

# Old Paths

Stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls. Jeremiah 6:16

The secret of the LORD is with them that fear him; and he will show them his covenant. Psalm 25:14

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*The pure air, the glad sunshine, the beautiful flowers and trees, the orchards and vineyards, and outdoor exercise amid these surroundings, are health-giving—the elixir of life. (E. G. White)*





## The Two Great Economies, Part 1

by Thomas Akens

When you hear the word *economy*, what comes to your mind? If most of you are like me, you will probably think *how we handle our money* or *something that deals with finances*. This is primarily what we think of today, but the word *economy* did not always have this meaning. Today, this is the primary sense of the word, but originally the word had an entirely different meaning than it has today. In fact, if you were to go to most good dictionaries, like Webster's Dictionary, you would find a definition something along those lines, but here is the older, archaic sense of the word:

**Primarily, the management, regulation and government of a family or the concerns of a household. (Noah Webster 1828)**

Now this definition may sound odd to you, but it is the literal meaning of *economy* and this is how it was used not too many years ago, but today it primarily deals with money. Originally *economy* gave the sense of the rules or regulations which govern a household, and that is because the word is made up of two words. Both of these words we borrowed from the Greeks, indirectly through Latin. The first word is the word *oikos*, and it means *house*. The second part of the word *economy* comes from the Greek word for law, *nomós*, and it means *law* or *rule*. When you put these two words together, you get the sense of house rule. Every house has its rules; every house is run by rules; we all have them, and so it should seem wholly logical to us that God's house, his church, too, has an economy, and it is this sense of the word which I wish to share with you.

When we talk about the two economies, we are referring to the two economies that have governed God's house throughout the years of its existence, essentially from the time of creation to the present, and that is the subject matter of this series of articles, but notice also that the word *economy*, or the original, *oikonomia*, also means *dispensation* or *stewardship*. The word *stewardship* should seem logical to us, for when we think of someone who is entrusted with the care, or the governing, of a house, especially of its financial aspects,

the word *steward* comes to mind. When a man has many estates, or properties, and cannot be present at every one of those estates, he may have a steward, or a manager, who is in charge of each one of those estates; therefore, one to whom the government of a household is entrusted is a steward.

### The Eden Economy

Now the original economy that God established upon earth was, in fact, a very simple economy. We are going to look at the first of the two economies now, and this first economy is also divided into two parts. The first part I have called the *Eden Economy*, and we find reference to this Eden economy back in the first book of the Bible, in Genesis, chapter 2. Now the context of Genesis 2, is at the end of God's six days of creation. We are entering upon the seventh day of creation:

**Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host of them. And on the seventh day God ended his work which he had made; and he rested on the seventh day from all his work which he had made. (Genesis 2:1, 2)**

Now this is the institution of the first law upon this earth, the first law that governed this *house*, the house of earth, which was given to Adam and Eve and over which they were given the stewardship. This was the first rule. Notice carefully; Moses tells us that on the seventh day God ended his work and that on that day he rested. Now notice in verse 2 that it says from the "work which he had made," speaking of it in the past tense. His work was done, and what took place next was in the seventh day:

**And God blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it: because that in it he *had rested* from all his work which God created and made. (Genesis 2:3)**

Moses is telling us that the blessing and the sanctification did not take place during the Sabbath; it took place after it. What is the significance of that? The Sabbath was past. That day was past, and the blessing that God gave could not have been for the Sabbath that was past. You can't bless past time, can you? You can't sanctify time that is gone, but you can

bless and sanctify time to come. So this was the institution of the Sabbath as a memorial. It was the institution of it as a repeated cycle, the memorial of God's creation. That Sabbath was over, and God instituted every seventh day from that period on as a memorial of his completed work, and man was to rest, as God rested upon that day. This was the institution of that first law, and that law was the Sabbath. This was the first rule under the economy of this earth.

The second rule followed very quickly, and it, too, is in Genesis, chapter 2:

**And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die" (Genesis 2:16, 17)**

This was the second rule to govern this earth. The first was a restriction upon man's time. Man was given six days for his labor, for anything that he needed to do, but the seventh day, God said, was his: *It belongs to me, and upon it thou wilt do what I have done. You will rest from your common labor. You will enjoy rest and communion with me upon that day* (Exodus 20:8–11). Notice God claims the Sabbath as his own. We see this very clearly, especially later on, and we will get to that in a moment, but notice the Sabbath belongs to God. It is sanctified, set apart, by him as his own. The second rule, likewise, set something apart as belonging to God and set another restriction upon man, this time not a restriction upon his time, but of his time—of his lusts, his passions, and his desires. That restriction was: *You may eat of every tree of the garden that belongs to you, just as you may work on every single day that belongs to you, but of this one tree, the tree of knowledge of good and evil, you may not eat of it. In other words, this is mine; don't eat of it, or you will die.* These were the only two restrictions given to man; we have no record of any other command given to man before sin.

So you see that the Eden economy was a very simple economy. The law was not extensive or complicated. It was very simple, and it was based upon God's word. God said it, and it was to be done. The command was a divine command, and they were obligated to obey that command.

Notice we have no record of any other commandments, simply the two regarding the Sabbath and the tree of knowledge of good and evil. Now you may ask the questions: *Why didn't God record the other commandments? Why don't we find here a record of the Ten Commandments? Surely they existed? Surely those principles existed?* I believe that they did, yet perhaps there is something else that we have not taken into account, and that is the fact that there was no sin upon earth. Man was perfect and holy. There was no need for God to inform him of adultery, no need for God to inform him of lying, and no need for God to inform him of the other sins that did not exist in the world. There were no such things upon earth—no lying, no cheating, no adultery, no murder, no bearing of false witness, no coveting. There was only one

God, and Adam loved him with all his heart. There was no idolatry, no blasphemy, and no taking of the Lord's name in vain. There was no need, essentially, for God to forbid these things, for Adam would not have understood them had he done so. Do you think he would have? Of course not. He didn't even know what adultery was. He didn't know what murder was. He didn't even know what death was. Adam could not have appreciated such instruction, but he could appreciate these simple restrictions on time and lust.

So, we see the economy that God established was very reasonable. It makes perfect sense, when you understand the situation in which Adam was placed; and God, I believe, dealt with him, as we, too, would deal with those who are in a similar situation to Adam, were we to understand things as God understood them.

### **The Typical Economy**

The economy of Eden was a very simple economy, but something happened which changed that economy for the rest of the history of earth, something very drastic. It is recorded in Genesis chapter 3. I want us to consider Paul's remarks about it. This drastic change brought something to earth. It brought an aspect that hitherto neither earth nor Adam knew. It is found in the book of Romans:

**For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord. (Romans 6:23)**

Two things are thus brought to view—one, the wage of sin, and two, the gift of God.

Sin came to our world, and we know its story. Eve wandered away from her husband's side, and when she left his side, unwittingly perhaps, she suddenly found herself at the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. As she stood there, upon enchanted ground, she didn't immediately leave and thus opened herself up to temptation. We know the rest of the story. The serpent deceived her. She took of the fruit and did eat, and gave to her husband. Thus sin was brought into this world, and the result of that sin, as Paul tells us, is death.

Sin thus came to this world, with all its corrupt and perverted knowledge, with all its feelings, all its passions, its depraved qualities, and with it came death.

Note also that it didn't take long for those qualities to manifest themselves in Adam and Eve. The very first words we hear coming from their mouths are words of self justification—protecting themselves, casting the blame on others, and blaming God. A very real and grotesque *reality* came to this world.

What was to be done? There was a need. No longer could the two simple restrictions originally placed upon man suffice. Death had come to the world. Something must happen, or man would certainly die.

This brings us to another economy. God had made provision. He had provided that, should Adam sin, should sin enter this world, a plan was ready to be set in place. If it were not ready, man would have died immediately. So we see that there was a plan already prepared of God. He had provided a



way to pay the wages of sin and to give back to man the gift of life. That provision was none other than Jesus Christ, the Son of God. This dearly beloved and only begotten Son promised to step down from his position and become the sacrifice for man. He would one day become a man, the seed of the woman. His heel would be bruised—he would suffer death—yet he would rise victorious over sin and death, victorious not only for himself, but also for all of mankind.

