

## THE OLD POINTED TOWARD THE NEW

NAME OF COVENANT	GOD'S ACTS OF SALVATION	PUT INTO EFFECT	COVENANT PEOPLE SEPARATED TO GOD	HOW TO LIVE	WHAT IS IN FORCE?
<b>OLD COVENANT</b>	Exodus from Egypt (Exo 20:1) (Type/Shadow)	Blood (Exo 24:4-8) (Type)	<b>ISRAEL</b>	<b>613 Commandments</b> (the Law—Exo 19:8)	The Old Covenant was put into effect as binding (Heb 7:11) then removed (Heb 8:13).
<b>NEW COVENANT</b>	Exodus accomplished by Jesus at Jerusalem (Luke 9:31) (Fulfillment)	Blood (Matt 26:28) (Fulfillment)	<b>CHURCH</b>	<b>New Commandment</b> (John 13:34) "Law of Christ" (Gal 6:2)	The New Covenant was put into effect as binding based on better promises (Heb 8:6). With a change of the priesthood, there must be a change of the law (Heb 7:12).

what Christ has done in sealing the New Covenant with His blood. The New Exodus/New Covenant, not the old exodus/old covenant, has been put into place (Heb 8:6) by the Lord as the starting point for the body of Christ.

### The Sabbath and the New Testament

Since the New Covenant alone is in force, what do the **NT** Scriptures teach about the **TC**? All are dealt with forthrightly. Nine appear as duties, and the Sabbath is seen as a ceremonial law, a type and shadow, with Christ as the reality.

The **SDA** say that Colossians 2:16,17 does not include the *weekly* Sabbath embedded in the fourth commandment, but only refers to special *annual* Sabbath days which were *ceremonial*; yet it is inconceivable that the Jewish mind would make such distinctions. The following **OT** Scriptures speak of festival days, new moons and Sabbaths (plural). There can be no doubt that in most of these examples the *weekly* Sabbath is included in the word "Sabbaths"—Exo 31:13; Lev 26:2,34,35; 2 Kings 4:23; 2 Chron 36:21; Isaiah 1:13; 56:4; 66:23; Lam 2:6; Ezek 20:12,13,16,20,21,24; 22:8; 44:24; 46:1; Amos 8:5. Hosea 2:11 is representative—"I will also cause all her mirth to cease, her feast days, her new moons, and her sabbaths, and all her solemn feasts." There is every reason to believe that Paul is teaching the Christian community in Colossians 2:16,17 that the Jewish Sabbath is ceremonial and is no longer a norm for judgment.

Further, when Paul says, "Do not let anyone judge you... with regard to a religious festival, a New Moon celebration or a Sabbath day" (v16 *NIV*), there is a specific chronological progression from yearly to monthly to weekly. The festivals were yearly, the new moons were monthly, and the Sabbaths were weekly. To suggest, as the **SDA** do, that "sabbath days" refer only to *annual* Sabbath days would break up Paul's clear Jewish division of time.

The *ceremonial* nature of the Sabbath is clearly seen in Christ's words, "Have ye not read in the law, how that on the sabbath days the priests in the temple profane the sabbath, and are blameless?" (Matt 12:5). If the Sabbath is a "*moral*"

command, as the **SDA** teach, like stealing or adultery, how could it be violated without punishment? Could any of the other nine commandments be transgressed without sin being committed? Doesn't this show conclusively that the Sabbath is different from the other nine? The priests worked on every Sabbath and did so without sinning. Clearly, the Sabbath was *ceremonial*. The New Covenant Scriptures teach that the Sabbath was a "*shadow*," and that Christ is the fulfilling "*reality*."

Do not let anyone judge you by what you eat or drink, or with regard to a religious festival, a New Moon celebration or a Sabbath day. These are a shadow of the things that were to come; the reality, however, is found in Christ (Col 2:16,17 *NIV*).

If a type and shadow is fulfilled in a person, why would you continue to focus on the shadow? Lambs were slaughtered under the old covenant. Once the fulfillment, Jesus, came and offered Himself, why would we keep on killing animals? Once the reality comes, the type/shadow is discontinued. Why not apply this reasoning to the seventh-day Sabbath?

