1260 years of papal persecution (Matt 24:29). On May 19, 1780, darkness descended upon the northeastern part of the North American continent. The president of

58Seventh-day Adventists Believe, 339-340.
Yale University, Timothy Dwight, believed that, in a very general feeling, that nation felt that the Day of Judgment was at hand.\textsuperscript{59} Samuel Williams of Harvard stated that between 10:00 and 11:00 a.m. the darkness could not have been more complete.\textsuperscript{60}

3. The witness of the stars. Both Christ and John spoke about the falling of the stars (Matt 24:29; Rev 6:13). The meteoric showers of November 13, 1833,\textsuperscript{61} certainly fulfilled this prophecy—the most extensive displays on record.\textsuperscript{62} A single observer could see an average of 60,000 meteors per hour. This was observed from Canada to Mexico and from the mid-Atlantic to the Pacific. Many saw this as a fulfillment of Bible prophecy.\textsuperscript{63}

Christ gave these signs to alert believers to the nearness of His coming so that they would all the more live in expectation of His coming. Recall the words of Jesus as found in Luke 21:28-31:

\begin{quote}
Now when these things begin to happen, look up and lift up your heads, because your redemption draws near.
And He spoke to them a parable:
Look at the fig tree, and all the trees.
When they are already budding, you see and know for yourselves that summer in now near.
So you, likewise, when you see these things happening, know that the kingdom of God is near.
\end{quote}

This unique witness directed many toward the prophecies of the Second Advent.

\textsuperscript{59}Timothy Dwight, quoted in John W. Barber, comp., \textit{Connecticut Historical Collections}, 2nd ed. (New Haven, CT: Durrie & Peck and J. W. Barber, 1836); cited in Maxwell and Damsteegt, \textit{Source Book}, 316.

\textsuperscript{60}\textit{Seventh-day Adventists Believe}, 340.

\textsuperscript{61}Ibid.

\textsuperscript{62}Ibid.

Signs in the Religious World

There are any number of signs that will be seen in the religious world as we prepare for the second coming of Christ.

1. A great religious awakening. There will be a worldwide religious movement before the second advent—more about this later.64

2. The prophecies of Daniel would be unsealed (Dan 12:4).

3. The Gospel of the Kingdom would be preached in all the world (Matt 24:14).

4. There will also be a decline in true spirituality toward the end time (2 Tim 3:1-5).

In the last days perilous times will come: For men will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, unloving, unforgiving, slanderers, without self control, brutal, despisers of good, traitors, headstrong, haughty, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, having a form of godliness, but denying its power.

5. A resurgence of the papacy. Scriptures reveal that the deadly wound of the papacy would heal. Rev 13:3 reveals that the entire world marveled and followed the beast, so much so today that many believe the pope to be the spokesman for morality in the world. The rise of the papacy is aided by the fact that many Christians elevate the tradition and human standards above the authority of the Bible. Rev 16:13, 14; cf., 13:13, 14 explain that Satan will bring about a confederation of evil, symbolized by the unholy trinity of the dragon, the beast, and the false prophet.65

6. Decline of religious freedom. The religious liberty so valued by early settlers

64Seventh-day Adventists Believe, 341.

65Ibid., 343.
in America, guaranteed by the separation of church and state, will fade and at the last be abolished. The apostate power will force her power on all people. There will be financial coercion. Rev 13:17 tells us that only those who have the mark or the name of the beast, or the number of his name may buy or sell. Those who refuse to obey will face the death penalty. But in the final time of trouble, God will intervene for His people (Dan 12:1; cf. Rev 3:5; 20:15) and deliver those whose names are written in the book of life.

Increase of Wickedness

1. There will a surge in world crime. From all over the world crime has never been more rampant than today.66

2. Sexual revolution. There will be a surge of immorality. A sure disregard for God’s law leads to a breakdown in morals and modesty. Sex is marketed through films, television, videos, songs, magazines, and advertisements. There is a shocking rise in divorce, mate-swapping, the sexual abuse of children, an alarming number of abortions, widespread homosexuality, lesbianism, sexual diseases, and AIDS (Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome).67

War and Calamities

Before His return, Jesus said, “Nation will rise up against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. And there will be great earthquakes in various places, and famine and pestilences; and there will be fearful sights and great signs from heaven” (Luke 21:10,

66Seventh-day Adventists Believe, 334-344.

67Ibid., 344.
As the end draws to a climax, these calamities will intensify and become more frequent.

1. Wars. Never before have wars been so destructive and so global. World Wars I and II were terrible, but now we are dealing with global terror.

2. Natural disasters. Never have we seen so many devastating tornadoes, hurricanes, mudslides, fires, earthquakes, and tsunamis—so many profound weather changes.\(^{68}\)

3. Famines. So many people in the last 100 years have suffered from hunger and malnutrition. Unbelievable numbers of people have experienced starvation.\(^{69}\)

The Nature of Christ’s Coming

Christ’s second coming will be literal and personal. Acts 1:11 is the message given by two angels as the disciples were still gazing up into heaven at His ascension. “Men of Galilee, why do you stand gazing up into heaven? This same Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will so come in like manner as you have seen Him go into heaven.” His second advent will be a literal, visible, and personal return just like His departure.

We are not to be taken in by some other interpretation of His return. Rev 1:7 declares that Christ will come in the clouds and every eye will see Him. Matt 24:30 declares, “All the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory.”

\(^{68}\)Seventh-day Adventists Believe, 344.

\(^{69}\)Ibid., 344-345.
An Audible Return

There will be sound, “for the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God” (1 Thess 4:16). Matt 24:31 also speaks of a great sound of a trumpet. The great event is not veiled in secrecy.

A Glorious Return

Matt 16:27 clarifies that when Christ returns, He comes as a conqueror in power and “in the glory of His Father with His angels.” Rev 19:11-16 pictures Christ’s return as He rides on a white horse, leading the many armies of heaven.

It will be a sudden and unexpected return for the world in general. In 1 Thess 5:2, 3 it speaks of the day of the Lord coming like a thief in the night. This is not a secret coming, but unexpected, like a thief in the night.

The comparison is made to the time of Noah when people went about their everyday lives, giving little thought to the preaching of Noah and his message. They did not guess what would happen until judgment came upon them. Matt 24:38, 39 tells us that is how it will be at the coming of the Son of Man. Those who believed were saved, the others chose to stay outside the ark for safety and “the flood came and took them away.”

Here, too, is an earth-shocking event. The coming kingdom of Christ is not to exist at the same time with any human kingdom. Here is the stone kingdom, which crushes all nations. All this will be established when Christ at His second advent separates the righteous from the wicked (Matt 25:31-34). This stone kingdom will strike the image on its feet of iron and clay and should “break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms” leaving not a trace of them (Dan 2:34, 44, 35).
The Resurrection

Jesus promised that He was preparing a home for the redeemed (John 14:3). Jesus will come to gather all of the redeemed (Matt 24:31; 25:32-34; Mark 13:27). What an exciting time it will be when Christ comes again. Every believer from every age and regardless of age, gender, education, economic status, or race will participate in this grand advent gathering. Both the resurrection of the righteous dead and the translation of the living saints make this gathering possible.

