

A man in a grey jacket and blue jeans is walking away from the camera on a dirt path through a forest. He is carrying a young child on his shoulders. The child is wearing a light blue jacket and a straw hat. The path is surrounded by lush green trees and foliage. The overall scene is peaceful and natural.

To Walk in my Father's Ways

Cecil Errens

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Printed by
Maranatha Media
maranathamedia.com

January 19, 2019

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My Story

I was born in the Orange Free-State, a landlocked central province of South Africa, in a dusty coloured community called Heidedal in the city of Bloemfontein, one of our three capitals. The date was October 12, 1970. My mother was between the ages of 16-17 when she had me, but I grew up without her and my father. My great-grandmother reared me.

“He doth execute the judgment of the fatherless and widow, and loveth the stranger, in giving him food and raiment.” Deuteronomy 10:18.

My great grandmother belonged to the Old Apostolic Church, locally we called it the Twelfth Apostle Church. Annie Errens, my great grandmother was illiterate, she never attend any school. What she heard in church, she applied in her daily life and she looked after us all.

How wonderful to know that God our Father takes special care of such cases as mine.

I used to belong to the Dutch Reformed Church in Heidedal. During the 1970's the Dutch Reformed Church was divided along racial lines, including the Seventh-day Adventist Church and all other denominations. This was the Apartheid era, which would not end until 1994.

The Dutch Reformed Church (NG Kerk) was only for my white brothers and sisters. I am coloured, so I was a part of the The Dutch Reformed Mission Church (NG Sending Kerk). The Dutch Reformed Church in Africa (NG Kerk in Afrika) was for my black brothers and sisters. I was heavily involved in my Sunday Church, being a lay pastor and youth leader.

In 1990, a dear friend of mine by the name of Mario Bloem invited me to a Revelation Seminar at his church, the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Heidedal on the corner of Violet Street and Gladiola Street. I was convicted of the truths taught there, and I was baptized in 1991 by the late Pastor B. Pakerson from Cape Town.

I was granted a bursary from the Kwazulu-Natal Free State Conference of Seventh-Day Adventists and the Union Conference of Seventh-Day Adventists to study towards a degree in theology in Somerset-West at Helderberg College in the Western Cape. I commenced my studies in 2004.

I will never forget the last words to me from Pastor B. Pakerson, late secretary of the Union Conference and the man who baptized me: “Never stop reading brother Cecil Errens.” I graduated in 2008 with a BA degree in Theology. I got married to a lovely beautiful lady from Malmesbury by the name of Gladoline Felix. As already mentioned, the Seventh-Day Adventist Church is located on the corner of **Violet Street** and **Gladiola Street**. I did not realize it then, but now in hindsight our Father was leading me through His church to my wife years later. Her name is **Gladoline Felix** and the church is on the corner of **Gladiola Street**. The wise man had once said, “A man deviseth his way: but the Lord directeth his step.” Proverbs 16:9. I am so grateful I had listened to the voice of my heavenly Father to attend the Revelation seminar. We got married in Bloemfontein.

I was inspired greatly by my illiterate great-grandmother who never went to school, yet was full of good deeds and walked with our Lord. God called me to this work in the message of truth that I might walk in His ways, and how we are to walk in His ways practically is important to me.

To Walk in His Ways

I KINGS 2:3 “AND KEEP THE CHARGE OF THE LORD THY GOD, TO WALK IN HIS WAYS, TO KEEP HIS STATUTES, AND HIS COMMANDMENTS, AND HIS JUDGMENTS, AND HIS TESTIMONIES, AS IT IS WRITTEN IN THE LAW OF MOSES, THAT THOU MAYSEST PROSPER IN ALL THAT THOU DOEST, AND WHITHERSOEVER THOU TURNEST THYSELF:”

The above words were King David’s dying charge to Solomon, his son, as stated 2 verses before in 1 Kings 2:1 – “Now the days of David drew nigh that he should die; and he charged Solomon his son.” David knew how great the fall of a kingdom could be due to its king. He had seen it in the life of Saul and in his own life in his dealings with Absalom. A life of learning had led him to understand that the prosperity of the kingdom, the church of its time, relied on the leaders walking in God’s ways – which is to keep God’s statutes, commandments, judgments, and testimonies, “as it is written in the law of Moses.”

“David knew that God’s high purpose for Israel could be met only as rulers and people should seek with unceasing vigilance to attain

to the standard placed before them. He knew that in order for his son Solomon to fulfill the trust with which God was pleased to honor him, the youthful ruler must be not merely a warrior, a statesman, and a sovereign, but a strong, good man, a teacher of righteousness, an example of fidelity.” E.G. White, *Prophets and Kings*, p. 26.1.

1 Kings 2 is directly stated by the Bible as David’s last words to Solomon. But are there any other words stated to Solomon before he died?

“With tender earnestness David entreated Solomon to be manly and noble, to show mercy and loving-kindness to his subjects, and in all his dealings with the nations of earth to honor and glorify the name of God and to make manifest the beauty of holiness. **The many trying and remarkable experiences through which David had passed during his lifetime had taught him the value of the nobler virtues and led him to declare in his dying charge to Solomon: “He that ruleth over men must be just, ruling in the fear of God. And he shall be as the light of the morning, when the sun riseth, even a morning without clouds; as the tender grass springing out of the earth by clear shining after rain. 2 Samuel 23:3, 4.”** E.G. White, *Prophets and Kings*, p. 26.2.

Ellen White does something interesting in this passage from *Prophets and Kings*. She talks of David’s dying charge to Solomon, and then you would expect her to quote 1 Kings 2 – but she doesn’t. She instead quotes 2 Samuel 23, which the Bible does not say was spoken directly to Solomon. It just says that, “Now these be the last words of David...” Ellen White takes this passage and says this was said to Solomon, meaning 2 Samuel 23:1-7 and 1 Kings 2:1-10 should be taken together as the complete dying charge to Solomon.

So Ellen White, instead of quoting an exhortation to do the law, says the last words to Solomon are a new covenant promise – for in 2 Samuel 23:5 it says “he hath made with me an everlasting covenant.” If it is “everlasting,” then this charge is also our heavenly Father’s charge to us, His sons and daughters throughout the ages. This would mean the law of Moses is a crucial part of the everlasting covenant, at least according to David.

