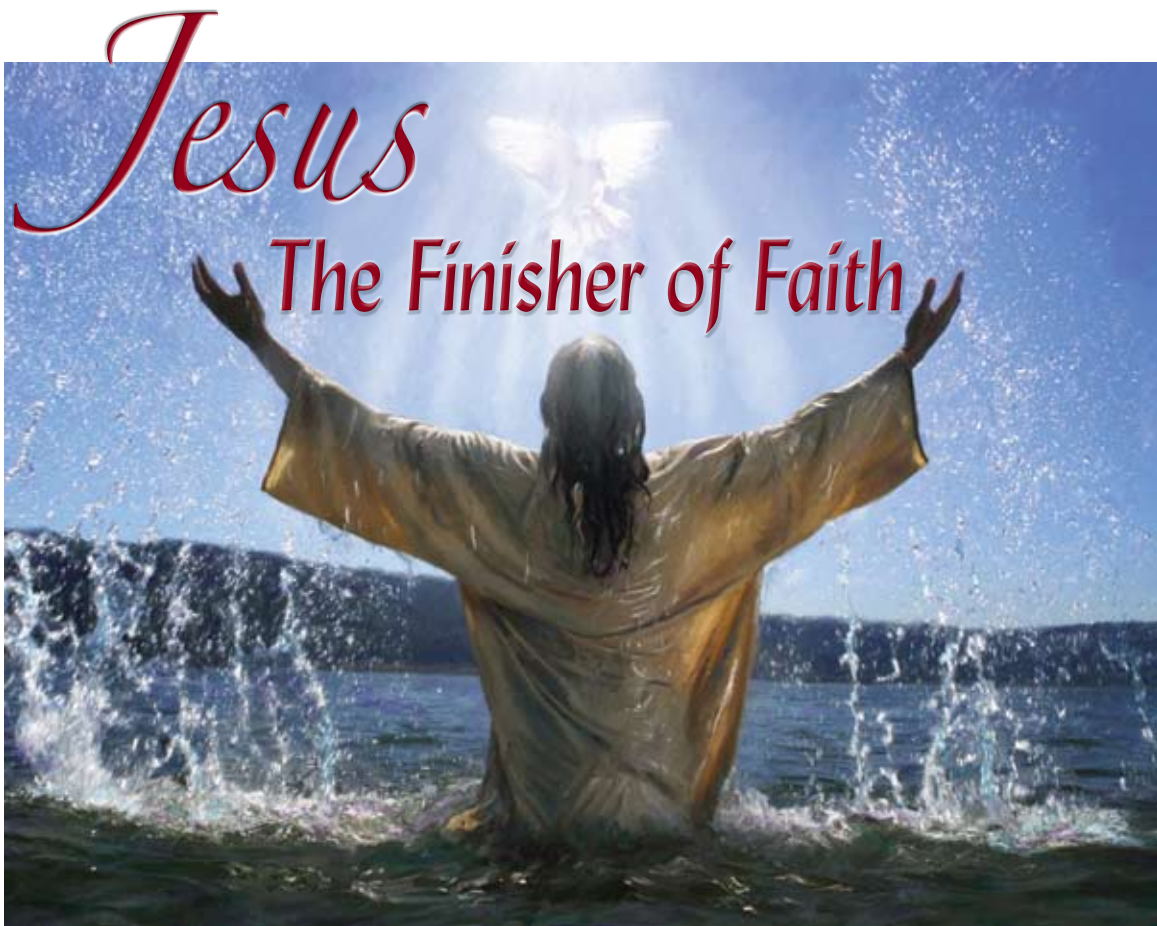


February 2009

# GLAD TIDINGS

*"I will make you fishers of men"*



**1888 NATIONAL CONFERENCE**

**JULY 7-11, 2009**

**PIONEER MEMORIAL SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST CHURCH**

**Berrien Springs, MI 49103**

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information  
inside*

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The purpose of this newsletter is to share the good news of Jesus Christ as the foundation of effective personal and public evangelism to the world, to encourage the use of and share more effective methods and resources.

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*From the editors:*

We have received numerous comments, calls and inquiries regarding the pullout sermon in our last *Glad Tidings* issue. All inquiries were of a positive and heart warming nature. For those readers who have not yet read the article, it may be downloaded from our website. Simply visit [www.gtpublishers.org](http://www.gtpublishers.org) and click on the Magazine tab. Select the 3Q 2008 issue.

We will be blessed to have Pastor Ivor Myers, author of the *Amazing Grace* article, join us at our national conference this summer in Berrien Springs, Michigan. Do not miss this opportunity to hear more from Pastor Myers, and be sure to register for our conference. See pages 22-23 for details.

Dear friends at Glad Tidings:

What a blessing your magazine has been to me, and especially the November issue! I will be bringing it to our weekly Bible study next week and we will read the wonderful sermon, *Amazing Grace*, together (and I hope many of the other articles as well).

I am enclosing the address of our Bible study group leader. She, too, wishes to receive your magazine.

I am enclosing a check ... and will continue to send this amount monthly, as God continues to bless. (I wish it could be more).

—DL

Dear friends:

The last *Glad Tidings* magazine was awesome—especially the article by Ivor Myers, *Amazing Grace*. This touched both my husband and [me]. Oh, the love of our Lord.

—S and BF

*(This comment was received during the time our last issue of Glad Tidings was being printed. Thus, it refers to the second previous magazine issue)*

Dear brothers,

Thank you for sending me Sabbath School Insights and for the publication, *Glad Tidings*.

The last issue has been a real inspiration to me and has opened my eyes on several topics such as: "The faith of Jesus" by Prescott—from Guthrie; "Studies in Galatians" by Jones. Important items, "Presumption of innocence" and "Presumption of Guilt" by Richard Kearns were new [to] me and for a lot of our membership in Holland. I was a church elder and now a lay priest for more than thirty years and the last two years I have been preaching on these topics in some of our churches in Holland (three times every month).

*Glad Tidings* is my friend during holidays for study (three times a year, because I'm retired and 75 years old).

... We need to know more about God's blessings, the message of 1888 and the truth from our pioneers. In this way you help the work in Holland.

—May God bless you all, FK

[Dear Glad Tidings]:

... The most recent *Glad Tidings* was/is excellent! Loved the article by Herbert Douglass, and the sermon by Ivor Myers. Is there a video of Ivor delivering this sermon? I'd love to see it ...

—CN

Dear Friends:

Thank you, R. J. Gravell for the gift and letter I received from Glad Tidings as early as last March. Please take the enclosed check as my gift of appreciation for the valuable work all of you are doing in spreading the truth of our Lord and Saviour and thereby saving many for His kingdom. May he continue to bless you and your work richly now and throughout 2009.

—Sincerely, HS, Germany

P. S. My special greetings go to R. J. Wieland, Herbert Douglass (AUC 1965-67), Lloyd Knecht and Mrs. Knecht and Richard and Carmen Kearns. Thank you!

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Dear Sir:

Thank you for the books and magazines that you sent us. Our prison (female) library is now getting better although the number of the inmates is increasing every [day].

However, more books, magazines and tapes, especially those on the mark of the beast are also needed. We do not have books like ... The Great Controversy. Bibles would also be appreciated. Thanking you in advance. God bless you as you toil to have His Word spread.

—Yours faithfully, DH, Zambia

---

Pastor[s]:

We enjoy and are blessed by your books, CDs, and newsletters. We pray that God will continue to bless you, your ministry and your families. We wish we could do more. Please use this money to get the message out. We thank God for all of His faithful SDA pastors.

—God Bless, DS

---

Dear 1888 Message Project:

A dear friend sent me a copy of 1888 Glad Tidings, January 2004. It was so refreshing to know that there is still an ongoing attempt to teach converted sinners about the cleansing power of a relationship with Christ. Thank you so very much.

I was blessed to embrace the teachings of the SDA church in May of 1977. I had previously derided and ridiculed Sabbath keepers. Likewise, it was my good fortune to attend a series of meetings conducted by Robert Wieland and another gentleman. The series was held in the Grants Pass, Oregon SDA church. ... I was on fire and [on] fertile ground for the truth in and about Christ.

The 1888 message as presented by Wieland and his associate were indelibly embedded in my mind (even to this day). I purchased every book Wieland had to offer. I still have them in my library at home.

However, as you know by the return address on this letter, I am in prison—for a crime that never occurred. I am appealing but it is a long process. I was awaiting trial with an ex-SDA. ... His wife had fallen away as well. Now, she is aggressively seeking to re-establish her relationship with Christ. We have never met, ... I am trying to help and encourage her ... she had not heard of the 1888 message and is excited about what I have shared with her so far. ...

... I do not have the funds while in prison, but I would like to obtain materials ... with the promise to pay for them upon my release. Is this possible? I would like to be placed on any mailing list pertaining to the 1888 message.

I received a copy of the book by [Shawn] Brace, *Waiting At the Alter*. It is fantastic! Every SDA should read this book. It is a simplistic and basic presentation of the 1888 message. I hope you have read it. ...

No matter what help can or cannot be proffered, I will pray for your ministry. If you are able to send books and or materials ... please keep an account of the cost so I can take care of it upon my release.

... God has a purpose for my “adventure” in Oregon’s penal system. I thank Him for blessing me. He uses us in “awkward” ways!!

—Prayerfully and respectfully yours, JS

---

Dear Glad Tidings:

This is a gift of thanks, especially for your magazine. I enjoy it so much. Also, a praise to our Savior for the health He has given me this year. Even though I have leukemia (stage 3 or 4), I am still able to share Christ and be with my family.

—Merry Christmas and God bless you, M

**We enjoy hearing from you! Send your comments to: [info@gtpublishers.org](mailto:info@gtpublishers.org)**



## JACK SEQUEIRA'S RESPONSE TO THE ARTICLE:

# Universal Legal Justification And Vicarious Atonement

As written by Stephen Bauer

THE WORD VICARIOUS IS defined by the *Webster's New World Dictionary* as "taking the place of another" or "endured or performed by one person in place of another." This is how I believe Ellen G. White understood and used the word vicarious. I fully agree with the above definition of vicarious atonement, even though Bauer claims that I do not believe that Christ died *for us* or *in our place*. In both my books that Bauer quotes, *Beyond Belief* and *Saviour of the World* (published by Pacific Press) I make it clear that Christ did die for us and in our place. Here is one clear example: "The New Testament clearly teaches that Christ died 'for us' and 'in place of us.' But the real question is: *What qualified Him to die for us or instead of us?*" (*Saviour of the World*, page 133).

My objection to vicarious atonement is not based on the above dictionary meaning of the word *vicarious*, that is, one person acting on behalf of another, but its theological application. The idea that it was the sinless pre-fall human nature of Christ that died on the cross *for* and *in place of* the sinful post-fall nature of the human race He came to redeem.

This view of vicarious atonement fails to identify Christ's humanity with our corporate humanity that needed redeeming. It is this that makes the *vicarious atonement model* unethical. And it is in this context that I opposed the *vicarious atonement model* in all my books. Inciden-

tally, it is for this very same reason that present day Islamic scholars accuse the evangelical Christian doctrine of vicarious atonement as "legal fiction."

In 1962, the British scholar, Harry Johnson, published his London University doctoral dissertation on *The Humanity of the Saviour* (The Epworth Press). He proved both, historically and biblically, that what Christ did not assume He could not redeem. He wrote: "The eternal Son of God became man for our salvation; but what kind of human nature did He assume? The answer of this book is that He took human nature as it was because of the Fall. Despite this, He lived a perfect, sinless life, and finally redeemed this 'fallen nature' through the Cross; in this victory is the basis of Atonement" (flyleaf). Johnson draws his biblical evidence especially from the book of Hebrews that correctly interprets the Sanctuary services of the Old Testament.