The **SDA** teach that Abraham and other Gentiles who lived long before the Law was given kept the Sabbath. That is a huge assumption. In terms of explicit statements of Scripture, it is never said that anyone kept the Sabbath before the Red Sea exodus. There are, however, several Scriptures that affirm that the Sabbath was indeed *given to Israel alone*. "Remember that thou wast a servant in the land of Egypt... therefore the LORD thy God commanded thee to keep the sabbath day" (Deut 5:15). "Thou camest down also upon mount Sinai... and madest known unto them Thy holy sabbath" (Neh 9:13,14). "Moreover also I gave them my sabbaths, to be a sign between me and them" (Ezek 20:12).

Paul specifically affirms three times in the same chapter that the *old covenant form* of the Ten Commandments was "abolished" (2 Cor 3:7,11,13) You cannot get around the fact that Paul has the **TC** in view, for he mentions the "tables of stone" and that which was "engraven in stones" (vv 3,7). Paul says that the **TC** "killed" and were a ministry of "death" and "condemnation" (vv 6,7,9). The Greek verb he uses is *katargeo* (vv 7,11,13), meaning "to render inoperative, cause to cease, to abolish, to

pass away, become of no effect, make void." Paul is contrasting the New Covenant which is in place with the old covenant which has become inoperative; he is contrasting the New Covenant which brings life and enduring glory with the old covenant that brought death and condemnation. Paul says three times here that something was *done away* with. The only "something" that can be found in this context is that which was "engraven in stone"—the Ten Commandments.

The **SDA** teach that Paul refers to the **TC** when he asks and answers the question: "Do we then make void the law through faith? God forbid: yea, we establish the law" (Rom 3:31). What does Paul mean by "the law"? He means *the Old Testament Scriptures*. In Romans 3:10-18 he cited *Isaiah* and the *Psalms*, and then said, "Now we know that what things soever the law saith" (v 19). Then he says, "But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets" (v 21). Again, the **OT** is in view here. In verse 31, then, Paul is affirming that the gospel does not nullify the teaching of the **OT**. Instead, the **OT** foretold the gospel, and Paul goes on in Romans 4 to confirm that the gospel establishes the **OT** writings, using Abraham and David as examples of justification by faith.

One of the most common meanings of "the law" in the **NT** is *the Old Testament writings*. The **SDA** often wrongly assume that "law" means the **TC**. They do this in their use of Romans 3:31. But Paul is contending that God's gospel is validated by the teaching of the **OT** in regard to the universal sinfulness of the human race and in regard to the justification of Jews and Gentiles by faith in Christ. The **TC** are nowhere mentioned in the immediate context before or after Romans 3:31.

Whenever the **SDA** see the word "commandments," they assume that the **TC** are in view. In doing this they utterly fail to recognize that a New Covenant is in effect and that out of it comes Christ's commands. The **SDA** see the saints "keeping the commandments of God" (Rev 14:12) and they read into this phrase the **TC**. But this statement in Revelation, and many others like it in the **NT**, simply mean the numerous commands of Jesus that flow out of the singular command to love one another as He loved us on the cross (John 13:34; 15:12,13). The old covenant and its commands has been fulfilled and removed. A New Covenant has been put into effect based upon better promises, and its commands are in force. Indeed, the saints keep the commands of their Savior because they love Him.

### What was Nailed to the Cross?

The **SDA** admit that the **TC** are central in the old covenant, but they also know that it would be fatal to their position if the **TC** were part of what was "*abolished* in His flesh...even the law of commandments contained in ordinances" (Eph 2:14,15; Col 2:14). So they say that only the law of *ceremonies* was nailed to the cross, and the **TC** were not included. But this is an interpretation driven by an agenda, not by listening to the texts. Paul says that whatever was nailed to the cross was "against us

and contrary to us" (Col 2:14). Wouldn't Paul's remarks indicate that he has something in mind that would justly accuse and condemn us? Wouldn't that imply something of a *moral* nature? What sense does it make to say that the ceremonial things like the mildew laws are against us and contrary to us? The old covenant law was a unit of some 613 commands (see Gal 5:3). The natural reading of Ephesians 2:14,15 and Colossians 2:14 would see that the entire old covenant written code was nailed to the cross, including the **TC** which were the center point of the old covenant (see Exo 34:29-34).