He would bruise the head of the serpent and thus guarantee the salvation of all mankind. This established the second great part of the new economy which I've called the *Typical Economy*. It brought a *new* or *added* part to the law which already existed. That part of the law was a moral law. It was to govern man's life and his habits—to govern or shape and develop his character. The second part of this economy was an *added* portion; it came in as a *consequence* of sin, and it was purely typical. Notice, now was entered the second portion of the definition for economy—that “system of rules, regulations, rites and ceremonies” (Noah Webster 1828). We see also:

If Adam had not transgressed the law of God, the ceremonial law would never have been instituted. (Ellen G. White, *The Signs of the Times*, March 14, 1878)

Wherefore, as by one man, sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned. (Romans 5:12)

For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord. (Romans 6:23)

Wherefore then serveth the law? It was added because of transgressions, till the seed should come to whom the promise was made; and it was ordained by angels in the hand of a mediator. (Galatians 3:19)

But with thee will I establish my covenant; and thou shalt come into the ark, thou, and thy sons, and thy wife, and thy sons' wives with thee. (Genesis 6:18)

Economy as we know it today, economy as the result of sin, has this added portion—rites and ceremonies. Initially there were no rites and no ceremonies, but simply the moral code, or law, existed—two commands, but now there was an additional quality. God instituted a rite, a ceremony, which was a type or shadow. It prefigured that which was to come. It typified the great gift that God would pay for the redemption of mankind. Thus was instituted the *Typical Economy*. Now, when I say *typical*, what do I mean? When we say this is a typical behavior of someone, we mean the behavior fits a *type*, a *character*. We are putting someone into a box, and defining what they are. A type, then, is a figure; it is a representation of something. Now notice how Noah Webster defines type, from which we get our word *typical*:

The mark of something; an emblem; that which represents something else. 2. A sign; a symbol; a figure of something to come; as, Abraham's sacrifice and the paschal lamb, were types of Christ. To this word is opposed

*antitype*. Christ, in this case, is the antitype. (Noah Webster 1828)

So, we can see that it stands in the place of something else—a sign, a symbol, a figure of something to come—and Webster lists Abraham's sacrifice and the paschal lamb as “types” of Christ. This word is opposed to “antitype”. Christ in this case is the antitype. The antitype would be that from which the type is derived, the pattern for all other types.

Now, this new economy had rites. A new system of law was instituted, built up and inseparably connected with sacrifice. Typically a lamb was brought as a type. Its blood was allowed to drain out, and a portion of that blood was gathered as a type. The animal was then burnt upon the altar. This was all prefiguring the death of the one that the lamb represented. It was a symbol, a type.

Thus this new economy, which I call the typical or ceremonial economy, was no longer simply made up of a moral code for the conduct of men, but it now had this added portion, that of the typical or priestly service.

When we think of a type or a shadow, let us imagine it is a clear sunny day, with the sun behind the cross of Christ. That cross gives a shadow, throws that shadow, forward or backward. So these types are referred to in the Bible as shadows because a real or material object casts a shadow. That shadow is a figure of something good to come, a representation of the thing, but it is not the thing itself. So it is with this portion of the economy, this portion of the law, which was added. It was a figure, a representation of the true, but it was not the true itself. The true sacrifice that it represented, Christ, was the one casting the shadow and if you trace the shadow back, eventually you will find its source, and we find this typical portion of law added in Genesis 3:

Unto Adam also and to his wife did the LORD God make coats of skins, and clothed them. (Genesis 3:21)

Note here that God doesn't directly mention sacrifice, but it does say that God covered man's nakedness with coats of skins. Adam and Eve had tried to cover themselves—their own shame of nakedness—with fig leaves. They made themselves little aprons to cover themselves, but God says *your works will never do*. Our works cannot suffice to cover the shame of our sin. Only the work of God can do this, and so God gave to man coats of skin.

Why didn't God give them linen coats? Why not woolen coats? Why coats of skins? Where do coats of skins or pelts come from? You get them from animals, and those animals, in order to give their skins, must die. And so here, even though we don't have it directly stated, we have evidence of the first death. That death was typical of the death of the Son of God. It prefigured his death; however, Jesus did not die at this time. That lamb only typified him. It was only a shadow of what was to come. It died; it gave its life. (We say it was a lamb, but we don't really know what animal it was. We don't know whatever skin it was that God covered them with, but that animal gave its life, and that life was typical of the life of

the son of God). Adam and Eve were now clothed with new life, not their own, but the life of Jesus. Thus also we have represented that second portion, that added portion, of the economy.

*But, asks one, how do we know that this sacrifice was to become a ceremonial law? Do we have any evidence that God had so instructed them?*

**And Adam knew Eve his wife; and she conceived, and bare Cain, and said, I have gotten a man from the LORD. And she again bare his brother Abel. And Abel was a keeper of sheep, but Cain was a tiller of the ground. And in process of time it came to pass, that Cain brought of the fruit of the ground an offering unto the LORD. And Abel, he also brought of the firstlings of his flock and of the fat thereof. And the LORD had respect unto Abel and to his offering. (Genesis 4:1–4)**

Often when we are reading, we can make assumptions. Something is not clearly stated here, and that something is expressed in unspoken questions: *Why are they bringing offerings in the first place? Who told them to do so? Who required them to bring any offerings at all?* Have you ever thought about that? Why were Cain and Abel bringing offerings to God in the first place? Someone must have told them to do it. Someone must have communicated it to them. Some command must have been given in order for them to be doing this. And so, even though we don't have it directly stated in Scripture, we can know by careful observation of the context that there must have been some command.

More than this, there must have been some specific ordinance given by God regarding these sacrifices, or else why was Abel's accepted and Cain's rejected? It would not have been fair for God to reject Cain's offering and accept Abel's, if God had not first clearly laid out his requirements before them, stating what was required, how it was to be done, and what they must bring. If God had not first laid out a clear law for them, it would have been unfair and unjust for God to reject Cain's offering and accept Abel's. The only way for this record to make sense is that God had already done this and that such a communication had already been given to Adam and Eve and perhaps even to Cain and Abel.

And so we find Cain and Abel bringing sacrifices and offerings and find Abel's was accepted and Cain's rejected. Why? Because Abel's was in fulfillment of God's requirement, when God covered the sin of Adam and Eve. A lamb was slain to cover their nakedness, and that became the type for this sacrificial service. This was required of them because it showed their faith in the Redeemer to come. All those who should accept this sacrifice on their behalf would be saved, and Christ's life would be given for them. They would be covered; therefore, Abel, in accordance to God's command, brought the required sacrifice. He showed his faith in the Redeemer to come, and his offering was accepted of God. Cain showed no faith. His offering revealed his attitude that his gifts are enough to please God and he did not need to have

the life of God's Son. In other words, he did not believe that sin was really *that bad*. In Cain's sacrifice we can see that he didn't think much of sin. He didn't truly see it as a serious issue; otherwise, he certainly would have brought the required offering, and sadly there are many who follow in the way of Cain today. Many do not believe that sin is as bad as it is and that it really doesn't bring about death, but that death is just a natural occurrence of life—something that comes to us all. Yet, in reality, beloved, death is not natural. It is not something that should happen to any us. It wasn't in God's original plan. It came as the direct result of sin, and the world (and even many professed Christians) stands in ignorance of this fact, much as did Cain.