As a result of this dissertation many reliable New Testament scholars are now proclaiming the post-fall human nature of Christ as the basis of a fuller and more complete understanding of the atonement. Here are a few of them: Anders Nygren, James Dunn, Thomas Torrance, C. E. B. Cranfield (editor of *The International Critical Commentary*), Leslie Newbigin, etc.

I believe that Harry Johnson was absolutely right in his conclusion. Interestingly,

the late Adventist theologian, and member of the E. G. White Estate, Jean Zurcher, demonstrated in his book, *Touched With Our Feelings, A Historical Survey of Adventist Thought on the Human Nature of Christ* (Review and Herald, 1999), that prior to the publishing of the book *Questions on Doctrines*, the Adventist church taught that Christ assumed the post-fall human nature of Christ, a view supported by Ellen G. White.

One major problem many Adventists face regarding the atonement, is their limited understanding of the universal sin problem. The New Testament presents sin as both a verb (Gk. *harmatano*), as well as a noun (Gk. *Harmatia*). The verb has to do with our actions or behavior. But the noun has to do with our condition. This is what makes us sinners by nature, as well as, slaves to sin (Romans 3:9-20; 5:19; 7:14; Eph. 2:3).

In order for Christ to save humanity totally from the universal sin problem He had to deal with both aspects of the sin problem. While the blood of Christ (His death on the cross) is able to cleanse us from all our sins (actions, 1 John 1:7, 9), the only way Christ could redeem mankind from the nature and condition of sin, what Paul calls the law (constant force) of sin in our members (Romans 7:22-24) is by meeting it head on.

This, in fact, was the primary reason Christ came to this world. At the begin-



*The article, Universal Legal Justification and Vicarious Atonement, by Stephen Bauer was published In the Biblical Research Institute's (BRI) Newsletter, Reflections (Issue number 24, October, 2008). Since Bauer includes my name in this article it is my Christian duty to respond. The reason being, Bauer has failed to realize the real reason why I oppose vicarious atonement in my books and therefore has misrepresented me.—Jack Sequeira*

ning of His ministry John the Baptist introduced Christ with these words, echoing the Sanctuary truth: “The next day he saw Jesus coming to him, and said, ‘Behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!’” (John 1:29). The word sin in this text is in the singular and is referring to the noun, our sinful condition. While we humans are able to change our outward behavior from bad to good

### ***“The eternal Son of God became man for our salvation; but what kind of human nature did He assume? ...”***

(this is what the legalists are emphasizing) we are absolutely incapable of changing our nature.

The Bible is absolutely clear that just as the Ethiopian cannot change his skin or the Leopard its spots, so also we humans, who are sinners by nature, cannot change that nature (Jeremiah 13:23). But what we humans are incapable of doing God did in Christ, “by sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful man to be a sin offering” (Romans 8:3, NIV).

According to the apostle Paul, Christ has set us free (past tense) from the law of sin and death (the nature problem) by

assuming the self-same fallen nature that we inherited from Adam. He not only conquered the law of sin by His life but also condemned or executed it by His death on the cross (Romans 8:2-4). Hence, He took to heaven a glorified redeemed body which He is reserving for the believers at His second coming (Philippians 3:20, 21). Here is the full content of the doctrine of the atonement that God raised the Advent Movement to proclaim to the world in its global mission.

Adventists are traditionally Arminians in their understanding of the atonement. Therefore, it is important that we consider the controversy between Calvinism and Arminianism, to fully understand the atonement issue. According to John Calvin (the Swiss reformer) God is sovereign and therefore whatever He decides will happen. Since the Bible clearly teaches that some will be lost, Calvin came to the conclusion that God has chosen only some to be saved, the elect. This is the doctrine of predestination. Hence, Calvinists define Christ's death on the cross as “limited atonement.”

In contrast, Jacob Arminius (the Dutch reformer) insisted that Christ died on the cross for the sins of the entire human race. Since the wicked will be punished for their sins at the end of the world, Calvin accused Arminius of making God an unjust God, since He punishes the same sins twice, once in Christ and at

the end of the world on the wicked. It is here that Arminius took a wrong turn. He claimed God did not save anyone on the cross but only potentially or provisionally saved all humanity.

For that provisional salvation to become a reality one must repent and believe in Christ. Only then will God place such a believer into Christ and the potential salvation will become a reality. Hence, Arminians apply the *in Christ motif* only to believers, even though Paul also uses the *in Christ* concept for mankind as a whole (Romans 5:15-18; 2 Corinthians 5:18, 19; Ephesians 1:4; 2:5, 6).

Because Seventh-day Adventists are traditionally Arminians, our understanding of the atonement is often presented as being only provisional. But this provisional salvation is a subtle form of legalism, since faith and repentance contribute towards one's salvation. As a result, this has robbed God's people of the joy and assurance of salvation. The Value Genesis survey, taken some years ago, proved this. The majority of the students who were interviewed said they had no assurance of salvation because their conduct did not measure up to God's requirement.

According to the New Testament, faith is obeying the gospel from the heart (Romans 6:17), that is, receiving with grateful hearts a salvation that has *already* been obtained for mankind in Christ. Likewise, it is the goodness of God (the



objective facts of the gospel) that leads us to repentance (Romans 2:4).

To fully appreciate the doctrine of the atonement we must keep in mind that the New Testament presents two dimensions of salvation. On the one hand, it speaks of salvation as an *already* accomplished fact in the earthly mission of Christ—His birth, life, death and resurrection. In John 3:17 we read: “For God did not send the Son into the world to judge the world, but that the world should be saved through him” (NASB). Turning to John 17:4, note Christ’s prayer to the Father as He comes to the end of His earthly mission: “I glorified Thee on the earth, *having accomplished* the work which Thou hast given Me to do” (emphasis mine). And on the cross Christ declared, “It is finished” (John 19:30). These are the *objective* facts of the good news of the gospel.

On the other hand, the Bible also speaks of salvation as a *subjective* experience, by those who through faith have accepted Christ as their personal Saviour. These two dimensions of salvation are related, since the *subjective* experience is always based on the *objective* facts of salvation (see 1 Corinthians 3:11-13). However, these two dimensions of salvation must be kept distinct to avoid confusing the *objective* facts of the gospel with its *subjective* experience, a problem plaguing many Adventists.

There are four main distinctions between the *objective* facts of the gospel and its *subjective* experience:

1. The *objective* gospel is *universal*. It includes the entire human race. The many universal texts of the New Testament make this clear. Here are a few examples: John 3:16; Titus 2:11; 1 John 2:2. The *subjective* experience of the gospel is *individual* and applies only to believers, Mark 16:15, 16; John 5:24.

2. The *objective* gospel is *perfect* and *complete*, to which we can add nothing, Romans 10:4; Ephesians 2:4-6. Its *subjective* experience is *on going* until the Second Advent, Romans 8:22-25; Ephesians 2:7; Philippians 3:20, 21.

3. The *objective* gospel is *unconditional* good news. Hence, we are saved by grace alone (unmerited favor), John 1:14; Ephesians 1:7; 2:8, 9. In contrast, the *subjective*

experience of salvation is *conditional*: Justification is experienced by faith (Romans 5:1); sanctification by walking in the Spirit

***The Bible is absolutely clear that just as the Ethiopian cannot change his skin or the Leopard its spots, so also we humans, who are sinners by nature, cannot change that nature (Jeremiah 13:23)***

(Galatians 5:16); and glorification requires our faith to endure to the end (Matthew 10:22; Hebrews 10:38, 39).

4. The *objective* gospel is *meritorious*. It fully qualifies believers for heaven, now and in the judgment, Romans 3:28; 4:5; 8:1; Galatians 2:16; 1 John 4:17. The *subjective* experience of the gospel is *demonstrative*. It witnesses to the world that our justification by faith is genuine, John 14:12; Ephesians 2:10; Titus 3:8.

In concluding my response to Bauer’s article, here is my understanding of the truth as it is in Christ, the plan of redemption and the atonement. The life that every person is born with is the extension of Adam’s life, after the Fall (Acts 17:26). The New Testament describes this life by the Greek word *Bios* (see for example, Luke 8:14; 1 John 2:16, where the word *life* is *Bios* in the original) It is a life that stands condemned to death, a slave to sin, and delivered to Satan (Romans 5:12-18; 7:14; Luke 4:5, 6). This is our human predicament from birth.

The divine, eternal life of Christ is called *Zoe* in the New Testament (see for example, John 1:4, 8:12 where the word *life* is *Zoe* in the original). This *Zoe* life Jesus surrendered to the control of the Father at the incarnation (Philippians 2:5-7, the *kenosis* doctrine). This made it possible for the Father to unite Christ’s *Zoe* life to the corporate *Bios* life of the human race that needed redeeming in the womb of Mary (Ephesians 2:5,6, note the word *together* or *with* in this text; see also Hebrews 2:14-18; 4:15). As a result, this qualified Christ to be legally the second or last Adam, mankind’s representative and substitute (1 Corin-

thians 15:45, the word *Adam* in Hebrew means mankind).

Then, by His perfect life, Christ met the positive demands of the law *for us*, and by His sacrificial death on the cross Christ met the justice of the law *in our place*. In this way Christ fulfilled the total demands of the law on man’s behalf for righteousness (Matthew 5:17; Romans 10:4; 2 Corinthians 5:21). Since the condemned corporate *Bios* life of the human race died on the cross forever in Christ (the second death), the wages of sin, in the resurrection God gave the *Zoe* life of Christ to the human race (Romans 6:23). Thus, in Christ, God re-wrote the history of the human race objectively, creating a new humanity out of the old (2 Timothy 1:8-10). This is God’s supreme gift to mankind, made effective individually by faith.

Like any gift, this *Zoe* life is experienced by all who receive Christ by faith and the new birth (John 3:16; 1 John 5:11, 12). That is why any person who is *subjectively* in Christ is a new creation (possessing the *Zoe* life of Christ, Romans 6:3-8), the old (*Bios* life) is by faith crucified with Christ (2 Corinthians 5:14, 17; Galatians 2:19, 20). This, in a nutshell, is the incredible good news of the gospel (Mark 16:15, 16).

This, I believe, is the everlasting gospel of Revelation 14 that God raised the Advent Movement to proclaim in its global mission, to every nation, kindred, tongue and people. This gospel is neither the *limited atonement* of Calvinism nor the *provisional salvation* of Arminianism. Instead, it is such incredible good news for all mankind (Luke 2:10) so that when it is proclaimed with a loud cry into all the world for a witness it will become inexcusable for any one to be lost (Matthew 24:14). Only then can the end come. May that day come soon. ✨

**Send your comments and questions to:**

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**We want to hear from you!**

# What Do We Mean by Moral Perfection in Contrast to Perfectionism?

PERFECTION, AS USED IN this book, refers to the dynamic life pattern of persons who increasingly reflect the life of Jesus; such people are trustworthy examples of genuine love to God and man. They have determined not to yield to rebellious, sinful desires and when they do slip, they, in their regret, fall back on the gracious arms of their Lord who offers everyone both pardon and power.

