

Central Luzon Conference & LL7 Sola Scriptura Ministries

Presents



ADVENTISM: Cultic or Christian to the Core?

A Cross-Centered Boot Camp for Adventist Evangelists

SYLLABUS

Club Filipino
Greenhills, San Juan, Metro Manila
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ADVENTISM: Cultic or Christian to the Core

“Present **the truth as it is in Jesus**, making plain the requirements of the law and the gospel. Present Christ, the way, the truth, and the life, and tell of His power to save all who come to Him.” (*GW 154*)

“**The heart of the Advent message is Christ and Him crucified**...let the world see and hear and know that the heart burden of Adventism is Christ and His salvation.” (*QOD 101-102*)

“Of all professing Christians, **Seventh-day Adventists should be foremost in uplifting Christ** before the world” (*GW 156*)

“The message of the gospel of His grace was to be given to the church in clear and distinct lines, **that the world should** no longer **say that Seventh-day Adventists** talk the law, the law, but do not **teach** or believe **Christ**.” (*TM 92*)

“The sacrifice of Christ as an atonement for sin is the great truth around which all other truths cluster. In order to be rightly understood and appreciated, **every truth in the Word of God**, from Genesis to Revelation, **must be studied in the light that streams from the cross of Calvary**.” (*GW 315*)

“Never should a sermon be preached, or Bible instruction in any line be given, without pointing the hearers to “the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.” John 1:29. **Every true doctrine makes Christ the center**, every precept receives force from His words.” (*6T 54*)

“**One interest will prevail**, one subject will swallow up every other, **Christ our righteousness**.”
(*RH 12/23/1890*)

“Several have written to me, inquiring if the message of **Justification By Faith is the third angel's message**, and I have answered, “It is the third angel's message **in verity**.” (*Ev 190*)

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OVERVIEW OF RELIGIONS

We can summarize the characteristics of religions in terms of its subscription to ultimate authority and its stance on salvation or eternal life. Here's a diagram of all religions with respect to those two tenets:

OVERVIEW OF RELIGIONS					
ULTIMATE AUTHORITY and SALVATION					
	CHRISTIAN				NON-CHRISTIAN
	CATHOLIC	PROTESTANT			
		EVANGELICAL	LIBERAL	CULTIC	
ULTIMATE AUTHORITY	<i>Church</i>	<i>Divine Revelation</i>	<i>Human Reason</i>	<i>Human Interpretation</i>	<i>Mystic Philosophy</i>
SALVATION	<i>Sacramental Grace</i>	<i>Divine Revelation</i>	<i>Societal Reform</i>	<i>Religious Affiliation</i>	<i>Human Effort</i>

Non-Christian religions were founded by spiritual guru(s) and / or philosopher(s) and they are sustained and practiced by the philosophies of their founder(s). For example, Buddhists are atheistic but they follow the Eightfold Path of Gautama Buddha that leads to Nirvana. At the heart of every pagan religion is the belief that salvation or eternity can be gained through human effort be it ascetic rituals or a series of reincarnations or purifications.

The line of demarcation between Catholicism and Protestantism was drawn by the Scriptural proclamations of the Reformation. Church traditions continue to be the basis of Catholic authority and Catholics persistently believe that they can earn salvation through the sacraments.

Protestantism can roughly be classified into 3 categories: Evangelical, Liberal and Cultic. The Evangelical wing has preserved the war cries of the Reformers, remaining true to Scriptural authority and Justification By Faith. The religious freedom made available by the Reformation reared two other branches of Protestantism. One is the Liberal school where human reason displaces the primacy of Biblical mandate and salvation is reduced to the betterment of society. The second is the cultic segment which is driven by the teachings and Scriptural interpretations of founder(s) and salvation is assured by religious affiliation(s).

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PERCEPTIONS OF ADVENTISM

Where does Adventism belong in the grid? We are definitely under the Protestant umbrella but are we evangelical, liberal, or cultic?

The *Wikipedia* states:

“**Adventism** is a Christian movement... started by William Miller, whose followers became known as Millerites. Today, the largest church within the movement is the Seventh-day Adventist Church. The Adventist family of churches are regarded today as conservative Protestants” (*Handbook of Denominations in the United States*, 12th edition. Nashville: Abingdon Press).

The *Christian Research Institute (CRI)*, Evangelical watchdog of cults, the comments of its late founder Walter Martin:

“It is our position that the evaluation given by Barnhouse and Martin still stands for that segment of Adventism which holds to the position stated in **Questions On Doctrine**... Though some within this group hold to doctrines which are not part of the evangelical mainstream, they do affirm the foundational doctrines of historic Christianity, particularly the Pauline or Reformation understanding of justification by grace through faith alone (Rom. 3-4). To this group, however many still remain, we extend a hand of fellowship and encouragement...”

Even so, these sympathetic descriptions are few. Instead, a number of Christian organizations flatly label Seventh-day Adventism as a cult. For example, here's the answer of *Christian Apologetics and Research Ministry (CARM)* to the question, “Does CARM recommend the Seventh-day Adventist Church?”

“No, CARM does not recommend attending the Seventh-day Adventist church. There are too many problems within Seventh-day Adventism to recommend it as a safe church. Though there are Seventh-day Adventist groups that are within orthodoxy, there are too many of them that are not.”

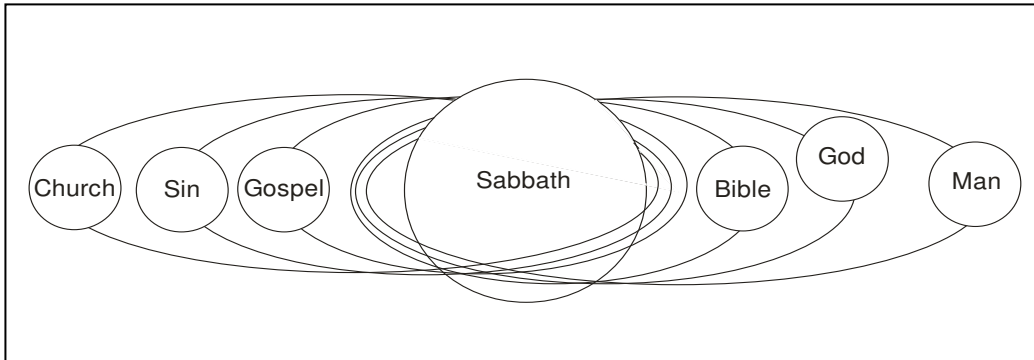
In the same vein, publishers of *Apologetics Index* asserts:

“Seventh-day Adventism's doctrines span the range from orthodox through aberrant, heterodox, sub-orthodox and heretical. For this reason, the publishers of Apologetics Index advise Christians not to get involved in Seventh-day Adventism, and urges those who are already part of the SDA church to instead seek out a church that teaches sound, biblical theology.”

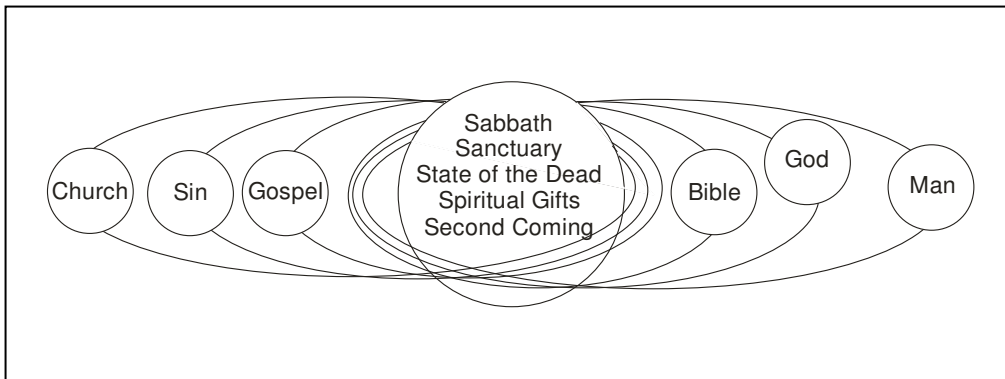
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Dan Day, in his insightful book “A Guide to Marketing Adventism,” points out three contrasting perceptions of Adventism:

1. **SABBATH AS CORE.** Everything else in the church is subsidiary to the Sabbath. It is the focus of our beliefs and practices. Every-thing else, in this view, is peripheral to the Sabbath, including the gospel of Jesus Christ. The core of Adventism is the Sabbath.

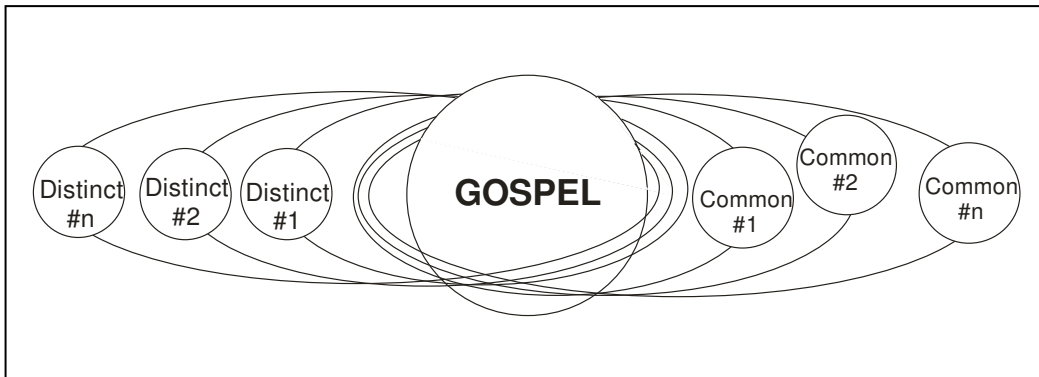


2. **A CLUSTER OF BELIEFS AS CORE.** The Sabbath is one of a cluster of beliefs that lie at the core of Adventism. The other members of Adventism’s “Big Five”---the second coming of Christ, the sanctuary teaching, the state of the dead, and spiritual gifts---are also given equal billing with the Sabbath, along with the gospel and church standards. Outside this central cluster are other beliefs of less standing, such as baptism, tithing, and creationism.



3. **THE GOSPEL AS CORE.** The gospel of Jesus Christ is shown at the center, with various doctrinal issues circling around it, at equidistant orbits, suggesting no judgment as to priority between them. This is clearly a gospel-oriented model.

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Dan Day further comments:

“In my opinion (perception) 1 represents an extremely cultic proposition ... one from which we must distance ourselves if we’re to be perceived as legitimate members of the Christian family...

The problem with “Jesus and ...” (perception 2) perspectives is that they confuse us. Our focus becomes foggy. And after a while, our commitment begins to waver, and the clarity of our faith begins to be distorted...

I’m convinced many contemporary Adventists generally hold this view (perception 3). In many ways, it parallels my own. However, it is not the way we are typically perceived.”

Before outlining the above perceptions, Day qualifies, “Now, it would be easy to miss the point here. I am writing about perception, not reality --- how we appear to be, not how we feel in our hearts we actually are.”

The question remains: “Is Adventism cultic or Christian to the core?” Some related queries are: “Is there a difference between Adventists and Adventism?” As Adventists, do we have a right understanding of Adventism? How much does this understanding influence our cultic perception by some Christians? Is that cultic perception only apparent but not real?

These series of learning sessions will attempt to answer these questions. In the process, it will seek to prove that Adventism is not cultic but Christian to the core. With much prayer, we hope that participants will leave with the passion to proclaim the Adventist distinctive beliefs in the light of the Cross of Christ. With such commitment, we hope we all can play a part in flooding the world with the glorious grace of God in the gospel of Christ. Then, He can come back and take us home where we can worship Him forever.

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CHRIST AT THE CENTER

A Hindu once asked Dr. E. Stanley Jones, the great missionary to India, "What has Christianity to offer that our religion has not?" He replied, "Jesus Christ."

Christ made astounding claims about Himself, claims that just weren't those of a mere human teacher. No other religious teacher made such claims. Gautama Buddha (563-483 B.C.), founder of Buddhism, a religion which has influenced perhaps half of the human race, believed that he had remarkable teachings to offer men, but he never instructed anyone to worship him.

Confucius (551-479 B.C.), the first and greatest Chinese philosopher, with charming humility declared: "How dare I lay claim to holiness or love? A man of endless craving, who never tires teaching, I might be called, but nothing more."

Mohammed (A.D. 570-632), the Arabian prophet and founder of Islam, laid claim to no special significance for himself. He said he was just a man like other men. An old tradition has him say: "Praise me not as Jesus the Son of Mary is praised."

Indeed, the most important thing about Buddhism is not Gautama the Buddha, but his teachings. Muslims reject the title "Mohammedanism," for Mohammed is thought to be only a carrier of the truth and not divine in any way. The same can be said of Confucianism, Hinduism, Shinto, and other non-Christian religions. The significant feature about the Christian faith, however, is not the Sermon on the Mount---as great as it may be---but the person of Jesus Christ. **Christianity (Christendom, the Christian faith) is because Christ is.**

Christ not only proclaimed truth, He claimed He is the Truth. Christ not only showed the way to God, He claimed He is the only Way to the Father. Christ not only promised life to His followers, He claimed that He is Life. In his thought-provoking book "Christ Among Other Gods," Dr. Erwin Lutzer elaborates these points as follows:

During the Russian revolution, Lenin promised that if Communism were implemented there would be bread for every household, yet he did not have the nerve to say, "I am the bread of life; he who comes to Me shall never hunger..."

Hitler claimed he would produce a powerful super human race, a reich that will last a thousand years, yet he never said, "Without me you can do nothing."

Buddha taught enlightenment yet he died seeking more light. He could not say, "I am the light of the world; he who follows Me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life."

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Mohammed claimed that he and his tribes were descendants of Abraham but he did not say, "Before Abraham was, I AM."

Sigmund Freud believed that psychotherapy would heal people's emotional and spiritual pains. But he could not say, "Peace I leave with you; My peace I give to you; not as the world gives, do I give unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, nor let it be fearful...for I have overcome the world."

New Age gurus say that all of us will be reincarnated, yet not one of them can claim, "I am the resurrection and the life: he that believes in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live."

Take a superficial look at Christ and other gods and you might think there are similarities. Take a closer look and you will discover that they are separated by an unbridgeable chasm. Christ has little in common with other teachers, prophets, Swamis, and gurus. It is not just that He is greater than others; in His presence they all disappear into insignificance!

The classic literary piece "The Incomparable Christ" ends with:

"The names of the past, proud statesmen of Greece and Rome have come and gone. The names of the past scientists, philosophers, and theologians have come and gone. But the name of this Man multiplies more and more. Though time has spread two thousand years between the people of this generation and the mockers at His crucifixion, He still lives. His enemies could not destroy Him, and the grave could not hold Him. He stands forth upon the highest pinnacle of heavenly glory, proclaimed of God, acknowledged by angels, adored by saints, and feared by devils, as the risen, personal Christ, our Lord and Savior."

Apostle Paul's timeless declaration confirms the above:

God put this power to work in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly places, 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 the age to come. (Ephesians 1:20-21 NRSV)

Our space-time continuum converges in Christ—in the cultures of both geological hemispheres and the chronological divide of human history. Even with the secular measures to replace the time reckoning B.C. – A.D. (Before Christ and Anno Domini) with B.C.E. – C.E. (Before Common Era and Common Era), the question remains, "What demarcates the two eras?" In the midst of polytheistic religious tolerance, the inescapable answer is Christ.

ONE SOLITARY LIFE

This is poem about the life of Christ is attributed to James Allen Francis.

**He was born in an obscure village, the child of a peasant.
He grew up in another village, where he worked in a
carpenter's shop until he was 30.
Then, for three years, he was an itinerant preacher.**

**He never wrote a book. He never held an office.
He never had a family or owned a home.
He didn't go to college. He never lived in a big city.
He never traveled 200 miles from the place where he was born.
He did none of the things that usually accompany greatness.
He had no credentials but himself.**

**He was only 33 when the tide of public opinion
turned against him.
His friends ran away. One of them denied him.
He was turned over to his enemies and
went through the mockery of a trial.
He was nailed to a cross between two thieves.
While he was dying, his executioners gambled for his garments,
the only property he had on earth.
When he was dead, he was laid in a borrowed grave,
through the pity of a friend.**

**Twenty centuries have come and gone, and today
he is the central figure of the human race.
I am well within the mark when I say that
all the armies that ever marched,
all the navies that ever sailed,
all the parliaments that ever sat,
all the kings that ever reigned—put together
--have not affected the life of man on this earth**

- **as much as that ONE, SOLITARY LIFE.**

ADVENTISM: Cultic or Christian to the Core

THE CHRIST EVENT

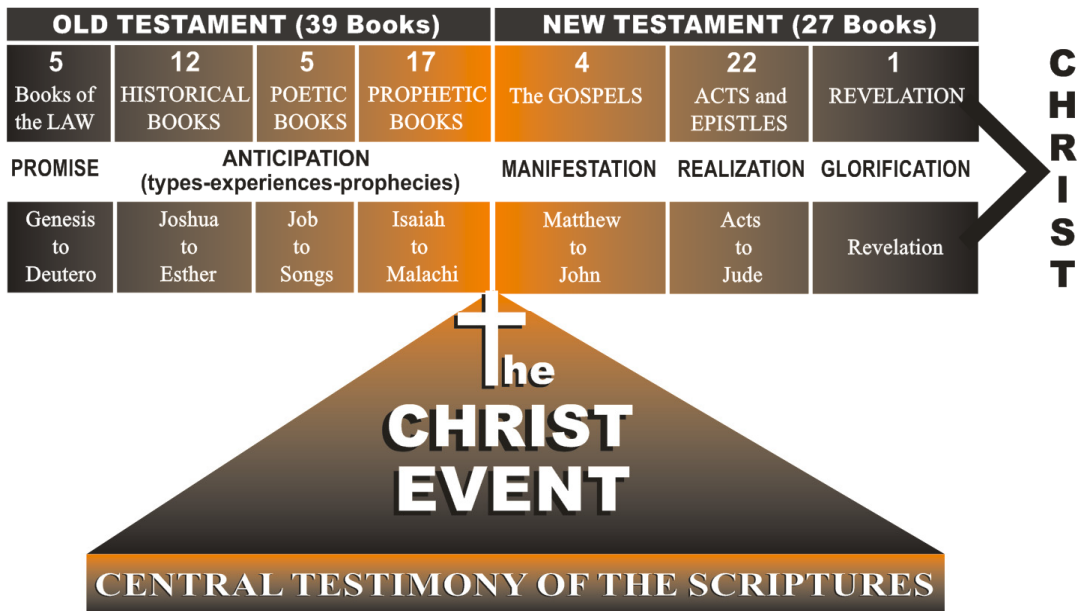
New Testament stalwart J. Gresham Machen described the uniqueness of Christianity in the following words:

“All the ideas of Christianity might be discovered in some other religion, yet there should be in that other religion no Christianity. For Christianity depends, not upon a complex of ideas, but upon the narration of an event.”

This event, Apostle Paul describes in his first letter to the Corinthians:

“By this gospel you are saved, if you hold firmly to the word I preached to you...For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance: that Christ died for our sins according to Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to Scriptures...” (1 Cor. 15:2-4)

The Christ Event is the gospel, the central testimony of the Scriptures.