Is there opposition between the promise that “he shall be the light of the morning” and keeping the law of Moses? It seems that the two are inseparable here.

Ellen White shows further that how to keep the Law of Moses is to humble our hearts and not be flattered in error, allowing the law to point out our sin so as to allow us to repent and confess. Here she talks of David's charge to solemn and quotes 1 Kings 2 rather than 2 Samuel 23.

'I counsel you to humble your heart and confess your wrongs. Consider the solemn charge David gave to Solomon on his dying bed: "I go the way of all the earth: be thou strong therefore, and show thyself a man; and keep the charge of the Lord thy God, to walk in His ways, to keep His statutes, and His commandments, and His judgments, and His testimonies, as it is written in the law of Moses, that thou mayest prosper in all that thou doest, and whithersoever thou turnest thyself." Take this charge to your own heart. Let no one flatter you in wrongdoing. While it is a disgrace to sin, it is no disgrace, but rather an honor, to confess one's sins. Maintain true individuality, and cultivate manly dignity. Put away pride, self-conceit, and false dignity; for these can be maintained only at the most terrible consequences to yourself.' 5T 509.1.

We see in the above passages how many different aspects of the Gospel are connected together to change us practically. But for that to happen we need to know the way that God would have us walk in, that if we sin we may have the "honor to confess one's sins." "Sin is the transgression of the law", and to "walk in his ways" is to walk without sin, in complete obedience to the law, which is righteousness. (1 John 3:3-7, Romans 8:4, Psalm 119:142).

The promise is that "He that ruleth over men must be just, He is ruling in the fear of God." Then "he shall be as the light of the morning, when the sun riseth, even a morning without clouds." Solomon did not follow this charge his whole life. He lost his way, and when he was old he also gave a variation of the advice his father David gave, reflecting that: "The end of the whole matter let us hear: --'Fear God, and keep His commands, for this is the whole of man.'" (YLT) This means that Solomon, at the end of his wayward life, came to understand that the fear of God was connected to the keeping of His commands, and if Solomon had done so his whole life, he would have been as the "rising sun...a morning without clouds...ordered in all things, and sure."

Written in the Law of Moses

“For Moses describeth the righteousness which is of the law, That the man which doeth those things shall live by them.” Romans 10:5.

So what was written in the Law of Moses that David counselled Solomon to follow?

The Law of Moses is the first five books of the Bible, all written by Moses, called the Pentateuch or the Torah:

- Genesis.
- Exodus.
- Leviticus.
- Numbers.
- Deuteronomy.

The Jewish Bible (The Christian Old Testament), called the “Tanakh”, was separated into three parts: The Torah – the Law, the Nevi'im – the Prophets, and Ketuvim – the Writings. These distinctions are clearly understood by the Jews of Jesus's day, and are what he referred to in this verse:

“Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets:
I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil.” Matthew 5:17.

Jesus was not come to destroy the “Torah” nor the “Nevi'im”; meaning Jesus was not come to make of no effect the 5 books of Moses – the “Torah”; or the books of the former prophets (Joshua, Judges, Samuel, Kings) and the latter prophets (Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Hosea, etc) – collectively known to the Jew as the “Nevi'im”. Other times “law” is used to mean all the inspired writings, denoting the Old Testament in general, such as in this verse where Paul quotes Isaiah 28:11-12.

“In the law it is written, With men of other tongues and other lips will I speak unto this people; and yet for all that will they not hear me, saith the Lord.” 1 Cor 14:21

Of this passage Adam Clarke states: “Here is no contradiction, for the *torah*, LAW, was frequently used by the Jews to express the whole Scriptures, law, prophets, and hagiographia; and they used it to distinguish these sacred writings from the words of the scribes.”

We remember what Ellen White said about the law:

“We have only glimmering light in regard to the exceeding breadth of the law of God. The law spoken from Sinai is a transcript of God’s character.” {RH February 4, 1890, par. 1}

“The Lord Jesus gave to men a representation of the character of God in his life and example. The law of God is the transcript of the character of God. And in Christ they had its precepts exemplified, and example was far more effective than the precept had been.” {ST March 14, 1895, par. 9}

As we spend time with our Father in Heaven, we learn more and more about His character, so it is the same with His law. This principle of expanding light regarding law is present even in the Old Testament. God led Israel and taught them in His law, and just as the book of the law, placed in the side of the ark, expanded upon the 10 Commandments, so the writings of the prophets and the experiences of Israel after the death of Moses expanded and gave more detail to the Torah. Finally, the greatest example of the will of God for men was given in His Son Jesus:

“But when the fullness of the time was come, **God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law.**” Galatians 4:4.

“For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps: Who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth: Who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; but committed *himself* to him that judgeth righteously: Who own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripe ye were healed.” I Peter. 2:21-23

Just as the Jews referred to the entire scriptures as “the law”, so it may be said that the whole Bible for Christians, including the New Testament, may be referred to by us as “the law”. That “law” includes grace, for the law is a full transcript of God’s character and God’s character includes grace and mercy – therefore grace and mercy are in the law, in the life of Jesus, and in the Scriptures.

“The Bible presents a perfect standard of character. This sacred book, inspired by God, and written by holy men, is a perfect guide

under all circumstances of life.” E.G. White, *Fundamentals of Christian Education* p. 100.3

The last book of the Old Testament is the book of Malachi. The name Malachi means “**my messenger**,” and he was the last of the prophets to the restored remnant of Israel after the 70 years’ captivity in Babylon. In it the book prophesizes the work of John the Baptist to prepare the way for the Son of God.

“Behold I will send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me: and the Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to his temple, even the messenger of the covenant, whom ye delight in: behold, he shall come, saith the Lord of host.” Malachi 3:1.