Paul teaches that the old covenant law stood as a *barrier* between Jew and Gentile (Eph 2:14-18). Obviously, one important function of this law was to keep the Israelites separate from the other nations. For Christ to make "*one new man*" out of the two separated groups, the law of commandments had to be removed. As long as the Law stood, "Jew" and "Gentile" had to be kept. In God's wisdom Christ fully honored the Law by obeying it, fulfilling it, and thereby "abolishing" it, so that He could create "one new man," the body of Christ.

If the entire old covenant law was nailed to the cross, does this leave us with *no moral direction*? Absolutely not. We have already shown that He abolished the old covenant to "put legally into place" (*nomotheteo*, Heb 8:6) the New Covenant. The life of discipleship flows out of the New Exodus, which brings with it a New Command, to love one another as He loved us on the cross (John 13:34), which Paul calls the "law of Christ" (Gal 6:2). Out of this single command comes many other commands; thus Christ says, "If ye love me, keep my commandments [plural]" (John 14:15). The **SDA** teach that when Jesus said, "keep my commandments," He had the **TC** in view. That is a biased interpretation of Scripture. Jesus meant *His teachings*. He is the Prophet Moses wrote about: "I will raise them up a Prophet from among their brethren, like unto thee... whosoever will not hearken unto my words which He shall speak in my name, I will require it of him" (Deut 18:18,19; see Matt 7:24,26). Just as Israel's obligations to the Lord arose from His mighty arm in the Red Sea exodus, so the Church's New Covenant life flows out of Christ's exodus accomplished at Jerusalem. "My commandments" is all that Jesus teaches us in the New Covenant, including the things that came through the pens of those who wrote the New Covenant documents.

### Christians Not Under Law, But Under Grace

Paul anticipated the concerns some would have when he asked, "What then? shall we sin, because we are not under the law, but under grace? God forbid" (Rom 6:15). The Christian's status in Christ is *under grace*, not law (see 1 Cor 9:19-23; Gal 5:18). Some might reason, if we are not under law, won't the floodgates of sin be opened? Paul's answer is clear: the gospel that saves us also breaks the dominion of sin in our lives, and the Spirit enables us to walk in the gospel lifestyle. The event that saves us—the cross—also commands us how to live: "For the *grace of God* that bringeth salvation hath appeared

to all men, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world” (*Titus 2:11,12*). “Grace,” says the apostle, is our sufficient teacher. Just as Israel’s covenant life was rooted in the exodus out of Egypt—“the law came by Moses” (*John 1:17a*), so the believer’s obedience flows out of the New Exodus at Calvary—“grace and truth came by Jesus Christ” (*John 1:17b*).

### The Benchmark: Saturday Sabbath-Keeping

The **SDA** go on and on about how central Sabbath-keeping is. They say that the Saturday Sabbath is a sign of our allegiance to God, that it must be kept from sunset Friday to sunset Saturday, that Satan wants to make Sunday the mark of his authority, that the Saturday Sabbath is not a minor issue, that it is about loyalty to God, and that not keeping the seventh-day could separate you from a loving Savior.

If a new Christian was to read the **NT** from Matthew to Revelation, would these things jump out at him? I don’t think so. Jesus said that the sign by which the world would know that we are His people was our visible love for each other, not observing a day (*John 13:35*). There is no emphasis in the **NT** on “remembering” the Sabbath; “remembering” is focused on the Lord Jesus in the context of the meal shared among the disciples (*1 Cor 11:24,25*). Even in the **OT** Scriptures, the Sabbath is never mentioned in places like the Psalms or Proverbs.

The **SDA** teach the seventh-day Sabbath is the day God set aside for church services. But the **OT** teaches no such thing about the Sabbath. In Israel there was no congregational worship on the Sabbath. Everything would shut down and each family met privately in their homes. Under Roman rule in Christ’s day, the Jews did gather together in synagogues. However, the synagogue was an adjustment to the times, not something the Lord had ever specified in the Law.

The **SDA** point out that Jesus kept the Sabbath. This is certainly true, but this fact does not inherently lead to the conclusion that we also must do the same. Jesus was born “under law” (*Gal 4:4*). The believer’s status is “not under law” (*Rom 6:14,15; Gal 5:18; 1 Cor 9:20*). Jesus was required to do a number of things as a Jew for which we have no obligation. For example, Jesus kept Israel’s dietary laws, but under the New Covenant the clean/unclean distinction regarding foods has passed away. Even Jesus foretold this in the Gospel: “Do ye not perceive, that whatsoever thing from without entereth into the man, it cannot defile him” (*Mark 7:18*).