“And beginning at Moses and all the Prophets, He expounded to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself.” (Luke 24:27)

“You diligently study the Scriptures because you think that by them you possess eternal life. These are the Scriptures that testify about me, yet you refuse to come to me to have life.” (John 5:39, 40)

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“But now a righteousness from God, apart from law, has been made known, to which the Law and the Prophets testify. This righteousness from God comes through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe.” (Rom. 3:21, 22)

“I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God for the Salvation of everyone who believes: first for the Jew, then for the Gentile. For in the gospel a righteousness from God is revealed, a righteousness that is by faith from first to last, just as it is written: ‘The righteous shall live by faith.’” (Romans 1:16, 17)

Let’s outline the progression of thoughts in the preceding Biblical texts:

1. All the Scriptures point to Christ. (Luke 24:27)
2. The Scriptures testify about Christ that we can come to Him and have life. (John 5:39, 40)
3. The Christ-centered Scriptures (the Law and the Prophets) testify to the righteousness of God that comes through faith to all who believe. (Romans 3:21, 22)
4. The gospel of Justification By Faith is the Christ Event: the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

Following is a diagrammatic form of Christ-centeredness according to the testimony of the Scriptures:



The Christ Event is His sinless life and vicarious death. His sinless life provides a perfect righteousness to those who put their faith in Him and gives them right standing before God. His vicarious death paid the infinite penalty of sin and provides forgiveness to all who will accept Him as Savior.

The gospel is at the very core of Christian confession and conduct.

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THE HEART OF ADVENTISM

In like manner, at the very heart of Adventism is the Christ Event:

“The heart of the Advent message is Christ and Him crucified...let the world see and hear and know that the heart burden of Adventism is Christ and His salvation.” *(QOD 101-102)*

“Of all professing Christians, Seventh-day Adventists should be foremost in uplifting Christ before the world...The great center of attraction, Christ Jesus, must not be left out. It is at the cross of Christ that mercy and truth meet together, and righteousness and peace kiss each other.—” *(GW 156)*

“Lift up Jesus, you that teach the people, lift Him up in sermon, in song, in prayer. Let all your powers be directed to pointing souls, confused, bewildered, lost, to “the Lamb of God”...Let the science of salvation be the burden of every sermon, the theme of every song. Let it be poured forth in every supplication. Bring nothing into your preaching to supplement Christ, the wisdom and power of God.” *(GW 156)*

“The message of the gospel of His grace was to be given to the church in clear and distinct lines, that the world should no longer say that Seventh-day Adventists talk the law, the law, but do not teach or believe Christ.” *(TM 92)*

Christ and His righteousness--let this be our platform, the very life of our faith. *(RH 08/31/1905)*

“Christ crucified for our sins, Christ risen from the dead, Christ ascended high, is the science of salvation that we are to learn and to teach.” *(8T 287)*

“The sacrifice of Christ as an atonement for sin is the great truth around which all other truths cluster. In order to be rightly understood and appreciated, every truth in the Word of God, from Genesis to Revelation, must be studied in the light that streams from the cross of Calvary.” *(GW 315)*

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JUSTIFICATION BY FAITH

The doctrine of Justification By Faith is so pivotal to the Christian faith that the apostle Paul proclaimed a curse on anyone who would pervert it in his epistle to the Galatians:

*"I am astonished that you are so quickly deserting the one who called you by the grace of Christ and are turning to a different gospel-- which is really no gospel at all. Evidently some people are throwing you into confusion and are trying to pervert the gospel of Christ. **8** But even if we or an angel from heaven should preach a gospel other than the one we preached to you, let him be eternally condemned! As we have already said, so now I say again: If anybody is preaching to you a gospel other than what you accepted, let him be eternally condemned!" (Gal. 1:6-9)*

Martin Luther, the father of the Protestant Reformation, called Justification By Faith "the article upon which the church stands or falls" and wrote:

"This doctrine [Justification By Faith] is the head and the cornerstone. It alone begets, nourishes, builds, preserves, and defends the church of God; and without it the church of God cannot exist for one hour.... For no one who does not hold this article – or, to use Paul's expression, this 'sound doctrine' (Titus 2:1) – is able to teach aright in the church or successfully to resist any adversary . . . this is the heel of the Seed that opposes the old serpent and crushes its head. That is why Satan, in turn, cannot but persecute it."

Luther further points out the centrality of Justification By Faith:

"This doctrine can never be urged and taught enough. If this doctrine is overthrown or disappears, then all knowledge of the truth is lost at the same time. If this doctrine flourishes, then all good things flourish, religion, true worship, the glory of God, and the right knowledge of all conditions of life and of all things?"

Ellen White herself was most emphatic on the same centrality:

"One interest will prevail, one subject will swallow up every other, Christ our righteousness." (RH 12/23/1890)

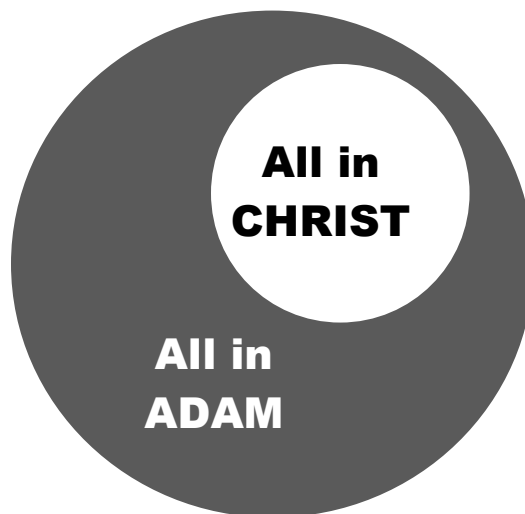
"Several have written to me, inquiring if the message of Justification By Faith is the third angel's message, and I have answered, "It is the third angel's message in verity." (Ev 190)

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The most comprehensive New Testament passage on Justification By Faith is Romans 5:12-21 which contrasts the two Adams in the Bible:

12 Therefore, just as sin entered the world through one man, and death through sin, and in this way death came to all men, because all sinned-- **13** for before the law was given, sin was in the world. But sin is not taken into account when there is no law. **14** Nevertheless, death reigned from the time of Adam to the time of Moses, even over those who did not sin by breaking a command, as did Adam, who was a pattern of the one to come. **15** But the gift is not like the trespass. For if the many died by the trespass of the one man, how much more did God's grace and the gift that came by the grace of the one man, Jesus Christ, overflow to the many! **16** Again, the gift of God is not like the result of the one man's sin: The judgment followed one sin and brought condemnation, but the gift followed many trespasses and brought justification. **17** For if, by the trespass of the one man, death reigned through that one man, how much more will those who receive God's abundant provision of grace and of the gift of righteousness reign in life through the one man, Jesus Christ. **18** Consequently, just as the result of one trespass was condemnation for all men, so also the result of one act of righteousness was justification that brings life for all men. **19** For just as through the disobedience of the one man the many were made sinners, so also through the obedience of the one man the many will be made righteous. **20** The law was added so that the trespass might increase. But where sin increased, grace increased all the more, **21** so that, just as sin reigned in death, so also grace might reign through righteousness to bring eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord."

ADAM and CHRIST



The Entire HUMAN RACE

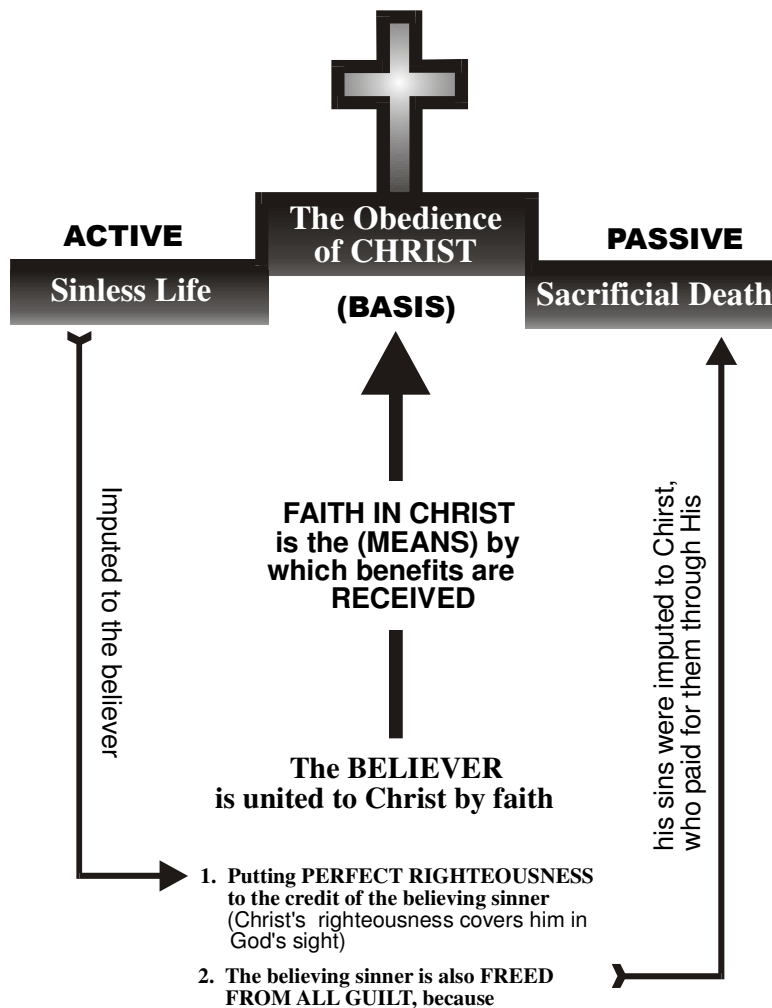
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In order for a sinner to be accepted by a Holy God, it is necessary for him to fulfill the law perfectly, both as penalty and precept. Two problems must then be resolved:

First, the penalty due for sin must be paid in full. God's nature and law requires satisfaction for all disobedience.

Second, God requires of all men a perfect obedience.

Justification of the sinner comprises not only pardon, but also a title to perfection. The former is related to Christ's passive righteousness, the latter to his active. Christ's substitutionary death saves the believing sinner from the punishment which the law exacts, and Christ's perfect obedience establishes for him a right to the reward which the law promises.



ADVENTISM: Cultic or Christian to the Core

TWO ASPECTS OF SALVATION

The gospel is the good news that Jesus did what we cannot do for ourselves. This makes the gospel very different from other religions. As someone has said:

Religion says, "Attain", the gospel says "Obtain."
 Religion says, "Attempt", the gospel says, "Accept."
 Religion says, "Try"; the gospel says, "Trust."
 Religion says "Do this;" the gospel says, "It is done."

Therefore, Justification By Faith is God's act of salvation in Christ and has nothing to do with man's act. However, there are 2 aspects of salvation:

2 ASPECTS OF SALVATION	
God's work IN CHRIST outside and above us JUSTIFICATION	God's work IN US by the Holy Spirit SANCTIFICATION

In the chart of the stories of Creation and Sin are blocks for "BASIS" (position or cause) and "OUTCOME" (experience or result). The gospel is the "BASIS" quadrant while our response to the gospel is the "OUTCOME." Note that in the Christ Event, both aspects of salvation merge.

STORY OF SALVATION				
	SALVATION PROVIDED	SALVATION OFFERED	SALVATION APPLIED	SALVATION REVEALED
BASIS	The CHRIST EVENT (C.E.)	Holy Spirit makes the C.E. a present reality	Imputation of C.E. to believer (Justification)	Second Advent of Christ
				Final Judgment
OUTCOME	Vicarious LIFE and DEATH of Christ	Conversion: Repentance and Faith	New Birth	Eternal Life (Glorification)
			Holy Living (Sanctification)	No more sin

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ARE YOU CATHOLIC OR PROTESTANT?

Do you have a Catholic or Protestant view of salvation? Test yourself and see. Evaluate each of the following ten paired statements and mark the one that you think best states a Protestant doctrinal position.

- (1a) God gives a man right standing with Himself by mercifully accounting him innocent and virtuous.
- (1b) God gives a man right standing with Himself by actually making him into an innocent and virtuous person.
- (2a) God gives a man right standing with Himself by placing Christ's goodness and virtue to his credit.
- (2b) God gives a man right standing with Himself by putting Christ's goodness and virtue into his heart.
- (3a) God accepts the believer because of the moral excellence found in Jesus Christ.
- (3b) God makes the believer acceptable by infusing Christ's moral excellence into his life.
- (4a) If a sinner becomes "born-again" (the regenerating, transforming process of character), he will achieve right standing with God.
- (4b) If the sinner is granted right standing with God through faith ("born-again"), he will then experience transformation of character.
- (5a) We receive right standing with God by faith alone.
- (5b) We receive right standing with God by faith which has become active by love.
- (6a) We achieve right standing with God by having Christ live out His life of obedience in us.
- (6b) We achieve right standing with God by accepting the fact that He obeyed the law perfectly for us.
- (7a) We achieve right standing with God by following Christ's example by the help of His enabling grace.
- (7b) We follow Christ's example because His life has given us right standing with God.
- (8a) God first pronounces that we are good in His sight, then gives us His Spirit to make us good.
- (8b) God sends His Spirit to make us good, and then He will pronounce that we are good.
- (9a) Christ's finished work on the cross and intercession at God's right hand gives us favor in the sight of God.
- (9b) It is the indwelling Christ that gives us favor in God's sight.
- (10a) Only by the imputation of Christ's righteousness through faith can we fully satisfy the claims of the Ten Commandments.
- (10b) By the power of the Holy Spirit living in us, we can fully satisfy the claims of the Ten Commandments.

ADVENTISM: Cultic or Christian to the Core

DECIPHERING THE DISTINCTION

Historically, Roman Catholicism has always taught that we are saved by grace, and grace alone. They emphasize that very strongly. The 16th century Council of Trent makes this point very clear (*The Council of Trent was a general council of the Roman Catholic Church. Its sixth session, January, 1547, met to define the Catholic doctrine of justification. The council issued a series of thirty canons on justification. Following are three of them*).

Canon 1. If anyone says that man can be justified before God by his own works, whether done by his own natural powers or through the teaching of the law, without divine grace through Jesus Christ, let him be anathema.

Canon 3. If anyone says that without the predisposing inspiration of the Holy Ghost and without His help, man can believe, hope, love or be repentant as he ought, so that the grace of justification may be bestowed upon him, let him be anathema.

Canon 11. If anyone says that men are justified either by the sole imputation of the justice of Christ or by the sole remission of sins, to the exclusion of the grace and the charity which is poured forth in their hearts by the Holy Ghost, and remains in them, or also that the grace by which we are justified is only the good will of God, let him be anathema

The council also decreed that Christ merited our justification by His death on the cross, and also that "none of those things that precede justification, whether faith or works, merit the grace of justification. For, if by grace, it is not now by works, otherwise, as the Apostle says, grace is no more grace."

The two basic impressions of Roman Catholicism in the Philippines are:

1. The Biblical aberrations and religious rituals she espouses that stems from her blending of pagan and Christian traditions, and
2. The doctrine of salvation by works she mandates. This second notion is more pronounced as it is physically displayed by Catholic flagellates during the Lent season every year. It seems that the fundamental difference between a Catholic and a Protestant is that a Catholic penitently works to be saved and a Protestant kept the commandments of God through the power of the Holy Spirit to be assured of salvation.

The first perception can prove valid but the second is inaccurate.

ADVENTISM: Cultic or Christian to the Core

A Doctrinal Catechism

by Stephen Keenan

- Q. What is justification?
A. It is a grace which makes us friends of God.
- Q. Can a sinner merit this justifying grace?
A. No, he cannot; because all the good works which the sinner performs whilst he is in a state of mortal sin, are dead works, which have no merit sufficient to justify.
- Q. Is it an article of the Catholic faith, that the sinner, in mortal sin, cannot merit the grace of justification?
A. Yes; it is decreed in the seventh chapter of the sixth session of the Council of Trent, that neither faith, nor good works, preceding justification, can merit the grace of justification.
- Q. How then is the sinner justified?
A. He is justified gratuitously by the pure mercy of God, not on account of his own or any human merit, but purely through the merits of Jesus Christ; for Jesus Christ is our only mediator of redemption, who alone, by his passion and death, has reconciled us to his Father.
- Q. Why then do Protestants charge us with believing, that the sinner can merit the remission of his sins?
A. Their ignorance of the Catholic doctrine is the cause of this, as well as many other false charges. -pp.138, 139.

Catholicism in no way subscribes to salvation by sheer works. Her tenet of being justified depends on man cooperating with God while empowered by the Holy Spirit, to merit eternal life through “infused grace” in the sacraments. The focus is God’s work IN US and not God’s work OUTSIDE OF US in Christ.

JUSTIFICATION VIEWS	
CATHOLIC	PROTESTANT
Infused Grace	Imputed Righteousness
The Holy Spirit's work IN US	God's work IN CHRIST

Lutheran Bible commentator Todd Wilken succinctly stated: “If my Justification depends on my moral improvement throughout life, if grace is a power God gives me to cooperate in my salvation, if faith includes my works, then the work of Jesus Christ is insufficient to save me. It's this simple: if you get Justification wrong, you get the Gospel wrong. And a wrong Gospel can't save sinners. This was the whole reason for the Reformation.”

ADVENTISM: Cultic or Christian to the Core

The Seven Roman Catholic Sacraments			
Sacrament	Procedure	Significance	Vatican II Emphasis
Baptism	Priest performs the rite on infants	Produces rebirth, "infant Christian;" necessary for salvation; Frees one from original sin and guilt; unites one to Christ and the church.	Baptism to receive greater emphasis; convert to receive instruction beforehand; illustrates commitment to Christ; emphasizes unity of all members in Christ.
Confirmation	Bishop lays hands on person whereby he receives the Holy Spirit	Necessary sequence after baptism; with baptism, part of the "sacrament of initiation;" person receives the Holy Spirit, bringing one to maturity and dedication.	Endeavor to unite baptism and confirmation as one act of initiation; separating the 2 sacraments suggests there are degrees of membership in the church.
Eucharist	Priest celebrates the Mass. Upon his pronouncing, "This is my body," the bread and wine becomes the body and blood of Christ.	The Mass is ongoing sacrifice of Christ, except the Mass is not bloody; participant receive forgiveness from venial sins.	Frequent participation encouraged to increase "union with Christ;" ceremony now involves lay people; shorter, simpler ceremony; more use of Scripture.
Confession (Penance)	Three steps: (1) sorrow for sin; (2) oral confession to the priest; (3) absolution of sins by priest.	Having confessed all known sins to the priest and stated intention not to sin in the future, adherent receives absolution from sins by priest.	New view of sin: distorted personal relationship and motives; allows for general confession and absolution; general confession in the form of singing, Scripture, prayer, sermon, self-examination, confession, absolution.
Holy Orders	Ordination to office: bishop, priest, deacon. As successor to the apostles, bishop ordains priest.	Confers on recipient the priestly power to mediate grace through sacraments.	Greater involvement of lay people in ministry; lay people to develop and use gifts in church; reduced distinction between priest and people.
Marriage	Vow are exchanged in the presence of the priest.	Sign of union of Christ and church; indissoluble because marriage of Christ and the church is indissoluble.	Marriage is not only for procreation; greater emphasis on love in marriage; mass permitted at weddings with baptized non-Catholics,
Anointing the sick	Bishop consecrates oil; person near death anointed by priest.	Removes obstacles left by sin which prevent the soul from entering glory.	Changed from "extreme unction" to "anointing the sick."