Jesus explained to the disciples that this verse applied to John the Baptist:

And his disciples asked him, saying, Why then say the scribes that Elias [Elijah] must first come? And Jesus answered and said unto them, Elias truly shall first come, and restore all things. But I say unto you, That Elias is come already, and they knew him not, but have done unto him whatsoever they listed. Likewise shall also the Son of man suffer of them. Then the disciples understood that he spake unto them of John the Baptist. Matthew 17:10-13.

But Seventh-day Adventists understand that God’s people in the last days are comparable to Elijah, “restoring all things” and “preparing the way” for the Second Coming of Jesus. This role of God’s church at the end of time is known as the Third Elijah or the last Elijah. Ellen White declared this from the beginning in Early Writings, and she would connect this Elijah work to more aspects later in her life, like health.

“John came in the spirit and power of Elijah to proclaim the first advent of Jesus. I was pointed down to the last days and saw that John represented those who should go forth in the spirit and power of Elijah to herald the day of wrath and the second advent of Jesus.” EW 155.1

For years the Lord has been calling the attention of His people to health reform. This is one of the great branches of the work of the work of preparation for the coming of the Son of man. John the Baptist went forth in the spirit and power of Elijah to prepare the way of the Lord and to turn the people to the wisdom of the just.

He was a representative of those living in these last days to whom God has entrusted sacred truths to present before the people to prepare the way for the second appearing of Christ. John was a reformer. The angel Gabriel, direct from heaven, gave a discourse upon health reform to the father and mother of John. He said that he should not drink wine or strong drink, and that he should be filled with the Holy Ghost from his birth.” 3T 61.1

We remember that health reform in the Adventist church was discovered first through the clean and unclean foods of Leviticus, and then moved on to the original Edenic diet of Genesis – both books which are part of the Torah, the Law of Moses.

There may not be any Old Testament prophecy referred to in the New Testament that is made more clear. Not only did Jesus directly answer the disciples question on it, but the angel of the Lord directly quotes Malachi 4:6, the last verse of the Old Testament, to Zacharias, John the Baptist’s father.

But the angel said unto him, Fear not, Zacharias: for thy prayer is heard; and thy wife Elisabeth shall bear thee a son, and thou shalt call his name John. And thou shalt have joy and gladness; and many shall rejoice at his birth. For he shall be great in the sight of the Lord, and shall drink neither wine nor strong drink; and he shall be filled with the Holy Ghost, even from his mother's womb. And many of the children of Israel shall he turn to the Lord their God. And he shall go before him in the spirit and power of Elias, to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just; to make ready a people prepared for the Lord.
Luke 1:13-17

So we see the importance of this prophecy, and that it surely is meant for us at the end of time as well. The prophecy in Malachi itself declares its application to the 2nd Coming by using the language, “great and dreadful day of the LORD.”

Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the LORD: And he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers, lest I come and smite the earth with a curse. Malachi 4:5-6

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But is there an aspect to this prophecy that we have forgotten? Something that would be obvious to the church in the time of Jesus that it need not be mentioned, but would not be so to us? What is the greatest difference between the Jews of Jesus's time and us? Is it not our different understanding of the law? For the Jews it was incredibly important and revered – their problem was not that they rejected it but that it was misunderstood and misinterpreted, stripped of grace and mercy and compassion. But the church at the end of time has rejected the law altogether, particularly the health laws that were given to bless us. Peter bluntly stated that he had never ate any unclean food, but to us there is no such thing as clean and unclean.

Not only has disease been transmitted from generation to generation, but parents bequeath to their children their own wrong habits, their perverted appetites, and corrupt passions. Men are slow to learn wisdom from the history of the past. The strange absence of principle that characterizes the present generation, the disregard of the laws of life and health, is astonishing. Although a knowledge of these things can be readily obtained, a deplorable ignorance prevails. With the majority, the principal anxiety is, "What shall I eat? what shall I drink? and wherewithal shall I be clothed?" Notwithstanding all that has been said and written upon the importance of health and the means to preserve it, appetite is the great law which governs men and women generally. {RH December 13, 1881, par. 5}

The people perish for lack of knowledge. The knowledge that God would have us receive is stated in the same important prophecy in Malachi 4, telling us to "remember":

Malachi 4:4 starts as follow "**Remember** ye the **law of Moses my servant**, which **I commanded** unto **him in Horeb** for all Israel, *with the statutes and judgments.*"

And when we do Remember the law of Moses, all of it, including the statutes and judgments as charged to us by David on his deathbed, we can begin to reclaim these promises:

"Thy word is a lamp unto **my feet**, and a **light** unto **my path**."Psalm 119:105.

“For the **commandment** *is* a **lamp**; and the **law** *is* **light**; and reproofs of instruction *are* the way of life.” Proverbs 6:23.

“Then shalt thou walk in the way safely, and **thy foot** shall **not stumble**.” Proverbs 3:23.

“The law of the Lord *is* perfect, converting, the soul: the testimony of the Lord *is* sure, making wise simple.” Psalm 19:7.

“**The statutes of the Lord** *are* **right**, rejoicing the heart: the **commandment** of the Lord *is* **pure**, righteous altogether.” Psalm 19:8.

“More to be desired *are they* than gold, yea, than much fine gold: sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb.” Psalm 19:10.

“Therefore I love they commandments above gold; yea, above fine gold.” Psalm 119:127.

The *Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary Volume 4* page 1133 explains “**Remember ye**” as follows: “It is significant that the prophet who closes the Old Testament canon should stress the necessity and the importance of observing God’s instructions to His people on Mount Horeb (see Lev. 26; Deut. 28). It is significant also that ‘the law of Moses’ was to play an important part in helping people prepare for the day of the Lord.”

“Where shall we find laws more noble, pure, and just than are exhibited on the statute books wherein is recorded the instruction given to Moses for the children of Israel? From what other source can we gather such strength or learn such noble science? What other book will teach men so well how to love, fear, and obey God? What other book presents to students more ennobling science, more wonderful history? It clearly portrays righteousness and foretells the consequences of disloyalty to the will of Jehovah.” E.G. White, *Counsels to Parents, Teachers, and Students*, p 428.2

Walking in my Heavenly Father’s Ways

“When my father and my mother forsake me, then the Lord will take me up.” Psalm 27: 10.