This life pattern is described in biblical terms such as “maturity,” “the stature of the fullness of Christ,” and “righteousness.” Thus, perfection, as we use the term, does not refer to a state in which a person is beyond temptation or the possibility of sin, any more than Jesus, man’s Example of perfection, was immune to temptations and self-indulgence. Neither do we mean that the perfection set before Christians suggests a state in which no illnesses arise or no mental mistakes, such as in mathematics, are made. Because God is fair, He does not hold people accountable for acting “out of character” when their mental abilities have been seriously damaged by old age, disease, or other disasters.

Perfection is here used in the same context as the following statement: “Moral perfection is required of all. Never should we lower the standard of righteousness in order to accommodate inherited or cultivated tendencies to wrongdoing. We need to understand that imperfection of character is sin. . . . The heavenly intelligences will work with the human agent who seeks with determined faith that perfection of character which will reach out to perfection in action.”—White, *Christ’s Object Lessons*, pp. 330-332.

The urgency involved in this term rests on such passages as: “When the character of Christ shall be perfectly reproduced in His people, then He will come to claim them as His own.” (*ibid.*, p. 69).

“The very image of God is to be reproduced in humanity. The honor of God, the honor of Christ, is involved in the perfection of the character of His people.”—White, *The Desire of Ages*, p. 671.

In real and important theological and practical differences, perfection, as understood in the above quotations, is in contrast to the concept of perfectionism. The latter term, emphasizing an absolute point beyond which there can be further development, grows out of Grecian philosophy and not the Bible. Perfection in the biblical sense is simply Christlikeness—combining a relationship with God such as Jesus had, with the qualities of character that Jesus manifested. Such a relationship leads to the fulfillment of Revelation 3:21—“To him who overcomes, I will grant to sit with Me on My throne as I also overcame and sat down with My Father on His throne” (NKJV).

Although perfection is a word not frequently so translated in English Bibles, the concept of moral perfection (that is, living a Spirit-empowered, maturing life with increasing habits of overcoming moral weaknesses (sin), an increased ripening of the fruits of the Spirit)—is the only goal held up to all in both the Old and New Testaments and in the writings of Ellen White. To hold that the goal is unrealistic is to doubt the divine power to sustain that which God has promised.

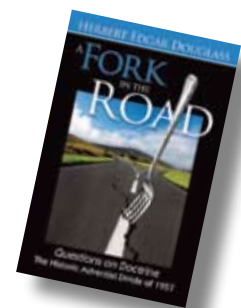
For biblical writers, the emphasis is on direction; the pursuit of perfection will last forever—always growing in knowledge and nearing the goal of reflecting the image of our Maker more fully. In other words, “No Finish Line.” The Lexus auto motto is pertinent: “The relentless pursuit of perfection.” On my computer are these words: “Pursue perfection but accept excellence.”

One caution: those who focus on personal perfection as the primary goal in their lives are likely to experience less of it than those who make service to God and others their overriding concern.<sup>1</sup>

In determining what the Bible writers and Ellen White meant by the concept of perfection (whether the actual word is used or not), it is always necessary to submit to a basic hermeneutic principle: Let the meaning be found in the context. ✨

<sup>1</sup> I am indebted to David Larson for this emphasis.

Excerpted from the book,  
*A Fork in the Road*,  
authored by Herbert E. Douglass



# TWO ADAMIC RESPONSES

## TWO

### Introduction

THE HUMAN NATURE OF Christ has been called one of Adventism's "hot potatoes."<sup>1</sup> A perusal of some of the writings of Ellett J. Waggoner and G. I. Butler,<sup>2</sup> suggests that issues related to this subject were controversial issues long before the publication of what has been called "the most divisive book in Seventh-day Adventist history,"<sup>3</sup> *Seventh-day Adventists Answer Questions on Doctrine*. Speaking of the human nature of Christ:

Dr. Woodrow Whidden II calls it our "most explosive and divisive issue."<sup>4</sup> Dr. A. Leroy Moore says it threatens "to tear the church apart."

Dr. William Johnsson adds: "The stakes in this debate are high. This isn't some abstract theological discussion; it's about our salvation. It's about the very gospel God calls us to proclaim."<sup>5</sup>

Because of the divisive controversy that has surrounded the subject, it has been suggested that we should cease discussion of this issue.<sup>6</sup> But the servant of the Lord has suggested a different course of action.

The humanity of the Son of God is everything to us. It is the golden linked chain which binds our souls to Christ and through Christ to God. This is to be our study.<sup>7</sup>

Again she wrote:

When we want a deep problem to study, let us fix our minds on the most marvelous thing that ever took place in earth or heaven—the incarnation of the Son of God.<sup>8</sup>

The importance of striving for a correct understanding of this "study" becomes apparent, when one considers the following:

Christ's overcoming and obedience is that of a true human being. In our conclusions, we make many mistakes because of our erroneous views of the human nature of our Lord. When we give to His human nature a power that it is not possible for man to have in his conflicts with Satan, *we destroy the completeness of His humanity.*<sup>9</sup> (*Emphasis supplied*).

This is a very important topic! Perhaps *the* most important study in which we can ever engage. Heaven forbid that we should give heed to the counsel to cease discussion of this topic. Yet, as we enter upon this study, or any discussion of it, we should be cognizant of this caution:

When we approach this subject, we would do well to heed the words spoken by Christ to Moses at the burning bush, "Put off thy shoes from off thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground" (Ex. 3:5). We should come to this study with the humility of a learner, with a contrite heart. And the study of the incarnation of Christ is a fruitful field, which will repay the searcher who digs deep for hidden truth.<sup>10</sup>

This is a very "fruitful field." I can say from personal experience that there is great blessing associated with the study of this topic. But if the blessing is to be realized, we

must "come to this study with the humility of a learner." We must prayerfully seek to lay aside our pre-conceived opinions and accept truth, wherever it may lead.

[We] need to study the word of God with a purpose, not to confirm [our] own ideas, but to bring them to be trimmed, to be condemned or approved as they are or are not in harmony with the word of God.<sup>11</sup>

Irrespective of the viewpoint with which we come to the study of this subject, these words should be taken to heart. We dare not approach it with a "rich and increased with goods"<sup>12</sup> attitude. He who thinks he has "need of nothing" "knows not" his/her true condition. "And if anyone thinks that he knows anything, he knows nothing yet as he ought to know."<sup>13</sup> There is precious truth here for each of us.

This subject stands at the heart of the gospel. As such, it is a subject that we instinctively feel passionate about. One can understand the history of controversy and stormy contention over the topic and almost sympathize with the heated participants. The good news is [that] controversy is not the conclusion of this discussion, nor is division the final state of Adventist opinions on the matter. The Spirit of Prophecy contains a glorious promise for the people of God, which shall be realized, before the end shall come.

Although possessing different temperaments and dispositions, they will see eye to eye in all matters of religious belief. They will speak the same things; they will have the same judgment; they will be one in Christ Jesus. . . .<sup>14</sup>



# *(The Humanity of the Saviour In the Light of the Cross)*



This unity will become a reality as we study the prayer of Christ and seek to be united with Him. In view of this objective, we have been told to:

Read and study carefully the prayer that Christ offered just before His trial, recorded in the seventeenth chapter of John. Follow its teachings, and you will be brought into unity. Our only hope of reaching heaven is to be one with Christ, and then, in and through Christ, we shall be one with one another.<sup>15</sup>

## **From Volunteer to Reluctant Substitute**

Before Christ came to earth He knew all things. He understood the *facts* of all that He would endure in order to redeem mankind. Yes, there were things that He did not know from experience. And there were feelings that He had never experienced, and thus did not “know.” But He knew that He would experience terrible feelings and terrible emotional distress and terrible pain. He knew the *fact* that He would die of a broken heart under the sense of the Father’s condemnation and wrath. And knowing all of this, He willingly volunteered to save mankind.

The Spirit of Prophecy describes Christ going to His Father the day that Adam and Eve sinned.

Sorrow filled heaven as it was realized that man was lost and that the world which God had created was to be filled with mortals doomed to misery, sickness, and death, and that there was no way of escape for the offender. The whole family of Adam must die. I then

saw the lovely Jesus and beheld an expression of sympathy and sorrow upon His countenance. Soon I saw Him approach the exceeding bright light which enshrouded the Father. Said my accompanying angel, “He is in close converse with His Father.” The anxiety of the angels seemed to be intense while Jesus was communing with His Father. Three times He was shut in by the glorious light about the Father, and the third time He came from the Father we could see His person. His countenance was calm, free from all perplexity and trouble, and shone with a loveliness which words cannot describe. He then made known to the angelic choir that a way of escape had been made for lost man; that He had been pleading with His Father, and had obtained permission to give His own life as a ransom for the race, to bear their sins, and take the sentence of death upon Himself, thus opening a way whereby they might, through the merits of His blood, find pardon for past transgressions, and by obedience be brought back to the garden from which they were driven. Then they could again have access to the glorious, immortal fruit of the tree of life to which they had now forfeited all right.<sup>16</sup>

Jesus went to the Father “three times” and pled with Him for the right to die for fallen mankind. What an amazing contrast with His later response to the crisis of human destiny in the garden. In the Garden of Gethsemane He would again go to the Father “three times.” But this time He would

plead not for the right to die for mankind. On the contrary, He would plead that He be released from the responsibility of dying for mankind. Before the incarnation He was willing to die. Before the incarnation He volunteered to be our Saviour.

He chose to bear the wrath of God, which man had incurred. ... He chose to endure the cruel mockings, the deridings, the scourging, and the crucifixion ...<sup>17</sup>

Evidently there was no hesitation on the part of the pre-incarnate Christ.

As soon as there was sin, there was a Saviour. Christ knew that He would have to suffer; yet He became man’s substitute. As soon as Adam sinned, the Son of God presented Himself as surety for the human race, with just as much power to avert the doom pronounced upon the guilty as when He died upon the cross of Calvary.<sup>18</sup>

Christ was as truly a Saviour before as after His incarnation. *At the very moment* of transgression and apostasy, He entered upon His work, laboring for the salvation of man with an activity equal to the activity of God.<sup>19</sup> (*Emphasis supplied*).

In heaven, as He looked upon the condemned pair, Christ immediately volunteered to endure “cruel mockings,” “deridings,” “scourging,” “crucifixion” and death via “the wrath of God.” Yet after He came to earth everything was different. As He stood in the shadow of the cross, instead of manifesting an

eagerness to enter upon the steps required for the redemption of mankind, He was perplexed.

A mysterious cloud seemed to enshroud the Son of God. Its gloom was felt by those near Him. He sat rapt in thought. At last the silence was broken by His mournful voice, "Now is My soul troubled; and what shall I say? Father, save Me from this hour." In anticipation Christ was already drinking the cup of bitterness. *His humanity shrank from the hour of abandonment*, when to all appearance He would be deserted even by God, when all would see Him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. *He shrank from public exposure, from being treated as the worst of criminals, from a shameful and dishonored death.* A foreboding of His conflict with the powers of darkness, a sense of the awful burden of human transgression, and the Father's wrath because of sin caused the spirit of Jesus to faint, and the pallor of death to overspread His countenance.<sup>20</sup> (*Emphasis supplied*).

In heaven it seems that it had been the Father who was slow to agree to pay the cost of our redemption. Now it is Jesus who shrinks from paying the cost, "from the hour of abandonment" from "public exposure," from "a shameful and dishonored death." In heaven He knew what was coming and He volunteered to endure it. Now everything is different. Behold His struggle in the garden.