ADVENTISM: Cultic or Christian to the Core

LAW AND GOSPEL

The reformers used a Biblical motif to ensure Justification By Faith occupied its central position, i.e. the proper distinction between the Law and the Gospel. In his sermon of Galatians, Martin Luther asserted:

“This difference between the Law and the Gospel is the height of knowledge in Christendom. Every person and all persons who assume or glory in the name of Christian should know and be able to state this difference. If this ability is lacking, one cannot tell a Christian from a heathen or a Jew; of such supreme importance is this differentiation. This is why St. Paul so strongly insists on a clean-cut and proper differentiating of these two doctrines.”

By the proper distinction between the Law and the Gospel the centrality of Justification By Faith is maintained. Any other emphasis leads only to bitter controversy and tragic confusion. Luther adds, “Hence, whoever knows well this art of distinguishing between Law and Gospel, him place at the head and call him a doctor of Holy Scripture.” This principle is foundational to sound Biblical interpretation.

The LAW is the DEMAND of GOD
The GOSPEL is the PROVISION of GOD

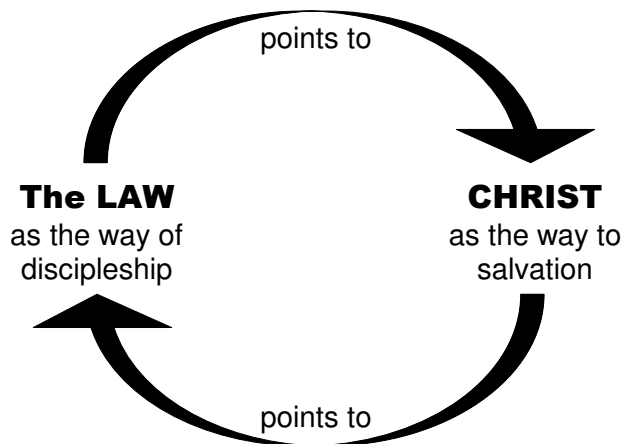


To use an analogy: If we compare doctrine to a wheel in which all of the doctrines are spokes radiating from the central doctrine of justification, then the distinction between Law and Gospel may be described as the rim which holds each spoke in place and keeps it oriented to the center.

ADVENTISM: Cultic or Christian to the Core

Most if not all deviations from Biblical truth, comes from a faulty view of the relationship between law and gospel. Church history may be seen as a struggle to keep law and gospel in proper tension. When the law is emphasized so as to eclipse the glory of the gospel, the church falls under the bondage of legalism. When the gospel is preached so as to undermine the authority of the law, the church falls into the heresy of antinomianism.

The LAW is not legalism. Legalism is the wrong use of the LAW, The GOSPEL is not cheap grace. Cheap Grace is the incorrect application of the GOSPEL. Simply put, legalism is a GOSPEL-less law while antinomianism (cheap grace) is a LAW-less gospel. The following flow describes the distinction between the LAW and the GOSPEL (CHRIST).



Only in the central truth of Justification By Faith do we find law and gospel preserved in proper tension. We may liken the truth of Justification By Faith to the straight and narrow path, high and lifted up above the dark valleys of error. There are two ways to fall off the path. On one side is the precipice of legalism; on the other side is the chasm of antinomianism.

Moreover, the Reformers saw three uses of the LAW in the Scriptures:

1. PRESERVING (Political) restrains outward expression of sin to preserve life (Romans 2:14, 15)
2. TEACHING (Pedagogical) exposes sin and the need of a Savior (Romans 7:7; Galatians 3:24)
3. GUIDING (Normative) provides an infallible rule of practice (Romans 7:10, 22)

ADVENTISM: Cultic or Christian to the Core

REFORMATION SLOGANS

The Protestant Reformation was epitomized by five slogans, five Latin phrases that embodied the principles and convictions for which it stood: The Latin word *sola* or *solus* or *solus* means “alone” or “only” and emphasized the singularity of each component of the Reformation’s essential principles.



OLA SCRIPTURA (Scripture alone)

OLUS CHRISTUS (Christ Alone)

OLA GRATIA (Grace Alone)

OLA FIDE (Faith Alone)

OLI DEO GLORIA (The Glory of God Alone)

Sola scriptura is the teaching that the Bible alone is our only authority for faith (what we believe) and conduct (how we live). “All Scripture is God-breathed and profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness: so that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.” (2 Timothy 3:16-17)

Solus Christus is the teaching that it is in Christ’s perfect life and substitutionary death alone that we have salvation. Through Him and Him alone, we have the forgiveness of our sins and are declared righteous before God. “For there is no other name under heaven that has been given among men by which we must be saved.” (Acts 4:12)

Sola Gratia is the teaching that salvation is a gift from God and is all of grace and grace alone. “(He) who saved us and called us to a holy calling, not because of our works but because of his own purpose and grace, which he gave us in Christ Jesus before the ages began.” (2 Timothy 1:9)

Sola Fide is the teaching that faith alone is the instrument of our salvation. Salvation is not by works; it is by faith, that is, trusting in the Lord Jesus Christ. Even saving faith is a gift of God’s grace. “For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast.” (Ephesians 2:8-9)

Soli Deo Gloria is the teaching that all glory is to be due to God alone, since salvation is accomplished solely through His will and action. All of life is to be lived to the glory of God in contrast to the monastic division of life into sacred versus secular. “For from Him and through Him and to Him are all things. To Him be the glory forever. Amen.” (Romans 11:36)

ADVENTISM: Cultic or Christian to the Core

NOTHING BUT THE GOSPEL

The cry of the Reformation was not simply FAITH!, GRACE!, CHRIST!, THE SCRIPTURE!, or THE GLORY OF GOD! Instead, the cry was FAITH ALONE!, GRACE ALONE!, CHRIST ALONE!, SCRIPTURE ALONE!, THE GLORY OF GOD ALONE! These were exclusive claims that affected how they viewed the Gospel:

THE GOSPEL	
CAN BE	CANNOT BE
Accepted	Earned
Believed	Experienced
Centralized	Extended
Declared	Exhorted

1. **One can ACCEPT but NOT EARN the gospel.** The gospel is the gift of God's grace in Christ. We can accept it but we can never earn it; otherwise, it ceases to be a gift.
2. **One can BELIEVE but NOT EXPERIENCE the gospel.** The gospel is the life, death, and resurrection of Christ. We can believe in His righteousness and sacrifice but we cannot experience it since it is the experience of Christ and not ours.
3. **One can CENTRALIZE but NOT EXTEND the gospel.** The gospel is the hub of the Bible. We can centralize it but we cannot extend it to mean other doctrines. The Sabbath is not the gospel. Neither is the state of the dead, the second coming, nor the new birth. We can, however, understand and teach the preceding tenets as they are connected or related to the gospel.
4. **One can DECLARE but NOT EXHORT the gospel.** The gospel is the "good news" of salvation in Christ. We can declare it but we cannot exhort it. The Bible contains an abundance of exhortations but they are not the gospel. The only valid impetus for heeding them is the gospel but again, they are not the gospel.

ADVENTISM: Cultic or Christian to the Core

REFORMED FAITH AND EVANGELICALISM

Luther never published a systematic theology because he believed that God and His Word are ultimately beyond human comprehension. The Swiss Reformers led by John Calvin organized and systematized Protestant theology. In the process, theology stemming from their works has been usually identified as "Reformed" while that emanating from Luther is called Lutheran or Evangelical. In common usage, Evangelical simply means Protestant as opposed to Roman Catholic. Reformed theology is normally equated with Calvinism.

Calvinism has summarized its position in the famous acronym TULIP, and this serves as a useful way to compare the Reformed and Lutheran theologies.

5 POINTS OF CALVINISM		
Doctrine	Explanation	LUTHERAN VIEW
T otal Depravity	As a result of Adam's fall, all humanity is dead in trespasses and sin. Man is therefore, unable to save himself.	Man is totally enslaved to sin and the devil. On his own he does not have the ability to believe.
U nconditional Election	In eternity past God elected certain people to salvation. Election and predestination are unconditional; they are not based on man's response.	God elects with no regard to future merits. Faith is a gift of God. God did not predestine only a plan but individuals, unconditionally unto salvation.
L imited Atonement	God determined that Christ should die only for all whom God has elected to be saved.	Christ died for every individual, including those who will not be saved.
I rresistible Grace	God draws the elect to Himself through irresistible grace. God makes man willing to come to Him.	God's grace is truly offered to all, and since some are not saved, God's grace must be resistible.
P erseverance of the Saints	The elect will persevere in faith. None whom God has elected will be lost; they are eternally secure.	All of God's elect will be finally saved. Some who have true faith fall away, yet the elect will be finally saved.

In Reformed and Evangelical churches and their many revivalist descendants, a great conflict continues between the Calvinists and Arminians over the tension between God's sovereignty and human responsibility. The two consistent positions are named after French theologian John Calvin (1509-1564) and the Dutch theologian Jacobus Arminius (1560-1609). Calvinism emphasizes divine sovereignty while Arminianism focuses on human responsibility.

ADVENTISM: Cultic or Christian to the Core

Presbyterians, Dutch Reformed, some Episcopalians, and many Baptists hold to the Calvinist position, while Methodists, Holiness churches (Nazarene, etc.), Assemblies of God, many Episcopalians and many Baptists hold to the Arminian position.

ARMINIANISM (The Remonstrance)	
DOCTRINE	EXPLANATION
D iminished Depravity	The sinner has the power to either respond to God and be saved or resist God's grace and perish (free will or human ability)
A brrogated Election	God elected those whom He foreknew would fulfill the condition believing the gospel (conditional election).
I mpersonal Atonement	In His atonement, Christ made it possible for everyone to be saved but only those who believe will be saved (unlimited atonement).
S edentary Grace	While God's saving grace can save, it can be resisted and thwarted by man (resistible grace).
Y ielding Eternal Uncertainty	Those who are saved can lose their salvation by failing to keep up their faith (falling from grace).

If the cultic branding of Adventists is to be debunked, an effective method would be to start with common ground. This calls for understanding the Scriptural interpretations of both sides. The issue involves the paradox between the Biblical teachings on divine sovereignty and human responsibility.

Calvinists come from the divine sovereignty angle while Arminians stress human responsibility. As in all theological polarities, there are extremes. Extreme Calvinism puts too much emphasis on divine sovereignty to the exclusion of human responsibility. Arminianism in the deep end, advocates human free will and responsibility at the expense of divine sovereignty.

Questions and Doctrine, pp. 405-406, states:

The Seventh-day Adventist Church is neither Calvinist nor totally Arminian in theology. Recognizing the virtues of each, we have endeavored to assimilate that which to us appears to be the clear teaching of the Word of God. While we believe John Calvin was one of the greatest of the Protestant Reformers, we do not share his view that some men "are predestinated to eternal death without any demerit of their own, merely by his sovereign will" (Calvin, *Institutes*, bk. 3, ch. 23, par. 2). Or that men "are not all created with a similar destiny; but eternal life is foreordained for some, and eternal damnation for others" (*Ibid*, bk. 3, ch. 21, par. 5).

ADVENTISM: Cultic or Christian to the Core

However, QOD stopped short of telling exactly what that Adventist assimilation is. Dr. Walter Martin, a major influence in the writing of QOD, calls himself a CALMINIAN. John Wesley, father of Methodism, was more closely aligned to Arminianism. A host of Adventist theologians, including Ellen White, identifies with the Wesleyan perspectives on salvation. Thus, we are considered Arminians in the Evangelical community. However, as stated above such an impression is not completely true.

To diffuse the heated conflict between the 2 flowers above, another flower(s) has been introduced, i.e. ROSES comprehensively explained in 2 books: *“Amazing Grace”* by Reformed theologian Timothy George, dean of Beeson Divinity School and executive editor of Christianity Today, calls it a SOFTENED CALVINISM; and *“Salvation and Sovereignty”* by the staunch spokesperson for the Society of Evangelical Arminians Keneth Keathley, dean of the graduate studies of Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary, labels it as WESLEYAN-ARMINIAN MOLINISM (taken from the teaching of Jesuit theologian Luis de Molina who introduced middle knowledge during the counter reformation). Here’s the breakdown of the ROSES acronym:

SOFTENED CALVINISM (Wesleyan Molinism)	
DOCTRINE	EXPLANATION
R adical Depravity	Every aspect of our being is affected by the Fall and renders us incapable of saving ourselves.
O vercoming Grace	It is God’s persistent beckoning that overcomes our wicked obstinacy.
S overeign Election	God desires the salvation of all, yet accentuates that our salvation is not based on us choosing God but on God choosing us.
E ternal Life	The Believer enjoys a transformed life that is preserved and is given a faith which will remain.
S ingular Redemption	Emphasizes that Christ died sufficiently for every person, but efficiently only for those who believe.

The ROSES acronym avoids extreme positions and both divine sovereignty and human responsibility are kept in proper tension. The Bible teaches that we have been chosen by God since the foundation of the world. It also declares that the Holy Spirit enables us to freely respond to His grace. It’s amazing how much commonalities the 2 above authors, one a Calvinist and the other an Arminian, arrived at in their respective books. Surrendering reason in faith to this profound Biblical paradox will lead to better dialog among Christians and a more awesome picture of God’s grace.

ADVENTISM: Cultic or Christian to the Core

COMMON AND DISTINCTIVE CHRISTIAN TEACHINGS

The word doctrine comes from the Greek word *didache*: “teaching.” A doctrine is a belief (or system of beliefs) accepted as authoritative. It is the “content of teaching intended to be accepted as truth.”

In most religions, certain doctrines are considered *essential* to the belief system. These central, or key doctrines form the primary basis of the belief system. Denial of one or more of these essential doctrines would compromise the religion. Someone who denies one or more central doctrines would therefore not be accepted as a genuine follower of that faith.

In Christianity, the term **orthodoxy** refers to “The body of essential biblical teachings. Those who embrace them are considered Christians.” The opposite of orthodoxy is heresy, “doctrine which is aberrant in such a way that Christians must sever themselves from all who teach or advocate it.” **Individuals** who claim to be Christians but reject one or more central doctrines of the Christian faith are considered heretics. **Religious Groups** which reject one or more essential doctrines while claiming to represent Christianity, are considered to be cults.

THE 7 BATTLES FOR THE TRUTH						
(In the History of the Christian Church)						
BIBLE (Bibliology)	GOD (Theology)	MAN (Anthropology)	CHRIST (Christology)	SALVATION (Soteriology)	CHURCH (Ecclesiology)	LAST THINGS (Eschatology)
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)
CANON	TRINITY	TOTAL DEPRAVITY	PENAL SUBSTITUTION	IMPUTED RIGHTEOUSNESS	EVANGELICALISM	SEAL OF GOD
vs.	vs.	vs.	vs.	vs.	vs.	vs.
APOCRYPHA	UNITARIAN MONOTHEISM	LEGALISM	MORAL INFLUENCE THEORY	INFUSED GRACE	ECUMENISM	MARK OF THE BEAST
COMMON FAITH						DISTINCTIVE

However, faith and love must always be kept in proper tension. No one has put it better than Richard Baxter:

**“In essentials unity;
in non-essentials liberty;
in all things charity.”**

ADVENTISM: Cultic or Christian to the Core

ESSENTIAL CHRISTIAN DOCTRINES

The Christian Apologetics and Research Ministry (CARM) graphically presents the essential Christian doctrines as follows:

CHRISTIAN DOCTRINES		
RELIGIOUS GROUPS	IMPORTANCE	SUBJECT
<p>Groups denying these: Mormons - 3,4,5 Jehovah's Witnesses - 1,2,3 Roman Catholicism - 3 Christian Science - 1,2,3,4 Christadelphians - 1,3</p>	<p>Primary Essentials Stated specifically in scripture that these cannot be denied and still be a Christian. They deal with the nature of God, the atonement, and its method of salvation applied to the believer. Denial of any Primary essential constitutes lack of regeneration, lack of salvation. Note: Regeneration means the believer is indwelt by God, changed, and enabled to understand spiritual things (1 Cor. 2:15)</p>	<p>1) Jesus is both God and man (John 1:1,14; 8:24; Col. 2:9; 1 John 4:1-4). 2) Jesus rose from the dead physically (John 2:19-21; 1 Cor. 15:14). 3) Salvation is by grace through faith (Rom. 5:1; Eph. 2:8-9; Gal. 3:1-2; 5:1-4). 4) The gospel is the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus according to the scriptures (1 Cor. 15:1-4; Gal. 1:8-9). 5) There is only one God (Exodus 20:3; Isaiah 43:10; 44:6,8)</p>
<p>Comments: Denial of any of the above doctrines as stated in scripture constitutes being non-Christian.</p>		
<p>Groups denying these: Oneness Pentecostal - 6 Mormonism - 6, 7? Jehovah's Witnesses - 6 Christadelphians - 6</p>	<p>Secondary Essentials Not stated in scripture as essential, but are derivatively essential since they deal with accurately describing the true God and they are based, in part, on the Primary Essentials. Denial strongly suggests lack of regeneration.</p>	<p>6) God exists as a Trinity of persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. (See Trinity) 7) Jesus was born of the Virgin Mary (nature of incarnation) 8) Jesus is the only way to God the Father (John 14:6).</p>
<p>Comments: God is a Trinity and though a person may not understand or initially affirm the Trinity doctrine upon regeneration, he will eventually come to accept it since it is a biblically true revelation describing the true God. Jesus was born of a virgin which is essential when defending the two natures of Jesus: divine and human. If Jesus were not born of a virgin, then His patronage would be in doubt as well as His divine nature. Without a divine nature, Jesus would not be able to atone for the sins of the world.</p>		