The **SDA** asks the question, “On what day did Paul worship?” and they reply, “he reasoned in the synagogue every sabbath” (*Acts 18:4*). This is true on many of his journeys; however, Paul’s primary thrust as he met in these synagogues was *evangelistic*. It was to declare unto them “glad tidings” (*Acts 13:32*) as he “reasoned with them out of the Scriptures... that this Jesus, whom I preach unto you, is Christ” (*Acts 17:2,3*). Paul was not going among a group of believers who were enjoying the Lord’s Supper together and mutually edifying

one another. The synagogue was filled with unbelieving Jews who needed to hear about Christ, not the **TC**. It was Paul’s custom to enter synagogues first, as he wished for his people to be saved (*Rom 10:1*); but these occasions had nothing to do with a Christian gathering, such as the one mentioned in Acts 20:7.

The **SDA** use Jesus’ words to His disciples, “Pray ye that your flight be not in the winter, neither on the sabbath day” (*Matt 24:20*)—which refers to the tribulation of AD70—as evidence that the Sabbath was still around after His resurrection. But this perspective fails to take into consideration that the destruction of the Temple and Jerusalem in AD70 by the Romans was the definitive termination of the old covenant economy. Obviously, the Lamb of God had come and sacrificed Himself, but Judaism kept on killing sheep after His death. Jews continued the types and shadows after Christ finished His redemptive work. One major component of Judaism was their genealogical records. These were all destroyed in AD70. So it makes perfect sense that Jesus would say, “Pray that your departure from Jerusalem is not on a Sabbath.” In AD70 the Sabbath and all the other Jewish institutions were terminated. “In that He saith, A new covenant, He hath made the first old. Now that which decayeth and waxeth old is ready to vanish away,” which refers to the events of AD70 (*Heb 8:13*). The Temple veil was torn in two when Christ died, but the Temple services did not cease to function until AD70.

Under the New Covenant there are no holy places or holy days—only holy people, who are the Temple of God (*Eph 2:21,22; John 4:19-24; 1 Peter 2:5,9*). Paul teaches that days and food are not an issue in Messiah’s kingdom (*Rom 14:17*). Christians are free to observe or not observe days as unto the Lord. One option in Christ is “to esteem every day alike” (*Rom 14:5*). Each person is to be persuaded in his own mind in such matters. Now, if there is a day that must be observed or *sin* is committed, how could Paul allow for some brethren to regard every day the same? Under the New Covenant there is no reason to believe that the body of Christ can incur sin by meeting on the “wrong” day. The brethren must gather together, but they are free to work out the details in light of their New Covenant privileges and responsibilities as priests. The **NT** puts no emphasis on keeping a day of worship. Rather, we are encouraged to be our brother’s keeper seven days a week.

The utter Sabbath-centeredness of **SDA** theology is revealed in its conviction that even in the New Heaven/New Earth for all eternity, God’s redeemed people will gather every seventh-day Sabbath to have a time of special worship and fellowship with their Creator God. But the Book of Revelation makes it clear that in the New Heaven/New Earth the elements necessary for a “weekly” gathering will be nonexistent. “The city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it: for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof... There shall be no night there; and they need no candle, neither light of the sun; for the Lord God giveth them light” (*Rev 21:23; 22:5*). The fundamental essence

of the age to come is that “history” is finished (in which the sun and moon appear in cycles) and “time” simply is no more. The **SDA** make the ultimate error of carrying over a type and shadow literally into an age in which a seventh-day Sabbath is ridiculous. Further, by focusing on the shadow they miss the glory of the Lamb who is the Sabbath-reality and supplies the light of the New Heaven/New Earth.

The **SDA** cite Isaiah 66:22,23 as proof for their ideas of a weekly Sabbath for eternity. In light of Hebrews 4, it would make more sense to realize that there is indeed a Sabbath rest awaiting the people of God in the New Heaven/New Earth. The gospel way to keep the Sabbath is to cease from your own works and find rest in Christ (*Matt 11:28,29*). “Rest” in Christ has a “firstfruits” fulfillment in this age, and looks for the full harvest of rest in the New Heaven/New Earth, where there will be no more tears and no more curse.