Turning away, Jesus sought again His retreat, and fell prostrate, overcome by the horror of a great darkness. *The humanity of the Son of God trembled* in that trying hour. He prayed not now for His disciples that their faith might not fail, but for His own tempted, agonized soul. The awful moment had come—that moment which was to decide the destiny of the world. The fate of humanity trembled in the balance.

Christ might even now refuse to drink the cup apportioned to guilty man. It was not yet too late. He might wipe the bloody sweat from His brow, and leave man to perish in his iniquity. He might say, Let the transgressor receive the penalty of his sin, and I will go back to My Father. Will the Son of God drink the bitter cup of humiliation and agony? Will the innocent suffer the consequences of the curse of sin, to save the guilty? The words fall tremblingly from the pale lips of Jesus, "O My Father, if this cup may not pass away from Me, except I drink it, Thy will be done."

Three times has He uttered that prayer. Three times has *humanity shrank* from the last, crowning sacrifice. (*Emphasis supplied*).<sup>21</sup>

In heaven, Christ seemed almost eager, to give His life as a sacrifice for mankind. But now, in the Garden of Gethsemane, it appears He wants nothing more than to escape that same sacrifice.

Hitherto He had been as an intercessor for others; now He longed to have an intercessor for Himself.<sup>22</sup>

What precipitated this drastic change of attitude? What caused the "gloom," the pregnant "silence," and the "mournful voice" that came from the Son of God? What caused Jesus to fall "prostrate" to the ground? What caused His agony? What caused the Son of God to "tremble?" It was His *humanity!* That same humanity, which is "everything to us," constituted Christ's great liability, His point of greatest vulnerability. Before the incarnation, it had been His supreme and unhesitating will to save *mankind*. But now, He is tempted, with a great temptation, to save *Himself*. Before, He had been willing to die for others, but now He prays "with vehement cries and tears to Him who was able to save *Him* from death."<sup>23</sup> (*Emphasis supplied*). Again we ask: What has made the difference? The only explanation, for this dramatic change of attitude, must be the influence of His humanity!

## Two "Wills" in Conflict

As Jesus approached the cross, and His death upon the cross, increasingly, there were two "wills" struggling for the mastery, His will and the will of His Father. Throughout His life, He has denied His will, and done the will of His Father. This is why He could say:

I can of Myself do nothing. As I hear, I judge; and My judgment is righteous, because I do not seek My own will but the will of the Father who sent Me.<sup>24</sup>

Jesus had a "will" of His own. But He did not seek His own will. He was committed to doing the will of His Father. What was the Father's will?

All that the Father gives Me will come to Me, and the one who comes to Me I will by no means cast out. For I have come down from heaven, not to do My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me. This is the will of the Father who sent Me, that of all He has given Me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up at the last day. And this is the will of Him who sent Me, that everyone who sees the Son and believes in Him may have everlasting life; and I will raise him up at the last day.<sup>25</sup>

The Father's will was to save mankind. To this mission Christ was committed. He came to do the Father's will, not His own will. His human will, and the Father's will were not identical. But His purpose was to deny His will and live in harmony with the Father's will. Notice how Christ's human will is described.

The one absorbing aim of the life of Christ was to do the will of his heavenly Father. He did not become offended with God; for he lived not to please himself. *The human will of Christ* would not have led him to the wilderness of temptation, to fast, and to be tempted of the devil. It would not have led him to endure humiliation, scorn, reproach,



suffering, and death. *His human nature* shrank from all these things as decidedly as ours shrinks from them.<sup>26</sup> (*Emphasis supplied*).

Notice that Christ's will and the Father's will were *not* one and the same. He did not want to go to the cross. It was not His will. Just as we are at times convicted of God's will for us and find it a struggle to comply, Christ endured the same struggle. Yet He prayed, "not my will, but Yours be done."<sup>27</sup> This prayer must be ours. In this, Christ is our example. Yet, we must consider the question: When did this conflict emerge between the will of God the Father, and the will of God the Son? What influenced and radically altered the will of Christ? Clearly, in heaven it had been His will to save the human race. And that had also been the Father's will. But in the Garden of Gethsemane, Christ's will and the Father's will were no longer the same. Christ had taken fallen human nature. And His will was influenced by the nature which He had assumed.

### The Father's Dilemma

The validity of this conclusion becomes more evident as we understand three related events:

- 1) The reaction of God to the prospect of the death of Christ.
- 2) The reaction of the unfallen angels to the prospect of mankind's death.
- 3) The reaction of the unfallen Adam to the prospect of his own demise.

One might challenge the conclusion, that it was the humanity of Christ that influenced His willingness to sacrifice Himself, when one considers the fact that the Father had also hesitated.

We are told that Jesus had pleaded with the Father "three times" for the right to die for mankind. Evidently there was considerable reluctance on the part of God the Father, when the time came to initiate the plan of redemption. Does this observation undermine the conclusion that it was Christ's humanity which caused Him to shrink back as He approached the cross? The Father was not encumbered with human nature, much less fallen human nature. Yet, even He hesitated on the eve of the inauguration of the plan of redemption.



Does this nullify the 'humanity factor'? I think not.

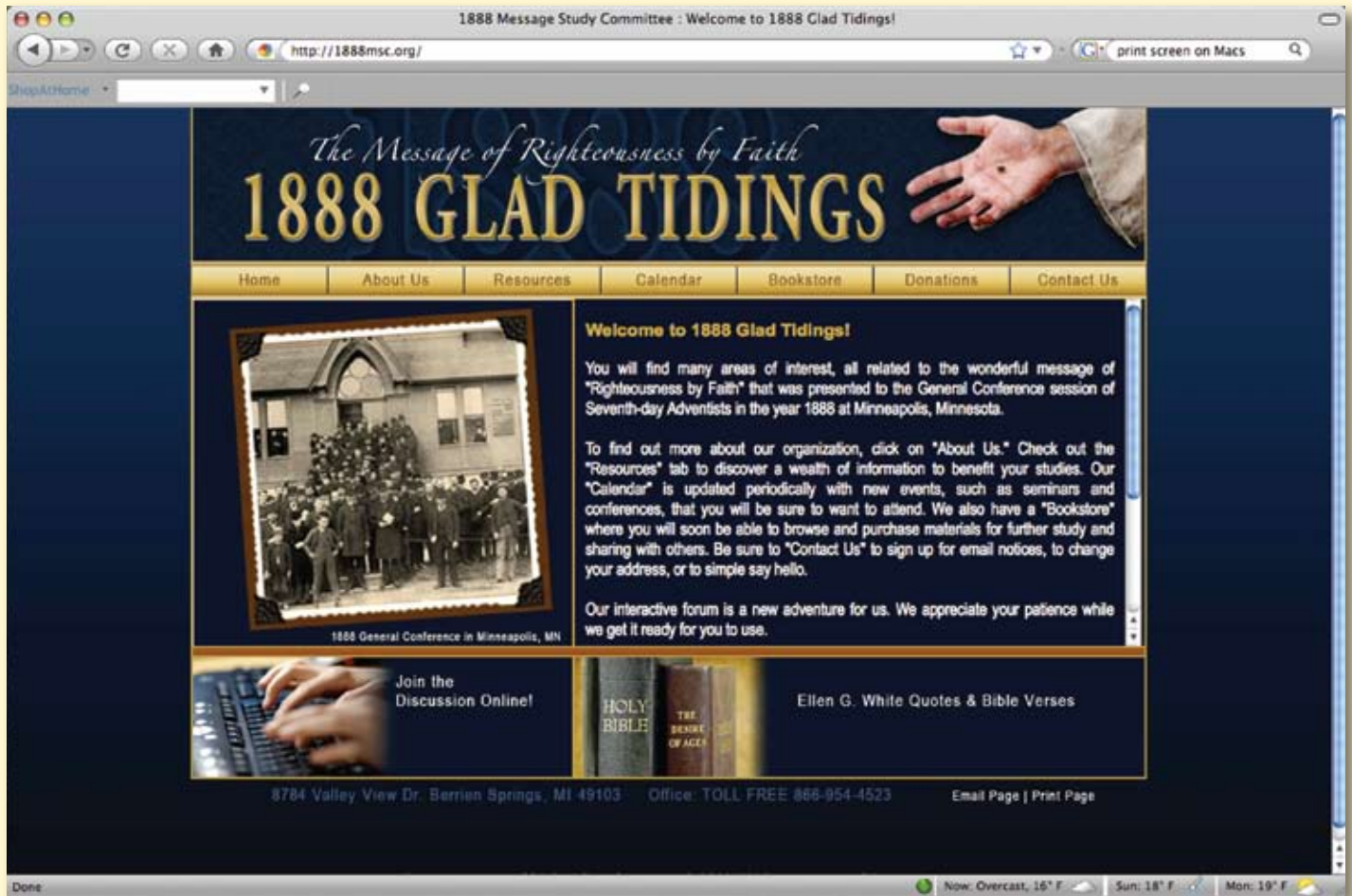
The dilemma, which the Father faced, was vastly different from that which confronted Jesus. When Christ initiated the process of implementing the plan, in which He would die in man's place, the Father's choice was between the loss of His Son and the loss of His son. He had to choose between the loss of the first Adam and the sacrifice of the second Adam. For God the Father, there was no easy option. He loved His Son Jesus, with an infinite everlasting love, but He also loved His son Adam, with that same incomprehensible love. God the Father was forced to choose between two terrible options. Who can fathom making a choice as to which of His sons will die? Sin placed God in an unenviable position.

Said the angel, "Think ye that the Father yielded up His dearly beloved Son without a struggle? No, no." It was even a struggle with the God of heaven, whether to let guilty man perish, or to give His darling Son to die for them.<sup>28</sup>

By comparison, the choice placed before the pre-incarnate Son of God required little thought. His options were to sacrifice Himself or face loosing Adam and Eve. Unencumbered with the liabilities and vulnerabilities of fallen human nature, that choice was easy. He would sacrifice Himself. "Jesus did not count heaven a place to be desired while we were lost."<sup>29</sup> Were the Father in the position of Christ, His choice would have also been easy. He would have immediately chosen to sacrifice Himself to save mankind. Evidently, this was not an option for Him.<sup>30</sup> Therefore, He hesitated. Therefore, there was a terrible struggle. Therefore, Christ entered into "close converse with His Father" and pleaded with Him, "three times." God the Father faced His "Garden of Gethsemane" four thousand years before Christ.

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# Mrs. Potiphar And *Amazing* Grace

SHE HAD IT ALL, ALL, THAT IS, that any woman in 19<sup>th</sup> century BC Egypt could ever hope to have. She had beauty, a wealthy and powerful husband, and a life of ease. Her husband, so long as she continued to please him, could afford to showcase the gem of her beauty in a setting of luxury, surrounded by servants and dressed in the finest fabrics known to man. And yet, she knew she was nothing more than a piece of property.

According to the custom of the times, her marriage would have been arranged by her father for whatever political or financial gains best suited him. Nobody would consult *her* preferences. She belonged to her husband in the same way his horses, his slaves, and his shoes belonged to him. She answered to him about every detail of her life.

Potiphar, on the other hand, was not under any obligation whatsoever to consider his wife's personal feelings, needs, or preferences unless it happened to please him to do so for the moment. Likely, this seasoned, high-ranking officer in the court of the Pharaoh was not a young man. Potiphar was busy. He was gone much of the time. He seems to have been a reasonable—perhaps even a kindly man. But the personal identity and heart needs of his wife were probably non-existent in his consciousness. The gods he worshipped placed no premium whatsoever on the personhood of a woman. His habits were those of the sumptuous, licentious, debauched officials of the greatest court on earth. Such a lifestyle tends to take a toll on a man's physique.