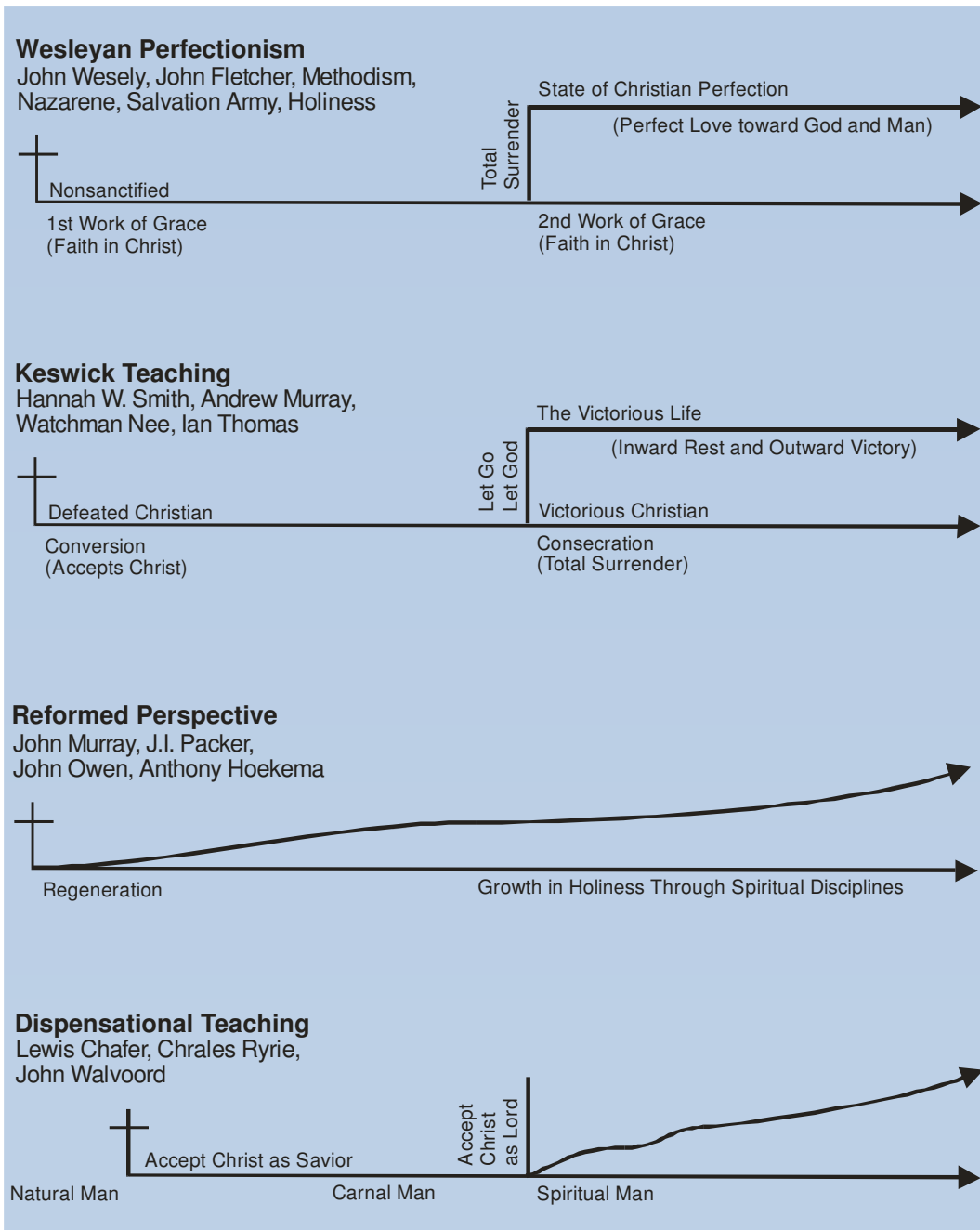
ADVENTISM: Cultic or Christian to the Core

CHRISTIAN DOCTRINES		
RELIGIOUS GROUPS	IMPORTANCE	SUBJECT
<p>Most Groups affirm: Moral integrity, marriage fidelity, inerrancy, etc. Mormonism denies - 12</p> <p>ICOC denies 13</p>	<p>Primary Non-Essentials (1 John 2:4) Can be denied and still be a Christian. Yet, denial would bring into question a person's regeneration since acceptance of these show the work of regeneration of the heart</p>	<p>9) Moral integrity (Ex. 20:1-17) 10) Fidelity in marriage in heterosexual relationships 11) The condemnation of homosexuality. 12) Inerrancy of the Bible 13) Baptism is not necessary for salvation (Acts 10:44-48)</p>
<p>Comments: The fruit of the indwelling Spirit of God is agreement in word and deed with the scriptures. The Primary Non-Essentials are those teachings that the Bible does not declare as essential to salvation; however, to affirm otherwise is evidence of lack of regeneration since they are the fruit of the regenerate mind and heart.</p>		
<p>Denomination Division Denominational difference often result due to these issues.</p>	<p>Secondary Non-Essentials Any of them can be denied or affirmed, and regeneration is not in question.</p>	<p>14) Predestination, election, limited atonement, and free will. 15) Communion every week, monthly, or quarterly, etc. 16) Saturday or Sunday Worship. 17) Pre, mid, post trib rapture. 18) Premill, Amill, Postmill., preterism. 19) Continuation or cessation of the charismatic gifts 20) Baptism for adults or infants. 21) Musical Instruments in church</p>
<p>Comments: The subjects above whether affirmed or denied have no bearing on the status of a person before God. They are opinions, various positions held. Unfortunately, it is in these non essentials that many denominational differences result.</p>		
<p>Liberal interpretation Examples of bad biblical interpretations</p>	<p>Christian Heresies These do not contradict the essentials, but do contradict non essential teachings.</p>	<p>22) Universalism 23) Open Theism 24) Annihilationism 25) Possession of Christians by demons 26) Christians are to be healthy and wealthy by the fact of being Christians. 27) Women pastors and elders</p>
<p>Comments: Affirming the doctrines in this grey section are signs of significant lack of understanding of biblical theology. Even so, believing them does not negate salvation.</p>		

ADVENTISM: Cultic or Christian to the Core

VIEWS OF SANCTIFICATION

Though Evangelicals have unanimity when it comes to Justification By Faith, they have four varying views of sanctification:



ADVENTISM: Cultic or Christian to the Core

CHRISTIAN DENOMINATIONS

Worldwide, Christians are divided, into separate churches and traditions. Over half of Christians in the world are Catholics. Protestants make up 40% of the Christian population. Catholics, Protestants, Anglicans, and other denominations compose Western Christianity. Eastern Orthodoxy, largely Greek and Russian, and the much smaller Oriental Orthodoxy, along with the Mar Toma churches and the Assyrian Church of the East are considered Eastern Christianity. Anglicanism was generally classified as Protestant, but since the "Tractarian" or Oxford Movement of the 19th century, led by John Henry Newman, Anglican writers emphasize a more catholic understanding of the church and characterize it as more properly understood as its own tradition — a *via media* ("middle way"), both Protestant and Catholic.

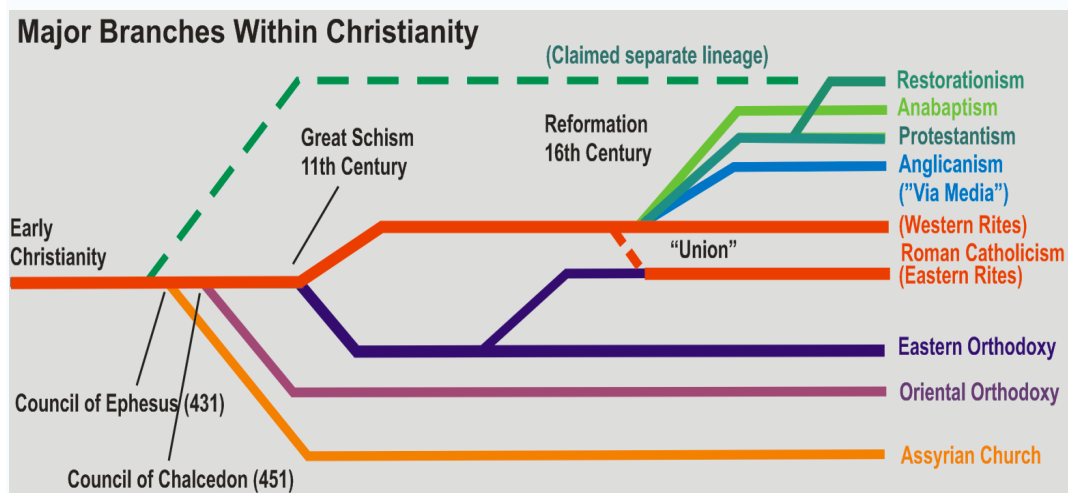


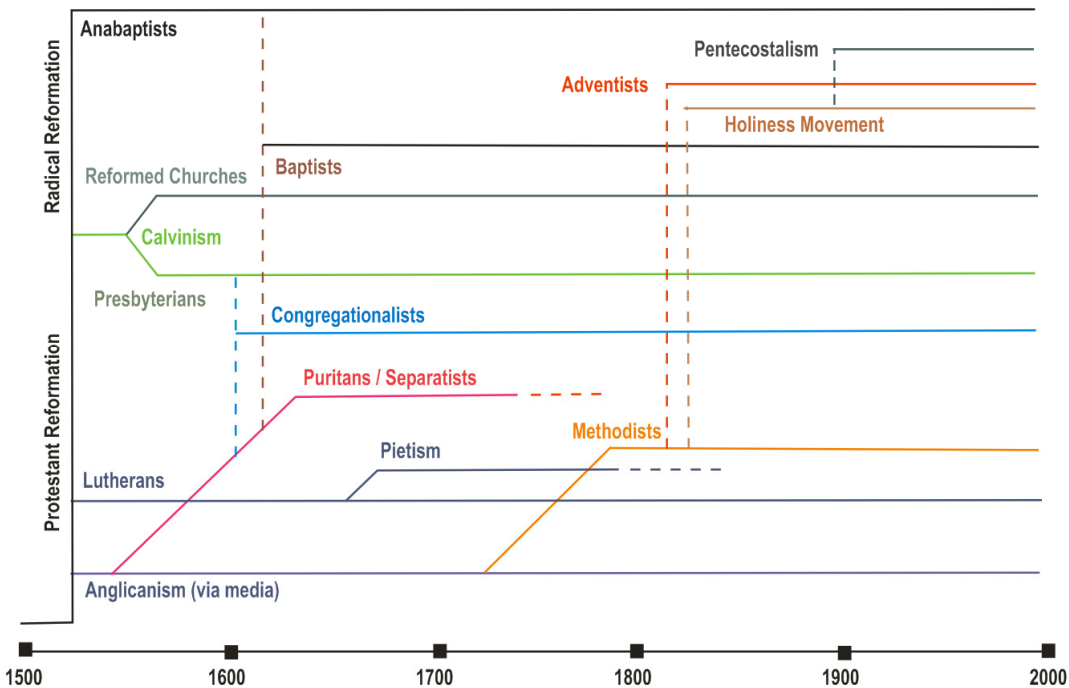
Diagram showing derivation of major branches of Christianity:

- **Eastern Christianity**
 - Eastern Orthodox Church
 - Oriental Orthodoxy
 - Assyrian Church of the East
- **Catholic Christianity**
 - Latin Rite (Western Rite or Roman Catholic)
 - Eastern Catholic Churches
- **Western Christianity**
 - Protestantism
 - Anglicanism
 - Restorationism (note that Restorationist groups are quite diverse, and share little in common other than a belief in the inauthenticity of other traditions)

ADVENTISM: Cultic or Christian to the Core

Both the Catholics and the Eastern Orthodox consider themselves to faithfully represent the One Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church. Protestants separated from the Catholic Church theologies and practices that they considered not based on Scriptural Christian doctrine. Members of the various denominations in Protestantism acknowledge each other as Christians to the extent that they share historically orthodox views. Since the Vatican II reforms, the Catholic Church has referred to Protestant communities as denominations, while reserving the term "church" for apostolic churches, including the Eastern Orthodox

Unlike the other branches (Roman Catholicism, Eastern and Oriental Orthodoxy, the Assyrians, and Anglicans), Protestantism is a general movement that has no internal governing structure. As such, diverse groups such as Adventists, Anabaptists, Baptists, Congregationalists, Lutherans, Methodists, Presbyterians, Reformed, Pentecostals, and Restorationists (depending on one's classification scheme) are all a part of the same family, and with further doctrinal variations within each group. The largest number of new churches and denominations have come from Protestantism in its first four hundred years, compared to the millennium and a half prior in all of Christendom.

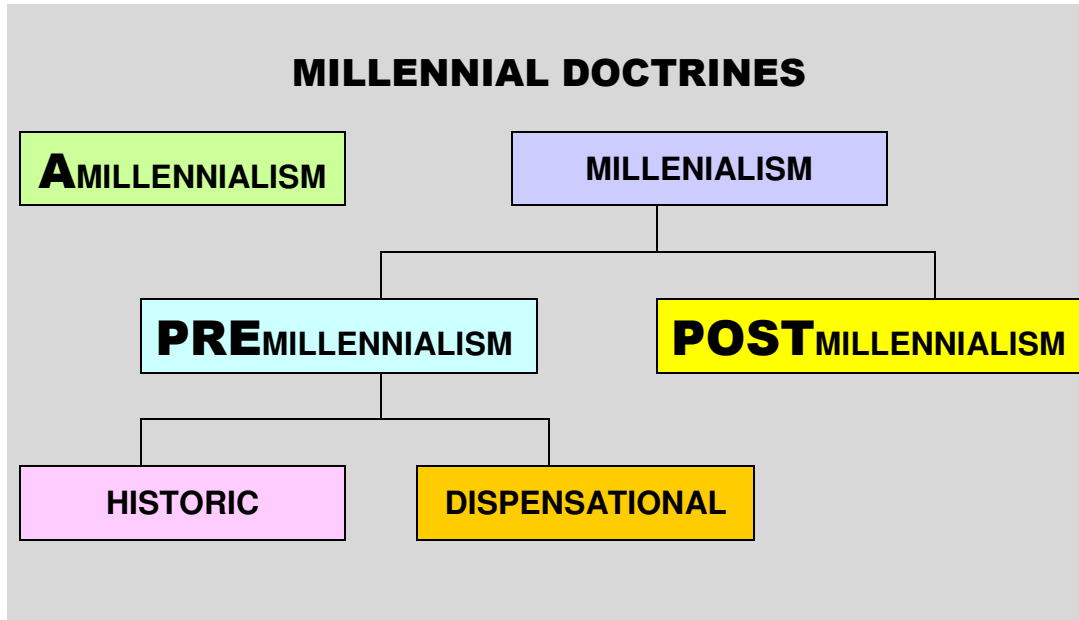


Catholicism, Anglicanism, and Protestantism are the three major divisions of Christianity in the Western world. However, Catholics do not describe themselves as a denomination but rather as the original Holy and Universal Church; which all others branched off from, as do some Anglicans. The Baptist, Methodist, and Lutheran churches are generally considered to be Protestant denominations, although strictly speaking, of these three, the Lutheran denomination, is the only one of these founded as a "protest" against Roman Catholicism.

ADVENTISM: Cultic or Christian to the Core

MILLENNIAL VIEWS

Evangelicals find unity in the common faith but not in eschatology, the study of the last things. Since the major thrust of eschatology deal with the future, various prophetic camps pervade contemporary Christendom. Key to the study of the last things is an understanding of the “millennium,” the 1,000 years of Revelation 20.



There are 4 general views of the millennium among Christians:

- (1) Amillennialism - denies a literal millennium and treats the thousand-year period in Revelation 20 as the present reign of dead believers with Christ in heaven.
- (2) POSTmillennialism – puts the second advent after a millennium of peace where evil is reduced to a minimum due to a heightened moral influence of Christians on society.

Reformed and Lutheran Christians are generally amillennialists or postmillennialists.

- (3) PREmillennialism – subscribes to Christ’s return which will occur before the millennium. This view has two major streams: the DISPENSATIONAL most popular among Evangelicals and the HISTORIC held predominantly by Seventh-day Adventists.

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ADVENTIST FUNDAMENTAL BELIEFS

The **28 Fundamentals** are a set of theological beliefs held by the Seventh-day Adventist. Traditionally, Adventists have been opposed to the formulation of creeds. It is claimed that the 28 Fundamentals are *descriptors* not *prescriptors*; that is, that they describe the official position of the church but are not a criterion for membership. The beliefs were known as the **27 Fundamentals** until 2005 when another was added. They may be grouped into the doctrines of God, humankind, salvation, church, Christian life, and last things.

28 FUNDAMENTAL BELIEFS OF ADVENTISM		
Doctrine of God	1	Holy Scriptures
	2	Trinity
	3	The Father
	4	The Son
	5	The Holy Spirit
Doctrine of Humankind	6	Creation
	7	Nature of Man
Doctrine of Salvation	8	Great Controversy
	9	Life, Death and Resurrection of Christ
	10	Experience of Salvation
	11	Growing in Christ
Doctrine of the Church	12	Church
	13	Remnant and Its Mission
	14	Unity in the Body of Christ
	15	Baptism
	16	Lord's Supper
	17	Spiritual Gifts and Ministries
	18	The Gift of Prophecy
Doctrine of the Christian Life	19	Law of God
	20	Sabbath
	21	Stewardship
	22	Christian Behavior
	23	Marriage and the Family
Doctrine of the Last Things	24	Christ's Ministry in the Heavenly Sanctuary
	25	Second Coming of Christ
	26	Death and Resurrection
	27	Millennium and the End of Sin
	28	New Earth

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The preamble to the 28 Fundamentals states that Adventists accept the Bible as their only creed, and that revision of the statements may be expected:

"Seventh-day Adventists accept the Bible as their only creed and hold certain fundamental beliefs to be the teaching of the Holy Scriptures. These beliefs, as set forth here, constitute the church's understanding and expression of the teaching of Scripture. Revision of these statements may be expected at a General Conference Session when the church is led by the Holy Spirit to a fuller understanding of Bible truth or finds better language in which to express the teachings of God's Holy Word."

The editors of the Adventist Fundamentals clearly stated, "We have not written this book to serve as a creed—a statement of beliefs set in theological concrete. Adventists have but one creed: "The Bible, and the Bible alone." They identified their objectives as follow:

We have written this book with the deep conviction that all doctrines, when properly understood, center on Him, the Way, the Truth, and the Life, and are extremely important. Doctrines define the character of the God we serve...

We have written this book to lead Adventist believers into a deeper relationship with Christ through a study of the Bible. Knowing Him and His will is vitally important in this age of deception, doctrinal pluralism, and apathy...Only those who have fortified their minds with the truth of the Scriptures will be able to stand in the final conflict.

We have written this book to assist those who are interested in knowing why we believe what we believe. This study, written by Adventists themselves, is not just window dressing. Carefully researched, it represents an authentic exposition of Adventist beliefs.

Finally, we have written this book recognizing that Christ-centered doctrine performs three obvious functions: first, it edifies the church; second, it preserves the truth; and third, it communicates the gospel in all its richness...A true knowledge of God, His Son, and the Holy Spirit is "saving knowledge." That is the theme of this book.—Editors.

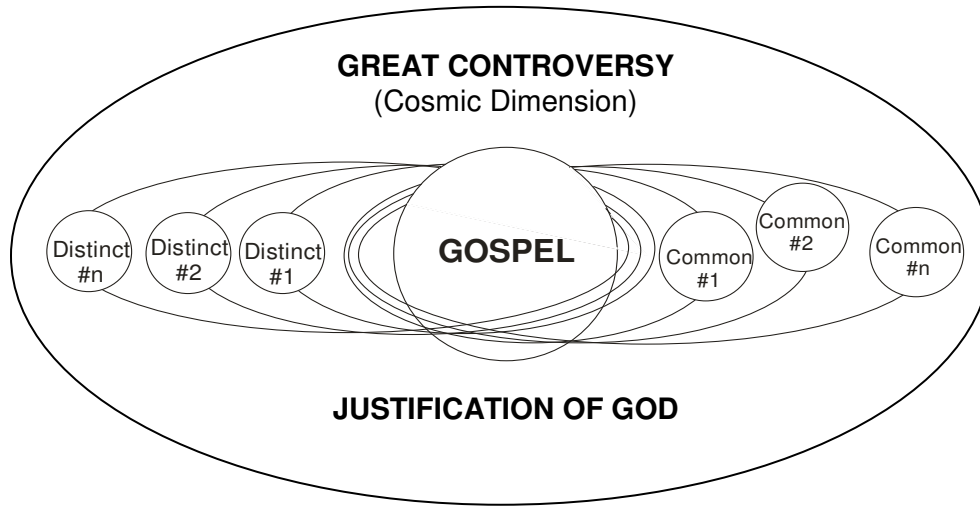
Without ambiguity, they also make the following qualification:

This is not a speculative work...Rather, it is a thorough, Biblically-based, Christ-centered exposition of what we believe. And the beliefs expressed are not the product of a studious afternoon; they represent more than 100 years of prayer, study, prayer, reflection, prayer...In other words, they are the product of Adventist growth "in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ" (2 Peter 3:18).