The Resurrection of the Dead in Christ

When the trumpet sounds, the righteous dead will be raised incorruptible and immortal (1 Cor 15:52, 53). In 1 Thess 4:16 it clarifies that it is the dead in Christ who will rise first. The dead in Christ are raised before the living righteous and are caught up to be with the Lord. The saints are raised with new, immortal, perfect bodies, no longer marked by sin. The resurrected saints reflect the image of God in body, mind, and soul (1 Cor 15:42-54).

Living believers are translated at the second coming of Christ. It states in 1 Cor 15:53, “For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality.” Paul shares that the living and the transformed believers shall “be caught up together with the then resurrected believers in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air” (1 Thess 4:17; Heb 11:39, 40).

The Death of Unbelievers

To the lost, the Second Advent will be a devastating time. They will call upon the inanimate creation to shelter them (Rev 6:16, 17).
This is the time that God will destroy Babylon, the union of all apostate religion. “She will be burned with fire” (Rev 18:18). The leader, the lawless one, the Lord will consume with the breath of His mouth and destroy with the brightness of His coming (2 Thess 2:18). The power that enforces the mark of the beast will be cast into the lake of fire. The rest of the wicked will be killed with the sword, which proceeds from the Christ who sat on the white horse (Rev 19: 20, 21).

The Three Angels’ Messages

The placement of the Three Angels’ Message of Rev 14:6-12 is most interesting. This message stands between the threats of the antichrist in chapter 13 and the judgment scene of 14:14-20. Here is “God’s ultimatum to a world united in rebellion against the Lord:” 70

Then I saw another angel flying in midair, and he had the eternal gospel to proclaim to those who live on the earth—to every nation, tribe, language, and people. He said in a loud voice, “Fear God and give Him glory, because the hour of His judgment has come. Worship him who made the heavens, the earth, the sea and the springs of water (Rev 14:6-7).

This end-time warning originating from heaven is for the entire earth. Here by an angel flying in mid-air is the awakening message for the end. This message develops Christ’s earlier promise:

And this Gospel of the kingdom will be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come (Matt 24:14).

70 Hans LaRondelle, How to Understand the End-Time Prophecies of the Bible (Sarasota, FL: First Impression, 1997), 329-356.
This Gospel is called eternal because it is the unchanged Gospel of the apostles of Jesus. It is the same Gospel which Paul preached and wrote about. This Gospel cannot be altered or changed.

In this final proclamation, the whole world is prepared for judgment. To proclaim this threefold message is the church’s final mission. “The actual fulfilling of this mission is the greatest sign of all that the end-time has begun.”\(^7\) This world-wide preaching must take place.

Paul summarized the Gospel in 1 Cor 15:3-5. Here he writes of the atoning death, burial, and resurrection appearances of the risen Christ. Part of the Gospel is also the Day of Judgment. LaRondelle sees justification and judgment as investigation and consummation.

The First Angel’s Message

The first angel speaks in a loud voice, which means that all who dwell on earth will hear his message. All are to worship Him who made heaven and earth. Rev 14:7 and Exod 20:11 are parallel messages, which call everyone everywhere to honor the seventh-day Sabbath. Keeping the Sabbath of the Creator-Redeemer identifies the one true God. The Sabbath is not a Jewish day of worship in its whole understanding. Isa 66:22, 23 relates, “From one New Moon to another and from one Sabbath to another, all mankind will come and bow down before me.” Rev 15:4 declares, “All nations will come and worship you.” Here is a call to worship God, the Creator, in opposition to worship of the image, which invalidates the commandments of God. The image of the

\(^7\)LaRondelle, How to Understand the End-Time Prophecies, 331.
beast is an attempt by man to come against the Lord of Sabbath with a counterfeit (Rev 13:15-18).

Now added to all of this is a special message—“the hour of God’s judgment is come” (14:7). Even in Israel’s worship, God is the Judge because He is the Creator of all things:

but the Lord made the heavens . . .
Say among the nations, The Lord reigns
The world is firmly established, it cannot be moved;
he will judge the people with equity . . .
he comes to judge the earth.
He will judge the world in righteousness
and the peoples in His truth (Ps 96:5, 10, 13).

On the Day of Atonement, “it is proclaimed that Yahweh and sin have nothing in common.”72 The Jewish Encyclopedia reports the development of an investigative judgment in heaven: “The fate of the thoroughly wicked and the thoroughly pious is determined on the spot [on New-Year’s Day]; the destiny of the intermediate class is suspended until the Day of Atonement, when the fate of every man is sealed.”73 Salvation is based on being “in Christ,” by personal faith (Rom 5:1; 8:1).

The phrase “the hour of His judgment has come” functions as a “prophetic perfect.” Here is past tense to describe a future event. Ellen White states that the first of these warnings announces the approaching judgment.74 John uses the phrase “one like the Son of Man” which he adopts from Daniel 7:13. “The hour of God’s judgment has come” parallels Daniel’s vision when the court was seated and the books were opened”

72LaRondelle, How to Understand the End-Time Prophecies, 336.
73Ibid., 337.
74White, The Great Controversy, 311.
(Dan 7:9, 10). And from Dan 7:8-14 we can conclude that the judgment scene in heaven starts while the little horn is still active and thus precedes the end. The saints are maligned and condemned by the little horn, but the Ancient of Days pronounces judgment in favor of the saints of the Most High. The saints are assured that they will possess the kingdom.

Upon the activities of this end-time message, the final epoch of time began. God has begun the final phase of salvation history; He has begun the court session in heaven.

This new event in heaven of necessity must be proclaimed on earth. The analogy is found with the Day of Pentecost in Acts 2. From that day we find the apostles announced with boldness that Jesus of Nazareth was enthroned as King and Priest in the heavenly court (vv. 33, 36). As concerning evidence, they pointed to the outpouring of the Spirit of God and on Christ blessing the Israelites (v. 33), “What do you now see and hear?”

Daniel 12:1-3 goes from describing the final judgment to the ultimate vindication of the saints, their resurrection to everlasting life, and joy in the kingdom of heaven.

John 5:29 declares, “Those who have done good, to the resurrection of life and those who have done evil, to the resurrection of condemnation” (NKJV). Jesus indicates that people will be resurrected not in order to be judged, but as a result of God’s judgment. The resurrection to life and the resurrection to condemnation are clearly two different resurrections. Christ returns to earth to “reward each person according to what he has done” (Matt 16:27), “to execute judgment on all” (Jude 15).

75LaRondelle, How to Understand the End-Time Prophecies, 339.

76Ibid., 341.
Paul’s description of events during the second coming of Christ in 1 Thess 4:16, 17 and 2 Thess 1:7-10 sees Christ not in a trial process, but in an executive act of resurrection and transforming believers and destroying unbelievers. In this context, the determination of human destiny has already taken place. A saving faith in Christ will be ratified by the judgment. Only those without Christ will be condemned.

The Second Angel’s Message

A second angel followed and said: “Babylon is fallen, is fallen, that great city, Because she has made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication” (Rev 14:8).