Notice what inspiration tells us of this newly appointed service:

**The sacrificial offerings were ordained by God to be to man a perpetual reminder and a penitential acknowledgment of his sin and a confession of his faith in the promised Redeemer. They were intended to impress upon the fallen race the solemn truth that it was sin that caused death. To Adam, the offering of the first sacrifice was a most painful ceremony. His hand must be raised to take life, which only God could give. It was the first time he had ever witnessed death, and he knew that had he been obedient to God, there would have been no death of man or beast. As he slew the innocent victim, he trembled at the thought that his sin must shed the blood of the spotless Lamb of God. This scene gave him a deeper and more vivid sense of the greatness of his transgression, which nothing but the death of God's dear Son could expiate. And he marveled at the infinite goodness that would give such a ransom to save the guilty. A star of hope illumined the dark and terrible future, and relieved it of its utter desolation. (Ellen G. White, *Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 68)**

Since the announcement to the serpent in Eden, "I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed" (Genesis 3:15), Satan had known that he did not hold absolute sway over the world. There was seen in men the working of a power that withstood his dominion. With intense interest he watched the sacrifices offered by Adam and his sons. In these ceremonies he discerned a symbol of communion between earth and heaven. He set himself to intercept this communion. He misrepresented God, and misinterpreted the rites that pointed to the Saviour. Men were led to fear God as one who delighted in their destruction. The sacrifices that should have revealed His love were offered only to appease His wrath. (Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages*, p. 115)

So we see that even though this new added portion of the law was both typical and ritual, there was a certain manner in which it was to be done. God required that the services, with their sacrifices, were to be carried out in a very precise way. Thus they were called rites or ceremonies. A rite or a ceremony is something that we do in a form, and so this

sacrificial law became known as the ceremonial law because of the forms that were to be strictly followed. God allowed no deviation from the forms. Why? Because those forms were typical. They pointed forward to that which was to come to pass and should they be deviated from, it would be a perversion of that which was to be done for man's salvation. God would allow no perversion, no corruption, of that plan; therefore, these forms were required. Thus the law, because of its strict forms, became known as the *ceremonial* law.

Notice also that God gave it to point out to man not only of the seriousness of sin, but also to be a star, a bright ray of light to illumine his now darkened path and to give him hope of life eternal. He would now have to live upon earth under the curse of sin; yet one day God would redeem this earth. He would redeem man, and the curse of sin would be removed, and there would be life once more, life without sin, without death, and without heartache and sorrow. This hope illumined the life of Adam, and it has illumined the life of every one of his descendants who have clung to that hope typified in the death of that lamb.

Not all chose, however, to adhere to that service. Many forsook hope of life eternal altogether, and chose rather the pleasures of this life. (See Romans 1:18–22, 28–32.) Yet others, still more wicked, turned this blessed service into a means of gaining wealth and power. God's people, the sons of God, were eventually led by continual intercourse with the sons of Cain to intermarry among them. Thus they compromised their faith and set themselves into an ever increasing downward spiral of wickedness and sin. For this reason God chose to destroy man from the face of the earth. Yet one man found grace in the eyes of God, a man who feared, who walked with, and who worshiped Jehovah with all of his heart. His name was Noah. Through Noah God preserved righteousness in the earth. Through this righteous man and his three sons, the earth would once again be populated by men.

### **After the Flood:**

As men again departed from God, the Lord chose Abraham, of whom he declared: "Abraham obeyed My voice, and kept My charge, My commandments, My statutes, and My laws." To him was given the rite of circumcision, which was a sign that those who received it were devoted to the service of God,—a pledge that they would remain separate from idolatry, and would obey the law of God. The failure of Abraham's descendants to keep this pledge, as shown in their disposition to form alliances with the heathen and adopt their practises, was the cause of their sojourn and bondage in Egypt" (Ellen G. White, *The Signs of the Times*, February 1, 1910).

The sacrificial system committed to Adam, was also perverted by his descendants. Superstition, idolatry, cruelty, and licentiousness corrupted the simple and significant service that God had appointed. Through long intercourse with idolaters [Canaanites & Egyptians] the

people of Israel had mingled many heathen customs with their worship; therefore the Lord gave them at Sinai definite instruction concerning the sacrificial service. After the completion of the tabernacle He communicated with Moses from the cloud of glory above the mercy seat, and gave him full directions concerning the system of offerings and the forms of worship to be maintained in the sanctuary. The ceremonial law was thus given to Moses, and by him written in a book. But the law of Ten Commandments spoken from Sinai had been written by God Himself on the tables of stone, and was sacredly preserved in the ark. (White, *Patriarchs & Prophets*, p. 364)

Notice that this simple and significant service which had meaning to those to whom it was originally given had, over time, been perverted, even by the antediluvians, and again after the flood, when the world was populated by the descendants of Noah. Once again this pure system which God instituted became corrupted with superstition and idolatry, cruelty and licentiousness. It was corrupted for the benefit of greedy men. They distorted the system's intent, and beclouded its significance, so that the meaning of the symbols became obscure, unknown, mystical, and hard to discern. They kept it that way, so that the people were ignorant, and this was to their benefit.

And so we find that at the time when the children of Israel came into Egypt, many of them were ignorant of the significance of the sacrificial services, and this ignorance only deepened during their long intercourse in Egypt. As they mingled with the Egyptians and witnessed their pagan rituals which were a perversion of that first typical economy which God gave to Adam and Eve in the beginning, they almost entirely lost the meaning of it all. Many of the Israelites no longer understood what they typified. The nature of sin and of the plan that God had instituted for the salvation of men was fast fading, and it was necessary, when God brought them out of Egypt, to clarify both the meaning of the sacrifices and of the Ten Commandments, God's moral requirements for humanity, for these, too, had been corrupted.

### **The Typical Economy Re-explained**

We find in the history of the Exodus of the children of Israel another portion or another economy—the second portion of that first economy—came into existence, which I call the *Sinaitic Economy*, or the *Typical Economy Re-explained*. Thus was created that peculiarly Jewish economy or system:

System, n. [L. *systema*; Gr. to set.] An assemblage of things adjusted into a regular whole; or a whole plan or scheme consisting of many parts connected in such a manner as to create a chain of mutual dependencies; or a regular union of principles or parts forming one entire thing. (*Noah Webster* 1828)

The Moral Law, (Ten Commandments) was a part of one system while the Ceremonial Law, with ritual and the



ordinances of the sanctuary found in Leviticus, is in another system.

There are many who try to blend these two systems [the ceremonial law and the Ten Commandments], using the texts that speak of the ceremonial law to prove that the moral law has been abolished; but this is a perversion of the Scriptures. The distinction between the two systems is broad and clear. The ceremonial system was made up of symbols pointing to Christ, to His sacrifice and His priesthood. This ritual law, with its sacrifices and ordinances, was to be performed by the Hebrews until type met antitype in the death of Christ, the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world. Then all the sacrificial offerings were to cease. It is this law that Christ “took . . . out of the way, nailing it to His cross.” Colossians 2:14. But concerning the law of Ten Commandments the psalmist declares, “Forever, O Lord, Thy word is settled in heaven.” Psalm 119:89. And Christ Himself says, “Think not that I am come to destroy the law. . . . Verily I say unto you”—making the assertion as emphatic as possible—“Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled.” Matthew 5:17, 18. Here He teaches, not merely what the claims of God’s law had been, and were then, but that these claims should hold as long as the heavens and the earth remain. The law of God is as immutable as His throne. It will maintain its claims upon mankind in all ages. (White, *Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 365)

God’s people, whom he calls his peculiar treasure, were privileged with a two-fold system of law; *the moral and the ceremonial*. The one, pointing back to creation to keep in remembrance the living God who made the world, whose claims are binding upon all men in every dispensation, and which will exist through all time and eternity. The other, given because of man’s transgression of the moral law, the obedience to which consisted in sacrifices and offerings pointing to the future redemption. Each is clear and distinct from the other. (Ellen G. White, *The Review & Herald*, May 6, 1875; all emphasis supplied unless otherwise noted)

All this economy which God gave to the Jewish people was nothing new. It was simply an explanation of what God gave to Adam and Eve in the beginning, after sin, and that which all of his descendants had kept by faith but because of it being perverted and corrupted, God felt it necessary for all the muck and mire to be swept aside, so that man could clearly see his purpose and plan in giving to man his law and in requiring this ceremonial service.