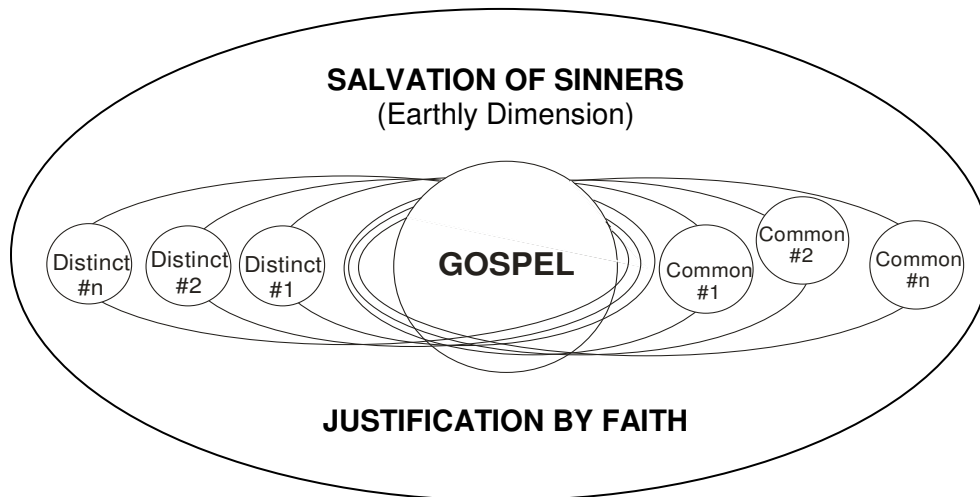
ADVENTISM: Cultic or Christian to the Core

THE CROSS AND GREAT CONTROVERSY THEME

The unique contribution of Adventism to Christendom is our understanding of the great controversy between Christ and Satan. The Great Controversy is the overarching theme of our theology. We can diagram this as follows:



Adventist Great Controversy Theme



Evangelical Perspective

ADVENTISM: Cultic or Christian to the Core

GREAT CONTROVERSY ISSUES

Number 8 of the Fundamental Beliefs of Seventh-day Adventism states:

Great Controversy:

All humanity is now involved in a great controversy between Christ and Satan regarding the character of God, His law, and His sovereignty over the universe. This conflict originated in heaven when a created being, endowed with freedom of choice, in self-exaltation became Satan, God's adversary. He led into rebellion a portion of the angels. He introduced the spirit of rebellion into this world when he led Adam and Eve into sin. This human sin resulted in the distortion of the image of God in humanity, the disordering of the created world, and its eventual devastation at the time of the worldwide flood. Observed by the whole creation, this world became the arena of the universal conflict, out of which the God of love will ultimately be vindicated. To assist His people in this controversy, Christ sends the Holy Spirit and the loyal angels to guide, protect, and sustain them in the way of salvation. (Rev. 12:4-9; Isa. 14:12-14; Eze. 28:12-18; Gen. 3; Rom. 1:19-32; 5:12-21; 8:19-22; Gen. 6-8; 2 Peter 3:6; 1 Cor. 4:9; Heb. 1:14.)

Paul completes his discourse on the righteousness of God in Romans 3:21-26 by emphasizing that the gospel is a declaration of God's justice. "It was to show his righteousness at the present time, so that he might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus" (Romans 3:26 ESV). Paul discloses the gospel's "broader and deeper purpose" than just the salvation of man, to honor God's holy character and declare His righteous way of justifying those who believe in Christ.

God's kingdom stands on two great pillars: justice and mercy (Psalms 89:14). The Fall presented an infinite dilemma. God's hatred for sin (justice) demanded that He punish transgression. Yet His eternal love for the sinner (mercy) called for compassion to spare this offending world. God solved the dilemma through the gospel! Christ's life and death exhausted the rigors of divine justice while effecting man's eternal salvation. In the gospel, justice and mercy met in Jesus Christ and "kissed each other" (Psalms. 85:10).

In the end, "...at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in heaven, and of those on earth, and of those under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father." (Philippians 2:10, 11). This is the **cosmic view of the Cross**, the gospel in the framework of the great controversy. This is the everlasting gospel of Revelation 14 which is proclaimed in the setting of God's judgment hour. Its celestial perspective showcases the conflict between Christ and Satan.

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Paul alludes to this larger view in Ephesians 3:10 where he uses phrases such as "principalities and powers" and "rulers and authorities in the heavenly realm." Asserting his apostleship, he wrote the Corinthians, "we have been made a spectacle to the world, both to angels and to men" (I Corinthians 4:9 NKJV).

Earlier in Ephesians, Paul establishes the main purpose of the gospel is to praise the glorious grace of God:

"to the praise of the glory of His grace, by which He made us accepted in the Beloved. In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins...that in the dispensation of the fullness of the times He might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven and which are on earth--in Him. In Him also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestined according to the purpose of Him who works all things according to the counsel of His will, that we who first trusted in Christ should be **to the praise of His glory**. In Him you also trusted, after you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation; in whom also, having believed, you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, who is the guarantee of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, **to the praise of His glory**" (Ephesians 1:6-7; 10-14 NKJV emphasis supplied)

Jesus Christ Himself clearly declared this purpose in John 13:30-32 after Judas set out to betray Him:

"Having received the piece of bread, he then went out immediately. And it was night. So, when he had gone out, Jesus said, "Now **the Son of Man is glorified, and God is glorified in Him**. If God is glorified in Him, God will also glorify Him in Himself, and glorify Him immediately." (cf. John 12:27-33; 17:1-2)

In Reformation terms, the preoccupation of Adventism in these last days is **SOLI DEO GLORIA**. As vital as the other 4 war cries of the Reformation are:

SOLUS CHRISTUS (Christ Alone)
SOLA SCRIPTURA (Scripture Alone)
SOLA GRATIA (Grace Alone)
SOLA FIDE (Faith Alone)

SOLI DEO GLORIA (Glory to God Alone) is the foundational slogan that glues all of them together. At times, this is not included in the emphases of Evangelicals, even Reformed churches. However, the messages of the 3 angels in Revelation 14 intentionally make God's glory and His worship the central hub in proclaiming the everlasting gospel. This Adventist trademark testifies to a God-centered gospel.

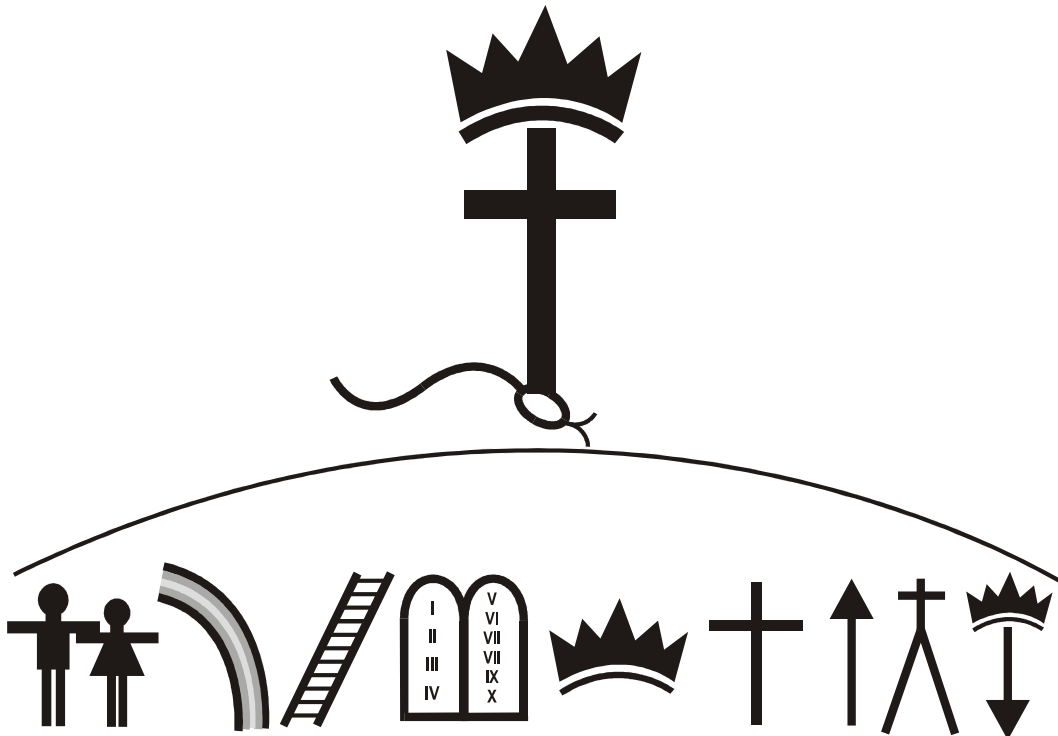
ADVENTISM: Cultic or Christian to the Core

GREAT CONTROVERSY CONTENDERS

The cosmic conflict began in heaven as we read in the Book of Revelation:

And there was war in heaven, Michael and his angels waging war with the dragon. The dragon and his angels waged war, and they were not strong enough, and there was no longer a place found for them in heaven. And the great dragon was thrown down, the serpent of old who is called the devil and Satan, who deceives the whole world; he was thrown down to the earth, and his angels were thrown down with him. (Revelation 7:7-9 NASB)

The main contenders in the great controversy are Michael and the great dragon, the serpent of old who is called the devil or Satan. It is fascinating that Bryan Chappell, who wrote what many Christian leaders consider the best volume on Christ-centered preaching, alluded to the great controversy as a vantage point in crafting Biblical messages with Christ as the focus.



So long as the message exposes theological truths or historical facts that show the relation of the passage to the war between the Seed of the woman and Satan, Christ assumes His rightful place as the focus of the message.

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THE CROSS AND THE IDENTITY OF MICHAEL THE ARCHANGEL

Due to the Jehovah's Witnesses' teaching that Michael is a created being, most Christians recoil from identifying Michael with Jesus Christ. Yet, Michael is the chief protagonist in the great controversy against Satan. Thus, He must be Jesus Christ. He is the same Michael the archangel of Jude 9 and Michael the great prince of Daniel 12:1 and contrary to common misconception, this understanding in no way relegates Christ to a being less than God.

The term "angel" can be interpreted not as a specific class of created heavenly beings as generally viewed in the Scriptures, but more broadly as any being serving as a messenger from God. This English word "angel" is derived from the Greek ANGELO meaning "messenger." In the strictest sense, Christ is the chief ("arch") messenger of God in His incarnation. Michael is also Chief of the angels (archangel) in heaven, one of the many titles applied to the Son of God.

The word Archangel is compounded from two words, ARKH, a prefix denoting "chief" or "first in rule and power," and ANGELOS, or "messenger." Christ alone could cast Satan out of heaven. It was no mere angel that cast Satan out of heaven! He was cast out by the *power of his Christ*. "And I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, Now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of his Christ: for the accuser of our brethren is cast down, which accused them before our God day and night" (Revelation 12:10).

It is also the voice of the Archangel that calls the dead from their graves. That voice is the same voice of Christ who conquered death on the cross and His loud shout will awaken the dead at His return (1 Thessalonians 4:16; John 5:28). No created being has the power, let alone the right, to challenge the power of death. Only Christ, the Resurrection and the Life, dealt the grave an utter defeat.

Apart from the account in Jude 9, the only Biblical reference to the burial of Moses is Deuteronomy 34:5, 6 where it is recorded that the Lord buried His faithful servant and that his grave was not known to men. Jude reveals that the dead body was the subject of dispute between Christ and Satan. It is evident that the Lord triumphed in His contest with the devil and raised Moses from his grave, making him the first known subject of Christ's resurrecting power to eternal life (Matthew 17:3). Moses appeared with Elijah on the Mount of transfiguration.

Michael also appears in the book of Daniel. Michael your Prince in Daniel 10:21 refers to the Prince of princes in Daniel 8:25 and the same Person as Messiah the Prince in Daniel 9:25, the Christ who will be cut off to fulfill the sacrifice for our salvation. As Michael the Archangel is a title of Christ so is Prince: the Prince of Peace (Isaiah 9:6), the Prince of life (Acts 3:15), the Prince and Savior (Acts 5:31), and the Prince of the kings of the earth. (Revelation 1:5)

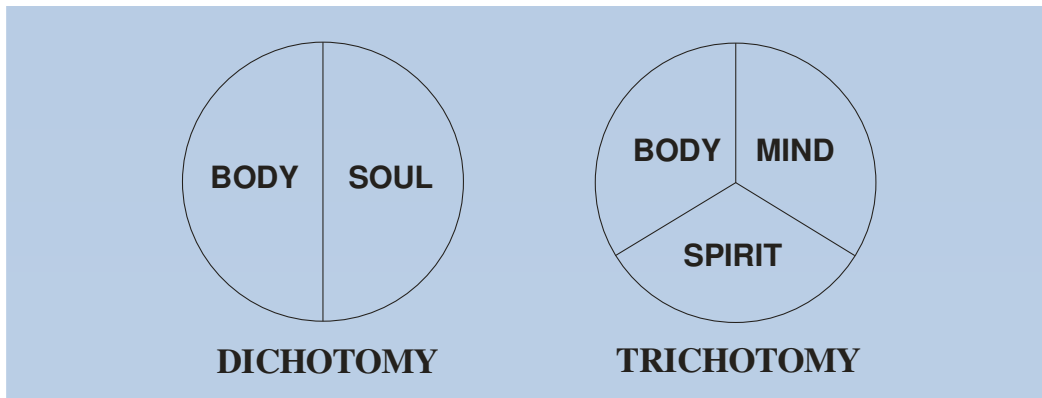
ADVENTISM: Cultic or Christian to the Core

THE CROSS AND THE HOLISTIC VIEW OF MAN

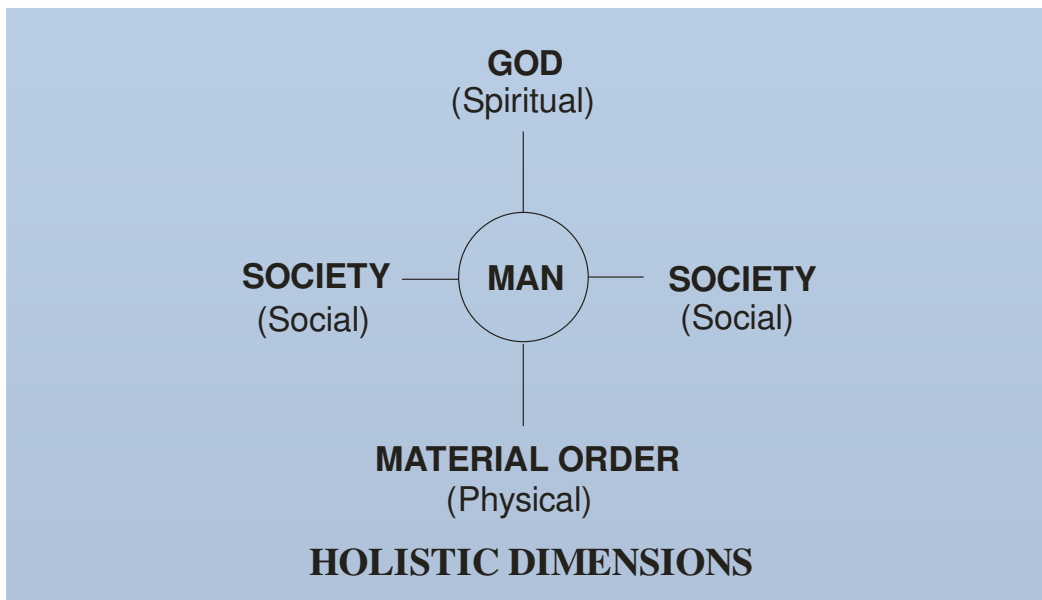
It is common place among many Christians not to despair during the funeral of a departed loved one because he or she, they believe, is more alive after death since the soul of a believer goes straight to heaven at death. Such a belief comes from the philosophy of Greek dualism imposed on the Scriptures.

Similarly, Adventists don't conduct funeral services without hope but for quite a different reason. With their mourning comes a bright hope for a resurrection morning when they will be reunited with their loved ones who died. This hope is solidly founded on the Biblical holistic view of man.

Greek dualism dichotomizes man into body and soul while **Biblical holism** sees man as a total, indivisible being. Man is not a divided entity:



He is, instead, a total being that can be viewed in 3 dimensions:



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Greek dualism assumes an immortal soul that is encased in the human body. Therefore, immortality is innate to man. This is diametrically opposed to the most loved gospel verse: "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life" (John 3:16 NKJV) If the sinner has inherent immortality, then the gospel is irrelevant. The Cross of Christ becomes a travesty!

Contrary to the Grecian view of an immortal soul, the Bible teaches **conditional immortality**. Upon believing in Jesus Christ, immortality is given by God. Paul teaches in 1 Timothy 6:15-26 that "God... alone is immortal," while in 2 Timothy 1:10 he writes that immortality only comes to human beings as a gift through the gospel. Immortality is something to be sought after (Romans 2:7 NIV) therefore it is not inherent to all humanity.

The Platonic dualism of Greek philosophy also claims that **the soul is good and the body is evil**. Consequently, only the body is sinful and not the soul. This categorically distorts the doctrine of sin. Salvation can simply be attained, as Socrates believed when he drank the cup of hemlock, by letting the body die and allowing the soul to escape.

On the other hand, Biblical holism recognizes that the whole man sinned and consequently, the whole man suffers and dies. Man does not have a soul. He is a soul and "the soul who sins dies" (Ezekiel 18:20 NKJV). As a result, sinners need a Savior and the Cross alone answers this need.

Christian Platonists attempt to bridge the gap between the views of Biblical holism and Greek dualism through the doctrine of **holistic dualism**. It concedes that Grecian dualism is objectionable from the standpoint of Scripture. As an alternative, an immaterial component of man is advanced to reckon with what is thought of as a Biblical tenet on survival between death and the resurrection. A main reference to this approach is John W. Cooper's "Body, Soul, and Life Everlasting."

Nevertheless, holistic dualism still dichotomizes the human being and it does so because of the *a priori* assumption of the dualism-laden historical church that man survives the death of the body (the soul survives death). The Biblical witness is to the contrary and teaches **soul-sleep**. When the living soul (total man) dies, he sleeps to await the resurrection (John 5:29; 11:11-14).

The question is soul **immortality** or the **resurrection** of the whole being. Through the dogma of an immortal soul, Satan hurls a most overt attack against the gospel using his minions of demons. Via the promotion and practice of spiritism, he persists in propagating his original lie that sinners *will not die*. His aim is to make sin and death irrelevant and lure people away from the saving power of the Cross of Christ. Yet, Biblical holism upholds the gospel truth that the whole man sinned and anyone who trust will have the gift of immortality by faith, now, and by sight when Jesus comes back.