My great-grandmother past away in 1980. One of my aunties told me to go and look for my mother on the farms around Bloemfontein. I was in standard 4

(grade 6) back then. At such a young age, it was very devastating for me. Many nights I cried myself to sleep. One of the questions I frequently asked myself was: Who will care for me? Why is this happening to me?

Now, looking back, I could see clearly the hands of my heavenly Father guiding me along the way. At first I wondered why I faced so many difficulties, but now I understand. Such promises as this comforted me. Thank you Father.

“A father of the fatherless, and a judge of the widows, *is* God in his holy habitation.” Psalms 68:5

Our Father gives us clear instruction in His word. Jesus asked His Father, which is our Father, to “Sanctify them (us) through thy truth: thy word is truth.” John 17:17. Christ says through Solomon in the book of Proverbs, “Hear, ye children, the instruction of a father, and attend to know understanding. For I give you good doctrine, forsake ye not my law.” Proverbs 4:1-2. Why? “For I was my father’s son, tender and only beloved in the sight of my mother.” Proverbs 4:3.

“...the Significance of the Jewish Economy is not yet fully comprehended. Truths vast and profound are shadowed forth in its rites and symbols...” E. G. White, *Christ Object Lessons*, p. 133.

“None will ever enter the city of God, who do not reverence the statutes of its government.” E. G. White, *Signs of the Times*, December 15, 1887.

Is there more for us to understand? Are there blessings from the law that we have yet to receive?

“The living Oracles are the flesh and blood of the Son of God, although He had not then been crucified among them. His Work as the Substitute for all sin was the only hope of Ancient Israel, and after the plan of God had been fulfilled in the death of Christ, the New Testament was written by Holy men as they were moved by the Spirit of God. This additional blessing, the New Testament Scriptures, was given, not that the Old might be cast aside, but **the light of the New Testament might be reflected back into past ages, giving significance to the whole Jewish economy.**” E.G. White, *Manuscript Releases Vol. 2*, p, 44, par. 2

The New Testament is our bright light and guide to lead us back into the Old Testament that we might truly understand their meaning. Only in the life of Christ can the writings of the Old Testament be understood.

There are those who profess to believe and to teach the truths of the Old Testament, while they reject the New. But in refusing to receive the teachings of Christ, they show that they do not believe that which patriarchs and prophets have spoken. "Had ye believed Moses," Christ said, "ye would have believed Me; for he wrote of Me." John 5:46. Hence there is no real power in their teaching of even the Old Testament.

Many who claim to believe and to teach the gospel are in a similar error. They set aside the Old Testament Scriptures, of which Christ declared, "They are they which testify of Me." John 5:39. In rejecting the Old, they virtually reject the New; for both are parts of an inseparable whole. No man can rightly present the law of God without the gospel, or the gospel without the law. The law is the gospel embodied, and the gospel is the law unfolded. The law is the root, the gospel is the fragrant blossom and fruit which it bears.

The Old Testament sheds light upon the New, and the New upon the Old. Each is a revelation of the glory of God in Christ. Both present truths that will continually reveal new depths of meaning to the earnest seeker. *Christ's Object Lessons* p. 128.1-3

Some statutes we readily accept, such as the following:

"Do not spread false reports. Do not help a guilty person by being a malicious witness. (2) "Do not follow the crowd in doing wrong. When you give testimony in a lawsuit, do not pervert justice by siding with the crowd, Exodus 23:1-2 (NIV)

Yet are there others we have forgotten? We remember that the Jews who were called out of Bablyon and given the holy task of rebuilding the temple had forgotten much of the Law, and it needed to be reclaimed.

"Thou camest down also upon Mount Sinai, and spakest with them from heaven, and gavest them right judgments, and true laws, good statutes and commandments: from "And madest known unto them they holy Sabbath, and commandedst them precepts, statutes, by the hand of Moses thy servant." Nehemiah 9:13-14.

Why did the post-exile remnant need to reclaim the law, to have more law, to “magnify the law?” Because more law allows for a better diagnosis and understanding of sin, which we then confess and receive more grace:

Moreover the law entered, that the offence might abound. But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound: That as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord. Romans 5:20-21

But if we don't feel “poor in the spirit,” then we will have no need for more grace and therefore no need for more laws to show us how to properly walk in the light of the law. This is the Laodicean curse.

“Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked: I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment, that mayest be clothed, and *that* the shame of thy nakedness do not appear; and anoint thine eyes with eyesalve, that thou mayest see.” Revelation 3:17-18

The Result of Self-Seeking

We are carnal and fallen in nature. When we recognize our need and are baptized, it doesn't mean we understand everything – in fact, we hardly understand anything at all. The work of sanctification is progressive. Even the angels needed time to comprehend the full picture of the great controversy.

“...Satan had urged in heaven, that God's law was oppressive and opposed to the good of His creatures.” E.G. White, *Great Controversy* p.531.1.

“The controversy begun in heaven over the law of God, and has been kept up the earth ever since Satan's expulsion from heaven...**The law of God has been given for the regulation of our conduct,** and it is **far-reaching in its principles...****The great statute-book is truth,** and truth only; for it delineates with unerring accuracy the history of Satan's deception, and the ruin of his followers. **Satan claimed to be able to present laws which were**

better than God's statutes and judgments, and he was expelled from heaven," E.G. White, *Review and Herald*, June 17, 1890, p. 10

Now the end of the commandment is charity out of a pure heart, and of a good conscience, and of faith unfeigned: From which some having swerved have turned aside unto vain jangling; Desiring to be teachers of the law; understanding neither what they say, nor whereof they affirm. But we know that the law is good, if a man use it lawfully. (1 Timothy 1:5-8)

Because we inherit the fallen mind of Adam who believed Satan, we too also by nature see God's law as oppressive and opposed to us. As we begin to trust God, we begin to accept his laws, but it is hard for us to accept all of them – it is all too easy to put up our own standard rather than God's. How many Christians today, when they are shown inspired scripture detailing what is required of them beyond their traditions, call that law bondage and slavery? Is the law of Moses bondage and slavery to Jesus? Or is that the mind of the opposer of the government and rule of God – Lucifer, that being who felt no gratitude towards the law and saw restriction in it rather than blessing and freedom.