So God spoke at Sinai his Ten Commandments. He clarified the moral obligation upon man. He made it clear to Israel what he required of them character-wise—what character they must have in order for them to be accepted of God. He clarified also that sacred service, the typical service, which typified the plan of salvation. He made it clear. He explained it, and really, in a sense, it was expanded. Many of the

symbols were clarified to be crystal clear. That service, therefore, became a means of teaching the people the great plan of salvation.

Thus was instituted that added law to which we refer as the ceremonial, typical, or Jewish law. The moral law had always been. The added law was that typical law, and later it became known as the Levitical law or the ceremonial law. Initially the priestly service belonged to the first-born son, but God had chosen the tribe of Levi to be the priesthood in this new economy, and so the law that was committed to them to govern all the ceremonies, rites, sacrifices, and ordinances of the sanctuary became known as the Levitical law, most of which is contained in the book known as Leviticus. Some of this economy is explained in Exodus, some in Numbers, and even some is reiterated in the book of Deuteronomy, but the essential law which is known as the Levitical law is found in the book of Leviticus.

Notice what we read concerning this new economy which we shouldn’t call new, but only re-explained:

The heavenly temple, the abiding place of the King of kings, where “thousand thousands ministered unto Him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before Him” (Daniel 7:10), that temple filled with the glory of the eternal throne, where seraphim, its shining guardians, veil their faces in adoration – no earthly structure could represent its vastness and its glory. Yet important truths concerning the heavenly sanctuary and the great work there carried forward for man’s redemption were to be taught by the earthly sanctuary and its services. (White, *Patriarchs & Prophets*, p. 357)

Notice the author here makes it very clear what the purpose of the Jewish economy was. It was for the purpose of instruction. It was to be an educational tool or system. First of all, it was to educate the children of Israel concerning the knowledge they had lost of the plan of salvation and God’s moral requirements. This system, however, was not only for them to keep to themselves, but it was for them to teach to all the world. Because that original system had been corrupted by all the nations of earth, God gave this to the children of Israel to preserve its true knowledge and for them to teach it to all the world.

We read of this educational system in Leviticus 23:4. Here we find the instance in which it is instituted:

And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, Concerning the feasts of the LORD, which ye shall proclaim to be holy convocations, even these are my feasts. Six days shall work be done: but the seventh day is the sabbath of rest, an holy convocation; ye shall do no work therein: it is the sabbath of the LORD in all your dwellings. These are the feasts of the LORD, even holy convocations, which ye shall proclaim in their seasons. (Leviticus 23:1–4)

This is that portion of that Levitical law which refers to the feasts. Now, I ask, *What was central to these feasts? What*

*made these feasts teaching instruments?* It was the sacrificial service that was at the center and heart of them. At each feast there was a required sacrifice—a burnt offering, a sin offering, and sometimes other offerings were required at these feasts. Each one was to be at its appointed season. Notice that they were to be proclaimed “in their seasons.” Notice now verse 37:

**These are the feasts of the LORD, which ye shall proclaim to be holy convocations, to offer an offering made by fire unto the LORD, a burnt offering, and a meat offering, a sacrifice, and drink offerings, every thing upon his day. (Leviticus 23:37)**

These feasts were to be kept on a particular day and in a particular manner, according to the law of these different sacrifices. The laws concerning these sacrifices are given in the first chapters of Leviticus, regarding the sin offering, the peace offering, the burnt offering, etc. They were thus required to follow the outlined custom or ceremony. They had a form which they were to follow, because, as we saw, these forms were typical. They pointed forward to the work which Jesus himself was going to do. But more than this, we note that they were to be done on a particular day. Why? Because the days themselves were typical. The days on which these feasts fell were typical, indicating that the fulfillment of each would take place on that very day. And so that is why the feasts could not be kept on any day the people might chose. They had to be kept on the day that God specified because those days were typical. They stood as shadows and pointed forward to the great fulfillment of those feasts. Notice another point to take notice of:

**[These feasts are] Beside the sabbaths of the LORD, and beside your gifts, and beside all your vows, and beside all your freewill offerings, which ye give unto the LORD. (Leviticus 23:38)**

Notice that God clearly separates the annual feasts from the Sabbaths, gifts, vows, and from all freewill offerings. Those he said were “beside,” *i.e.*, they did not pertain to the feasts and were not ceremonial. You see God is making a clear distinction here that the annual feasts are distinct, are separate, and are set apart from other portions of the Levitical law because there are portions of the Levitical law that are not ceremonial, that are not typical. For instance, we find in Leviticus 11 the health laws. These are in no sense typical. There is nothing ceremonial about them. In fact, if you go back to Genesis chapters 6 and 7, you will see that the distinction between clean and unclean animals was already known before the flood. So we can clearly see that there are portions of the Levitical law that are not ceremonial. They are not typical in any sense and don’t point forward to anything. They are simply rules or regulations which God gave for man to follow in regard to health and cleanliness. A distinction is here made with regard to the feasts because they have as their center a sacrificial offering and are part of that ceremonial, or ritual, law.

I want us to have a clear understanding concerning the law because in the New Testament the term *law* is very frequently used, but to the Jew, you have to understand, there was only one law. That law, however, had different portions, different parts, to it. When the Jews spoke of *the law*, it could refer to any one portion of the law. There was only one law, one economy, but there were different divisions; therefore, we need to understand where to draw those divisions. Let us now consider a few texts which will help us to see how God makes that division. The first is in the book of Numbers:

**And the LORD spake unto Moses in the wilderness of Sinai, in the first month of the second year after they were come out of the land of Egypt, saying, Let the children of Israel also keep the passover at his appointed season. In the fourteenth day of this month, at even, ye shall keep it in his appointed season: according to all the rites of it, and according to all the ceremonies thereof, shall ye keep it. (Numbers 9:1–3)**

Notice that the feasts were rites and ceremonies and that these rites and ceremonies were not to be separated from their appointed season. The sacrifices cannot be separated from these feasts, that’s what they are, because they are typical. The services represented the work to be done, and that work to be done required sacrifice. It required the sin offering, the burnt offering, the peace offering, and other offerings, as well.

Pay especially close attention to the fact that God specified the exact day the Passover was to be kept, and, even more than this, he specified the very hour—at even. God is very clear when it comes to these ceremonies because everything that is done must be done exactly according to the pattern because the pattern is typical. This is why they are ceremonies, beloved. I want this to be clear in our minds because there is a portion of the law that is purely symbolic. It was purely a shadow which pointed forward to things to come and one day would meet its end. That end is spoken of in the book of Daniel:

**At the beginning of thy supplications the commandment came forth, and I am come to shew thee; for thou art greatly beloved: therefore understand the matter, and consider the vision. (Daniel 9:23)**

Now notice the angel Gabriel is sent at the command of God to instruct Daniel concerning a certain portion of the vision, and this portion is given in the following verse:

**Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people and upon thy holy city . . . (Daniel 9:24)**

Now if you look up in a Strong’s Concordance and Dictionary, the Hebrew word which is translated “determined” literally means “to cut off” or “set a part”. Seventy weeks, therefore, were cut off for God’s people, “. . . to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up the vision and prophecy, and to



anoint the most Holy” (Daniel 9:24). God here clearly marks out the end of the ceremonial system. All these things were to be accomplished at the end of the four hundred ninety years. This period was to be numbered from a specific date:

Know therefore and understand, that from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem unto the Messiah the Prince shall be seven weeks, and threescore and two weeks: the street shall be built again, and the wall, even in troublous times. (Daniel 9:25)

So sixty-nine weeks would intervene between the beginning of that decree to the time that the Messiah would come:

And after threescore and two weeks shall Messiah be cut off, but not for himself: and the people of the prince that shall come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary; and the end thereof shall be with a flood, and unto the end of the war desolations are determined. And he shall confirm the covenant with many for one week: and in the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation [This word means the offering, the service, the typical sacrifices and offerings] to cease, and for the overspreading of abominations he shall make it desolate, even until the consummation, and that determined shall be poured upon the desolate. (Daniel 9:26, 27)

God says that seventy weeks would be determined for his people, at the end of which something would end. What then, would end? That system of sacrifices. That great part of the economy, the typical portion, the typical law, would now come to an end. Why is this? Notice the following statement:

In the system of types and offerings, the sacrifice of the Son of God was shadowed forth, and yet the Jews did not behold in Christ “the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.” (Ellen G. White, *The Review & Herald*, September 11, 1894)

Why were those sacrifices, those services which were typical and pointed forward to that time, to come to an end? Because, beloved, the antitype was to come. And when the antitype came all the types were to vanish away.