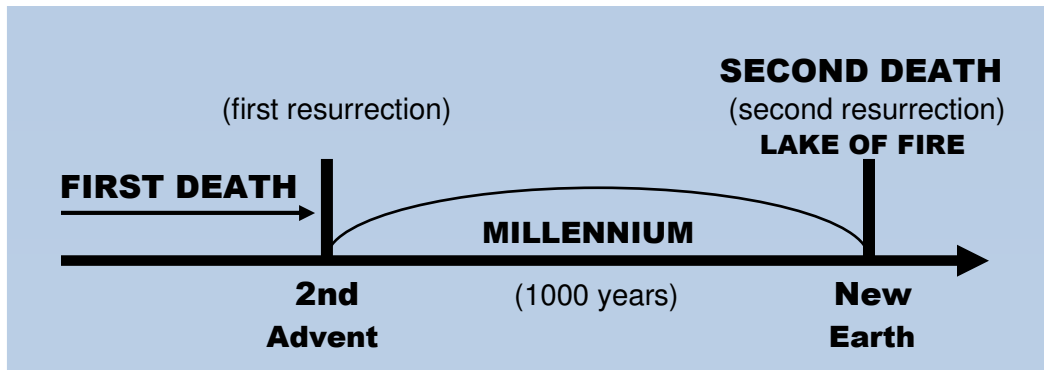
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THE CROSS AND ANNIHILATIONISM

The doctrine of conditional immortality goes with annihilationism, that the souls of the wicked will be destroyed in **Gehenna** (hell) fire rather than suffer eternal torment. After all, if the soul is not innately immortal and the soul that sins dies then hell means eternal punishment, not eternal punishing. The gospel is quite lucid that those who believe in Christ will have eternal life but those who will not believe in Him will perish as opposed to having an eternal life of suffering in hell.

Many who believe in an unending hell recognize how inconsistent it is with the character of God and claim that He does not send anyone to hell; they send themselves there. Of course, they do not cite any scripture for this idea, for the Bible states that God will judge the world through Jesus the Lord (Acts 17:31) and that it is He who has the power to destroy the entire person (Matthew 10:28). Paul wrote that, according to the righteous judgment of God, those who refuse to obey the gospel of Jesus will “suffer the punishment of eternal destruction” (2 Thessalonians 1:5-9).

Also confounded is the expression of Jesus about the unquenchable fire of Gehenna (Mark 9:44, 48). To say that a fire is “unquenchable” and say that it “never shall be quenched” are different. The Bible speaks of fires that were said to be unquenchable, but eventually went out (Jeremiah 17:27, Isaiah 34:10, and Ezekiel 20:47, 48). Some also speak of “the devil in hell.” The Bible gives no hint that such is the case. In Revelation 20 it is said that the devil will be cast into the lake of fire, but this will be only after the millennium.



The Cross of Christ won a decisive victory over Satan and His enemies. “The last enemy that will be destroyed is death. For “He has put all things under His feet” (1 Corinthians 15:26-27 NKJV). Even death will be cast into the lake of fire (Revelation 20:14). The “heavens will pass away with a great noise, and the elements will melt with fervent heat; both the earth and the works that are in it will be burned up...all these things will be dissolved (2 Peter 3:10-11). Everything will pass away including death---the death of Satan, his demons, and the wicked. Then there will be a new heaven and a new earth (Revelation 21:1).

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THE CROSS AND THE JUDGMENT

Number 24 of the Fundamental Beliefs of Seventh-day Adventism reads:

24. Christ's Ministry in the Heavenly Sanctuary:

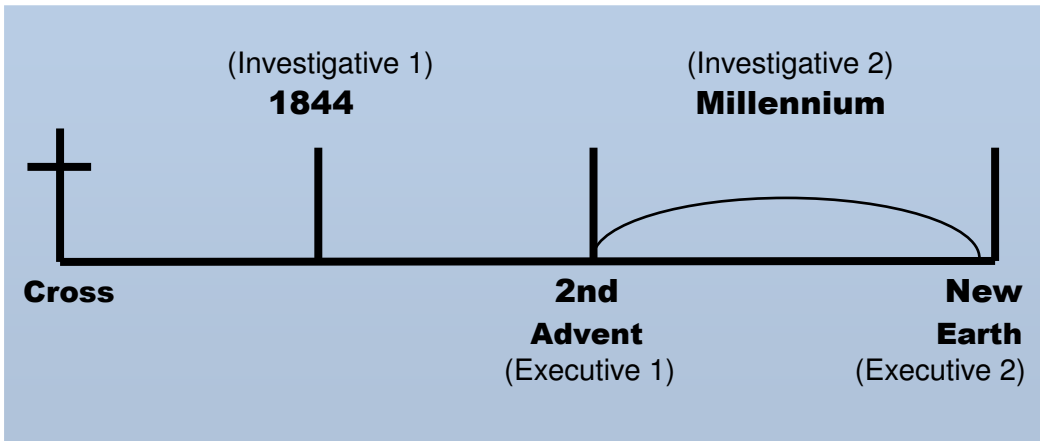
There is a sanctuary in heaven, the true tabernacle which the Lord set up and not man. In it Christ ministers on our behalf, making available to believers the benefits of His atoning sacrifice offered once for all on the cross. He was inaugurated as our great High Priest and began His intercessory ministry 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. 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. This judgment vindicates the justice of God in saving those who believe in Jesus. It declares that those who have 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. (Heb. 8:1-5; 4:14-16; 9:11-28; 10:19-22; 1:3; 2:16, 17; Dan. 7:9-27; 8:13, 14; 9:24-27; Num. 14:34; Eze. 4:6; Lev. 16; Rev. 14:6, 7; 20:12; 14:12; 22:12.)

The Bible presents with certainty the prospect of final judgment. Most Christians conceive of the final judgment to be a single divine event but Seventh-day Adventists have come to regard the final judgment as occupying at least four successive phases:

- (1) the pre-advent investigative judgment of the professed people of God,
- (2) the second-advent separation of sheep and goats based on their works,
- (3) the examination of the records of the wicked by the saints during the 1000 years, and
- (4) the execution of judgment on the wicked at the end of the 1000 years.

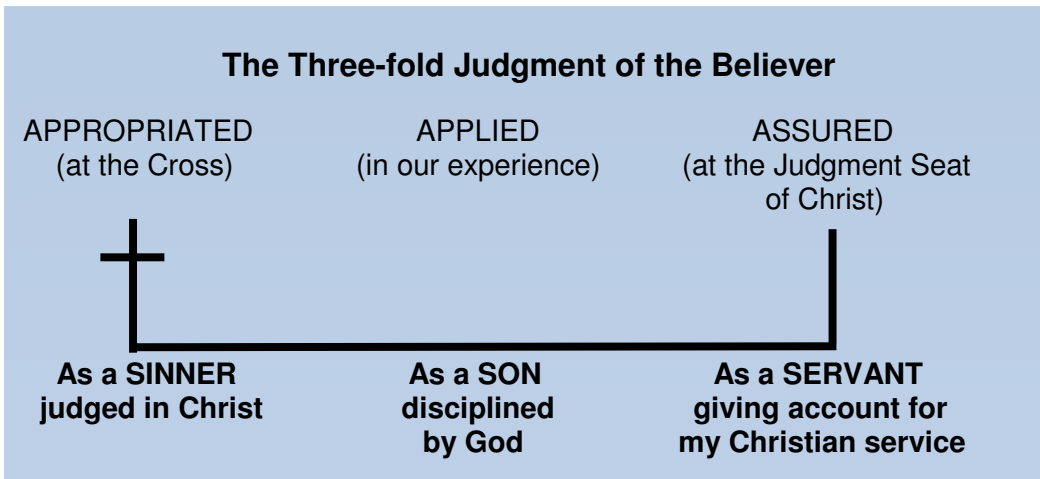
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This can be illustrated by the diagram below:



Adventism's doctrine of an investigative judgment does not mean that God seeks information He does not have. After all, God is the Author of the books which His judgment opens. The books stand not for new knowledge that God has yet to acquire but for old knowledge that God now will expose. So the purpose of the investigative judgment on God's part is not to discover reality but to unmask it, not to find out the truth but to reveal it.

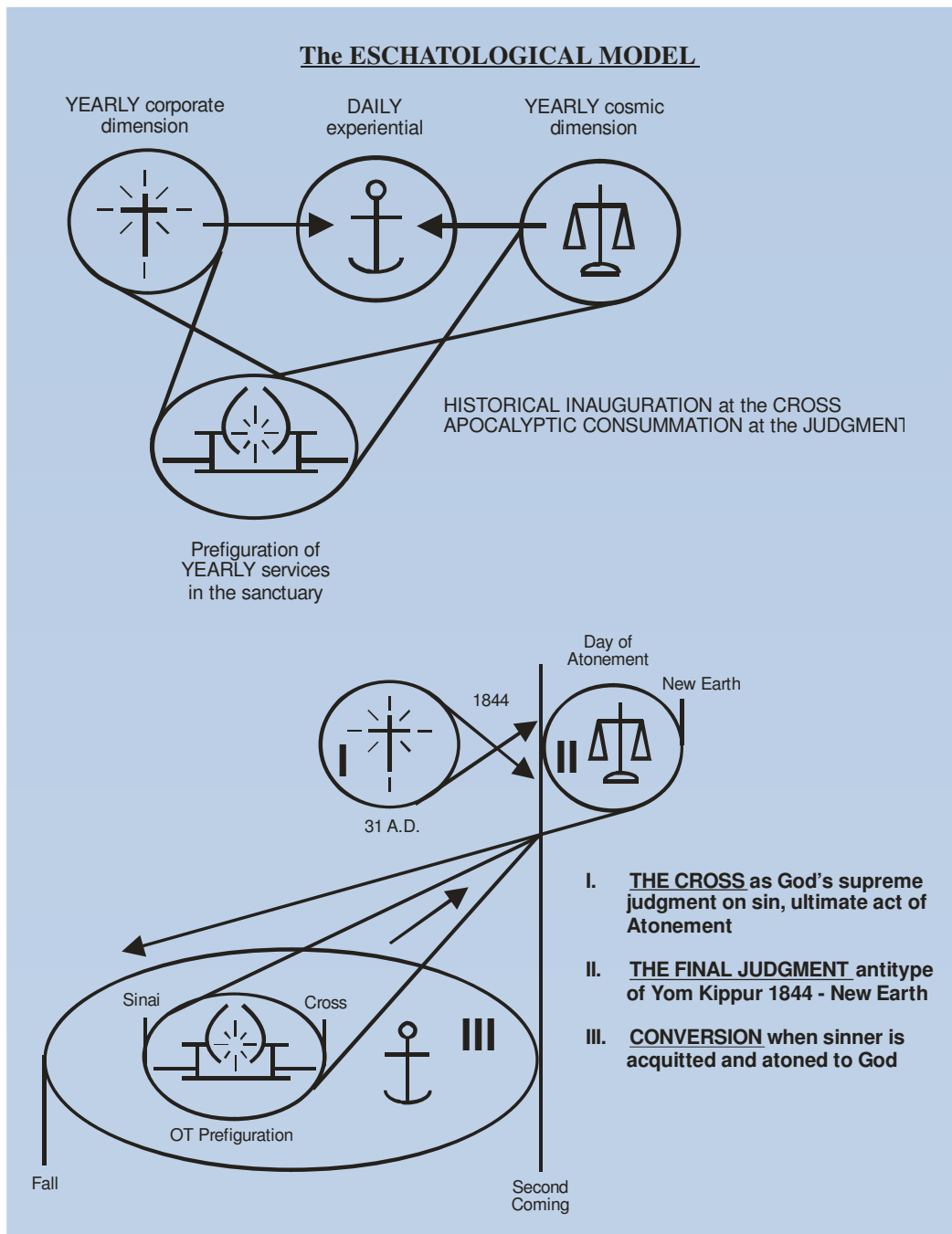
As the Cross brings salvation in 3 tenses (past, present, and future), so does it sheds light on the 3-fold judgment of the believer:



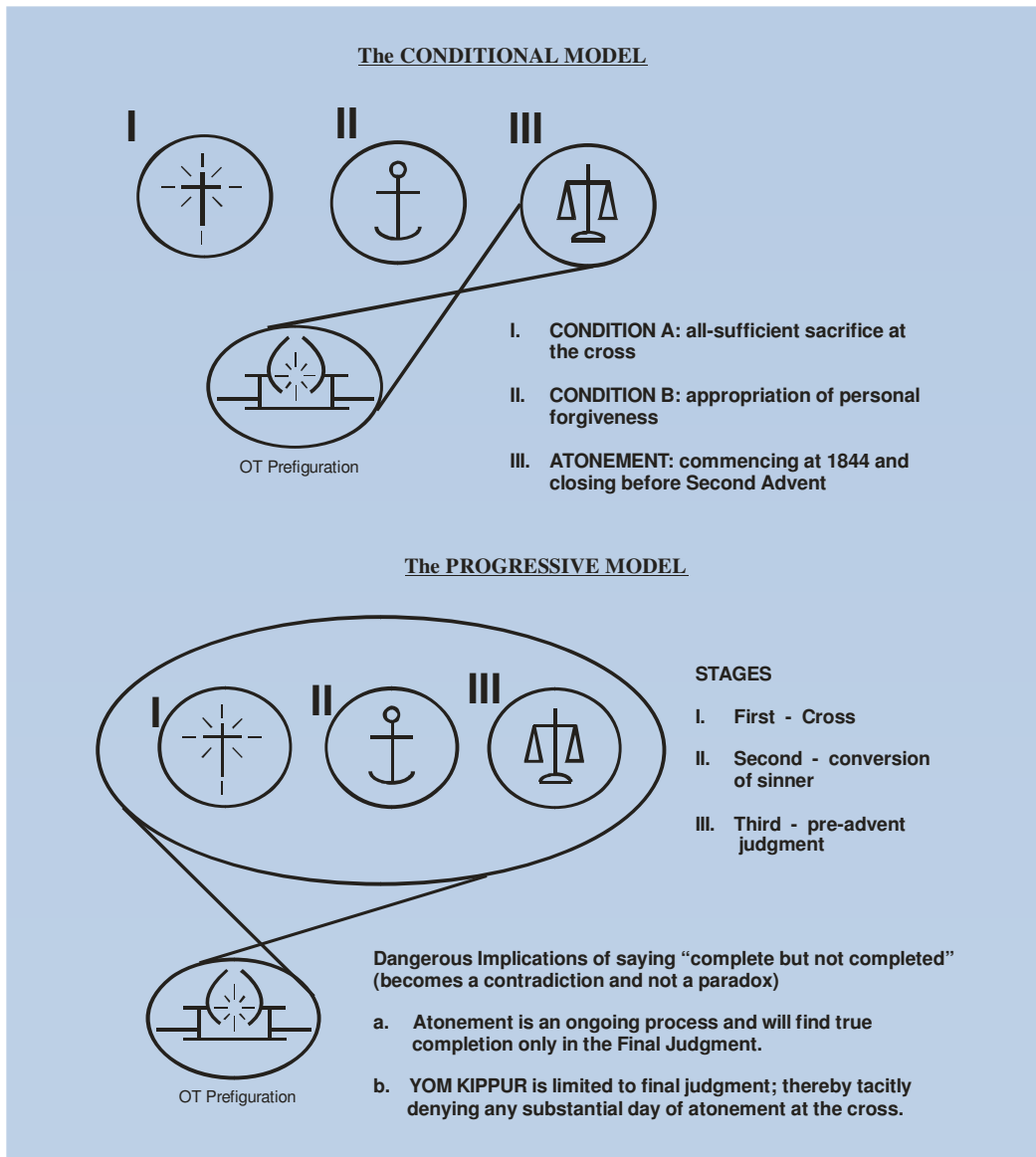
In His dual office as Savior and Lord, Christ judged sin at the Cross, justifies the sinner by faith, and judges the justified by works. The cross is the means by which justification is effected; faith is the means by which justification is accepted; and good works are the means by which justification is manifested.

ADVENTISM: Cultic or Christian to the Core

The pre-advent judgment and sanctuary beliefs are foundational to Adventism. It has gotten a bad rap because of the October 22, 1844 Great Disappointment. Despite reinterpreting the date from the Second Coming of Christ to His high priestly ministry in the heavenly sanctuary, Adventism has matured in its understanding of the atonement as observed in the following models described in the thesis of Johann A. Japp:



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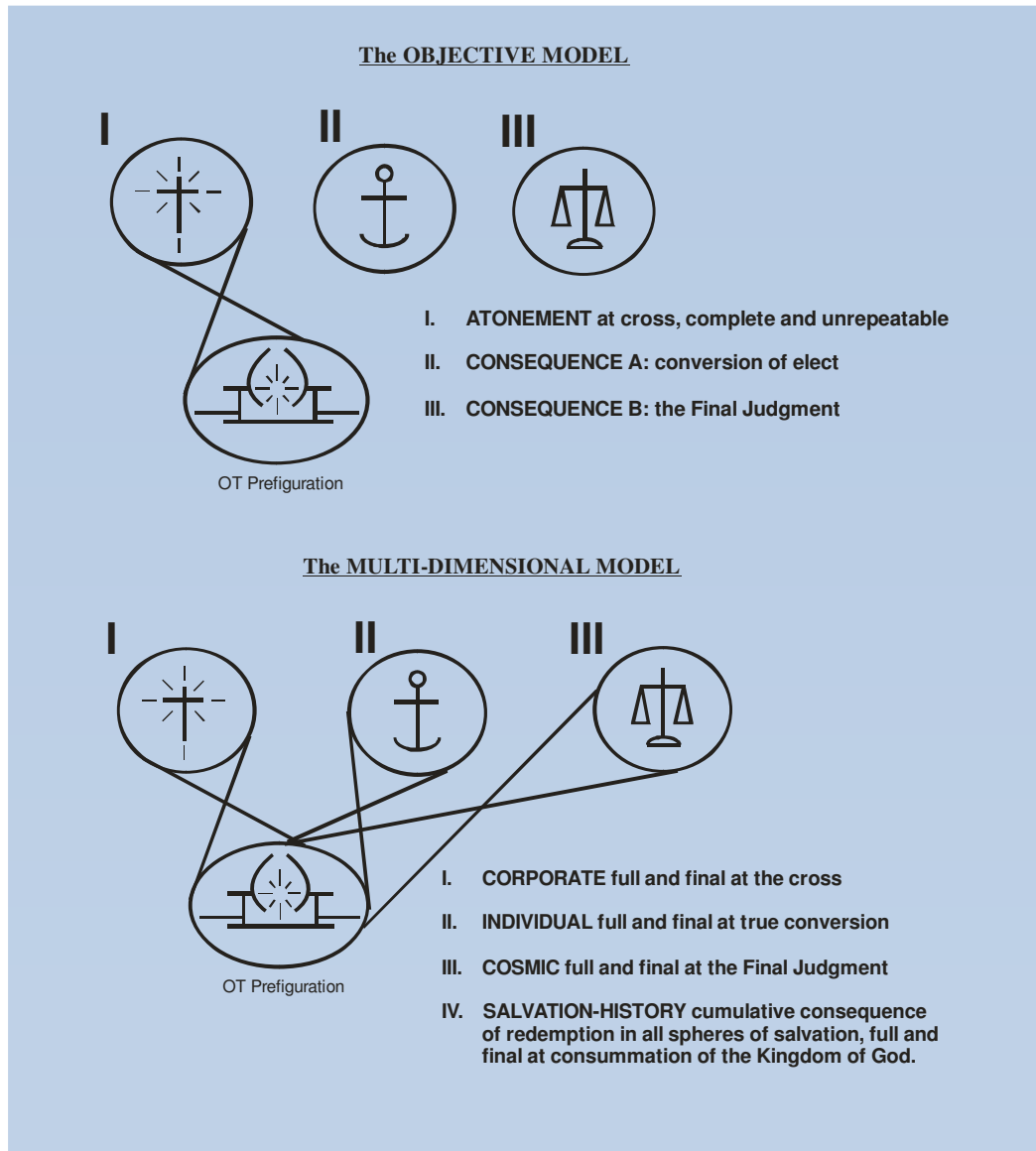
Adventists believe that Christ's work of atonement encompasses both his death on the Cross and his ministration in the heavenly sanctuary. Early Adventism went as far as to claim that the atonement occurs in heaven, *not* on the cross.