Into the confines of Mrs. Potiphar's privileged, yet limited world comes a new slave. Young, vigorous, and very easy to look at. Little by little, Potiphar turns over more and more of the household to Joseph. Little by little, Mrs. Potiphar discovers that physical attractiveness is not all that sets this young man apart. He is a *nice* young man. It is not a superficial, fawning "niceness" worn for the purpose of making others malleable. It is a deep-rooted respect for every human being. All the underling servants in Potiphar's house cooperate cheerfully with Joseph because they sense that they have value in his eyes. They trust his judgment and count on his fairness. Even the women are treated as human beings in good and regular standing. Although Mrs. Potiphar does not yet recognize the fact, Joseph's beautiful attitude and character reflect that of the God he serves.

It should not surprise us that a woman isolated by culture and wealth, and trapped in a big house with nothing worthwhile to do, should find herself captivated by the handsome, capable, thoughtful young man from Canaan. Nor should anyone be surprised at the shock, outrage, and fear that took possession of her when she discovered that her proposal was not acceptable to him.

Mrs. Potiphar was in deep trouble. Should her husband learn the truth about her little encounter with Joseph, her life would be as tenuous as that of the baker whose dream the lad would eventually interpret. It was not merely womanly indignity that drove Mrs. Potiphar to

manufacture her lies about Joseph. It was desperation. Her life was at stake.

Any intelligent woman knows that the best defense is a good offence. Mrs. Potiphar's *story* may have been fabricated, but her distress was not.

Inspiration informs us that Potiphar knew Joseph too well to believe his wife's story. We cannot know the detailed reasons for his decision to imprison Joseph. The nuances of "honor" within the culture of the times are multitudinous and murky.

To punish a wife for burning the beans would not be remarkable. To accuse a high-society wife of seeking to instigate a sexual encounter with a foreign slave would be an attack, not only on the honor of the wife, but also on the honor of her entire family. To tell of the foreign slave's rejection of such an advance might seem to indicate that the wife was so undesirable that even the lowest of the low wouldn't want her. If she were the daughter of a higher-ranking official, or even of the Pharaoh, the potential for wounded egos and recriminations would increase exponentially.

Whatever the case, Potiphar did just what his wife hoped he would do. He allowed social pressures to override the deep trust and love he felt for Joseph. The innocent Hebrew went to the dungeon while the seductress moved into a dungeon of her own. From that day forward, Potiphar could never have been a happy man. His vast and busy household was suddenly without the capable leadership on which he had come to depend. His

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### The Angelic Response

When the angels were informed of the plan to rescue mankind, they also volunteered to die in man's place.

Angels were so interested for man's salvation that there could be found among them those who would yield their glory and give their life for perishing man. "But," said my accompanying angel, "that would avail nothing." The transgression was so great that an angel's life would not pay the debt.<sup>31</sup>

Self-sacrifice was natural to the unfallen angels of heaven. When they understood that Christ would have to sacrifice His life to save the human race, they volunteered to do the same. Unencumbered by the self-interest, which is inherent only in fallen nature, they naturally put the interests of others before self. However, this was not the case with the fallen angels. Instead of sacrificing himself to save others, Satan plotted to ruin others, in a vain attempt to save himself.

[Satan's] followers were seeking him; and he aroused himself and, assuming a look of defiance, informed them of his plans to wrest from God the noble Adam and his companion Eve. If he could, in any way, beguile them to disobedience, God would make some provision whereby they might be pardoned, and then himself and all the fallen angels would be in a fair way to share with them of God's mercy. If this should fail, they could unite with Adam and Eve; for when once they should transgress the law of God, they would be subjects of God's wrath, like themselves. Their transgression would place them also in a state of rebellion; and they could unite with Adam and Eve, take possession of Eden, and hold it as their home. And if they could gain access to the tree of life in the midst of the garden, their strength would, they thought, be equal to

that of the holy angels, and even God himself could not expel them.<sup>32</sup>

What a contrast with the attitude of the unfallen angels. Their inclination was to sacrifice self to save others. The determination of the fallen angel is to ruin others in an attempt to save self. The law of heaven and the law of the fallen realm are opposites. Heaven's law is the law of self-sacrifice. But the law of the fallen realm is the law of self-preservation. The governing principles of the two kingdoms are poles apart. We may also observe this polar shift in perspectives, in the reaction of the unfallen versus the fallen Adam. His actions before and after the fall are described in stark contrast.

### Two Adamic Responses

Before the fall, Adam loved Eve more than life itself. And because of this he could not bear the thought of life without her. When Eve came to Adam with the forbidden fruit, he was not deceived into sin, as she had been. He understood what he was doing when he ate of the forbidden fruit. Yet, he *willingly* took sin and death upon himself, because of his love for his bride. Ellen White describes the events in these words:

Adam quite well understood that his companion had transgressed the only prohibition laid upon them as a test of their fidelity and love ... Adam regretted that Eve had left his side; but now the deed was done. He must be separated from her whose society he had loved so well. How could he have it thus? His love for Eve was strong. And in utter discouragement he resolved to share her fate. He reasoned that Eve was a part of himself; and if she must die, he would die with her; for he could not bear the thought of separation from her. ... He seized the fruit and quickly ate it ...<sup>33</sup>

Before the fall, Adam possessed a selfless love for his wife. He had been made in the image of God. This included God's self-sacrificing *agape* as the source of his motivations. Therefore, He chose to willingly share Eve's terrible fate. What a contrast with his attitude after the fall.

Their crime is now before them in its true light. Their transgression of God's express command assumes a clearer character. Adam censured Eve's folly in leaving his side, and being deceived by the serpent.<sup>34</sup>

Before the fall there was no "censorship," no thoughts of Eve's "folly." There was only "regret" and "discouragement." But after the fall Adam "censured" Eve and that was only the beginning. Things would get worse.

Then the LORD God called to Adam and said to him, "Where *are* you?" So he said, "I heard Your voice in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked; and I hid myself." And He said, "Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten from the tree of which I commanded you that you should not eat?" Then the man said, "The woman whom You gave to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I ate."<sup>35</sup>

Thus began the "blame game" so common in human experience today. "It's not my fault, Lord. It's that woman that You gave me." Gone is the resolution to die with Eve. Gone is the love that could not bear the thought of separation from her. Gone is the grief and regret. Adam had been made in the image of God. The law of heaven had been operating in his being. But the moment he sinned a dramatic change had taken place.

Through disobedience man's powers were perverted, and selfishness took the place of love.<sup>36</sup>

The significance of this change in the nature of man can hardly be over-stated, especially when one considers the fact that "Selfishness is the root of all evil."<sup>37</sup> When Adam sinned, the self-sacrificing love of God was replaced with "the root of all evil." It was at that point that the "law of sin"<sup>38</sup> took up residence in human nature. Could it be that this is the principle against which Christ was struggling as He approached the cross? Could it be that it is in this sense that He was made "to be sin for us?" He certainly never committed a sin, in word or thought or deed.



“The prince of this world cometh,” said Jesus, “and hath nothing in Me.” John 14:30. There was in Him nothing that responded to Satan’s sophistry. He did not consent to sin. Not even by a thought did He yield to temptation. So it may be with us.<sup>39</sup>

Please take note that this statement is a description of Christ’s *actions*, not His *nature*. “Nothing responded.” “He did not consent.” He did not “yield to temptation.” Yet the contrast between the divine response of Christ in heaven, and the human response of Christ on earth, must not be over-looked. Speaking of His act of condescension in taking human nature the Bible says:

For what the law could not do in that it was weak through the flesh, God *did* by sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, on account of sin: He condemned sin in the flesh. <sup>40</sup> (*Emphasis supplied*).

What is “sinful flesh?” Did Christ actually take it? Why did Paul use the expression “likeness of sinful flesh” rather than simply “sinful flesh?” Does this (the existence of the law of sin in His flesh) explain the two Adamic responses, both in the case of the first and the second Adam?

### What is “Sinful Flesh”?

The expression “sinful flesh” <sup>41</sup> appears only once in the scriptures (Romans 8:3). Romans chapter seven constitutes the near context of this verse and must inform our interpretation of it. In chapter seven, the apostle describes the struggle between the mind and the flesh.

I find then a law, that evil is present with me, the one who wills to do good. For I delight in the law of God according to the inward man. But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members. <sup>42</sup>

In light of this description, it is apparent that “sinful flesh” (Romans 8:3) is flesh which contains “the law of sin.” Or as the text put it

there is “sin in the flesh.” It (*i.e.* sin) had to be there *in* the flesh which Christ had taken or God could not have “condemned sin in the flesh.” If it was not “sinful flesh,” that Jesus took then Peter could never have written that He “bore our sins in His own body on the tree.” <sup>43</sup> Nor could Paul have written that God “made Him who knew no sin *to be* sin for us.” <sup>44</sup> But the question remains: What does the expression “sin in the flesh” mean?

The “law of sin” has been described as “the first law of life,” the axiom which says, “Save thyself.” “Look out for number one.” It has also been called, “The law of self-preservation.” But, this principle is not usually recognized as the “law of sin” until it is manifested as “selfishness,” “the root of all evil.” <sup>45</sup> This principle is opposite of the principle of “self-denial” and “self-sacrifice.” It did not exist until sin entered the universe. Now, it is manifested by all fallen beings, both human and angelic. It is actually a counterfeit of the true law of “self-preservation.” That is why the Spirit of prophecy says:

Self-renunciation is the great law of self-preservation, and self-preservation is the law of self-destruction. <sup>46</sup> So with all who bring forth fruit as workers together with Christ: self-love, self-interest, must perish; the life must be cast into the furrow of the world’s need. But the law of self-sacrifice is the law of self-preservation.<sup>47</sup>

Jesus put it this way:

Whosoever shall seek to save his life shall lose it; and whosoever shall lose his life shall preserve it. <sup>48</sup>

These two principles, self-renunciation and self-preservation are opposites. They are mutually exclusive and incompatible principles. It is when one is confronted with the mutually exclusive options to save others or to save self that the contrast between the law of the unfallen and the fallen realm is most clearly revealed.

Jesus came to the fallen realm to save fallen mankind. The Servant of the Lord says the Father gave Jesus “to the fallen race.” <sup>49</sup> Thus, when He came to the fallen realm, to save the fallen race, He took that same “fallen nature,” with “the law of sin” residing in it.

The Spirit of Prophecy describes His coming in these words:

Satan had pointed to Adam’s sin as proof that God’s law was unjust, and could not be obeyed. In *our humanity*, Christ was to redeem Adam’s failure. But when Adam was assailed by the tempter, none of the effects of sin were upon him. He stood in the strength of perfect manhood, possessing the full vigor of mind and body. He was surrounded with the glories of Eden, and was in daily communion with heavenly beings. *It was not thus with Jesus* when He entered the wilderness to cope with Satan. For four thousand years the race had been decreasing in *physical strength*, in *mental power*, and in *moral worth*; and Christ took upon Him the infirmities of degenerate humanity. Only thus could He rescue man from the lowest depths of his degradation. <sup>50</sup> (*Emphasis supplied*).

Note the words “our humanity.” Our humanity consists of three dimensions, the physical, mental and moral. And “our humanity” is fallen in all three dimensions, physical, mental and moral. Physically we are not nearly the equal of Adam. He was more than twice our height.