As ancient Babylon was the persecutor of Israel, so “Babylon” in Revelation is the persecutor of the new Israel of God in the time of the end. Jeremiah 51:7 declares: “Babylon was a golden cup in the Lord’s hand, That made all the earth drunk. The nations drank her wine; therefore all nations are deranged.”

The essential character of Babel (lit. “Gate of the gods”) has been to climb up to the heavens in order to usurp the place and ruling power of God (Gen 1:4; Isa 13:13, 14; Jer 51:53). The objective is to replace God and His Messianic redemption. The ambition of Babel is the same as that of the little horn. The ambition is that of a religious nature and is aimed at the position of the Most High.

This call to worship God the Creator brings us to attempts on the part of the church to change the day of worship. It is not surprising to discover that Satan has been waging an all-out war to overthrow the sacred institution of the Sabbath. Cardinal James Gibbons writes, “You may read the Bible from Genesis to Revelation, and you will not
find a single line authorizing the sanctification of Sunday. The Scripture enforces the religious observance of Saturday.”77

History records that the change from Sabbath to Sunday worship came gradually. We find no instance of weekly Sunday worship until the middle of the second century. By then, some Christians were voluntarily keeping Sunday as a day of worship, not a day of rest.78

The Church of Rome led in this trend toward Sunday worship. The practice arose amid strong anti-Jewish sentiments. The trend became an exclusive observance of Sunday.

From the second to the fifth centuries, while Sunday was increasing in influence, Christians continued to observe the seventh day throughout the Roman Empire.79

In the fourth and fifth centuries Christians worshiped on both Sabbath and Sunday. Sozomen, historian of that period, writes, “The people of Constantinople, are almost everywhere, assembling together on the Sabbath, as well as on the first day of the week, which custom is not observed at Rome or Alexandria.”80

A major reason given for turning to worship on Sunday was that Christ was resurrected on Sunday, but no single Bible verse has ever been given for this change. No early church father knew of any instruction from Jesus or from any portion of the Bible.

77James Gibbons, The Faith of Our Fathers (Baltimore, MD: John Murphy, 1895), 111, 112.


79Seventh-day Adventists Believe, 259.

Sunday was also the day of sun worship, one of the oldest components of the religion of Rome. Christian converts from paganism were frequently attracted toward the veneration of the sun.

The fourth century saw the institution of Sunday laws. “Emperor Constantine decreed the first civil Sunday law on March 7, 321 A.D., making Sunday a holiday.” Constantine also had a background as a sun worshiper. His law read: “On the venerable Day of the Sun let the magistrates and people residing in cities rest, and let all workshops be closed. In the country, however, persons engaged in agriculture may freely and lawfully continue their pursuits.”

Several decades later, A.D. 365, the Council of Laodicea, Roman Catholic Council, issues the first ecclesiastical Sunday law. The church ruled that Christians should honor Sunday and “if possible, do no work on that day,” and denounced the practice of resting on the Sabbath, stating that Christians should not be idle on Saturday, but shall work on that day.

In A.D. 538 the year that began the 1260-year prophecy, the Roman Catholic Third Council of Orleans issued a law more severe than that of Constantine. Canon 28

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81 Maxwell, God Cares, 1:129; H. C. Heggtrest, Illustreret Kishehistorie (Christiania [Oslo]: Canmer-meyer Boghandel, 1891-1895), 202, as translated in SDA Bible Students Source Book, 1000.


says that on Sunday even “agricultural labor ought to be laid aside so that people may not be prevented from attending church.”

In 2 Thess 2:7 the Bible speaks of the rise of the Papacy as “the mystery of lawlessness,” already at work in Paul’s day.

In further prophecy, Daniel 7 reveals God’s foreknowledge of the change of the day of worship. A power known as the little horn and in Rev 13:1-10 a beast would bring about a great apostasy within the Christian Church. The little horn would attack God’s people and His law and seek “to change the times and law” (Dan 7:25). Most of the world would be deceived by this apostate power, but at the end judgment will decide against it (Dan 7:11, 22, 26). During this final tribulation God will intervene on behalf of His people and they will be delivered (Dan 12:1-3).

At the Council of Trent in 1545-1563, convened by the Pope to counter Protestantism, Gaspare de Fosso, archbishop of Reggio, states that “the legal Scripture taught by our Lord has ceased by virtue of the same authority, the Church. The Sabbath, the most glorious day in the law, has been changed into the Lord’s Day. . . . These and other similar matters . . . have been changed by the authority of the Church.”

It is evident both by Scripture, church tradition, and Bible prophecy that there will come about the attempt once again to enforce a Sunday law to observe against the Lord’s biblical Sabbath.

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The first angel spoke with a lamb’s voice (Rev 14:7), “Fear God and give glory to Him.” I would understand that to mean that we are not to pay homage to anyone else, to observe any other Sabbath or bow down to any image or make any other image, but we are to honor, revere, and hallow the Sabbath and give glory to our Creator Redeemer.

The second angel’s awareness is that God has judged Babylon and her religious claims to represent God on earth. This is the judicial verdict of God. The intention of the proclamation is to warn the followers of the beast and the worshipers of its origin to leave Babylon: “Come out of her [Babylon], my people, lest you share in her sins, and lest you share in her plagues. For her sins have reached to heaven, and God has remembered her iniquities” (Rev 18:4, 5).

God wants to re-establish His remnant church. The true worshiper must leave Babylon, the unfaithful church. Babylon is equated with idolatrous worship. Babylon’s destruction is a retributive judgment because of her crime of persecuting the saints of God. We are reminded of Isa 21:9b, “Babylon is fallen, is fallen! And all the carved images of her gods He has broken to the ground.”

Babylon’s fall is seen on two levels—first as the judicial verdict of heaven, and, second, as her doom in history. End-time Babylon falls morally when she rejects the everlasting Gospel. The nations have been intoxicated by her doctrinal teachings by which she has corrupted the everlasting Gospel and the commandments of God. In this confusion about the distinction set by the Creator, men are led to rely on human traditions and political power to secure peace. The judgment of the seven last plagues is a future judgment for Babylon. This angel’s message has its final relevance for the generation
alive when Babylon’s plagues descend. The message of the three angels has an explicit end time setting.

Ellen White writes of a terrible condition in the religious world.\textsuperscript{86} With Babylon there is so much rejection of biblical truth. Babylon continues to trample upon the precepts of the Sabbath until they are led to persecute those who hold it sacred.\textsuperscript{87} Babylon accepts the teaching of spiritualism which comes to be accepted by the churches.\textsuperscript{88} The profession of religion will become a cloud to conceal iniquity. All of this opens up the door to seducing spirits and doctrine of devils and even the influence of evil angels.\textsuperscript{89} Babylon will decree that all shall conform to the custom of the church by the observance of the false Sabbath.\textsuperscript{90} All who refuse will be visited with civil penalties and will be declared deserving of death.\textsuperscript{91} On the other hand, “the Creator’s rest day demands obedience and threatens wrath against all who transgress its precepts.”\textsuperscript{92} “The stealthy but rapid progress of the paper power will be unmasked.”\textsuperscript{93} Babylon will actually enforce a Sunday law that which has so long been doubted will come to pass.\textsuperscript{94}

\textsuperscript{86}White, \textit{The Great Controversy}, 341.