These types were fulfilled, not only as to the event, **but as to the time**. On the fourteenth day of the first Jewish month, the very day and month on which, for fifteen long centuries, the passover lamb had been slain, Christ, having eaten the passover with his disciples, instituted that feast which was to commemorate his own death as “the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.” (Ellen G. White, *The Great Controversy*, p. 399; 1888 edition; emphasis added)

At the very time specified by that type—at even, on the fourteenth day of the first month—God’s sacrifice was offered. The Lamb of God died, and expired upon the cross of Calvary; and that system (notice she called it the “*system*” of types and symbols or ceremonies) came to an end. Why is that? Because the one that they typified, the one that they

pointed to, was now come. The reality of it was come and when the reality came, the shadow was no more.

Let us look at the prophet Isaiah’s opening remarks. Why didn’t the Jews foresee all of this? God had made it so clear when he gave to the Jews his moral law, and when he gave to them the Levitical law. It should have been very clear to the Jews why and who was pointed to in it all. They should have clearly recognized Jesus when he came, but they didn’t, and Isaiah tells us why:

Hear the word of the LORD, ye rulers of Sodom; give ear unto the law of our God, ye people of Gomorrah. To what purpose is the multitude of your sacrifices unto me? saith the LORD: I am full of the burnt offerings of rams, and the fat of fed beasts; and I delight not in the blood of bullocks, or of lambs, or of he goats. When ye come to appear before me, who hath required this at your hand, to tread my courts? Bring no more vain oblations; incense is an abomination unto me; the new moons and sabbaths, the calling of assemblies, I cannot away with; it is iniquity, even the solemn meeting. Your new moons and your appointed feasts my soul hateth: they are a trouble unto me; I am weary to bear them. And when ye spread forth your hands, I will hide mine eyes from you: yea, when ye make many prayers, I will not hear: your hands are full of blood. Wash you, make you clean; put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes; cease to do evil; Learn to do well; seek judgment, relieve the oppressed, judge the fatherless, plead for the widow. Come now, and let us reason together, saith the LORD: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool. (Isaiah 1:10–18)

Notice how God says that these sacrifices had become an abomination to him. He asks: *Why are you coming to my courts with these vain oblations? Who asked you to do this?* Well, of course, God had asked them to do it, but the Jews had lost the sense of it all. To them it had become a hollow form and ritual, for we read:

At the same time the Jews were, by their sins, separating themselves from God. They were unable to discern the deep spiritual significance of their symbolic service. In their self-righteousness they trusted to their own works, to the sacrifices and ordinances themselves, instead of relying upon the merits of Him to whom all these things pointed. Thus “going about to establish their own righteousness” (Romans 10:3), they built themselves up in a self-sufficient formalism. Wanting the Spirit and grace of God, they tried to make up for the lack by a rigorous observance of religious ceremonies and rites. Not content with the ordinances which God Himself had appointed, they encumbered the divine commands with countless exactions of their own devising. The greater their distance from God, the more rigorous they were in the observance of these forms.

With all these minute and burdensome exactions it was a practical impossibility for the people to keep the law. The great principles of righteousness set forth in the Decalogue, and the glorious truths shadowed in the symbolic service, were alike obscured, buried under a mass of human tradition and enactment. Those who were really desirous of serving God, and who tried to observe the whole law as enjoined by the priests and rulers, groaned under a heavy burden. (Ellen G. White, *Prophets & Kings*, pp. 708, 709)

### Jesus Our Passover

As they departed from God, the Jews in a great degree lost sight of the teaching of the ritual service. That service had been instituted by Christ Himself. In every part it was a symbol of Him; and it had been full of vitality and spiritual beauty. But the Jews lost the spiritual life from their ceremonies, and clung to the dead forms. They trusted to the sacrifices and ordinances themselves, instead of resting upon Him to whom they pointed. In order to supply the place of that which they had lost, the priests and rabbis multiplied requirements of their own; and the more rigid they grew, the less of the love of God was manifested. They measured their holiness by the multitude of their ceremonies, while their hearts were filled with pride and hypocrisy. (Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages*, p. 29; published in 1898)

The Passover was followed by the seven-day Feast of Unleavened Bread. On the second day of the feast, the first fruits of the year's harvest, a sheaf of barley, was presented before the Lord. All the ceremonies of the feast were types of the work of Christ. The deliverance of Israel from Egypt was an object lesson of redemption, which the Passover was intended to keep in memory. The slain lamb, the unleavened bread, the sheaf of first fruits, represented the Saviour. (*Ibid.*, p. 77)

You see, even the Jews, those to whom the sacred writings had been entrusted, had forgotten this fact, those who should have known, who should have understood, because God had made it so clear in their services. He had made the moral law clear. He had made the Levitical law clear and the distinction between what was ceremonial and typical and what was not clear. And God had made it very clear that those symbols were to be kept intact, not because the form itself was holy, but because that which the form represented was holy. The Jews forgot this, however, and many today have also forgotten.

Beloved, that is a saddening thought, a thought that should fill us with horror because we see sin and suffering here on earth. For example, we see the suffering of a poor animal, and it moves our heart. We are moved to tears when we see the suffering of a little creature and as sad as that is, we can read the story of the crucifixion of the Son of God and not be moved. How is it, beloved, that that story no longer moves our heart? How is it? Have we become like those Jews of old?

Has the meaning of those things been lost upon us? God sent Israel a messenger to tell the people the significance of what was coming upon them.

In the gospel of John, we read the words of the prophet John. The greatest of all the earthly prophets, he was sent as the forerunner of Christ to proclaim the coming of the Messiah. And when he came and saw Jesus, with outstretched arm John pointed and said, "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world" (John 1:29).

Perhaps not even understanding the meaning of his own words, yet John was moved by inspiration of God to proclaim to the children of Israel that the Lamb, that one prefigured in that most important of services of the children of Israel, the Passover, had come. But yet few understood the significance of that utterance, save two men that heard and went and followed Jesus. Those two men were John and Andrew (John 1:35-42).

Little did the priests and rulers realize the solemnity of the work which it was theirs to perform. At every Passover and Feast of Tabernacles, thousands of animals were slain, and their blood was caught by the priests and poured upon the altar. The Jews had become familiar with the offering of blood, and had almost lost sight of the fact that it was sin which made necessary all this shedding of the blood of beasts. They did not discern that it prefigured the blood of God's dear Son, which was to be shed for the life of the world, and that by the offering of sacrifices men were to be directed to a crucified Redeemer. (White, *The Desire of Ages*, pp. 589, 590)

And at the close of Christ's earthly ministry, as he was preparing to offer up his life as the ransom for sinful men, Jesus once more came to Jerusalem and entered into the temple for the last time:

And Jesus went into the temple of God, and cast out all them that sold and bought in the temple, and overthrew the tables of the moneychangers, and the seats of them that sold doves, And said unto them, It is written, My house shall be called the house of prayer; but ye have made it a den of thieves. (Matthew 21:12, 13)

Thus Jesus was symbolically showing the work that needed to be done. That temple, which represents us, needed to be cleansed. That temple had become a means of polluted traffic, a means of gain for self, for benefit of self. The Jews had turned that service, which was typical of the sacrifice of the Son of God and of his priceless gift to mankind, with its significance, its solemnity, its beauty, its purity into something corrupted for their own gain. Sadly, the same has been done by many today. And thus we understand Christ's words when he said, "You have made my Father's house a den of thieves":