"When it was announced that with all his sympathizers he must be expelled from the abodes of bliss, then the rebel leader boldly avowed his contempt for the Creator's law. He reiterated his claim that angels needed no control, but should be left to follow their own will, which would ever guide them right. He denounced the divine statutes as a restriction of their liberty and declared that it was his purpose to secure the abolition of law; that, freed from this restraint, the hosts of heaven might enter upon a more exalted, more glorious state of existence." E.G. White, *Great Controversy*, p. 499.

"The results of rebellion, the fruits of setting aside the divine statutes, have been laid open to the view of all created intelligences." E.G. White, *Great Controversy*, p. 670.

"The Great God has a law by which to govern His kingdom, and those who trample upon that law will one day find that they are amenable to its statutes." *Fundamentals of Christian Education*, p. 331.

The sacred statutes which Satan has hated and sought to destroy will be honoured throughout a sinless universe.” E.G. White *Patriarch and Prophets*, p. 342.

“God will not take into His kingdom and give eternal life to those who will not come under His laws and statutes in this life.” *Signs of the Times* September 8, 1887.

Irrespective of our church persuasion or belief systems, we are all called to adhere to the law of our heavenly Father. Remember what Solomon declared concerning us: “Let us hear **the conclusion of the whole matter**: Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this is the whole *duty* of man.” Ecclesiastes 12:13. If you fear God the very next best thing to do is to keep his commandments, all of His commandments, including his statutes and judgments which shine more light on his law.

“To the law (**Torah**) and to the testimony (**witness**)! If they do not speak according to this Word, it is because they have no **daybreak/light.**” Isaiah 8:20.

Law in Old and New Testament

We call the law Torah, a Hebrew word, but how does this word apply to The New Testament which was written in Greek, not Hebrew? Firstly, the original Semitic structures and thought-patterns underlying the Greek text are frequently still discernible in the Greek text. We see this in how the Old Testament is quoted in the New Testament. Still, the Greek word “nomos” (Law/*Torah*) may also represent expressions or ideas other than *Torah* from time to time in the Messianic Writings (New Testament). Using a greek word brought into the study of theology Greek philosophical ideas, as many philosophers had for hundreds of years used the word “nomos” in a way that was not biblical nor related to Jehovah. This Hellenic-Pagan lens caused much misunderstanding of the scriptures. Therefore we must be careful to read the Bible and try to understand what God means by law through comparing scripture with scripture, rather than bring in our own cultural-philosophical-legal understandings that are not biblical. The most perfect representation of a man’s relation to the law is in the life Jesus Christ walked when on this earth.

To follow God’s statutes is actually listening to the voice of our heavenly Father and doing what He considers to be right. Understanding the law is crucial to

keeping in a close love relationship with Him – meaning to share and confess in trust between a father and son – and this law is crucial for our wellbeing and the wellbeing of those around us, so therefore we will try to portray that law in as blessed a light as possible.

“Now these *are* the commandments, the statutes, and the judgments, which the Lord your God commanded to teach you, that ye might do *them* in the land whither ye go to possess it: That thou mightiest fear the Lord thy God, to keep all His Statutes and his commandments, which I command thee, thou, and thy son, and thy son’s son, all the days of they life, and that thy days may be prolonged. Hear therefore, O Israel, and observe to do *it*; that it may be well with thee, and that ye may it increase mightily, as the Lord God of thy fathers hath promised thee, in the land that floweth with milk and honey. Hear, O Israel: **The Lord our God is one Lord: And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might. And these words, which I command thee this day, shall teach them diligently unto thy children**, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when risest up. **And thou shalt bind them for a sign upon thine hand, and they shall be as frontlets between thine eyes. And thou shalt write them upon the posts of thy house, and on thy gates.**” Deuteronomy 6:1-9.

When we hear the word law, we think of it in the English sense. But the word Torah is much wider in meaning. It is derived from the word **arah** which carries the meanings **“to cast,” “to lay foundations,” “to sprinkle “to water,” “to send out the hand,” “to show,” “to indicate,” “to teach,” “to instruct”** (Gesenius).

The purpose of God’s law in God’s kingdom is different to its purpose in human kingdoms. Human laws are mostly used in the negative sense, to control what is worst in us, and if we are suitably mature there is not much to be gained morally by studying the statutes of a country. But God’s law teaches us, waters us, makes us more mature and stable. It is higher and more noble than human law, spiritual compared to our carnal laws. To understand them requires loving God completely, as stated in the above Bible verse.

We wonder why our children don’t walk in the faith of their fathers. Why are they so hard to discipline, why are they so easily drawn to the world, why do they

have so little faith and reverence for God? Why is it that oftentimes people of other religions have more faith in their gods than us Christians in our Father in Heaven? Ellen White gives us the reason:

Fathers and mothers who claim to be Christians, and who have not been doers of the words of Christ, who have not educated and trained their children in correct habits, have not brought them up to love and fear God, as God has directed them to. "**The words of Moses to Israel, concerning the statutes and judgments** of the Lord, are also **the word of God to us**; he says: "Keep therefore and do them; for this is your wisdom and your understanding in the sight of the nations, which shall hear all these statutes, and say, Surely this great nation is a wise and understanding people..." *Signs of the Times*, March 21, 1895.

Remember that at Sinai there were statutes and judgments given, they were not thought up by Moses but were given to Him by God. It is this law, given in relation to our past experience, that we are to teach our children. But instead we disregard the statutes and forget our history, and our children question God's governance or see it as arbitrary and without reasonable legal precedent. Ellen White often describes this sad state as being unable to "reason from cause to effect."