\textsuperscript{87}Ibid.

\textsuperscript{88}Ibid.

\textsuperscript{89}Ibid.

\textsuperscript{90}Ibid.

\textsuperscript{91}Ibid.

\textsuperscript{92}Ibid.

\textsuperscript{93}Ibid., 342.

\textsuperscript{94}Ibid.
God has people in Babylon that must be called out before the visitation of His judgments. Thousands upon thousands who have never heard the truth will respond. The power attending this message will only stir up those who oppose it.⁹⁵ A law will actually be invoked against commandment keepers; they will be threatened with fine and imprisonment to reverse their faith.⁹⁶ It shall come to pass that all who will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution (2 Tim 3:12). Men of talent and pleasing address will become bitter enemies to Sabbathkeepers.⁹⁷

Soon Jesus will cease His intercession in the sanctuary above. He will lift His books and with a loud voice He will say, “It is done. He that is unjust, let him be unjust still: and he which is filthy, let him be filthy still.” The inhabitants of the earth will be plunged into one final day of trouble. The faithful will be blamed for even the convulsions of nature.⁹⁸ The faithful will finally be put to death. It is even the time of Jacob’s trouble, but he will be saved out of it (Jer 30:5-7). Satan will even attempt to impersonate Christ.⁹⁹ Indeed, at the coming of Jesus Christ for the church, Babylon will fall.¹⁰⁰ Thus, we are to reverence and worship God alone and His Sabbath, not the beast and his false Sabbath. Only God is to receive honor, reverence, and praise.

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⁹⁶Ibid.

⁹⁷Ibid., 347.

⁹⁸Ibid.

⁹⁹Ibid., 355.

¹⁰⁰Ibid., 353.
The Third Angel’s Message

If anyone worships the beast and his image and receives his mark on his forehead or on his hand, he himself shall also drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out full strength into the cup of His indignation. And he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels and in the presence of the Lamb. And the smoke of their torment ascends forever and ever, and they have no rest day or night, who worship the beast and his image, and whoever receives the mark of his name. Here is the patience of the saints; here are those who keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus (Rev 14:9-12).

This solemn warning goes out to each believer. The worshipers of the beast have to drink God’s wrath in the form of the seven last plagues. It will be like the judgment on Sodom and Gomorrah (Gen 19:23, 28). The forever is seen in the eternal consequences of the fire.

The beast worshiper will have no read day or night. “But there remains a Sabbath rest for the people of God, for everyone who enters God’s rest also rests from his own work, just as God did for His” (Heb 4:9, 10). While Rev 14:13 asserts that those who died in the Lord will rest from their labors, for their deeds will follow them.

The Mark of the Beast

What is the theological significance of “the mark of the beast”? The mark cannot be had without the act of worship. The objective of the antichrist-beast is to receive divine worship. It is the mentality of Babylon. It is in conflict with Israel’s call and ours to worship the Creator, the One who made heaven and earth.

The basic issue here is to see the mark as an act of worshiping the beast and thus an attitude of idolatry. The beast takes to itself the prerogative of the God-Creator, and it is worshiped. The “mark on the forehead or on the hand” (14:9) is a reminder of Deut 6:8 and 11:16 when Israel was urged to tie God’s commandments “as symbols on your
hands and bind them on your foreheads.” They were to act and think in keeping with the will of God. Moses explained the moral purpose of the binding of God’s commandments to their hands and foreheads:

Fear the Lord your God and serve Him, and shall take oaths in His name. You shall not go after other gods, the gods of the people who are all around you (for the Lord God is a jealous God among you), lest the anger of the Lord your God be aroused against you and destroy you from the face of the earth. You shall diligently keep the commandments of the Lord your God (Deut 6:13-15, 17).

Israel was also to keep the ritual observance of the Passover—the eating of unleavened bread to commemorate their exodus deliverance: “It shall be a sign to you on your hand and as a memorial between your eyes, that the Lord’s law may be in your mouth: for with a strong hand the Lord has brought you out of Egypt. You shall therefore keep this ordinance in its season from year to year” (Exod 13:9, 10).

The beast threatens to take away life if there is disobedience to its totalitarian commands (Rev 13:15-17). Its promise is temporary life, while the Lord’s promise is eternal life—the beast uses coercion, the Lord uses persuasion.

The beast described in Rev 13:1-10 is the church-state union that ruled most of the world for many centuries. Paul calls the beast the “man of sin” (2 Thess 2:2-4). Daniel calls the beast the “little horn” (Den 7:8, 20-25; 8:9-13) “the image of the beast represents the apostate religion that develops when churches unite with the state to enforce their teachings on them.”\footnote{Seventh-day Adventists Believe, 167.} When church and state unite, they become a perfect image to the beast in the apostate church that persecuted for 1260 years.\footnote{Ibid.} Two distinct clans will develop. One clan will follow the gospel of human design and worship the

\begin{footnotesize}
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\item Seventh-day Adventists Believe, 167.
\item Ibid.
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beast and his image, bearing the fruit of horrible judgments. The other clan, in stark contrast, will bear the fruit of the true gospel; they will keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus (Rev 14:9-12). What is at issue is the making of an enforced Sunday law for worship. When this issue is clearly brought before the world, those who reject God’s Sabbath, the seventh-day Sabbath, in observance of His being Creator and Redeemer, will receive the “mark of the beast.” The mark is a mark of rebellion against God’s fourth commandment. “The beast claims its change of the day for worship shows its authority even over God’s law.”

The third angel’s message directs the cursed to the consequences of refusing to accept the everlasting gospel and God’s call to restore true worship. Both choices involve suffering. Those who obey God will experience the wrath of the dragon (Rev 12:17) and later even be threatened with death (13:15). But those who choose to worship the beast and his image will experience the seven last plagues and finally “the lake of fire” (15:16; 20:14, 15).

While both involve suffering, look at the outcomes. The worshipers of the Creator on Sabbath will escape the deadly wrath of the dragon and soon stand with the Lamb on Mount Zion (Rev 14:1; 7:2, 4). Those who choose Sunday, the false day of worship, will receive the full wrath of God and die in the presence of the holy angels and the Lamb (Rev 14:9, 10; 20:14).

The truth of both the Old and New Testament is that Israel’s God ordained the

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103 The Catholic Church claims the authority to change the day of worship. “Which is the Sabbath day? A. Saturday is the Sabbath day. Q. Why do we observe Sunday instead of Saturday? A. We observe Sunday instead of Saturday because the Catholic Church transferred the solemnity from Saturday to Sunday” (Geiermann, 50). See also Source Book, 886.
seventh-day Sabbath as a memorial of His creative work (Gen 2:2, 3; Exod 20:8-11; 31:12, 13). This truth becomes quite relevant in the time of the end when evolution becomes the dogma of the day. In all of this the threefold message of Rev 14 takes on increasing relevance. The message calls for a restored Sabbath celebration as our concrete experience of one’s dependence on the Creator of heaven and that our salvation is from above. Here is the appeal. Here is the patience of the saints; here are those who keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus (v. 12).

The last generation of Christian believers will need to be faithful and loyal in “keeping the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus.”