Jesus looked upon the innocent victims of sacrifice, and saw how the Jews had made these great convocations scenes of bloodshed and cruelty. In place of humble repen-



tance of sin, they had multiplied the sacrifice of beasts, as if God could be honored by a heartless service. The priests and rulers had hardened their hearts through selfishness and avarice. The very symbols pointing to the Lamb of God they had made a means of getting gain. Thus in the eyes of the people the sacredness of the sacrificial service had been in a great measure destroyed. The indignation of Jesus was stirred; He knew that His blood, so soon to be shed for the sins of the world, would be as little appreciated by the priests and elders as was the blood of beasts which they kept incessantly flowing. (White, *The Desire of Ages*, p. 590)

Shortly after Christ's final entry of Jerusalem, we read:

And they went, and found as he had said unto them: and they made ready the passover. And when the hour was come, he sat down, and the twelve apostles with him. And he said unto them, With desire I have desired to eat this passover with you before I suffer: For I say unto you, I will not any more eat thereof, until it be fulfilled in the kingdom of God. And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and said, Take this, and divide it among yourselves: For I say unto you, I will not drink of the fruit of the vine, until the kingdom of God shall come. And he took bread, and gave thanks, and brake it, and gave unto them, saying, This is my body which is given for you: this do in remembrance of me. Likewise also the cup after supper, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood, which is shed for you. (Luke 22:13–20)

Concerning this momentous event, inspiration tells us that,

Christ was standing at the point of transition between two economies and their two great festivals. He, the spotless Lamb of God, was about to present Himself as a sin offering, that He would thus bring to an end the system of types and ceremonies that for four thousand years had pointed to His death. As He ate the Passover with His disciples, He instituted in its place the service that was to be the memorial of His great sacrifice. The national festival of the Jews was to pass away forever. The service which Christ established was to be observed by His followers in all lands and through all ages.

The Passover was ordained as a commemoration of the deliverance of Israel from Egyptian bondage. God had directed that, year by year, as the children should ask the meaning of this ordinance, the history should be repeated. Thus the wonderful deliverance was to be kept fresh in the minds of all. The ordinance of the Lord's Supper was given to commemorate the great deliverance wrought out as the result of the death of Christ. Till He shall come the second time in power and glory, this ordinance is to be celebrated. It is the means by which His great work for us is to be kept fresh in our minds. (White, *The Desire of Ages*, pp. 652, 653)

Today, the service which Christ instituted has been treated by some in this same way that the Passover and the ceremonial law were treated by the Jews. Has it lost its significance? Have we lost the purpose and meaning of it all? I fear that many of us today have forgotten that,

The system of types that pointed to Jesus as the Lamb of God was to be abolished at His death; but the precepts of the Decalogue are as immutable as the throne of God. (*Ibid.*, p. 308)

That,

While the system of types which pointed to Christ as the Lamb of God that should take away the sin of the world was to pass away at His death, the principles of righteousness embodied in the Decalogue are as immutable as the eternal throne. (Ellen G. White, *Thoughts from the Mount of Blessing*, p. 51)

Notice the clear distinction: One is as immutable and eternal as God himself, the other was only for a time—for a time appointed. Its services were typical/ceremonial, pointing forward to a time when they would meet their fulfillment and when that time came, they were to pass away forever, to be replaced by a new system, a new economy, one that would continue to the close of this world's history. We see the significance of this in the words of Jesus upon the cross:

When Jesus therefore had received the vinegar, he said, *It is finished*: and he bowed his head, and gave up the ghost. (John 19:30)

Beloved, I ask you: *What was finished? Our salvation?* No, for the great work of Jesus in the temple of heaven, which the feasts foreshadowed, was just now beginning to be fulfilled. The vast majority of the typical yearly service of the sanctuary, which culminated in the seventh month of the Jewish year, was as yet unfulfilled. So we see that the actual work which the yearly typical, or symbolic, service prefigured had now commenced with the shedding of the blood of the Lamb of God. Yet it is clear that something came to an end. What was finished or ended? God himself gives us the answer:

Jesus, when he had cried again with a loud voice, yielded up the ghost. And, behold, the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom; and the earth did quake, and the rocks rent. (Matthew 27:50, 51)

As Jesus died on Calvary, He cried, "It is finished," and the veil of the temple was rent in twain, from the top to the bottom. This was to show that the services of the earthly sanctuary were forever finished, and that God would no more meet with the priests in their earthly temple, to accept their sacrifices. The blood of Jesus was then shed, which was to be offered by Himself in the heavenly sanctuary. (Ellen G. White, *Early Writings*, p. 253)

What came to an end? That system of types and ceremonies which pointed to the death, resurrection, and high-priestly work of Jesus Christ. That whole system and

everything which pertained to it was “finished,” as God himself revealed in rending or tearing the veil in two from top to bottom. God, in order that none should be confused as to the significance of Christ’s death upon the cross, tore the veil in two from top to bottom, thus declaring to the Jews that the ceremonial system with all its services was no more of any value, for the one which they typified was come. The purpose and place of the earthly temple was no more, for Jesus declared unto the unbelieving Jews, “your house is left unto you desolate” (Matthew 22:38). That is, *your temple, with all its yearly services and its ceremonial system, is left unto you empty or vain.*

When Caiaphas rent his garment, his act was significant of the place that the Jewish nation as a nation would thereafter occupy toward God. . . . When Christ upon the cross cried out, “It is finished” (John 19:30), and the veil of the temple was rent in twain, the Holy Watcher declared that the Jewish people had rejected Him who was the antitype of all their types, the substance of all their shadows. Israel was divorced from God. Well might Caiaphas then rend his official robes, which signified that he claimed to be a representative of the great High Priest; for no longer had they any meaning for him or for the people. (White, *The Desire of Ages*, p. 709)

## The Two Economies, Part 2

The New Testament economy was established upon the same foundation as the Old Testament, being the law of God, but with a new ordinance which did not point back to deliverance from bondage in Egypt, but rather pointed forward to deliverance from sin and also points forward into heaven. This study will look at that and at the history as given in the book of Acts concerning the apostles and the early church. This study is broken down into a chronological timetable to help us understand the context of the events that transpired in the book of Acts.

### The Early Years of the Church

Acts 1–6 records the first three years of history of the Christian Church (AD 31–34). This covers the time from Christ’s ascension until the death of the deacon, Stephen. The book *The Acts of the Apostles* by Ellen G. White has some very important spiritual insights concerning this history, and we will also be reflecting upon the history that Luke wrote in Acts through the lens of that spiritual insight to help us understand the situation that arose during the infancy of the church.

Among those of the Hebrew faith who were gathered at Jerusalem were some commonly known as Grecians, between whom and the Jews of Palestine there had long existed distrust and even antagonism.

The hearts of those who had been converted under the labors of the apostles, were softened and united by Christian love. Despite former prejudices, all were in harmony

with one another. Satan knew that so long as this union continued to exist, he would be powerless to check the progress of gospel truth; and he sought to take advantage of former habits of thought, in the hope that thereby he might be able to introduce into the church elements of disunion. (Ellen White, *The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 87)

During the first three years there was great harmony in the church, as their hearts were softened and united in, and by, Christian love. When the Jews and Gentiles alike became Christians, they gave up their former prejudices and particular or peculiar customs, traditions, and habits. As one people now, they united under the New Testament economy, based upon faith in Christ, with the ordinance of the Lord’s Supper which Jesus had instituted. With this ordinance and their uniting together in Christ, the walls of traditions and customs that had separated them were broken down, and they were united in Christian love. Satan knew that as long as they remained united, his kingdom was threatened.