### The Glory of Christ in the New Covenant

It’s a shame that the **SDA** are so fixated on the Sabbath. They are enamored with a law-based exodus out of Egypt. They speak of that “awe-inspiring event” when the Lord spoke His Ten Commandments to Israel. You might want to go back and consider what the people experienced (*Exo 19 & 20*). Paul openly states that this event was a ministry of “death,” and indeed was attended with glory, but this glory was “abolished” in order for the superior and lasting glory of the Spirit’s ministry to be established—“For even that which was made glorious had no glory in this respect, by reason of the glory that excellet. For if that which is done away was glorious, much more that which remaineth is glorious” (*2 Cor 3:10,11*).

In truth, the really awe-inspiring event was the Transfiguration, and even this occurrence was a pre-figuring of the full glory that would happen in Jesus’ death, burial, resurrection and ascension (*Luke 9:28-36*). Moses and Elijah spoke with the glorified Christ about the “exodus” He would soon accomplish at Jerusalem. The Shekinah glory cloud came over the disciples, Jesus, Moses and Elijah. The Father spoke out of the cloud, “This is my beloved Son: hear Him.” As these words came forth, the Lord removed Moses and Elijah, and “Jesus was found alone” by the disciples. We must fix our eyes on the exodus of Christ that brought a New Covenant and a New Commandment. That is where the glory of God in the face of Jesus is found. The **SDA** focus on the wrong exodus. They give more attention to Exodus 19 & 20 than they do to the many **NT** passages that exalt Jesus and the Sabbath rest that’s found in Him. ■

—Adapted from the writings of Jon Zens

# The Seventh-day Adventists & THE NEW COVENANT

The most fundamental problem with the Seventh-day Adventists (**SDA**), the Assemblies of Yahweh and various other seventh-day Sabbath groups (and for that matter, the bulk of visible Christianity) is that they are insensitive to the fact that Jesus accomplished a **New Exodus** on behalf of His people. They focus on the **old exodus** that separated Israel to the Lord. They skip over the fact that the Ten Commandments (**TC**) are founded upon a specific historical event: the Red Sea exodus: “I am the LORD thy God, which brought thee out of the land of Egypt” (*Exo 20:1*). This act of redemption was a *type* and *shadow* of a future exodus that the Messiah would accomplish for His people. It was never intended to be an end in itself. Just as the exodus out of Egypt brought with it 613 commands (the old covenant law), so the exodus Christ completed at Golgotha brought with it a New Covenant way of life for the Church, flowing out of one command: to love one another. This truth is diagrammed on the following page.

The Greek verb, *nomotheteo*, means to “put into effect *legally in force*.” This verb is used where the apostle says that the people “received the law” (*Heb 7:11*). This clearly shows that the old covenant at a certain point in history was “*in force*.” But this earthly economy came to an end when the Temple veil was “rent in twain” and Christ’s work was “finished” (*Matt 27:51; John 19:30; Heb 8:13*). In AD70, the old covenant fully ended when the Temple and Jerusalem were destroyed. The apostle then again uses this verb, *nomotheteo*, when he says the New Covenant “was established” upon better promises (*Heb 8:6*). This shows that the New Covenant was “put into effect and is legally in force,” and will continue on as the blood of the everlasting covenant (*Heb 13:20*). The **SDA** completely miss this point that the New Covenant is now *in force*, not the old.

### The New Exodus

Moses and Elijah spoke with the glorified Christ “about His departure [**exodus**], which He was about to bring to fulfillment at Jerusalem” (*Luke 9:31 NIV*). This New Exodus is the springboard for *Christian* obedience, as the old exodus was the foundation for *Israel’s* obedience. Just as Israel in the Old Testament (**OT**) was constantly called to think back to the Red Sea exodus that liberated them from Egypt, so the Church in the New Testament (**NT**) is repeatedly referred to the New Exodus at Calvary. Especially in the Lord’s Supper believers “remember,” not the Sabbath, but Christ death on the cross. Israel’s covenant obedience was to be in response to God’s gracious act of mercy to them as they went through the Red Sea on dry ground. The Church’s obedience is to flow out of

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