Mal 4:5 shows that God would send “Elijah before that great and dreadful day of the Lord comes.” The Old Testament prophet provides a final call for revival and reformation among God’s covenant people before the coming Day of Judgment (Mal 4:1, 2).

Remember what Elijah said to Israel, “If the Lord is God, follow Him; but if Baal is God, follow him” (1 Kgs 18:21). Thus, the call of God in the Apocalypse: “Worship Him as the Creator and not to worship the beast and his image” (Rev 14:6-9).

The Remnant

God always has a remnant.

In the last days, a time of widespread apostasy, a remnant has been called out to keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus. The remnant announces the judgment hour, proclaims salvation through Christ, and heralds the approach of His second advent. This proclamation is symbolized by the three angels of Revelation 14; it coincides with the work of judgment in heaven and results in the work of repentance and reform on earth. Every believer is called to have a personal part in this world wide witness (Fundamental Belief #12).104

104Seventh-day Adventists Believe, 152.
Even in the midst of 1260 years of oppression, God always has a remnant. Rev 12:17 states that the dragon was enraged with the woman and the rest of her offspring, who keep the commandments of God and the testimony of Jesus Christ. “The rest of her offspring” means remaining ones or “remnant.” These always remain faithful to God.

God has sent the remnant to proclaim His glory and lead His scattered people to His “holy mountain, Jerusalem,” “Mt. Zion” (Isa 37:31, 32; 66:20; cf., Rev 14:1).

The characteristics of the remnant are as follows:

1. The Faith of Jesus. God’s remnant people are described as having a faith like that of Jesus. These have an unbeatable confidence in God and the authority of Scripture. The remnant people really believe that Jesus Christ is the Messiah of prophecy, the Son of God, the One who came to be our Savior. Their faith encompasses all that Christ believed and taught.

   The remnant will excitedly proclaim the eternal gospel and warn the world that the hour of God’s judgment has arrived. They will prepare others to meet their coming King of Kings and Lord of Lords. They will engage in a global mission to complete the witness to humanity.\(^\text{105}\)

2. The Commandments of God. Just as Jesus obeyed the commandments of God, so will the remnant. They see all of the ten commandments of God unchanging moral law. Their world must harmonize with their talk and profession. “Not everyone who says to me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of my Father in heaven” (Matt 7:21).\(^\text{106}\)

\(^{105}\text{Seventh-day Adventists Believe, } 162.\)

\(^{106}\text{Ibid.}\)
3. The Testimony of Jesus. Rev 19:10 defines “the testimony of Jesus” as the spirit of prophecy. The remnant people are a people of prophecy who proclaim the prophetic message. The remnant people will also have a strong message in health, education, family life, temperance, evangelism, the publishing ministry, proper diet, medical work, and many other areas, in keeping with Ellen White, who certainly was given this gift of prophecy.

The remnant will bring about a full restoration of Gospel truth by proclaiming the everlasting Gospel and the Three Angels’ Message. This message must go out to all the world, then Christ will return for His church.

**Adventists and Lutherans in Dialogue on Eschatology**

Lutherans look to the end with confidence and candor. They look forward to their deliverance and do not fear the judgment. The last judgment is largely passed over by Lutheran eschatology because of the trust in what Christ has done for the believer.

Catastrophes will occur, and followers of God will be persecuted. The coming of Christ, the resurrection of the dead, and the final judgment will bring relief. All of the preceding distress shows the nearness of His coming. Imminent hope shows through all of this.

Luther was able to see clearly the antichrist in the papacy, which lifted itself above the Word of God and put itself in the place of Christ. Luther says, “Dear Last

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107 *Seventh-day Adventists Believe*, 162, 163.

108 Ibid., 226.

109 *Lutherans and Adventists in Conversation*, 276-278.
Day” which will deliver us from the Antichrist. Luther feels that he lived in a time of final crisis.¹¹⁰

Many down through the ages have felt themselves to be living in the last times. Lutherans believe very strongly in the larger picture, but are modest and cautious in giving lots of last day details.

For Adventists, eschatology is the “doctrine of hope.”¹¹¹ Eschatology and the apocalyptic were key aspects of Jesus’ preaching on the kingdom of God. The signs of Christ’s nearness call the believer to a strong degree of readiness. Adventists see themselves as the church of the last days. Adventists believe that they must preach the cross and the second coming as God’s final answer. Adventists see themselves as instruments in gathering the faithful remnant. Adventists believe that this faithful remnant may be in many churches throughout the world. Luther priests also talked about a small flock of true believers.

Both Lutherans and Adventists affirm that Jesus Christ is the center of eschatology. For the believer in Jesus, eschatology has both a present and future dimension. The Christian already sits with Christ in the heavenly places (Eph 2:6). The believer lives between the times. Both believe that the witness of Scripture points to the resurrection of the body, not the immortality of the soul.

Both attest to the fact that there is a judgment.

Both communions believe that history is moving toward a climax. Adventists give stronger emphasis to the study of last things. Five Articles of the 27 Fundamental

¹¹⁰Lutherans and Adventists in Conversation, 280.

¹¹¹Ibid., 216-228.
Beliefs focus on eschatology—The Ministry of Christ in the Heavenly Sanctuary; The Second Coming of Christ; Death and Resurrection; The Millennium and the End of Sin; and the New Earth. Lutherans say little else than is found in the ancient creeds. The books of Daniel and Revelation provide significant understanding for the Adventists. These books give the basic strokes of human history. Adventists’ interest in the apocalyptic had led to teaching on the pre-advent judgment—the ministry of Christ in the heavenly sanctuary and in the Most Holy Place, beginning in 1844.

Lutherans affirm Christ’s high priestly ministry, but they find no basis which agrees with the Adventists about Jesus beginning a new phase of His ministry at a specific time in recent history, but they do acknowledge that Adventists do appeal to biblical and theological evidence. Adventists acknowledge in all of this that Christ does not cease to be intercessor.

Adventists see the symbol of Babylon as the mark of the beast. Adventists identify the mark of the beast with the future enforcement of Sunday observance at the end of time. But Adventists do not believe that Sunday observance prior to a national Sunday law constitutes the mark of the beast or that those who observe Sunday, not knowing the difference, have the mark of the beast.

**Summary**

In my research, I was amazed at all of the teaching that Luther shares on the Last Day and the end of the world. He also has a keen understanding of the antichrist and the Babylonian captivity of the church. But Luther seems to lack a sharpness of understanding in regard to the Sabbath and I believe that is why Luther lacks the
sharpness so clearly seen in the full Adventist message on eschatology. The Adventists are so clear in the Three Angels’ Message, the Mark of the Beast, and the Remnant and their mission.

Luther leaves no uncertainty that his Reformation work is to be solely based on the Holy Scriptures or *Sola Scriptura*. He is resolved to leave his studies in philosophy and learn of Jesus Christ and Him crucified. His is the theology of the cross. He fully believes that God wrote the Bible through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit as man wrote it. Luther believes that we should interpret Scripture according to its plain sense, Scripture interpreting Scripture. Like Paul wrote in Romans 15:4 “that we through patience and comfort of the Scripture might have hope”.