The story of the tower of Babel in Genesis 11 records another time when people were united. Those people who had set themselves to build a city and a tower and to make a name for themselves were of one language and of one speech. They understood one another, and they were in perfect unity and understanding and because of that, God knew that whatever they set their mind to would be accomplished. Satan recognized this also with the Christian Church, that so long as the people remained united, focused upon Christ and moving forward by faith, with their differences, divisions, and partition walls broken down, nothing would stand in their way.

United, the church would move forward as a conquering hero, as pictured in Revelation 6, where the white horse went forth conquering and to conquer. This was the picture of that early church, and Satan knew so long as it remained as such, in perfect union, love and harmony, that his efforts would be of little avail. The superstitions, the divisions, the strife, and the conflicts that he had caused upon earth would be eradicated by this new gospel that was preached, not only by Jesus, but by his disciples. What would Satan do?

Inspiration tells us that Satan sought to take advantage of the believer’s former habits of thought, of their old way of thinking. To the Jew, of course, that meant the ceremonial or the Mosaic Law, to the Greek that meant their old pagan customs and habits. By reinserting these into the minds, an element of disunion was brought in, and there was a suspicion that was raised among the Greeks that they were being treated unfairly in the distribution of welfare. This was not true, but Satan had encouraged their former habits of thought. This is Satan’s tactic. He brought disunity, division, and strife into Christianity, where once there was love and harmony. History shows how that disunity, though very small in the beginning, erupted into a controversy that threatened to destroy the whole church.



It was decided by the church at this time (AD 34) that in order to meet the controversy that had arisen, seven deacons were to be chosen. One of the seven, Stephen, was an exceptional man. He was so filled with the Spirit and so desirous to reach out and break down that partition wall among his fellow Jews, that he began to share the truth with them. Stephen began to preach and teach boldly among the Jews and to dispute with them. Naturally this caused great division among the Jews as Satan sought to fix their minds on their old ways of thinking.

The non-converted Jews were very unwilling to let go of their preconceived ideas, and, in fact, this led to Stephen being put to death. One of those consenting to his death was Saul (Acts 8:1), who later became the apostle Paul, and this begins the story of one of the greatest apostles of the New Testament.

### **The Church Begins to Grow**

We are now going to take a look at this early history and see what it reveals concerning this new economy Christ established and the division that Satan sought to bring in very early into the church. We continue with the period of Paul's conversion which is recorded in Acts chapter 9 and his early labors which are chronicled in the book of Acts (but some also in Galatians). Immediately after Paul's conversion, he did something very important.

**And straightway he [Paul] preached Christ in the synagogues, that he is the Son of God. (Acts 9:20)**

Here we find the burden of Paul's heart! This helps us to understand his desire and focus in preaching the gospel—presenting Jesus Christ as the Son of God! This would be forever the center and heart of Paul's gospel. Let us notice this same focus in the book of Galatians, where Paul writes:

**I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel: Which is not another; but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ. (Galatians 1:6, 7)**

Galatians was written about twenty-four years after Paul's conversion and yet still preaches the same gospel. He says, however, that there were some who came to the Galatian churches and were causing trouble among the Galatian believers, promoting another (Greek: *heteros*, a different kind) gospel which, he says, is really not another (Greek: *allos*, of the same kind). They were perverting the gospel of Christ and were twisting and misrepresenting it to the Galatian believers. Paul continues:

**But though we [we apostles], or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed. (Galatians 1:8)**

Let us be clear. Paul was not uncertain about what he was preaching. He had a clear view of the gospel and what Christ had called him to preach and to teach. This will become more evident as we move on. Paul continues to say:

**As we said before, so say I now again, If any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed. For do I now persuade men, or God? or do I seek to please men? for if I yet pleased men, I should not be the servant of Christ. (Galatians 1:9, 10)**

Paul is drawing a contrast. The implication is clear that those who were preaching this new gospel were doing it to gain the favor of men. They were followers of men, and Paul is contrasting that with the gospel from heaven he had been called to preach. Because Paul's gospel came directly from Christ, he could preach it and teach it with certainty and authority, the very authority of Jesus himself. He continues:

**But I certify you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached of me is not after man. For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ. (Galatians 1:11, 12)**

Paul's introduction has laid his groundwork. It has showed his gospel was centered in Christ and in the ordinance which Christ had established to break down partition walls and to unite all together, for there is neither Jew nor Gentile; there is neither male nor female, bond nor free, high nor low, but all are the same in Christ Jesus. Paul's gospel was to bring all men together into a common bond. Paul came in with his spiritual demolition ball and was breaking down those walls, and men were coming in, troubling the believers, trying to build back those walls. The apostle Paul felt so strongly about it that he called for a curse upon these men-pleasers who followed after the traditions and customs of men. Paul's gospel, however, was not of men, but of Jesus Christ.

To better understand what Paul was preaching and teaching, we look to his "first extant Epistle to the Corinthians" (Ellen White, *Sketches from the Life of Paul*, p. 151).

**For I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you, That the Lord Jesus the same night in which he was betrayed took bread: And when he had given thanks, he brake it, and said, Take, eat: this is my body, which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of me. After the same manner also he took the cup, when he had supped, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood: this do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me. For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till he come. (1 Corinthians 11:23–26)**

There is no mention here of the ceremonial law or of keeping of the old traditions and rites of the Jews. Paul is clear on the gospel, so clear, because it had been directly revealed to him by Jesus. Not only was the gospel clearly given to Paul, but also what his mission to the Gentiles and to the Jews ought to be.

Again, from *The Acts of the Apostles*, we read, concerning this portion of Paul's life:

**Before his conversion Paul had regarded himself as blameless "touching the righteousness which is in the law." Philipians 3:6. But since his change of heart he had**

gained a clear conception of the mission of the Saviour as the Redeemer of the entire race, Gentile as well as Jew, and had learned the difference between a living faith and a dead formalism. In the light of the gospel the ancient rites and ceremonies committed to Israel had gained a new and deeper significance. (p. 190)

Notice that the rites and ceremonies committed to Israel had their place, majesty, glory, and purpose; but we also see clearly the purpose finding its fulfillment and having its end. Though the services were ended, the lessons which they contained are still valuable. Calvary magnifies those old rites and ceremonies. They gained a new and deeper significance in the mind of Paul. He understood what they really were intended to teach, and that became the heart and soul of his gospel.

Continuing in *Acts of the Apostles*:

That which they shadowed forth had come to pass, and those who were living under the gospel dispensation had been freed from their observance. God's unchangeable law of Ten Commandments, however, Paul still kept in spirit as well as in letter. (*Ibid.*)

Paul's view of the matter is stated so clearly that there can really be no misunderstanding. Paul was shown his mission to the world and the gospel which Jesus entrusted to Paul struck a decisive line between a living faith and a dead formalism. Paul understood better the significance of the types and shadows and that Jesus had himself instituted the great ordinance of his supper, what we call Communion. The gospel was centered around the great sacrifice of Jesus at Calvary, not on a sacrifice to come. Paul saw the substance of Calvary and that the covenant had been ratified by the blood of Jesus. He realized that every time we break the communion bread and drink of the cup that we were to do so in remembrance of Calvary and this is something that should never leave our minds. This was what Paul preached and taught everywhere he went.

Another statement from the Spirit of Prophecy is very similar to what we just read concerning the same period, but it says adds something that demands close attention:

But he [Paul] knew that the typical ceremonies *must soon altogether cease*, since that which they had shadowed forth had come to pass, and the light of the gospel was shedding its glory upon the Jewish religion, giving a new significance to its ancient rites. (White, *Sketches from the Life of Paul*, p. 65)

### Four Unmistakable Signs

Paul knew of a certainty that those typical ceremonies must soon altogether, not pieces or parts removed from the ceremonies, but altogether, the whole system, was to soon cease. They had not all ceased yet, but were soon to cease and God allowed them to continue for a period of time, but he gave the Jews three unmistakable signs to indicate his will was for

them to cease. The first unmistakable sign is recorded in Matthew 23:38, with Jesus speaking to the Jews:

Behold, your house [referring to the temple] is left unto you desolate. (Matthew 23:38)

No longer did Jesus call the temple *my house* or *my Father's house*. He refers to it clearly as their house. When Jesus left the precincts of that temple, he did so for the very last time. Its significance, purpose, and place were to come to an end, and Jesus said he had left it to them desolate which means empty or worthless. This was the first unmistakable sign that Jesus gave to the Jews that an economy was changing.