As Adam came forth from the hand of his Creator he was of noble height and of beautiful symmetry. He was more than twice as tall as men now living upon the earth, and was well proportioned. His features were perfect and beautiful. ... Eve was not quite as tall as Adam. Her head reached a little above his shoulders. She, too, was noble, perfect in symmetry, and very beautiful. <sup>51</sup>

Mentally, we are not the equal of Adam. His early descendents were far superior in mental strength and vigor.

Notwithstanding the wickedness of the antediluvian world, that age was not, as has often been supposed, an era of ignorance

and barbarism. The people were granted the opportunity of reaching a high standard of moral and intellectual attainment. They possessed great physical and mental strength, and their advantages for acquiring both religious and scientific knowledge were unrivaled. ... Could illustrious scholars of our time be placed in contrast with men of the same age who lived before the Flood, they would appear as greatly inferior in mental as in physical strength. As the years of man have decreased, and his physical strength has diminished, so his mental capacities have lessened.

The antediluvians were without books, they had no written records; but with their great physical and mental vigor, they had strong memories, able to grasp and to retain that which was communicated to them, and in turn to transmit it unimpaired to their posterity.<sup>52</sup>

Those who lived before the flood were only a few steps from God, the Creator of the world and its inhabitants. The long life and *large intellect* given to these men might have been used in God's service. But their intellectual strength, that mighty power, was perverted to dishonor God. ...<sup>53</sup>

Note the terms "large intellect," "intellectual strength," of "mighty power." The Bible calls the antediluvians "men of renown."<sup>54</sup> They were geniuses compared with the brightest of our generation. Even Einstein would be considered a "mental midget" in their day.

### **Moral Infirmity Inherited**

Yet, as significant as they are, physical and mental degeneration and weakness do not describe the full extent of mankind's inherited weakness. The moral nature of man was also impacted by the fall. The law of sin was encoded in the nature of Adam, in his very DNA, the moment that he sinned. This law of self-seeking, self-centeredness, selfishness and self-glorification, has been strengthening from generation to generation. It is becoming

more and more evident in our society today.

But evil men and impostors will grow worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived.<sup>55</sup>

Licentiousness, disease, and imbecility are transmitted as an inheritance of woe from father to son and from generation to generation, and this brings anguish and suffering into the world and is no less than a repetition of the fall of man. ...<sup>56</sup>

Parents may have transmitted to their children tendencies to appetite and passion, which will make more difficult the work of educating and training these children to be strictly temperate and to have pure and virtuous habits.<sup>57</sup>

And yet with scarcely a thought or care, men and women of the present generation indulge intemperance by surfeiting and drunkenness, and thereby leave, as a legacy for the next generation, disease, enfeebled intellects, and *polluted morals*.<sup>58</sup> (*Emphasis supplied*).

Every woman about to become a mother, whatever may be her surroundings, should encourage constantly a happy, contented disposition, knowing that for all her efforts in this direction she will be repaid tenfold in the physical, *as well as in the moral*, character of her offspring.<sup>59</sup> (*Emphasis supplied*).

Both parents transmit their own characteristics, mental and physical, their dispositions and appetites, to their children. As the result of parental intemperance, children often lack physical strength and mental and *moral power*.<sup>60</sup> (*Emphasis supplied*).

If men would practice the attributes of God, they would not have the painful consciousness of transmitting wrong tendencies and traits of character to their children, to be reproduced in their children, thus communicating the evils that might have been repressed. —*Letter 65, 1895*.<sup>61</sup>

It is not merely physical and mental weakness which is inherited, but the moral nature of our offspring is impacted by inheritance. As with the physical and mental degeneration and weakness which has accumulated over the ages, moral weakness and degeneration has also been accumulating. And Jesus was subject to the "law of heredity."<sup>62</sup> This may sound like terrible news indeed, yet there is hope through the Gospel of Christ: "A genuine conversion changes hereditary and cultivated tendencies to wrong."<sup>63</sup> This is the secret of Christ's victory in "sinful flesh." He was born "converted." Before the incarnation, He submitted His will to the will of the Father. Thus, when He was born He was born with a "sanctified human will."

He began life, passed through its experiences, and ended its record, with a sanctified human will. He was tempted in all points like as we are, and yet because He kept His will surrendered and sanctified, He never bent in the slightest degree toward the doing of evil, or toward manifesting rebellion against God.<sup>64</sup> Therefore, when He came into the world, He said: "Sacrifice and offering You did not desire, but a body You have prepared for Me. In burnt offerings and *sacrifices* for sin You had no pleasure. Then I said, 'Behold, I have come—In the volume of the book it is written of Me—To do Your will, O God.'"<sup>65</sup>

### **Conclusion**

When Christ stepped into the stream of human heredity, we are told that, "For four thousand years the race had been decreasing in *physical strength*, in *mental power*, and in *moral worth*; and Christ took upon Him the infirmities of degenerate humanity."<sup>66</sup> (*Emphasis supplied*). "He took upon His sinless nature, our sinful nature."<sup>67</sup> That must mean that He took all three dimensions of our "feeble faculties."<sup>68</sup> Because Jesus took "sinful flesh," He struggled with the "law of sin" just as any other earth-bound child of God. He knows by experience what we go through. He understands, not only the fact of our temptations, but He is "touched with the feelings of our infirmities."<sup>69</sup> He took the



same infirmities. This explains His terrible struggle in the Garden of Gethsemane. It explains how He experienced the strongest temptations which always “come from within,”<sup>70</sup> as well as the lesser temptations from without. It explains His prayer, “not my will but yours be done.”<sup>71</sup> This explains why His sweat became as “great drops of blood.”<sup>72</sup> It makes real the “consternation,”<sup>73</sup> perplexity and “despair”<sup>74</sup> which He experienced on the cross. And it reveals the reality of the cross and the depths of the love of God as nothing else can do.

If we fail to grasp the meaning of the expression, God has “made Him to be sin for us,”<sup>75</sup> a detail which is essential to the plan of redemption, we not only emasculate the Savior’s “matchless charms”<sup>76</sup> in the minds of many struggling Christians, but we inadvertently render the atonement impotent and the gospel null and void.

Christ is the ladder that Jacob saw, the base resting on the earth, and the topmost round reaching to the gate of heaven, to the very threshold of glory. If that ladder had failed by a single step of reaching the earth, we should have been lost. But Christ reaches us *where we are*. He took *our nature* and overcame, that we through taking His nature might overcome. Made “in the likeness of sinful flesh” (Rom. 8:3), He lived a sinless life.<sup>77</sup> (*Emphasis supplied*).

“The humanity of Christ is [indeed] everything to us.”<sup>78</sup> It is the key which explains the *Two Adamic Responses*, and the secret of the power of the gospel. ❧

<sup>1</sup> Martin Weber, *More Adventist Hot Potatoes*, p. 65, Pacific Press, 1992.

<sup>2</sup> See *The Law in Galatians* by G. I. Butler and *The Gospel in Galatians* by Ellett J. Waggoner.

<sup>3</sup> George R. Knight, *Questions on Doctrine* (Annotated Edition), p. xiii, Andrews University Press, 2003.

<sup>4</sup> Woodrow Whidden II, *Ellen White on the Humanity of Christ*, p. 11.

<sup>5</sup> William Johnsson, *Adventist Review*, July 22, 1993.

<sup>6</sup> Donald Karr Short, “Made Like . . . His Brethren” p. ix, 1991, Biblical Research Institute, “An Appeal for Church Unity” p. 5, August 1989; *Adventist Review*, November 1, 1990, p. 4.

<sup>7</sup> Ellen G. White, *Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 7A, p. 904.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>9</sup> Ellen G. White, *Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 9, p. 929.

<sup>10</sup> Ellen G. White, *Selected Messages*, vol. 1, p. 244.

<sup>11</sup> Ellen G. White, *Testimonies to Ministers*, p. 467.

<sup>12</sup> Revelation 3:17.

<sup>13</sup> 1 Corinthians 8:2.

<sup>14</sup> Ellen G. White, *Historical Sketches*, p. 124.

<sup>15</sup> Ellen G. White, *The Upward Look*, p. 141.

<sup>16</sup> Ellen G. White, *Early Writings*, p. 126.

<sup>17</sup> Ellen G. White, *That I May Know Him*, p. 339.

<sup>18</sup> Ellen G. White, *The Faith I Live By*, p. 75.

<sup>19</sup> Ellen G. White, *Review and Herald*, March 5, 1901.

<sup>20</sup> Ellen G. White, *Desire of Ages*, p. 624.

<sup>21</sup> Ellen G. White, *Desire of Ages*, p. 690.

<sup>22</sup> Ellen G. White, *Desire of Ages*, p. 686.

<sup>23</sup> Hebrews 5:7.

<sup>24</sup> John 5:30.

<sup>25</sup> John 6:37-40.

<sup>26</sup> Ellen G. White, *Signs of the Time*, October 29, 1894.

<sup>27</sup> Luke 22:42.

<sup>28</sup> Ellen G. White, *Early Writings*, p. 127.

<sup>29</sup> Ellen G. White, *Desire of Ages*, p. 416.

<sup>30</sup> “There was no other way by which man could be brought into harmony with his unchangeable law, save by the death of Christ.” Ellen G. White, *Signs of the Times*, September 2, 1889.

“It was because there was no other way in which man could be saved, because without this sacrifice it was impossible for the human race to escape from the defiling power of sin, and be restored to communion with holy beings--impossible for them again to become partakers of spiritual life—it was because of this that Christ took upon Himself the guilt of the disobedient, and suffered in the sinner’s stead.” Ellen G. White, *Faith I Live By*, p. 60.

<sup>31</sup> Ellen G. White, *Early Writings*, p. 127.

<sup>32</sup> Ellen G. White, *Spirit of Prophecy*, vol. 1, p. 30.

<sup>33</sup> Ellen G. White, *Spirit of Prophecy*, vol. 1, p. 39.

<sup>34</sup> Ellen G. White, *Spirit of Prophecy*, vol. 1, p. 41.

<sup>35</sup> Genesis 3:9-12, NKJV.

<sup>36</sup> Ellen G. White, *Mind, Character and Personality*, vol. 1, p. 205.

<sup>37</sup> Ellen G. White, *Evangelism*, p. 633.

<sup>38</sup> Romans 7:23.

<sup>39</sup> Ellen G. White, *Desire of Ages*, p. 123.

<sup>40</sup> Romans 8:3 (*Emphasis supplied*).

<sup>41</sup> Romans 8:3.

<sup>42</sup> Romans 7:21-23.

<sup>43</sup> 1 Peter 2:24.

<sup>44</sup> 2 Corinthians 5:21.

<sup>45</sup> Ellen G. White, *Evangelism*, p. 633.

<sup>46</sup> Ellen G. White, *Signs of the Times*, July 1, 1897.

<sup>47</sup> Ellen G. White, *Education*, p. 110.

<sup>48</sup> Luke 17:33.

<sup>49</sup> Ellen G. White, *Desire of Ages*, p. 25.

<sup>50</sup> Ellen G. White, *Desire of Ages*, p. 117 (*Emphasis supplied*).

<sup>51</sup> Ellen G. White, *Lift Him Up*, p. 47.

<sup>52</sup> Ellen G. White, *Patriarch and Prophets*, p. 83.

<sup>53</sup> Ellen G. White, *Conflict and Courage*, p. 34 (*Emphasis supplied*).

<sup>54</sup> Genesis 6:4.