Adventists believe in the historical account of Scriptures just as Jesus did. Adventists see unity of purpose and design in Scripture. Ellen White believes that the Holy Spirit guided the writers of the Bible with “exact fidelity.” Adventists also believe in *Sola Scriptura*, allowing Scripture to interpret Scripture.

**Justification by Faith**

Luther is without a doubt the pioneer reformer who leads us into a biblical understanding of justification by faith. This is fully supported by Rom 1:17, “For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, ‘The just shall live by
faith.” Luther believes that the law does not help a man become righteous, but the law, like a schoolmaster, points us to Jesus Christ. In this way, faith moves from the law to the Gospel. Luther comes to know that we are saved by the unmerited favor of God and by sola fide or “faith alone.” This righteousness is a free gift because of what Jesus Christ has done. Luther believes that God has chosen us by His grace. For Luther, Christ is God in the flesh. Luther does speak about a cosmic conflict between Christ and Satan, and the forces of evil that oppose the purposes of God. He believes that without the atoning work of Christ, we would be damned under the dominion of Satan. Luther sees all atonement as having taken place in and around the cross of Calvary, but he does see the believer receiving immortality at Christ’s second coming.¹

Christ is clearly our substitute. Although Luther shares much about baptism and immersion, he centers so much on grace that his practice is that of infant baptism. He feels that this approach accommodates to the total depravity of man. In the Eucharist or Meal of Thanksgiving, Luther believes that Christ gave His true body and blood for the forgiveness of sin. This forgiveness is offered to all who eat and drink in faith believing. There should be full repentance before communion.

Seventh-day Adventists speak of the Great Controversy, that battle between good and evil, Christ and Satan. War broke out in heaven and Christ prevailed over Satan and cast Satan and his angels to earth. Through Satan, man came under the curse of sin. Adventists believe that God’s law existed before the fall of man. This law leads us to Jesus Christ. Through Christ’s death and resurrection we are declared righteous. God became incarnate in Jesus Christ. This divine plan in Jesus Christ was foreordained

¹Luther, “1 Corinthians 15,” in LW 28:203.
before the foundation of the world. Because of Jesus’ perfect sacrifice, man no longer needs to bring a sacrifice. Adventists see salvation and the atonement in two phases—one on the cross, the other continues as Jesus ministers in the Most Holy Place.

Adventists believe in the believer’s baptism by immersion. Through the Holy Spirit we are born again and sanctified. Foot washing precedes communion. Like Jesus, we must take on the role of servant; we must esteem others better than ourselves. The Lord’s Supper commemorates deliverance from sin and communion with Christ and with other believers.

Covenant, Law, and Sabbath

Luther readily acknowledges that the Sabbath was made for man. This day should be devoted to worship and rest and listening to the voice of the Lord. He also believes that sin took place on that very first Sabbath. The Sabbath is also numbered differently as commandment number three. As he goes on, Luther does not want to worship on the same day as Jewish believers; he sees no reason to change from Sunday worship and he even compares the word “Sabbath” to a holiday. He feels a “Sabbath” could be observed any day of the week, but for the sake of good order he will keep the observance on Sunday for worship and rest.²

Adventists see no other day of worship in the Old and New Testament except that of the Sabbath. They do not see that Jesus nor His disciples ever changed the Sabbath day. In fact, Adventists see the Sabbath day as a practice that continues in heaven with

²Luther, The Large Catechism, 375, 376.
Jesus. Adventists believe that in the end the man of sin will try to enforce a Sunday law instead of God’s holy Sabbath.

Sanctification and Christian Behavior

Luther is described by Bengt Hoffman as a kind of mystic who is strong on feelings and experience, the guidance of the Holy Spirit, and he expounds on the gifts of the Holy Spirit. Luther sees that in our Christian behavior we are called to walk in the character of Jesus. Luther does speak of being filled with the Spirit of Christ.

Adventists, too, emphasize the gifts of the Spirit with a special emphasis on prophecy. Ellen G. White, they believe, certainly possessed the gift of prophecy. The faithful are they who obey the commandments of God and have the faith of Jesus. The commandments are the character of Jesus. Adventists, too, have a strong health message which allows them to serve Jesus longer. Adventists believe that justification by faith is the believer’s title for heaven, but through sanctification we are made fit for the kingdom.

Christ’s High Priestly Ministry

Christ’s office as High Priest continues even after He has ascended. Luther, along with Scripture, believes that Christ continues to intercede for the redeemed. Luther believes that the ascended Christ is preparing a place for them. He believes that the devil and all powers must be subject to the exalted Christ. Christ is a priest before God on our behalf. In this state of exaltation Christ ministers through His prophetic office of those who minister for Him. As King, no territory is exempt from the dominion of Christ. “All power is given unto Him” (Matt 28:18).

Adventists believe that in His role as prophet, Christ continues to send out His
clear prophetic Word. The 2300 days of prophecy locates the time when God’s prophetic judgment began in 1844. Here in the Most Holy Place Christ began the last phase of His prophetic ministry prior to His coming again.

In December of 1844 the ascended Christ called Ellen G. White to a prophetic ministry at the age of 17. She received more than 2000 visions between then and her death in 1915. Ellen White appeared in the precise moment when a true prophet was expected. Both she and James White, her husband, greatly helped in establishing the Seventh-day Adventist Church. In His prophetic role, Christ gave to John the powerful Three Angels’ Message of Revelation 14.

In the Most Holy Place Christ continues His work as High Priest, applying His perfect sacrifice on our behalf, “that the salvation purchased for them may be applied to them” (1 Jn 2:16). This was the new doctrine that unlocked the disappointment of 1844.

And Christ occupies a kingship far above all rule, authority, power, and dominion, and above every name that is named (Eph 1:21). And verse 22 of Eph 1 states that God has put all things under His feet. And as King, He will deliver the kingdom to God the Father. Yes, the pre-advent judgment precedes His second advent. The faithful received by our Lord are those who keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus. Jesus will at last come for those who sleep in Him and all who are alive and faithful to Him.

**Ecclesiology—The Church as a Community of Believers**

Luther gives considerable honor to those who are called of God to lead out and minister in the church. All Christians are seen as a chosen race, a royal priesthood, God’s own people. All have come out of darkness into His marvelous light. In the ministry all should be of one mind and heart. Luther fully accepts the three historic creeds. Luther
believes that the Christian community needs the historic faith and the faith relationship of others. Luther loves the church and sees the church as a fortress or castle for the faithful. Only through Christ has a congregation of the redeemed been made possible. The church is also the infirmary for those who need to be made well.

Adventists believe that the church is like a rock and the gates of hell shall not prevail against her. The church is wherever believers gather. The church is a family of born-again, Spirit-filled believers who are awaiting the second coming of Christ. Our fundamental beliefs describe the church as a body, as a temple, as a bride, as Jerusalem above, as a pillar and foundation of truth, and as an army, militant and triumphant. The church is both visible and invisible. The church is for worship, fellowship, and global ministry.

Eschatology—The Last Day and the Second Coming of Christ

Luther has a rather deep grasp or understanding of the issues of eschatology. He believes that the papal system is the enemy of the church. He has considerable understanding of what Christ’s ascended ministry was on behalf of the church. Luther believes in soul sleep until the resurrection. He has a rather clear picture of the church and her mission to prepare the world for Christ’s second coming.