Who gave these commands?—It was the Lord Jesus, enshrouded in the pillar of cloud. He presented to the people the only true standard of character, which is the law of God. "And when thy son asketh thee in time to come, saying, What mean the testimonies, and the statutes, and the judgments which the Lord our God hath commanded you? then thou shalt say unto thy son, We were Pharaoh's bondmen in Egypt; and the Lord brought us out of Egypt with a mighty hand." The Lord commanded the parents to rehearse to the children his past dealings with them, for the mighty works of God were ever to be kept fresh in their minds. "And the Lord commanded us to do all these statutes, to fear the Lord our God [not with a servile fear, but], for our good always, that he might preserve us alive, as it is at this day. And it shall be our righteousness, if we observe to do all these commandments before the Lord our God, as he hath commanded us." {ST March 21, 1895, par. 3}

God's Chosen People

"Now the Lord had said unto Abram, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will shew thee: And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing: And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed." Genesis 12:1-3.

When our heavenly Father chose a people unto Himself, it was not based on how you look, how much money you have in the bank, or how many degrees you have behind your name. All of the above is irrelevant for our Father. Do you have the qualities that Abram had? Abram believed the promises God made to him, and understood the relationship of obedience and blessing.

"And the scripture was fulfilled which saith, Abraham believed God, and it was imputed unto him for righteousness: and he was called the Friend of God." James 2:23.

"*Art* not thou our God, *who* didst drive out the inhabitants of this land before thy people Israel, and gavest it to the seed of Abraham thy friend for ever?" II Chronicles 20:7

"But thou, Israel, *art* my servant, Jacob whom I have chosen, the seed of Abraham my friend." Isaiah 41:3.

"Because that **Abraham obeyed my voice, and kept my charge, my commandments, my statutes, and my laws.**" Genesis 26:5

"By faith Abraham, when he was called to go out into a place which he should after receiver for an inheritance, obeyed; and he went out, not knowing whither he went." Hebrew 11:8.

We remember the plea of our Saviour Jesus to us, that if we love Him we would keep his commandments (John 14:15). This is no selfish request. Jesus wants us to prosper, and therefore he draws on the power of love to brings us to the commandments. "We love him, because he first loved us." (1 John 4:19)

The Word of Moses is the Word of God to us

The Jews of Jesus's time until today have incorporated many human ordinances to their laws – mixing human ideas to the wisdom of God. Jesus came to lift this unrequired burden. For example, to “keep” the Sabbath Jews are told by their rabbis not to use their phones, that they cannot turn on or off anything with electricity, take books outside, etc etc – making them feel that is impossible to keep the laws. But God says He will write HIS law in our hearts. It is not human laws that we are to study, but it is the law as it is in the inspired writings that we must ask God to help us understand; especially their relevance for us today. This must be done with humility and done individually, not as a weapon to judge others.

“The **words of Moses to Israel**, concerning the statutes and judgments of the Lord, **are also the word of God to us...**” *Signs of the Times*, March 21, 1895.

“The instructions given to Moses for ancient Israel, with their sharp, rigid outlines, **are to be studied and obeyed by the people of God today.**” *SDA Bible Commentary, Vol. 1*, p. 1103.4

Moses, the visible leader of the Israelites, was admitted into the secret councils of the Most High. The people were given evidence that Moses did **indeed talk with God, receiving from Him the instruction given them.** (Letter 259, 1903) 1BC 1103.5.

“And if ye have erred, and not observed all these commandments, which the LORD hath spoken unto Moses,” Numbers 12:22.

“And if the descendants of Abraham had kept the covenant, of which circumcision was a token or pledge, they would never have gone into idolatry, nor been suffered to go down into Egypt; and there would have been no necessity of God's proclaiming in law from Sinai, and engraving it upon tables of stone, and guarding it by **definite directions in the judgments and statutes given to Moses.**” *Spirit of Prophecy Vol. 1*, p. 264par. 2.

“The Jews has become ignorant of the fact that the Law really stands for ‘righteousness that comes from God’ and, since they have construed it as a domain of segregation from the rest of humankind, they have turned it into their ‘own’ righteousness.”

David J. Bosch, *Transforming Mission Paradigm Shifts in Theology of Mission* p.157.

Paul describes the state of men who think they love God, but have confused their own standard righteousness for God's standard of righteousness:

“Brethren, my heart’s desire and prayer to God for Israel is that they might be saved. For I bear them record that they have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge. For they being ignorant of God’s righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God.” Romans 10:1-3.

“But even unto this day, when Moses is read, the vail is upon their hearts. Nevertheless when it shall turn to the Lord, the vail shall be taken away”. 2 Corinthians 3:15-16.

“Before the Israelites entered the Promised Land, God warned them not to forget that the blessings they were to enjoy there if they cooperated with Him would come as divine gifts.” *Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary Vol. 4*, p. 31.

“Beware that thou forget not the Lord thy God, in not keeping his commandments, and his judgments, and his statutes, which I command thee this day.” Deuteronomy 8:11.

“Israel’s unwillingness to submit to the restrictions and requirements of God, prevented them, to a great extent, from reaching the high standard He desired them to attain.” *Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary Vol. 4*, p. 32.

The Books are Open

What books? Some may come to your mind. Whenever books are opened, it only means one of two things. You are busy reading or you are busy investigating something. The prophet Daniel pulled the curtains of heaven open for us to give us a picture of judgment in heaven when the books are opened.

“A fiery stream issued and came forth from before him: thousand thousands ministered unto him, and ten thousand times ten

thousand stood before him: the judgment was set, and the **books were opened.**" Daniel 7:10.

We know by heart there is a **book of life** and **book of remembrance**.

"Christ, in union with His people, judged the wicked dead, **comparing their acts with the statute book, the Word of God,** and deciding every case according to the deeds done in the body." E.G. White, *Early Writings*, p. 290.3.

"The books are opened--the **book of life** and the **book of death**. **The book of life contains the good deeds of the saints; and the book of death contains the evil deeds of the wicked. These books are compared with the statute book, the Bible,** and according to that men are judged." *Early Writings* p. 52

"**Jesus was the angel enshrouded in the pillar of cloud by day and the pillar of fire by night, and He gave special direction that the Hebrews should teach the law of God, given when the foundation of the earth was laid,** when the morning stars sang together and all the sons of God shouted for joy." 1SM p.315.2

"Directions were given that he who should sit on the throne of Israel should "**write him a copy**" of the **statutes of Jehovah** "in a book out of that which is before the priests the Levites." "It shall be with him," the Lord said, "and he shall read therein all the days of his life: that he may learn to fear the Lord his God, **to keep all the words of this law and these statutes, to do them:** that his heart be not lifted up above his brethren, and that he turn not aside from the commandment, to the right hand, or to the left: to the end that he may prolong his days in his kingdom, he, and his children, in the midst of Israel." Deuteronomy 17:18-20. PK 52.1

Do the statutes we are admonished to observe include the festivals? Are they not called statutes? Here are some samples.