<sup>55</sup> 2 Timothy 3:13.

<sup>56</sup> Ellen G. White, *Adventist Home*, p. 173.

<sup>57</sup> Ellen G. White, *Temperance*, p. 174.

<sup>58</sup> Ellen G. White, *Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 4, p. 30.

<sup>59</sup> Ellen G. White, *Review and Herald*, July 25, 1899.

<sup>60</sup> Ellen G. White, *Temperance*, p. 173.

<sup>61</sup> Ellen G. White, *Manuscript Releases*, vol. 3, p. 363.

<sup>62</sup> Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages*, p. 48.

<sup>63</sup> Ellen G. White, *Mind, Character and Personality*, p. 145.

<sup>64</sup> Ellen G. White, *Signs of the Times*, October 29, 1894.

<sup>65</sup> Hebrews 10:5-7.

<sup>66</sup> Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages*, p. 117.

<sup>67</sup> Ellen G. White, *Medical Ministry*, p. 181.

<sup>68</sup> Ellen G. White, *Review and Herald*, December 11, 1888.

<sup>69</sup> Hebrews 4:15.

<sup>70</sup> “The Christian is to realize that he is not his own, but that he has been bought with a price. His strongest temptations will come from within; for he must battle against the inclinations of the natural heart. The Lord knows our weaknesses,” Ellen G. White, *Bible Echo and Signs of the Times*, December 1, 1892.

<sup>71</sup> Luke 22:42.

<sup>72</sup> Luke 22:44.

<sup>73</sup> “As man’s substitute and surety, the iniquity of men was laid upon Christ; he was counted a transgressor that he might redeem them from the curse of the law. The guilt of every descendant of Adam of every age was pressing upon his heart; and the wrath of God, and the terrible manifestation of his displeasure because of iniquity, filled the soul of his Son with consternation.” Ellen G. White, *Spirit of Prophecy*, vol. 3, p. 162.

<sup>74</sup> “Christ was the prince of sufferers; but it was not bodily anguish that filled him with horror and despair,” Ellen G. White, *The Present Truth*, February 4, 1886.

<sup>75</sup> 2 Corinthians 5:21.

<sup>76</sup> Ellen G. White, *Manuscript Releases*, vol. 1, p. 142.

<sup>77</sup> Ellen G. White, *Desire of Ages*, p. 311.

<sup>78</sup> Ellen G. White, *Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 7A, p. 904.

# EVIL—IT'S IN YOUR GENES!!

JUST WITHIN THE LAST couple of decades, whole fields of scientific study have arisen that never existed before. Fields such as behavioral genetics, social genetics, as well as neuroscience and cognitive science have received a lot of study, and have given us vital and fascinating insights into the building blocks of human nature. Does the Bible shed light on these areas as well? And do these areas have implications for how we understand the nature of sin, the potential for overcoming sin, and even the kind of “nature” that Christ assumed? Since God is the designer of our biological, psychological, and spiritual frameworks, He does not want us to remain in the dark about the most basic building blocks of human nature.

One of the most common misconceptions in popular culture is that if something is “genetic,” then an individual is now programmed in a certain way, to be a certain type of person, and they have lost the ability to choose. The misunderstanding is that “genes” violate, or remove, our freedom of choice or freedom of expression. “If my genes are a certain way, then I have lost the ability to control my own destiny.”

This misunderstanding comes from the fact that there are some traits, physical ones being the most obvious, that do occur without regard to our choice. For example, your natural eye color is determined entirely by your genes. You cannot, by trying hard, or by making a mental decision, change your natural eye color. Making a choice cannot change skin color. You cannot

grow taller just by deciding to grow taller. You get the idea.

We then transfer that thought process to more complex intellectual, social, and psychological phenomena such as intelligence, behavior, and morality. We then try to simplify—erroneously—this multi-factorial picture into one of two simplistic boxes. Either:

A. Genetics has nothing, or nearly nothing, to do with behavior because it's all environmentally influenced and controlled, or:

B. If genetics *does* have something to do with our behavior and morality, then people are pre-programmed to do certain things without the ability of their free will to override those genes. They see a certain outcome or behavior as being inevitable and unchangeable.

Neither of these two extremes is accurate in the majority of cases. The most appropriate way to understand these issues reminds me of something I learned from one of my professors in medical school. He said, “Genetics loads the gun, and environment pulls the trigger.” What he meant was that our genetic makeup sets up probabilities or predispositions or influences which impact the likelihood of a certain disease or behavior or outcome, but it only *sets the stage*. Genetics, in most situations, do not determine an outcome apart from our environmental circumstances and personal choices.

Diabetes is an easy example. Many people are prone to develop diabetes during their lifetime depending on the genetic makeup that they enter life with. But whether or not they actually develop diabetes is dependent on many factors that they have control over such as diet, weight, how much they exercise, etc. (The primary cause of diabetes is eating more calories than are needed or used by the body).

Many behavioral and moral issues are of a similar character. We as individuals may be likely to exhibit certain behavioral traits or an intellectual ability based on our genetic composition *and* our environmental circumstances and personal decisions.

Genes don't stop working the day we are born. Genes are active throughout our lives. Specific genes become more active or less active throughout our lives, switching off and on in response to cues from the environment, and in response to the personal choices we make.

Many of us grew up with an oversimplified “one gene, one outcome” type of picture. It is much more complex and multi-factorial than that. There are at least three factors we need to take into account when we are looking at human behavior and human morality. Our behavior, morality, intelligence, etc., are all influenced, but not inevitably determined, by:

1. Our genetic heritage
2. Our environmental influences (home, parents, church, school, friends, diet, lifestyle, etc.).

### 3. Our own individual choices.

To ignore any one of these factors would be to have a very skewed and incomplete picture.

Let's look quickly at a few of the many areas where we see the effects of genetic influences in the moral, social, and behavioral realm. Remember, we are not talking about genetic programming or genetic predestination, but about genetic influences and pressures.

Twin studies are one of the best ways to attempt to tease out the differences between genetics and environment. Identical twins, who grow up together, share the same genetics and very similar environments, whereas fraternal twins who grow up together would share a very similar environment, but not the same genes. This should help us recognize, to some degree, the difference between genetic factors and environmental influences.

Probably one of the clearest examples is alcoholism. Identical twins, who share 100% of their genes, have a concordance rate of 60% for alcohol dependence. Fraternal twins, on the other hand, have a concordance rate of only 30% for alcohol dependence. This means that if one identical twin is an alcoholic the other identical twin has a 60% chance of also being alcoholic, but if one fraternal twin is alcoholic, the other fraternal twin has only a 30% chance of being alcoholic. So in this situation, about half the risk of developing alcoholism is related to genetics.

Adoption studies can also help reveal this difference between genes and environment. Sons of alcoholic fathers have a four-fold higher risk of developing alcoholism than sons of non-alcoholic fathers, *even if they are adopted out of the alcoholic home shortly after birth into a non-alcoholic home*. Interestingly, sons of non-alcoholic parents who are adopted into families with an alcoholic father do not demonstrate an increased risk of alcohol dependence. This is fascinating in that it reveals that the choice of the father to drink, actually changed the genetic heritage he passed on to his son! This is one of many examples where a behavioral choice by a parent changes his genes! Our DNA is actually altered by the choices we

make! This should give us insight into what scripture means where we are told that Jesus was born of the "seed" (DNA, genetics) of David (Jn. 7:42, Rom. 1:3, 2 Tim. 2:8).

Other behaviors that appear to be genetically *influenced*, but again, not genetically programmed or determined, include violence and sexual aggression, optimism versus pessimism, novelty/thrill-seeking behavior (such as sky-diving, bungee jumping), obsessive-compulsive behaviors, maternal nurturing behavior, etc.

While many of these areas are still under study and potentially controversial, it does point to an accumulating body of evidence that reveals genetic influences relating to many areas of human nature and relationships and behavior.

### WHAT DOES THE BIBLE SAY ABOUT BEHAVIORAL GENETICS?

Exodus 34:6-7: "And the Lord passed by before [Moses], and proclaimed, The Lord! The Lord! A God merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abundant in loving-kindness and truth, <sup>7</sup>Keeping mercy and loving-kindness for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, but Who will by no means clear the guilty, *visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children and the children's children, to the third and fourth generation.* (*Emphasis supplied throughout*).

Often when we look at this verse we stop with the first part where the Lord is described as merciful, gracious, slow to anger, abundant in loving-kindness, forgiving, etc. However, what do we understand it to mean in v. 7 where it says that God ... "[visits] the iniquity of the fathers upon the children ... until the third and fourth generations"?

Does it mean that if someone sins, God imposes a supernatural punishment, or penalty, or curse on the person, on his children, on his grandchildren, and on his great-grandchildren? And then after miraculously punishing and cursing the individual and his children for four generations, God is finally satisfied that enough suffering has occurred and He stops His curse?

Notice by contrast what Ezekiel 18:18-22 says in harmony with many other passages of Scripture:

<sup>18</sup> But his father will die for his own sin, because he practiced extortion, robbed his brother and did what was wrong among his people. <sup>19</sup> "Yet you ask, 'Why does the son not share the guilt of his father?' Since the son has done what is just and right and has been careful to keep all my decrees, he will surely live. <sup>20</sup> The soul who sins is the one who will die. The son will not share the guilt of the father, nor will the father share the guilt of the son. The righteousness of the righteous man will be credited to him, and the wickedness of the wicked will be charged against him.

Clearly God does not curse or punish children for the errors of their parents.

Notice another example: When Jesus healed the man who was born blind, the disciples asked who had sinned—the blind man or his parents. The disciples' thinking was that when we sin, God does bad things to us, or our children, like making people blind. What kind of picture of God did they have?

John 9:1-3: <sup>1</sup>As [Jesus] went along; he saw a man blind from birth. <sup>2</sup>His disciples asked him, "Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?" <sup>3</sup>"Neither this man nor his parents sinned," said Jesus, "but this happened so that the work of God might be displayed in his life."

*The disciples actually thought that God was the type of being who goes around blinding people for life if they sin or their parents sin!* Jesus clarifies here that suffering doesn't come in this life from God cursing people because they sin, or from God cursing people's children because the parents sin. God's work and attitude is seen in the healing of the blind man, and in the relieving of suffering. The disciples and people of Jesus' day had it completely backwards. They saw God as the *cause* of sickness and suffering, rather than the *remover* of sickness and suffering.

So Exodus 34 is NOT talking about God cursing people and their children when





they sin. What it *is* saying is that God is merely opening up to us the fact that when we as individuals make wrong choices, the *effects of those choices*—either for good or evil—follow laws of cause and effect which God designed and upholds, and thus, have *influences* on our children.

Just as in the example of alcohol, our behavioral and moral failures as parents can have genetic consequences for our offspring for several generations to come. So often we look at the relation between sin and its consequences as the arbitrary imposition of punishment or penalty by God, rather than seeing the inherent destructiveness that accompanies all sin, including its effect on others. The “iniquity that is passed on, or visited, from the father to the children unto the third and fourth generation” is the inherent destructiveness—genetic and environmental effects—that is introduced into a family from the choices of the parents.

This should make us appreciate the tremendous responsibility and opportunity that we have when we make choices in our lives. We can make choices that will give a positive and “righteous” heritage—both genetically and environmentally—to our children, or we can bequeath a negative heritage.