Luther believes that he is living in the last day. Luther looked forward to the day when all believers would be given new bodies. Luther feels that the world is running in such a determined way to its final end. Luther believes that most of the harvest has been gathered for the kingdom.

Luther gives high priority to the second coming of Christ. As believers look forward to the second coming of Christ, there would be a purifying effort in their lives.
and they would be called to holy living. Luther also believes that believers are members of two kingdoms at the same time. Also, the genuine hope of Christ’s return would bring joy and happiness in this life. Luther would not name a date, but continued to feel that the time of Christ’s coming was close at hand.

Adventists, too, particularly after 1844, feel that they are living in the time of the end. All the signs also seem to point to Christ’s soon coming. The coming of Christ will be literal and personal, audible, glorious, sudden, and expected for the believer. For others it will be like in the time of Noah, with little thought given to the general warning of His coming.

What an exciting time it will be when all the believers are raised to be with Jesus! What a grand reunion! The Three Angels’ Message is going forth throughout the world, calling all to Sabbath worship, to leave spiritual Babylon, and declaring that the hour of His judgment has come.

All are to follow the Master, Jesus Christ, and not the mark of the beast, the false Sabbath. This generation needs to be quite mindful of keeping the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus.

God always has a remnant. In the midst of widespread apostasy there will be a faithful remnant sharing with the world the end time message.

**Conclusion**

This comparison study began with the Holy Scriptures—in fact, our word was *Sola Scriptura* or “Scripture alone.” Luther feels strongly that his only source for this reformation is the Holy Scripture. He would study Jesus Christ and Him crucified. Luther feels that only the Scriptures can speak to us in all of our human situations.
Luther also asserts that he interprets Scripture in its plain sense. All of his theological work presupposes the authority of Scripture and that the tradition of the church derives its authority from Christ and the authority of Scripture. He also believes that the authority of Scripture establishes itself through experience. This is also the Adventist position, seeking always to find Christ at the center of Scripture.

Adventists do not look to confessional documents, but they place high value on the writing of Ellen G. White, in which they believe the biblical gift of prophecy was manifested. Her writings are regarded as containing authoritative truth. Her writings provide comfort, guidance, instruction, and correction. She fully endorsed the Sola Scriptura principle. Ellen White praises Luther for his emphasis upon Scripture Alone. Luther’s own testimony expresses that the just shall live by faith and that he who through faith is righteous shall live (Rom 1:17). She praises him for his theology of the cross, both that of the crucifixion and the resurrection. She praises Luther for his position on justification by faith—that we are saved both now and in the judgment by our faith in Jesus Christ and His free gift of righteousness.

In Early Writings, Ellen White wrote in 1851, “I recommend to you, dear reader, the Word of God as the rule of your faith and practice.” Years later she wrote, “In His Word, God has committed to man the knowledge necessary for salvation, the Holy Scriptures are to be accepted as an authoritative, infallible revelation of His will. They


4White, Early Writings, 222-224.
are the standard of character, the revealer of doctrine, and the test of experience.”

For Luther, there is only one phase of atonement, that which takes place around the cross of Calvary. For Adventists, the ministry of Jesus in the Most Holy Place forms phase two of the atonement.

For Luther, baptism is a sacrament, something sacred which comes wholly from the heart of God. Even the German word *taufe* or baptism means to stick completely into the water and draw out again, a symbol of death and resurrection. Although Luther accepts immersion, pouring, and sprinkling, the general practice is non-believing infants being baptized by sprinkling or pouring. The reformer would express that in what better way can the grace of God be shown than through a helpless infant? Since baptism is necessary for salvation, infants must be baptized. The parents or sponsors agree to raise the child in the faith, and faith is given to the child as a gift. Luther’s writing and speaking on baptism centers on infant baptism, the practice of the medieval church, not the practice of the early church. This practice also helps meet the need of Luther’s belief in the total depravity of man. So why not be covered over with the grace of baptism?

Adventists practice believer’s baptism. For Adventists, baptism gives testimony to a confession of faith, a born-again happening, already made and experienced by the baptismal candidate.

Luther’s belief about communion, that of consubstantiation, that of a sacramental union, is quite interesting. Here the body of Jesus Christ and His precious blood is given in, with, and under the bread and wine to each recipient who eats and drinks in faith believing. In the Eucharist or meal of thanksgiving the believer looks forward to the

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banquet meal with Jesus in the kingdom. Here Luther takes his reason captive to the Word of God. Ellen White expresses that in the communion meal we experience the special presence of Christ, while Luther speaks of the real presence of Christ in the Lord’s Supper. Adventists follow the mandate of Jesus, who said in John 13, “You ought also to wash one another’s feet.” Foot washing is taking on the form of a servant, a higher cleansing, a fellowship of forgiveness, and a fellowship with Christ and fellow believers. Luther does not do the foot washing, but has a healthy emphasis on public confession before receiving the elements of communion. Communion is our meal of deliverance or communion with Christ, a memorial meal and our Eucharistic meal.

Luther writes of a Great Cosmic Battle; Adventists speak of the Great Controversy. Here is the same battle, which began in heaven with Michael or Christ against Lucifer. Satan blames God and says it is impossible to obey the law. Adventists believe that God’s law existed before the fall of man. The writer believes that a right understanding of the moral law reveals the character of God.

Both Luther and Adventists agree that all of the Old Testament prophecies concerning the Messiah were fulfilled in Jesus Christ. Both also believe essentially the same about the ministry of Christ on the cross. Our salvation is fully completed in us when we are glorified in the resurrection or translated to heaven. Being in Christ, we are already in the throne room of heaven.

Both communions understand justification by faith as that which leads us to grow in sanctification, our growth in grace to take on the character of Jesus. Both agree that the life of the justified will be demonstrated by deeds of faith.

Luther has a lot of positive things to share about the Sabbath, but when it comes
to keeping a day of worship and rest, he decided to keep not the Sabbath, but Sunday. He does not keep to the plain sense of Scripture. It is his chief blind spot. He also numbers the commandments differently, making the Sabbath commandment the third commandment, following the Roman Catholic Church. John Eck challenged Luther by saying that the church has changed the Sabbath to Sunday on her own authority on which Luther has no Scripture. And there was Karlstadt, who was inclined to keep the real seventh-day Sabbath. Luther states that if we listen to Karlstadt we will all be Jews.

In the midst of his blind spot, Luther is unable to see that the origin of Sabbath is not Jewish, but Luther asserts that the Sabbath was given to the Jews alone.⁶ He feels that the commandment is not even a concern for Christians.⁷ But he feels that nature teaches that we should rest for a day and be refreshed. By keeping one day for public worship, people may assemble to participate in public worship, hear and discuss God’s word. He really feels that one day is no better than another.⁸ Now since it has become Sunday for all these many years, why change it? In this way a common order will prevail. He says the day or holiday is holy according to how you spend the day. Really, we should do this every day, but most people do not know their limit of time.