Unleavened Bread

And ye shall eat neither bread, nor parched corn, nor green ears, until the selfsame day that ye have brought an offering unto your God: **it shall be a statute for ever throughout your generations in all your dwellings.** Leviticus 23:14

Pentecost

And ye shall proclaim on the selfsame day, that it may be an **holy convocation** unto you: ye shall do no servile work therein: **it shall be a statute for ever** in all your dwellings throughout your generations. Leviticus 23:21

Day of Atonement

Ye shall do no manner of work: **it shall be a statute for ever throughout your generations in all your dwellings.** Leviticus 23:31

Tabernacles

Also in the fifteenth day of the seventh month, when ye have gathered in the fruit of the land, ye shall keep a feast unto the LORD seven days: on the first day shall be a sabbath, and on the eighth day shall be a sabbath. (40) And ye shall take you on the first day the boughs of goodly trees, branches of palm trees, and the boughs of thick trees, and willows of the brook; and ye shall rejoice before the LORD your God seven days. (41) And ye shall keep it a feast unto the LORD seven days in the year. **It shall be a statute for ever in your generations:** ye shall celebrate it in the seventh month. Leviticus 23:39-41

What does the Spirit of Prophecy say about this?

Again the people were reminded of the sacred obligation of the Sabbath. Yearly feasts were appointed, at which all the men of the nation were to assemble before the Lord, bringing to Him their offerings of gratitude and the first fruits of His bounties. The object of all these regulations was stated: **they proceeded from no exercise of mere arbitrary sovereignty; all were given for the good of Israel.** The Lord said, "Ye shall be holy men unto Me"--worthy to be acknowledged by a holy God. Patriarchs and Prophets p 311.2

"Shall we not keep holy festivals unto God? Shall we not show that we have some enthusiasm in His service? With the grand, ennobling theme of salvation before us, shall we be as cold as statues of marble? If men can become so excited over a match

game of cricket, or a horse race, or over foolish things that bring no good to anyone, shall we be unmoved when the plan of salvation is unfolded before us? **Let the school and the church henceforth have festivals of rejoicing unto the Lord.**” Special Testimonies on Education, pages 77-82

“Moses wrote these judgments and statutes from the mouth of God while he was with him in the mount. If the people of God had obeyed the principles of the Ten Commandments, there would have been no need of the specific directions given to Moses, which he wrote in a book, relative to their duty to God and to one another. The definite directions which the Lord gave to Moses in regard to the duty of his people to one another, and to the stranger, are the principles of the ten commandments simplified, and given in a definite manner that they need not err.” 3SG 299.3

The forces of the enemies are strengthening, and as a people we are misrepresented; but shall we not gather our forces together, and come up to the feast of tabernacles? Let us not treat this matter as one of little importance, but let the army of the Lord be on the ground to represent the work and cause of God in Australia. Let no one plead an excuse at such a time. One of the reasons why we have appointed the camp-meeting to be held at Melbourne, is that we desire the people of that vicinity to become acquainted with our doctrines and works. We want them to know what we are, and what we believe. Let every one pray, and make God his trust. Bible Echo, December 8, 1893 par. 5

It is certainly true that Ellen White was not keeping the Feast of Tabernacles in accordance with the calendar of the Torah, but we see how she was applying the principle. Why did Ellen White not directly advocate the keeping of the festivals not just in principle but according to the calendar? It is because the Adventist Church had not yet found the book of the law as a movement.

How the Lost Law Was Found

“And when they brought out the money that was brought into the house of the Lord, **Hilkiah the priest found a book of the law of**

the Lord given by Moses. And Hilkiah answered and said to Shaphan the scribe, **I have found the book of the law in the house of the Lord.** And Hilkiah delivered the book to Shaphan." II Chronicles 34:14-16.

The story of Josiah has special significance for Adventists because it is the last story that Ellen White wrote about in the Review and Herald before she died. Her closing words are significant and are full of instruction for us.

Like unto Josiah "was there no king before him, that turned to the Lord with all his heart, and with all his soul, and with all his might, according to all the law of Moses; neither after him arose there any like him. Notwithstanding the Lord turned not from the fierceness of his great wrath, . . . because of all the provocations that Manasseh had provoked him withal." 2 Kings 23:25, 26. **The time was rapidly approaching when Jerusalem was to be utterly destroyed, and the inhabitants of the land carried captive to Babylon, there to learn the lessons they had refused to learn under circumstances more favorable.** Review and Herald, July 29, 1915 par. 16

The significance of this statement is not to be underestimated. Just as the final words from David to Solomon are full of instruction, so also the final words of Ellen White in the Review point to a future time from when she wrote when God's people would rediscover the importance of the book of the law and keep it all and claim its blessings.

The Adventist movement had been given an opportunity to discover the book of the law with the most precious message given in 1888 by elders Waggoner and Jones. This message was rejected, and thus the opportunity to learn the principles of the book of the law during more favourable times would not come until after the Babylonian captivity, which would occur in 1980 when Adventism was welcomed into the sisterhood of churches of the daughters of Babylon. Despite this failure Ellen White gave this penetrating statement ten years earlier.

The closing words of Malachi are a **prophecy** regarding the work that should be done preparatory to the first and the **second advent of Christ.** This prophecy is introduced with the admonition, "**Remember ye the law of Moses my servant, which I commanded unto him in Horeb** for all Israel, with the statutes and judgments. Southern Watchman, March 21, 1905

We are told by the messenger of the Lord to “remember ye the law of Moses my servant.” We must call to remembrance the Law of Moses. We are told to read, study and do them.