"[Christ] ascended on high to be our only mediator in the sanctuary in Heaven, where, with his own blood he makes atonement for our sins; which atonement so far from being made on the cross, which was but the offering of the sacrifice, is the very last portion of his work as priest..." Quoted from *Fundamental Principles taught and practiced by the Seventh-day Adventists* (1872), proposition II.

ADVENTISM: Cultic or Christian to the Core

Present Adventism has moved away from this unorthodox view, and now insists that Christ's death on the cross was a fully completed work of atonement. Yet, Adventism continues to identify Christ's priestly work in heaven as an "atoning ministry."

The preceding models recognize the all-sufficiency of the cross but at the same time that recognition appears to negate a complete atonement at the cross. Two more models can resolve this seeming contradiction.

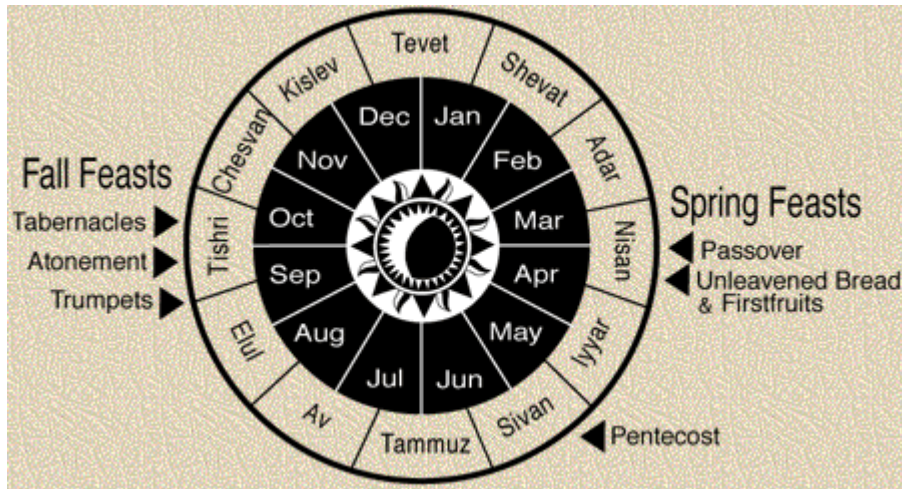


Conversion and the end-time judgment are consequences of the Cross. They are not stages but **dimensions** of the atonement.

ADVENTISM: Cultic or Christian to the Core

TYOLOGY OF THE JEWISH FEASTS

One of the strongest arguments for the pre-advent judgment is the typology of the Jewish feasts. The Old Testament holidays are a pattern of shadows fulfilled in a Messiah who has already come in the first phase of a two-part plan to save His people and rule the world. These holidays provide a panorama of history that paint a compelling picture of the past, present, and future work of Christ.



The plan of God was revealed during the spring feasts of Passover, Unleavened Bread, Firstfruits, and Pentecost. On Passover, Jesus became the sacrificial Lamb whose blood marked all who believe in Him for deliverance. During the Feast of Unleavened Bread, He died to take away our sin and to give us, in the place of our own efforts, the “bread” (life-sustaining provision) of His eternal presence. On the Feast of Firstfruits, He arose from the dead to show that it was by God’s power that He carried out our rescue. Then 50 days later on the Feast of Pentecost (also known as the Feast of Weeks, or *Shavuot*), Jesus sent His Spirit to show His presence with all who are willing to stake their lives on Him.

Spring Feasts:

1. Passover (*Pesach*)
2. Unleavened Bread (*Chag HaMatzot*)
3. Firstfruits (*HaBikkurim*)
4. Pentecost (*Shavuot*)

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The New Testament endorses the idea that the Jewish festival year typified the entire Christian age. In 1 Corinthians 5:7 Paul alludes to the Passover as the type of the crucifixion of Christ. In Revelation 7:9 the redeemed are pictured as standing before the throne "clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands." As shown in the marginal notations of the KJV, this is a reference to the Feast of Tabernacles. This feast was also called the Feast of Harvest in harmony with Christ's allusion to the harvest at the end of the world. The New Testament references to Christ as the firstfruits and the time of Pentecost help portray the Christological significance of the Jewish ceremonial year.

By and large, the spring festivals have been applied to the First Advent of Christ by Evangelicals. Nonetheless, the autumn festivals have not met with the same study emphasis. While the Jewish spring festivals typified the significant events of the First Advent of Christ, the Jewish fall feasts point to important milestones related to the Second Advent of Christ. As Pentecost typified the first fruits of the world's harvest in the gathering of the saved from all nations, the feast of tabernacles typifies the completion of that harvest in the final and universal gathering of the saved when Christ appears the second time.

As in the antitypical fulfillment of the wavesheaf in the resurrection of our Lord, the resurrection of all from the dead at His coming fulfills the celebration of the feast of tabernacles.

In like manner, the Day of Atonement has a special significance to those living in the last days of earth's history. Whereas, Christ completed the atonement for our sin at the cross during the Passover, Yom Kippur typifies the consummation of that atonement in the final judgment and restoration of the earth.

Fall Feasts:

5. Trumpets (*Rosh Hashanah*)
6. Atonement (*Yom Kippur*)
7. Tabernacles (*Sukkot*)

Let's diagram the parallel meanings of the Jewish feasts:

SPRING FESTIVALS (First Advent)

Passover (Crucifixion)
First Fruits (Resurrection)
Pentecost (Proclamation of the
gospel in the Holy
Spirit's power)

FALL FESTIVALS (Second Advent)

Yom Kippur (Judgment/Atonement)
Tabernacles (Universal Resurrection)
Trumpets (Proclamation of the
coming of Christ in
the power of the Spirit)

ADVENTISM: Cultic or Christian to the Core

THE CROSS AND THE SABBATH

Closely related to the Adventist teaching on the judgment is the importance given to the Sabbath. Dr. Jon Paulien, Adventist New Testament scholars, concludes:

“The cumulative evidence is so strong that an interpreter could conclude that there is no direct allusion to the Old Testament in Revelation that is more certain than the allusion to the fourth commandment in Rev. 14:7. When the author of Revelation describes God’s final appeal to the human race...he does so in terms of a call to worship...”

Jon Paulien asserts that worship is clearly the central issue in the earth’s final history and he considers Revelation 14:6-7 to be the central appeal of the Apocalypse. He elaborates on 3 parallels of the verses with the Sabbath:

- (1) **Verbal Parallels.** The language of Revelation 14 makes an unmistakable reference to the Sabbath commandment (Exodus 20:8-11).
- (2) **Structural Parallels.** The first table of the law is at the center of the Great Controversy. The context of Revelation 13 shows the beasts counterfeit The first 4 commandments of the Decalogue. The sea beast usurps worship from God (Revelation 13:4, 8). The land beast raises up an image to be worshipped (Revelation 13:14-15). The sea beast has the names of blasphemy written all over it (Revelation 13:1, 5, 6). Ancient covenants were stamped with a seal of ownership. The Decalogue follow the form of these covenants with the seal of ownership in the center: the Sabbath.
- (3) **Thematic Parallels.** The first tablet of the Ten Commandments contains 3 motivations for obedience. The first is *salvation*, “I brought you out of the land of Egypt” (Exodus 20:2). The second is judgment, “...visiting the iniquity of fathers upon their children” (Exodus 20:5) The third is *creation*, “Worship Him who made...” (Exodus 20:11).

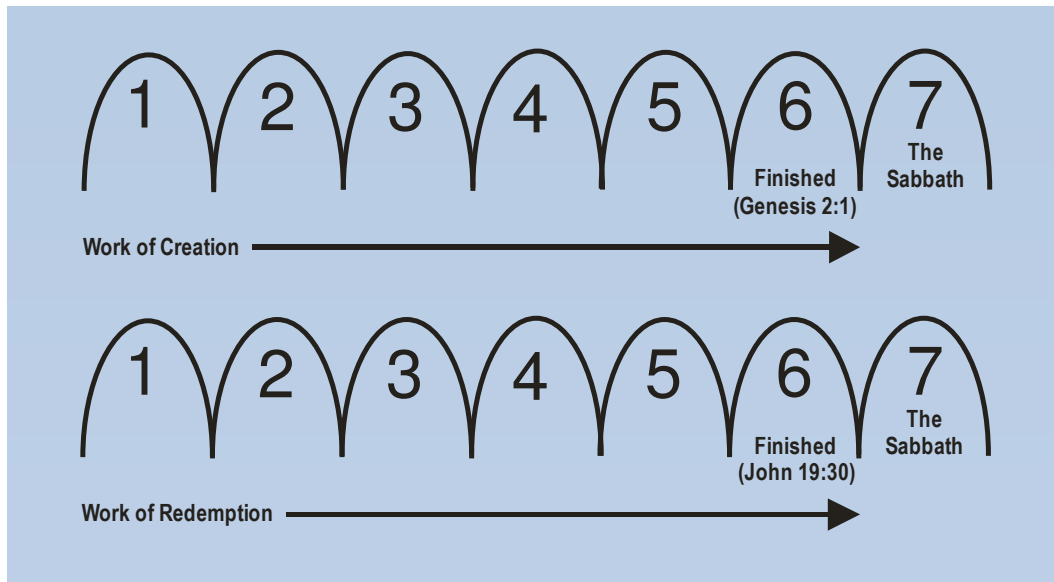
The same 3 motivations occur in Revelation 14:6-7. *Salvation* in the “everlasting gospel.” *Judgment* in “the hour of His judgment...” *Creation* in the summons to “Worship Him who made...” The same motivations even come in the same order as they do in Exodus 20.

In Hebrews 4:1-2, the following warning and invitation is given:

“Therefore, while the promise of entering his rest is still open, let us take care that none of you should seem to have failed to reach it. For indeed the good news came to us just as to them; but the message they heard did not benefit them, because they were not united by faith with those who listened.”

ADVENTISM: Cultic or Christian to the Core

It will be helpful to trace the theme of the Sabbath rest from the New Testament back into the Old Testament, rather than vice versa. After all, it is the New Testament that clarifies the Messianic implications of the Sabbath rest.



The two greatest events in all history are the creation of the world and the redemption of mankind. Each involved a divine *week of work* and a *day of rest*. Creation Week, which culminated in a perfect world (Genesis 1:31), was followed by man's fall and God's Curse on the world (Genesis 3:17). Passion Week, which culminated in the death and burial of the Maker of that perfect world, is followed by man's restoration and the ultimate removal of God's Curse from the world (Revelation 22:3). A Tree (Genesis 3:6) was the vehicle of man's temptation and sin; another Tree (1 Peter 2:24) was the vehicle of man's forgiveness and deliverance.

The record of Creation stresses repeatedly that the entire work of the creation and making of all things had been *finished* (Genesis 2:1-3). In like manner does John's record stress repeatedly the *finished* work of Christ on the Cross.

As the finished creation was "very good," so is our finished salvation. The salvation which Christ thus provided on the cross is "so great" (Hebrews 2:3) and "eternal" (Hebrews 5:9), and the hope thereof is "good" (2 Thessalonians 2:13).

Then, having finished the work of redemption, Christ rested on the seventh day, His body sleeping in death in Joseph's tomb. He had died quickly, and the preparations for burial had been hurried (Luke 23:54-56), so that He could be buried before the Sabbath. As He had rested after finishing His work of Creation, so now He rested once again.

ADVENTISM: Cultic or Christian to the Core

THE CROSS AND THE END TIMES

After the French revolution took atheism in the public arena, liberalism gripped Christendom in the early 1800's and reason held sway as the Bible was humanized. Doctrinal preaching was all but unheard of, and the second advent was held up to ridicule by the clergy. Amillennialism was affixed to papal abuses and could not make a dent in the religious crisis. Postmillennialism contemplated a human utopia and practically lost the expectancy of Christ's return.

When Napoleon's General Berthier took Pope Pius VI as prisoner in 1798, renewed interest in Biblical prophecy was kindled and advent movements arose. Joseph Smith taught a regathering of Israel and put out the Book of Mormon in 1830---the same year John Darby was acclaimed as the leader of the Bretheren movement (precursor to dispensationalism). In 1831, William Miller began a group which proclaimed 1844 as the end of the world leading to the formation of Seventh-day Adventism. Judge Rutherford wrote "Comfort for the Jews" after succeeding Charles Russell who founded Millennial Dawnism, the root of the "Jehovah's Witnesses."

All the above movements, except for the dispensationalists and the Millerites, espoused aberrant doctrines and were justifiably dismissed as cults by the Christian community. The 1844 Great Disappointment discredited *Millerism* and in an atmosphere of spiritual starvation, *Dispensationalism* seemed to be the only sound alternative left to remedy the dearth in scriptural teachings.

Representative Dispensational Schemes*			
	J. N. Darby 1800-1883	James M. Gray 1851-1935	C. I. Scofield 1843-1923
1	Paradisaical State	Edenic	Innocency
2	(to the Flood) Noah	Ante-diluvian	Conscience
3	Abrahamic	Patriarchal	Human Government
4			Promise
5	Israel—under Law under Priesthood under Kings	Mosaic	Law
6	Gentiles	Church	Grace
	Spirit		
7	Millennium	Millennial	Kingdom

*Charles C. Ryrie, *Dispensationalism Today* (Chicago: Moody, 1965), p.84

ADVENTISM: Cultic or Christian to the Core

ADVENTISM AND DISPENSATIONALISM

The advent movements in Britain and America in the late 19th century revived widespread attention to premillennialism. John Darby led the dispensational British advent movement while William Miller guided the American counterpart. The Great Disappointment of 1844 discredited the Millerite movement. Thus, the Adventist millennial view is hardly acknowledged, if at all, in Christian circles and publications.

Meanwhile, Dwight L. Moody joined the dispensationalist camp. On John Darby's death, C. I. Scofield took over the reins and made dispensationalism an integral part of the best-selling Scofield Reference Bible. Charles Swindoll, a very popular Evangelical writer and preacher even among Adventists, is chancellor of the Dallas Theological Seminary and is also a dispensationalist. Moody Bible Institute (MBI), Dallas Theological Seminary, the Scofield Reference Bible, and now *The Left Behind series* co-authored by Jerry Jenkins, chair of MBI Board of Trustees, are 4 major reasons why dispensational premillennialism is sweeping contemporary Christianity.

DISPENSATIONAL and ADVENTIST PARALLELS

Both believe that the judgment of (for) the church will take place before God's throne prior to the Second Advent.

Both believe that there will be some sort of separation of the righteous and the wicked just before the great tribulation.

Both believe that the second advent of Christ will be preceded by a short period of catastrophic stress and persecution.

Both believe in the literal second coming of Christ to earth before the beginning of the millennium.

Both believe in a real thousand-year millennium.

Both believe in a second resurrection of the wicked and a final judgment at the end of the millennium.

Both believe that the new earth will be the eternal home of the saved.

ADVENTISM: Cultic or Christian to the Core

Historic premillennialism's chief proponent was the late George Eldon Ladd, a leading New Testament scholar of our time. He is closest to the Adventist millennial scheme. The only difference is his placement of the millennial reign of Christ, i.e. on earth. Immersed in dispensationalism for years before abandoning the position in favor of historic premillennialism, he has unknowingly become the most influential apologist for the Adventist historic premillennial position.

DISPENSATIONAL and ADVENTIST BASIC PREMISES

DISPENSATIONAL	ADVENTIST
<p>The age of the law has been superseded by the age of grace. Law is set off against grace.</p>	<p>Law and grace both have their function from the beginning to the end of time. Law and grace are in harmony.</p>
<p>Various gospels spread across 7 dispensational divisions of the Scriptures.</p>	<p>One everlasting gospel on the backdrop of the great controversy between Christ and Satan.</p>
<p>Scriptures subject to Scofield's interpretation.</p>	<p>Scriptures is its own interpreter.</p>
<p>The age of the Jew has been superseded by the age of the church.</p>	<p>The church is now "the Israel of God." God's people are one body. Christ means no distinction between Jew and Gentile.</p>
<p>Prophetic focus is on the Jew in Palestine and rebuilding the temple on Mt. Zion, together with animal sacrifices.</p>	<p>Prophetic focus is on Jerusalem above and restoring worship in the temple of heavenly Zion through faith in the sacrifice of Jesus Christ.</p>
<p>Prophetic scheme is based on the Futurist school of interpretation.</p>	<p>Prophetic scheme is based on the Historical school of interpretation.</p>

While the Bible staunchly advocates only one gospel, dispensationalism teaches 4 gospels as described on page 1343 of the Scofield Reference Bible: (1) **The gospel of the kingdom** - This is the good news that God will set up a political, Jewish and universal kingdom ruled by Jesus as the greater Son of David during the millennium; (2) **The gospel of the grace of God** - This is the good news that Jesus died, was buried, and that he rose again to save wholly apart from forms and ordinances; (3) **The everlasting gospel** - This is to be preached by Jews after the church is "secretly raptured" during the "tribulation." It is the good news that those who are saved during the "tribulation" will enter the millennial reign of Christ; and (4) **Paul's gospel**. This is the gospel of grace which has a fuller development than that preached by Christ and the apostles.

ADVENTISM: Cultic or Christian to the Core

DISPENSATIONAL and ADVENTIST CONTRASTS

DISPENSATIONAL	ADVENTIST
Final Disposition of Wicked	
<p>God's plan means that after the final judgment the righteous will live on this earth in everlasting bliss, while God will torment the wicked in hell forever.</p>	<p>God's plan provides for the total eradication of sin and sinners from God's universe. After appropriate punishment sinners will be no more. Eternal punishment means eternal exclusion from the privilege of life.</p>
Millennium	
<p>The millennium will be on this earth while it is in a flourishing state.</p> <p>Christ and the Jews will reign over nations.</p> <p>Men will be living on earth in their mortal state.</p> <p>There will be a second chance given to sinners after the coming of Christ.</p>	<p>The millennium will be in heaven while this earth lies desolate.</p> <p>Christ and His saints will judge the world and fallen angels.</p> <p>Immortal saints will reign with Christ in heaven.</p> <p>There will be no further opportunity for salvation after Jesus comes.</p>
Second Advent	
<p>At Christ's second coming He will bring His raptured saints back with Him.</p>	<p>At Christ's second coming He will take all His saints out of this world by resurrecting the righteous dead and translating the righteous living.</p>

The word "millennium" is not a Biblical term but is used by Bible students for the thousand-year period mentioned six times in Revelation 20. The millennium chapter (Revelation 20) continues the Revelation 19 narrative which proclaims the marriage of the Lamb, the triumphant return of Christ and His victory over all of His enemies. The 19th chapter reveals Christ's conquest of the beast and the false prophet. Chapter 20 details Christ's destruction of the devil which occurs in two stages.