I believe that Luther fails to allow Scripture to interpret Scripture, but instead he reverts to church tradition and the position of the papacy. He fails to see the Decalogue as an everlasting covenant. If Karlstadt could see this, so should Luther. I realize at the same time that prophecy is not yet advanced sufficiently for Luther to understand the

⁶Luther, The Large Catechism, 376.

⁷Ibid.

⁸Ibid.
meaning of Revelation 14—Three Angels’ Messages and fallen Babylon and the mark of the beast.

Adventists, in keeping with Scripture, choose to keep the Sabbath day holy, seeing that neither Jesus nor His disciples changed the day. Adventists see the Sabbath as a basic part of the divine design of creation and redemption.

Luther shows much depth as he writes on Christ’s high priestly ministry, but he fails to speak of a special ministry of cleansing the sanctuary as an atonement II phase of salvation. It is the Adventists who speak of a developed doctrine of the sanctuary and the high priestly ministry of Jesus. Luther does clearly speak of a judgment of the living and the dead, but he is not definitive as to how and when Jesus goes about this high priestly ministry. Luther does have a biblical understanding of the state of the dead.

Luther could not see the prophetic issues not yet fulfilled; but he feels that Christ could just come at any time. He does not have any clear sense of a remnant message going out into all the world as do the Adventists with the Three Angels’ Message.

For Luther, the church is where the Word of God is preached and the sacraments are rightly administered. Luther is strong on the Christian community. Christ lives in and through the community of faith. Each Christian should work for the renewal of the church. Adventists believe that the church is a kingdom of priests, a holy nation with a prophetic global message. There is fellowship in the Gospel and there is unity and sharing. Adventists believe strongly in the grace of God, but dedicate infants and children and baptize believers.

By reaching the whole world, Adventists prepare for the second coming of Jesus. Christ and the Scripture are the source of all the church’s authority, not church tradition.
Both Luther and Adventists see the papacy as lifting itself above the Word of God and putting herself in the place of Christ. But Luther is not able to put together the image of the beast, only that the papacy is a key part of Babylon.

In the area of eschatology, the last judgment is largely passed over; however, Christ will come to judge the living and the dead. Luther does feel he is living in the last days, while Adventists see themselves as the church of the last days. Adventists believe they must preach the Three Angels’ Message and the second coming of Christ as God’s final answer. Adventists believe that the faithful remnant may be in churches throughout the world.

In this document, it is noted that five articles of our 28 beliefs are on eschatology. Adventists see the symbol of Babylon as a mark of the beast and an image to the beast. Luther interprets no such symbol. Much lies with what others will do with the upcoming Sunday law.

In this comparative study I hope to take away all doubt about our authenticity as a denomination that we go strictly by the Scripture. I also wanted to write a document that could also be used for basic Bible study. I am looking for ways to place this research study in the hands of both Lutherans and Adventists. It was the intent of both Martin Luther and Ellen White to return us to the Scripture. I would hope to place this document in the hands of the Lutheran World Federation and other Lutheran pastors. I clearly see this document as an evangelistic tool to reach others with the Gospel of Jesus Christ, all of this in preparation for the 2017 celebration of the 500th year of the Reformation under Martin Luther’s leadership. I believe that I have achieved what I set out to do in this research project.
Reflections

Throughout this grand research I have grown in an historical perspective and in a
greater appreciation of our Adventist pioneers in their quest for and their laying out our
foundation of truth in our basic doctrines.

With its heritage traced all the way back to the 16th century German Reformation,
the Lutheran Church is present on all continents. The Lutheran World Federation
comprises about 55 million members, more than 95 percent of today’s Lutherans.
Lutherans, too, have been active in the ecumenical movement. Now at 16 million
members plus, the Seventh-day Adventist Church is a strong Christian denomination with
a worldwide missionary thrust. Found in more than 200 countries, the Church is today
the most widespread Protestant denomination.

Recommendations

The following five historical recommendations reflect the years of conversation
held by Lutherans and Seventh-day Adventists. The following recommendations reflect
a seriousness of their dialogue but unfortunately I personally believe these
recommendations were not given serious follow-up.

1. We recommend that Adventists and Lutherans mutually recognize the
   basic Christian commitment of each other’s faith communions.
   a. We recommend that Lutherans do not treat the Seventh-day
      Adventist Church as a sect, but as a free church and a Christian
      world communion.

\footnote{Adventists and Lutherans in Conversation.}
b. We recommend that Adventists, in their relationship with other churches, seek to have this relationship affirmed. Lutherans are welcome to participate in the Adventists’ communion service.

2. A consensus has been reached on Scripture as the sole foundation for church authority and on Christ as the head of the church. Both the creedal and confessional statements, along with the writings of Ellen White, are seen as derived norms of faith—that is, these are derived from Scripture and can be tested by the Scriptures.

a. Each faith is urged to present the other’s faith view of church authority truthfully in a manner that represents their self-understanding.

b. We urge Adventists and Lutherans to use their public teaching and theological education to present the other’s faith communion view of church authority truthfully and unpolemically and in a manner that corresponds to their self-understanding.

c. We affirm the importance of giving Scripture priority in preaching and daily life. We consider personal Bible study to be a fundamental part of Christian life and encourage members of our churches to engage in joint study of the Bible.

3. While maintaining individual identity and convictions, it is recommended that Lutherans and Adventists encourage and nurture consultative linkage for the good of the total Christian community, understanding, and the betterment of humanity. Several areas of cooperation for a joint witness
suggest themselves, such as:

a. alleviating the suffering of humanity
b. religious liberty endeavors
c. ministerial associations
d. pastoral gatherings
e. joint prayer events
f. Bible Society work

4. We recommend that Lutherans and Adventists meet in occasional bilateral consultations to explore topics of mutual interest. We further recommend that first consultations should deal with the theological foundations and the spiritual dimensions of our observance of the day of rest and worship, with particular reference to modern society. Such a consultation should include a cross section of theologians, pastors, church leaders, and lay people from the two churches, and any other invitees.

5. We recommend that both the Lutheran World Federation and the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists develop plans for the dissemination and study of this report among their churches for mutual sharing and better understanding.

The following recommendations, after much research and reflection, are given with the specific intention to continue to engage the Seventh-day Adventist Church and Lutherans in further effective dialogue which will result in an evangelistic thrust and our working together.
1. My personal recommendation is that I make every effort to share this research with as many as possible as an evangelistic tool.

2. I recommend that we, the Seventh-day Adventist Church, in our dialogue with the Lutherans gain a spiritual insight into understanding Lutheran beliefs and practices, which in turn will result in effective evangelism.’

3. I recommend that my research findings be used by the Lutherans for further insight into the beliefs of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in an attempt to strengthen our relationship and create further dialogue.

4. I recommend that the Seventh-day Adventist Church seek to target Lutheran congregations via seminars, workshops, etc., so they may be educationally informed as to the beliefs and practices of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. This outreach will break down barriers and bias and create an understanding that will strengthen relationships between Adventists and Lutherans.

5. I recommend that we, Seventh-day Adventists and Lutherans, take seriously and implement what was dialogued previously regarding working together in Christian community, that is, working together in areas like human suffering, religious liberty, pastoral gatherings, ministerial associations, prayer events, and Bible studies.
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