*The effects of sin and of righteousness have a real and biological genetic effect on us. Sin and righteousness change us as people. Sin is a real entity that has genetic consequences. When we make*

*decisions, when we form habits, when we think certain thoughts, there is biological and physiological change occurring in our brains and in our bodies.*

Sin has biological consequences. When we see something and form a memory, something changes in our brains—in the chemistry and biology of our neurons.

When 2 Cor. 3:18 tells us that “by beholding, we become changed,” it is defining a biological reality of our human nature and human neuroscience. *We change, and the changes that we undergo can be passed on to our children for generations.*

Sin is a real and dangerous entity that we need to avoid at all costs—not because God gets upset and curses us when we sin—but because sin damages and changes us in ways that we cannot see in the short term. As Adam and Eve observed the first dead falling leaves after they left Eden, and saw Cain, their first born son, kill his brother, Abel—how acutely they must have felt the “realness” of sin.

What we think and what we do make us who we are as individuals. When we engage in selfish or lustful thinking, we are establishing patterns in our minds/brains that become more and more fixed over time.

“As a man thinketh in his heart, so [is] he.” Prov. 23:7.

What ever influences our mind, our thoughts, our hearts, makes us who we are.

This is why we are told repeatedly in inspiration that the law is immutable and unchangeable. The law is immutable and unchangeable—not because God is stubborn and won’t change—but because these laws are woven into the fabric of our nature and our being. To eliminate the ability we have to be a negative influence on others, would of necessity include the loss of our ability to be a positive influence on them as well.

Notice the encouragement in these two verses that we have a Savior who experienced the same reality as we do:

Heb. 2:14: “Inasmuch then as the children have partaken of flesh and blood (fallen genetic heritage), He Himself likewise shared in the same ...”

Heb. 2:16: “For verily he took not on [him the nature of] angels; but he took on [him] the seed (fallen genetic heritage) of Abraham ...”

Rom.5: 19, 21: “<sup>19</sup>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 ... <sup>21</sup>so that, just as sin reigned in death, so also grace might reign through righteousness to bring eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.”

This verse brings out so clearly what we are talking about. Because of the sins of Adam and Eve, evil entered our world. Adam and Eve passed on to us a fallen genetic inheritance—a fallen nature—a genetic inheritance that produces death.

But the good news is that where sin has taken root in our world, grace has increased all the more. Paul, in v. 21, talks about an organic, cause-effect relationship, between grace and righteousness, and eternal life. And this life is revealed and exemplified in the life of Jesus.

As there is an inherent relationship between sin and death, there is also, praise the Lord, an inherent relationship between righteousness and life. Just as our mind is shaped for the worse by dwelling on sinful and selfish things, our minds can be shaped for the better by dwelling on the things of God and the love He has for us.

So often we do things that we think only affect *us*, without realizing the effects they will have on our offspring and those around us, and how these wrong decisions, made repeatedly over time, can handicap and make all the more difficult the lives that others will lead. But also, right decisions, made repeatedly over time, can bless and enhance the lives of others.

We have the chance to have our minds changed and altered for the better by appreciating the law of love that God has given to us. As our representative, as the Second Adam, Christ kept His mind surrendered and in obedience to His Father's will, and that created for us a new genetic effect that we experience as we "have the mind of Christ" today.

And be not conformed to this world: but be ye *transformed* by the *renewing* of your mind, that ye may prove what [is] that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God. Rom.12: 2.

It used to be thought for many decades that the nervous system couldn't change—after adolescence it was

fixed, hard-wired. But now we have confirmation from science that what the Bible told us all along was true. We can have our minds changed and renewed and healed from the damage that sin has done to it.

Whether we have been saddled with the damaging effects of sin because of the failures of our parents, or because of our own personal failures, there is good news that God is the Great Physician who can heal all the damage done.

"My wayward children," says the LORD, "come back to me, and I will heal your wayward hearts (minds)." "Yes, we will come," the people reply, "for you are the LORD our God. Jer.3: 22. ☩

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## Mrs. Potiphar, from p. 13

wife was an ever-present reminder of his loss and his weakness. He could never shake the clear-eyed integrity, forgiveness, and acquiescence he saw on Joseph's face as he was bound and led away. Surely Potiphar, with his guilty conscience and his increased distrust for his wife, was not very much fun to live with from that time on. Without doubt, Mrs. Potiphar, trapped in a prison of her own making, had many long thoughts as she considered the fruit of her manipulation. She had to wonder why Joseph never spoke a word in his own vindication. Because she knew well Joseph's love for his God (*Signs of the Times*, January 8, 1880, par. 3), she must have spent some wakeful nights considering the puzzle of Joseph's actions with relation to his religion.

And then, after three years, someone told her that Joseph was suddenly the prime minister of Egypt. Pause for a moment and consider just how *you* would feel in her place. The Pharaoh has committed the keys of the kingdom to the man she has so terribly wronged. By all precedents, what remained of her life was sure to be very short and very miserable. All that

remained for her was to wait until the other shoe dropped.

She waited. And she waited. No doubt Potiphar himself must have had some tense moments as well. We cannot know how long they bore the suspense. We are not told whether Joseph spoke words of forgiveness, or whether he merely allowed time and attitude to demonstrate his unwillingness to "get even" with those who had wronged him. We do know that "to save the reputation of his master's house," Joseph was treated as Mrs. Potiphar deserved, so that she might be treated as Joseph deserved. "Joseph was sacrificed, while the sinful wife was exalted in the estimation of her friends as if a model of virtue" (*Signs of the Times*, January 8, 1880, par. 3).

Further, we know that "The Lord designed that the light and power of heavenly grace should shine forth amid the darkness of heathen superstition and idolatry; that the purity, the faithfulness, and steadfast integrity of the true believer in God should appear in contrast with the darkened characters of those who served idols" (*Signs of the Times*, January 8, 1880, par. 3).

Joseph "looked upon God, not as a tyrant watching his actions to condemn and punish him, but as a tender, loving friend, guarding his interests" (*Signs of the Times*, January 8, 1880, par. 5). Because he lived with this vision of who God is, he was motivated and empowered, not only to stand firmly in obedience to the law of the God he loved, but also to awaken in the hearts of those who knew him a realization of the character of God.

On the great Judgment Day, you will meet Mrs. Potiphar. If she is on the outside of the city, she must certainly bow before the Lord of heaven and earth, acknowledging that He did all that could be done to show her how much He values her. She was truly surrounded with the light of His forgiving love. She could never say that more could have been done to show her that He deserved her love and allegiance.

On the other hand, she may have been brought to humble repentance by Joseph's demonstration of her value in the sight of His God. If so, I believe that you may find Mrs. Potiphar, Mary Magdalene, and me, kneeling together at the feet of Jesus, washing them with our grateful tears. ☩

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CITY/STATE/ZIP _____	
EMAIL _____	
CC # _____ / _____ / _____ / _____	EXP ____ / ____ 3 DIGIT CODE _____
CHECK NO. _____	
	processed by office <input type="checkbox"/>

A.

LODGING FEE / NIGHT: \$40  
(Includes A/C room with two twin beds, linens, semi-private bathroom)

Please **CIRCLE** each night of stay

TUESDAY      WEDNESDAY      THURSDAY      FRIDAY      SABBATH

B.

C.  **TOTAL AMOUNT TO BE PAID  
BY CREDIT CARD OR CHECK**

Example: Registration fee = \$35 (A)  
1 room @ \$40/night (2 people max) X 5 nights = \$200 (B)  
\$35 + \$200 = \$235 (A+B=C)

### MEALS

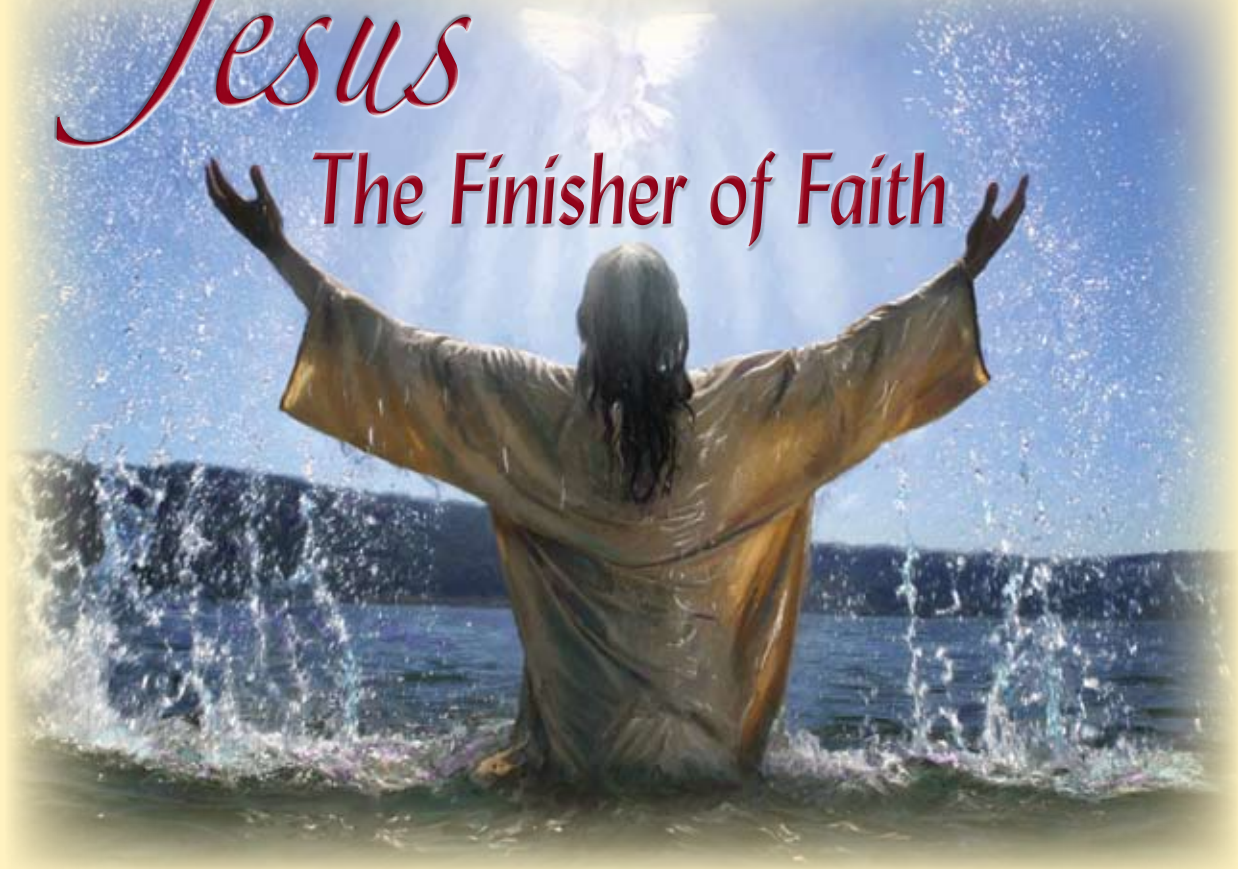
Meal cards may be purchased by calling "Christi" at (269) 471-3295 no later than 06/22/09.  
You may purchase in increments of \$25. Your meal card may be used for any/all meals you desire, provided you have purchased adequate value for your card.

FAX: (269) 473-5851 • 8784 VALLEY VIEW DR. BERRIEN SPRINGS, MI 49103

# 1888 NATIONAL CONFERENCE

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*The Finisher of Faith*



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Berrien Springs, MI 49103

**JULY 7-11**  
(See pages 22 & 23 inside)

**CALL NOW TO REGISTER! (866) 954-4523**

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