ADVENTISM: Cultic or Christian to the Core

DISPENSATIONAL and ADVENTIST CONTRASTS

DISPENSATIONAL	ADVENTIST
Tribulation Period	
<p>Antichrist will make war on the Jews in the coming "tribulation."</p> <p>The church will not be on earth but in heaven during the great persecution by the antichrist. Thus, it will be miraculously preserved from the fires of persecution.</p> <p>A total separation of saints from the wicked will take place before the great tribulation by means of physical removal from the earth (secret rapture).</p>	<p>Antichrist will make war on the church in the coming "time of trouble."</p> <p>The church will be on earth and will be the object of the antichrist's assault during the "time of trouble." But it will be miraculously preserved in the fires of persecution.</p> <p>A mark of deliverance, or seal, will be placed on the foreheads of the saints before the "time of trouble." This is a spiritual separation.</p>
Pre-Advent Judgment	
<p>Before the second advent, the church, both dead and living, will be taken up to heaven bodily in a secret rapture to be judged in person at the throne of God.</p> <p>The saints therefore, will put on their sinless immortal state and then be judged.</p>	<p>Before the second advent, the church, both dead and living, will be judged at God's throne. The saints will be there only in the Person of their Representative, Jesus Christ.</p> <p>The saints will be judged, and after that, at the second advent, they will put on their sinless immortal state.</p>

We share beliefs in the second advent, resurrection, end-time judgment, and a future new eternal order with Postmillennialists and Amillennialists. Unlike the earlier, we maintain that Revelation 19 is a narrative on the second advent which will occur before the millennium. In contrast with the latter, we hold that the events in Revelation are distinct episodes in the "end times" played out in the "great controversy" between Christ and Satan to consummate what Christ inaugurated in his life, death, and resurrection. Because we don't subscribe to the immortality of the soul, we also deny their notion of disembodied martyrs reigning in heaven with Christ.

ADVENTISM: Cultic or Christian to the Core

It is interesting that Amillennialists posits the reign of Christ in heaven. With our doctrines on soul-sleep, multi-phase judgments, the “scapegoat,” and eternal punishment (as opposed to unending fires of hell), the heavenly reign of saints with Christ during the millennium are our distinctives in eschatology.

Recognizing the centrality of the Cross of Christ, we should allow it to measure the validity of dispensationalism regardless of endorsements by renowned Bible teachers. No one who genuinely and consistently holds to the doctrine of righteousness by faith can be a dispensationalist for the following reasons:

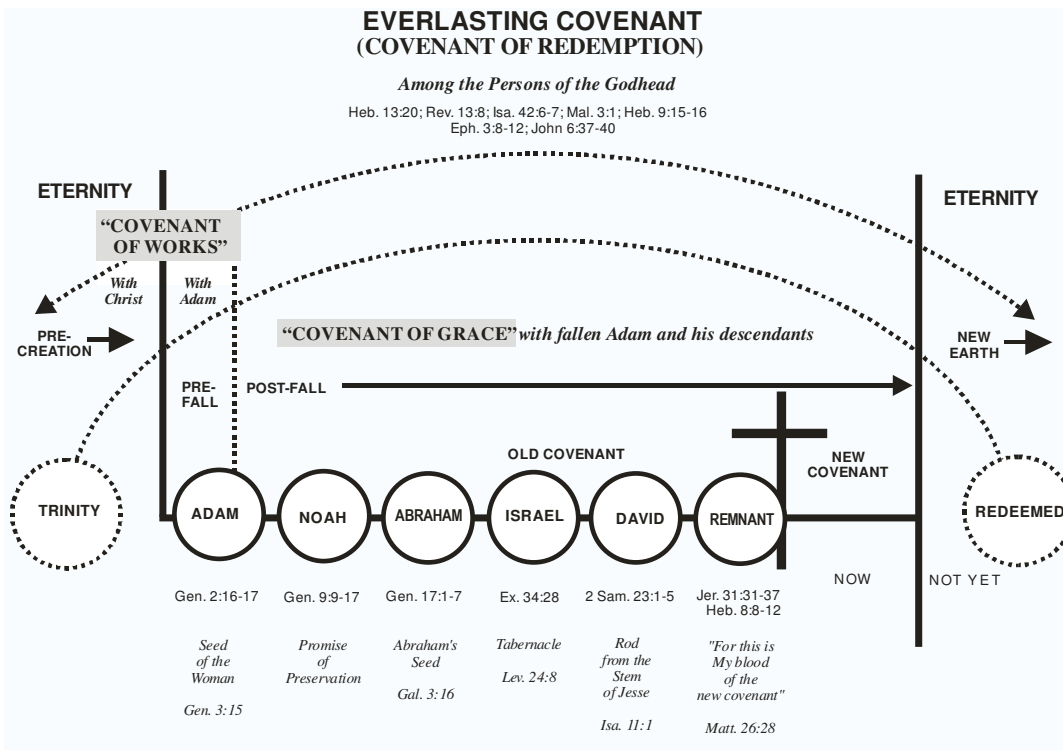
- (1) Though dispensationalists deny the charge, it is difficult not to see different plans of salvation in their 7 dispensations of God’s entire program. An example of this different plans of salvation is found in the Scofield Bible (page 1115, note 2), “The point of testing is no longer legal obedience as the condition of salvation, but acceptance or rejection of Christ...”
- (2) While the Holy Scriptures advocates only one gospel, dispensationalism teaches that there are 4 gospels described on page 1343 of the Scofield Reference Bible.
- (3) One of the central tenets of dispensationalism is that in the millennium, the Jewish temple will be rebuilt and the entire sacrificial system reinstated. However, the millennial sacrifices will be a memorial to the sacrificial death of Jesus. This idea stands in direct opposition to the New Testament’s evident assertion that the Old Testament ceremonial system is obsolete.
- (4) The basic premise of Dispensationalism is two purposes of God expressed in the formation of two people who maintain their distinction throughout eternity. This contradicts the gospel claim that “There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave or free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus. If you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham’s seed, and heirs according to the Promise” (Gal. 3:28-29).

In his book, “The Blessed Hope,” George Eldon Ladd traces the rise of dispensationalism and lists noted Bible scholars who left the dispensational movement after examining it against Scriptural data. Along with Ladd, they hold onto a position closest to Adventist eschatology differing only in the location of Christ’s millennial reign.

ADVENTISM: Cultic or Christian to the Core

THE CROSS AND ADVENTIST BREAKAWAY GROUPS

Closely aligned to the Great Controversy model is Covenant theology which views God's dealings with mankind in all of history under the structure of 3 overarching covenants — the covenants of redemption, of works, and of grace. As a framework for biblical interpretation, covenant theology stands in contrast to dispensationalism to the relationship between the Old Covenant with national Israel and the New Covenant in Christ's blood.



With respect to the theological status of modern day Jewish people, covenant theology is often referred to as "replacement theology" by its detractors, due to its teaching that God has abandoned the promises made to the Jews and has replaced the Jews with Christians as his chosen people in the earth.

The Christian church continues to wrestle with the continuity / discontinuity of the Old and New Testaments. The Reformed tradition camp (Covenant theology) and Dispensationalist school (Dispensational theology) have debated the issue for more than a century. A relatively new system entering the melee is New Covenant Theology (NCT) which attempts to strike a balance between Covenant Theology (CT) and Dispensationalism (Disp). Most breakaway Adventists admit that their decision was influenced by their defection to New Covenant Theology (NCT). Their denominational desertion is most pronounced in their new Sabbath view which teaches that Christ has replaced the Sabbath.

ADVENTISM: Cultic or Christian to the Core

When David Newman was pastor of Damascus Grace Fellowship, he wrote:

“If I grow up with the subtle misunderstanding that Sabbath keeping is connected to my salvation, a prerequisite to my entering heaven, and then discover grace, that I am saved ONLY by what Jesus did for me at Calvary, I will suddenly have a very different view of the Sabbath. I will want to DISCARD IT, and I should, as a MEANS OF SALVATION. But the relief of discovering grace can be so overwhelming that it is quite possible to throw out blessings simply because we have previously seen them as HAVE TO’s or MUST’s or SHOULD’s.”

In a way, Adventist breakaway groups have thrown the proverbial baby with the bath water. In steering away from a legalistic Sabbath interpretation they’ve abandoned the Sabbath altogether.

Former Adventists who adhere to NCT make an unwarranted statement that gospel-centered Adventists wrongly interpret the Sabbath because of their “Adventist bias.” Worse, they even imply that Sabbath-keeping is legalism. However, if they avoid using traditional Adventism as a diversion in their arguments they might better perceive the shortcomings of NCT:

- (1) Exegetically, NCT forces a new law rather than a new placement of the law in their interpretation of the new covenant passages of the Bible.
- (2) Ethically, NCT inaccurately claims that Christ replaced the Moral Law rather than magnified it.
- (3) Canonically, NCT drives an artificial wedge between the Old and the New Testaments by espousing a revelational canon --- the Old and New Testaments --- and an ethical canon limited to the New Testament.
- (4) Historically, NCT fails to do justice to the Reformed confessional theology that upholds the validity of the Ten Commandments in our day.
- (5) Evangelically, NCT’s abrogation of the Moral Law compromises the gospel of Justification By Faith and limits the Biblical teaching on the covenants to the contrast between the Mosaic and the New Covenants. The Everlasting Covenant and the Covenant of Works God made with the two Adam’s are bypassed.

Biblical discussions however eloquent and/or keen and noble are no more than high-sounding fluff when devoid of the gospel of Christ. Subjecting New Covenant Theology to careful Biblical scrutiny in comparison with the Adventist Reformed position reveals how much more consistent the Adventist faith is to the gospel of Justification By Faith.

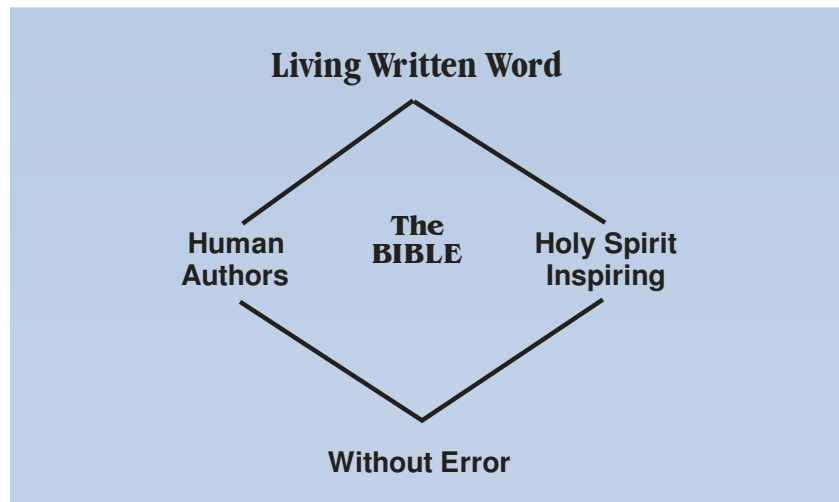
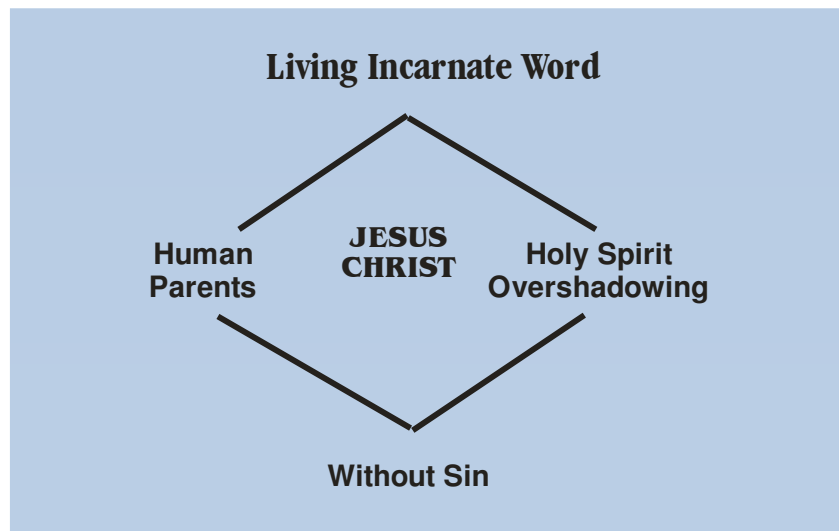
ADVENTISM: Cultic or Christian to the Core

THE CROSS AND INSPIRATION

The central theme of the Bible is Christ as emphatically reiterated by Ellen White:

Christ as manifested to the patriarchs, as symbolized in the sacrificial service, as portrayed in the law, and as revealed by the prophets, is the riches of the Old Testament. Christ in His life, His death, and His resurrection, Christ as He is manifested by the Holy Spirit, is the treasure of the New Testament. Our Saviour the outshining of the Father's glory, is both the Old and the New. (*COL 126*)

Here's a diagrammatic comparison of Christ the Living Incarnate Word and the Scriptures as the Living Written Word.



ADVENTISM: Cultic or Christian to the Core

The Handbook of Seventh-day Adventist Theology affirms the “inseparable union of the Divine and Human.” While recognizing “some minor transcriptional errors in Scripture,” it affirms the reliability of the Bible’s history and rejects the liberal attempt to question “the accuracy or veracity of numerous historical details in the biblical record.”

Adventism does not teach the mechanical view of verbal inspiration generally held by fundamentalists. This view of inspiration is neither fundamentalist nor liberal. It stands between the “right” and the “left.” While rejecting the naturalistic presuppositions of the historical-critical method of higher Biblical criticism, the historical-grammatical approach is advocated which incorporates the descriptive aspects of Biblical criticism.

Ellen White was instrumental in guiding Adventism to arrive at this position. She introduced the concept of *thought inspiration* when she wrote:

“It is not the words of the Bible that are inspired, but the men that were inspired. Inspiration acts not on the man’s words or his expressions but on the man himself, who, under the influence of the Holy Ghost, is imbued with thoughts. But the words receive the impress of the individual mind. The divine mind is diffused. The divine mind and will is combined with the human mind and will; thus the utterances of the man are the word of God” (*1SM 21*)

At the same time, she tenaciously held to the divine authority of the Bible:

“The Holy Scriptures are to be accepted as an authoritative, infallible revelation of His [God’s] will. They are the standard of character, the revealer of doctrines, and the test of experience” (*GC 7*) “...every position we take should be critically examined and tested by the Scriptures” (*EV 69*)

Moreover, she was emphatic on the all-sufficiency of the Scriptures:

“The Bible contains all the principles that men need to understand in order to be fitted either for this life or for the life to come” (*ED 123*) “...there is need of a return to the great Protestant principle—the Bible, and the Bible only, as the rule of faith and duty” (*GC 204-205*)

Does the Adventist claim that the gift of prophecy was manifested in the ministry of Ellen White negate her very high regard for the Bible? Adventism considers her to belong in the category of New Testament prophets who were given for “strengthening, encouragement, and comfort” (1 Corinthians 14:3). Unlike the Old Testament prophets, their utterances were discerned to be true or false based on the apostles’ teachings. Peter sees that the authority of the Old Testament prophets has been passed on to the New Testament apostles (2 Peter 3:2). The apostle Paul who was also a prophet defends his authority based on his apostleship (1 Corinthians 9:1; Galatians 1:11-12).

ADVENTISM: Cultic or Christian to the Core

There are at least 3 things Ellen White says about her writings:

- (1) She saw her special work as being God's "messenger" to the Advent movement. Her particular gift was not to be made an issue before the rest of the Christian church (*TM 34-35*).
- (2) If the Adventist people had studied and obeyed the Word of God, they would not have needed this charismatic counsel (*LS 198-201*). One almost gets the impression that she regarded her counsels, reproofs, and appeals for radical holiness as pedagogic—a sort of disciplinary agent to lead God's people to Christ and justification by faith. If this is true, her work stands as a reproof rather than a commendation to Seventh-day Adventists.
- (3) She called her writings "a lesser light" to lead Adventists back to the Bible because the very movement which she believed had a God-given mission to perform had neglected the Bible (*EV 257; 2T 455; ST 234, 674; 2T 605*). Those who continually say, "She says, she says," while they neglect the Bible severely are reproved, as the following verbatim remarks indicate:

"Lay Sister White right to one side...Don't you ever quote my words again as long as you live, until you can obey the Bible. When you take the Bible and make that your food, and your meat, and your drink, and make that the elements of your character, when you can do that you will know better how to receive some counsel from God. But here is the Word, the precious Word, exalted before you today. And don't you give a rap any more what "Sister White said—Sister White said this, and Sister White said that, and Sister White said the other thing." But say, "Thus saith the Lord God of Israel," and then you do just what the Lord God of Israel does, and what He says" (*Spalding-Magan Collection 167*).

"Now God wants every soul here to sharpen up. He wants every soul here to have His converting power. You need not refer, not once, to Sister White; I don't ask you to do it" (*Spalding-Magan Collection 170*).

"But don't you quote Sister White. I don't want you ever to quote Sister White until you get your vantage ground where you know where you are. Quote the Bible. Talk the Bible. It is full of meat, full of fatness. Carry it right out in your life, and you will know more Bible than you know now. You will have fresh matter—O, you will have precious matter; you won't be going over and over the same ground, and you will see a world saved. You will see souls for whom Christ has died. And I ask you to put on the armor, every piece of it, and be sure that your feet are shod with the preparation of the gospel" (*Spalding-Magan Collection 174*).

It is often said that Seventh-day Adventists, in practice if not in theory, put the writings of Mrs. White on a par with the Bible and even in place of the Bible. It is clear, however, that she did not encourage them to do this (*EV 256-257*).

ADVENTISM: Cultic or Christian to the Core

THE CROSS AND ELLEN G. WHITE

Arthur Patrick puts forth a case to consider Ellen White as an evangelical in *Lucas* with the following summary statement.

"Was Ellen White Evangelical? If to be Evangelical is to be motivated and restrained by a sense of faith and duty similar to Luther, Wesley and the Evangelical Party in Anglicanism, the answer must be yes. Her doctrine of Scripture, her analysis of the sinful nature of humankind, her idea of righteousness by faith, her methodical attempts to express the implications of the gospel in word and deed—all bear stronger testimony than do any countervailing factors" (Arthur Patrick *Lucas* n. 12, Dec 1991, page 48).

Without question, Ellen White's regard for the centrality of Christ and His Cross can never be emphasized enough:

"Christ as manifested to the patriarchs, as symbolized in the sacrificial service, as portrayed in the law, and as revealed by the prophets, is the *riches of the Old Testament*. Christ in His life, His death, and His resurrection, Christ as He is manifested by the Holy Spirit, is the *treasure of the New Testament*. **Our Saviour**, the outshining of the Father's glory, **is both the Old and the New**" (*COL 126*).

"The heart of the Advent message is **Christ and Him crucified**...let the world see and hear and know that the heart burden of Adventism is Christ and His salvation" (*QOD 101-102*).

"Of all professing Christians, **Seventh-day Adventists should be foremost in uplifting Christ** before the world" (*GW 156*).

"The sacrifice of Christ as an atonement for sin is the great truth around which all other truths cluster. In order to be rightly understood and appreciated, **every truth in the Word of God**, from Genesis to Revelation, **must be studied in the light that streams from the cross of Calvary**" (*GW 315*).

"Never should a sermon be preached, or Bible instruction in any line be given, without pointing the hearers to "the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world." John 1:29. **Every true doctrine makes Christ the center**, every precept receives force from His words" (*6T 54*).

"**One interest will prevail**, one subject will swallow up every other, **Christ our righteousness**" (*RH 12/23/1890*).