It was not possible for the Advent movement to begin to keep all the statutes of God until the book of the law was found in the context of the everlasting covenant. Just as the admonition to Solomon was a combination of the following.

And keep the charge of the LORD thy God, **to walk in his ways, to keep his statutes, and his commandments, and his judgments, and his testimonies, as it is written in the law of Moses**, that thou mayest prosper in all that thou doest, and whithersoever thou turnest thyself: 1 Kings 2:3

Although my house be not so with God; **yet he hath made with me an everlasting covenant, ordered in all things, and sure: for this is all my salvation**, and all my desire, although he make it not to grow. 2 Sam 23:5

It is not until we see that the law is a transcript of the character of God, and that the grace of the everlasting covenant is part of the law, that we could venture to respond to the admonition to keep all the law of Moses. This did not happen in the life time of Ellen White. But now after the iniquity of the rejection of the 1888 message has reached its third and fourth generation, we are now offered to become part of the remnant that keep all the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus. Revelation 14:12.

Let’s seek for the book of law in the house of God. It has been suppressed under the cloak of error. Let’s seek for it with our whole heart. Jesus the Son of God advises us to **“Ask, and it shall be given you, seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you: For every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened.”** Matthew 7:7-8.

For how long must the Son of God be knocking at your heart’s door? It is time to stand up and open the door, your heart’s door, for our Elder Brother Jesus Christ. He wants to take us to our heavenly Father. Our time is running out.

Ellen White tried with all her might to unlock the puzzle that would lead to a true restoration of the law of Moses. In 1899 she wrote to the Haskells in an excited manner with a sense of urgency.

I have things to send to you in writing that I deem very important, and I think it will be prepared in a form so that many may be benefited by it. **I should oft be so pleased to have talks with you upon matters that are intensely interesting to me, that I am trying to write out, in reference to the specifications in Scriptural injunctions in regard to the duties one to another in Leviticus and Deuteronomy. We must just call to our minds those [precepts on] actual, practical missionary work, and work intelligently, and do the very principles of Christianity, the gospel of the Old Testament.**

And this some call the Dark Ages. If so, it is not because they had no communication from heaven. [See] Leviticus 25. The Lord was over the whole earth. **Every seventh year was a sabbatical year. This would be a wonderful arrangement down in this age of great light.** Not only the agricultural processes were to be intermitted, but the cultivation of the soil was not permitted. It lay in its spontaneous growth for the benefit of the poor. All had free access to it — the strangers and the flocks and the herds. This was to invigorate the productive, worn - out soil, and to teach the Hebrew nation that God was the Householder, and the people were His tenants. The land had a sabbath, or yearly sabbath.

Then the jubilee, the fiftieth. The lessons given were to encourage liberality and overcome all stinginess, and to give lessons to all that it was the Lord's land. He was to be regarded as its owner, that He would make it productive, if they were obedient, by giving them His blessing upon their lands. The lesson given was that the Lord was taking care of the poor, and that He had made provision for them; and every seventh year the spontaneous crops were for them. This is the principle of liberality; a provision was made by special interposition of God. The sixth year, under God's supervision, the land yielded provision for three years; and it was a constant lesson that God was the Householder, and the land was His.

I cannot write out all that is contained in Leviticus and Deuteronomy. But I think our people in this enlightened age of 1899, if they would go back to the period they call the "Dark Ages" and bring into their practical life the lessons that Christ

gave to the Hebrews, they would act out the obedience God required of them. Their hearts would not be so full of selfish principles that when His brethren working in hard fields should ask a favor, that they would close the door of their heart and say, No. Letter 221, August, 1899

Ellen White spoke of the light in the gospel of the Old Testament, the light in Leviticus and Deuteronomy, and the light in the land Sabbath and the Jubilee and that these things needed to be lived out practically in our lives.

Sadly the failure in 1888 to understand the everlasting covenant in its proper context meant that the book of the law could not be placed in its correct framework, and thus it would be after her death that this book of the law would be truly found in the right framework.

“He found him in a desert land, and in waste howling wilderness; he kept him as the apple of his eye. As an eagle stirreth up her nest, fluttereth over her young, spreadeth them on her wings. So the Lord alone did lead him, and there was no strange god with him.” Deuteronomy 32: 10-12

“How excellent *is* thy lovingkindness, O God! Therefore the children of men put their trust under the shadow of thy wings.” Psalm 36:7.

I am truly privileged to be called to walk in all the commandments of my heavenly Father.

I waited patiently for the LORD; and he inclined unto me, and heard my cry. (2) He brought me up also out of an horrible pit, out of the miry clay, and set my feet upon a rock, and established my goings. (3) And he hath put a new song in my mouth, even praise unto our God: many shall see it, and fear, and shall trust in the LORD. Psalms 40:1-3

From the horrible pit after I lost my dear great grandmother, I have been brought into the presence of my heavenly Father through His Son and been granted the inheritance of His statutes and judgments.

What a joy it is to see that my Father’s commandments and statutes are life for me in the light of the everlasting covenant.

The law of the wise is a fountain of life, to depart from the snares of death. Proverbs 13:14

Take care and lets us stay true to His statutes and judgments.

To Walk in My Father's Ways

O how love I thy law! it is my meditation all the day. Psalm 119:97

Now therefore hearken, O Israel, unto the statutes and unto the judgments, which I teach you, for to do them, that ye may live, and go in and possess the land which the LORD God of your fathers giveth you. (2) Ye shall not add unto the word which I command you, neither shall ye diminish ought from it, that ye may keep the commandments of the LORD your God which I command you. (3) Your eyes have seen what the LORD did because of Baalpeor: for all the men that followed Baalpeor, the LORD thy God hath destroyed them from among you. (4) But ye that did cleave unto the LORD your God are alive every one of you this day. (5) Behold, I have taught you statutes and judgments, even as the LORD my God commanded me, that ye should do so in the land whither ye go to possess it. (6) Keep therefore and do them; for this is your wisdom and your understanding in the sight of the nations, which shall hear all these statutes, and say, Surely this great nation is a wise and understanding people. Deuteronomy 4:1-6

For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith the Lord; I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts: and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people: Hebrews 8:10