The second unmistakable sign is found in the verses that follow.

And Jesus went out, and departed from the temple: and his disciples came to him for to shew him the buildings of the temple. (Matthew 24:1)

To a degree, the disciples understood the import of his words in Matthew 23:38. Jesus was pointing to what seemed impossible—a time when the temple and its services would be no more! The disciples, therefore, showed Jesus the greatness of the buildings, saying in effect, *Look, God himself instituted the services. Look at how beautiful these buildings are. God has graced us with his presence until now.* But what did Jesus say?

And Jesus said unto them, See ye not all these things? verily I say unto you, There shall not be left here one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down. (Matthew 24:2)

Jesus said that not one stone would be left upon another. This clearly implied that all the ceremonies and the whole culture that the Jews had prided themselves on were going to be leveled to the ground.

The third unmistakable sign is found in Matthew 27:51, after Jesus had taken his last expiring breath and had yielded up the ghost:

And, behold, the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom; and the earth did quake, and the rocks rent. (Matthew 27:51)

This was another clear indication that there was to be a major change, but there was even a yet stronger indication when these things were fulfilled. In AD 67, when the Jews were keeping a feast, the armies of Rome, led by Gaius Cestius Gallus, surrounded Jerusalem. It was the promised sign that Jesus had given in Matthew 24, and the Christians recognized it. When the army picked up camp and left, the Christians knew that this was the time. They remembered Jesus' words, *Return not to your house to get your garments. If you are in the field, return not, but flee.* And this they did. Without a moment's notice, they left. Those who neither recognized the sign nor understood the import of Jesus' words remained in that city, continuing the old rites and ceremonies, but these people died when Jerusalem was



destroyed—God’s final, unmistakable sign that the ceremonial services were to end. Since then, there has been no temple in which the services could be conducted; there has been no high priest, and no order of Levi. That was abolished at the same time when the temple was destroyed. God gave to the Jews unmistakable signs. He has given to us, beloved, unmistakable signs. We need not be confused in this matter.

Now we move backward from the time of AD 70 to the time of Paul’s ordination in approximately AD 52.

The Christian church was at this time entering upon an important era. The work of proclaiming the gospel message among the Gentiles was now to be prosecuted with vigor; and as a result the church was to be strengthened by a great ingathering of souls. The apostles who had been appointed to lead out in this work would be exposed to suspicion, prejudice, and jealousy. Their teachings concerning the breaking down of “the middle wall of partition” (Ephesians 2:14) that had so long separated the Jewish and the Gentile world, would naturally subject them to the charge of heresy, and their authority as ministers of the gospel would be questioned by many zealous, believing Jews. God foresaw the difficulties that His servants [Paul and Barnabas] would be called to meet, and, in order that their work should be above challenge, He instructed the church by revelation to set them apart publicly to the work of the ministry. Their ordination was a public recognition of their divine appointment to bear to the Gentiles the glad tidings of the gospel. (White, *The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 161)

### **A New Era of the Gospel**

At the time of Paul’s ordination, the church was entering into a new era, when the gospel would go forth with greater force and vigor unto the Gentiles, and Jesus knew that in so doing it would excite the jealousy and the national pride of the Jews. Satan would excite this jealousy. Meanwhile, those who were preaching the gospel message to break down the partition walls would be even accused of heresy, and so, to wipe away that stain, God calls upon Paul and Barnabas and ordains them in a solemn, public manner so their work could be above reproach.

Immediately after this, in the year AD 52, Paul set out on his first missionary trip, and he first went into the area known as Asia Minor, or Anatolia (modern-day Turkey). There, in the different cities, Paul preached the gospel, as well as on the island of Cyprus which is where the mission trip actually began. There, with Barnabas and John Mark, Paul preached the gospel, and there was, indeed, a great harvest of souls from this work. On this trip which took approximately a year, the apostle Paul preached and taught and gathered in a great harvest of souls, but he did more than this. He organized them; he unified them. He brought order and discipline among them because Paul knew that God is not the God of confusion but of peace and order in all his churches. This practice followed the labors of Paul wherever he went, and you can see

this in Acts 13:4–14:28 which provides the outline of Paul’s first missionary trip. Immediately after this mission trip, the apostle Paul and Barnabas were excited about the openness and reception of the Greeks, as many came to believe. But not only the Greeks, but many of the Jews had come to believe and accept the gospel. Paul and Barnabas returned to the great Christian center of Antioch, and there they shared with the brethren their mission report.

**And certain men which came down from Judaea taught the brethren, and said, Except ye be circumcised after the manner of Moses, ye cannot be saved. (Acts 15:1)**

As Paul and Barnabas were sharing with the brethren, there came down certain men from Judaea and instigated this idea of circumcision which was really at the heart of the whole ceremonial system of the Jews, and Paul understood that this was striking at the heart of the gospel. So we read in verse 2:

**When therefore Paul and Barnabas had no small dissension and disputation with them, they determined that Paul and Barnabas, and certain other of them, should go up to Jerusalem unto the apostles and elders about this question. (Acts 15:2)**

### **The Council of Jerusalem**

Paul and Barnabas set themselves to oppose the introduction of this to the Gentiles. It caused a dispute among the believers and when they could not come to an agreement, it was decided that the apostles whom Christ had ordained, with other leaders, should be consulted on this and give a united decision. So a delegation was sent to Jerusalem which included Paul, Barnabas, and others of the church in Antioch and of the leading churches. Concerning these events, we learn:

**While the apostles united with the ministers and lay members at Antioch in an earnest effort to win many souls to Christ, certain Jewish believers from Judea “of the sect of the Pharisees” succeeded in introducing a question that soon led to wide-spread controversy in the church and brought *consternation* to the believing Gentiles. (White, *The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 188)**

The word *consternation* is a strong word. This was not a light matter, but rather a very serious one. To consternate someone is to throw them into utter shock, where they are bewildered.

**With great assurance these Judaizing teachers asserted that in order to be saved, one must be circumcised and must keep the entire ceremonial law.**

**Paul and Barnabas met this false doctrine with promptness and opposed the introduction of the subject to the Gentiles. (*Ibid.*, pp. 188, 189)**

So not only were they opposed to the whole concept, but they were so strongly opposed that they said it should not even be introduced, should not even be discussed and brought to the mind of the Gentiles.

On the other hand, many of the believing Jews of Antioch favored the position of the brethren recently come from Judea. (*Ibid.*, p. 189)

And so a delegation was sent, and it led to the great council.

The Jewish converts generally were not inclined to move as rapidly as the providence of God opened the way. (*Ibid.*)

God had instituted the ceremonial law. It had a purpose. It pointed to that which Christ himself was to do, yet the Jewish converts were slow to give it up, even though many of them knew that Christ had abolished it by his death. But many of them were not inclined to move as rapidly as the providence of God opened the way.

From the result of the apostles' labors among the Gentiles it was evident that the converts among the latter people would far exceed the Jewish converts in number. The Jews feared that if the restrictions and ceremonies of their law were not made obligatory [that is, binding] upon the Gentiles as a condition of church fellowship, the national peculiarities of the Jews, which had hitherto kept them distinct from all other people, would finally disappear from among those who received the gospel message.

The Jews had always prided themselves upon their divinely appointed services, and many of those who had been converted to the faith of Christ still felt that since God had once clearly outlined the Hebrew manner of worship, it was improbable that He would ever authorize a change in any of its specifications. (*Ibid.*)

These Jews "insisted that the Jewish laws and ceremonies should be incorporated into the rites of the Christian religion" (*Ibid.*). An amalgamation was their idea.

They were slow to discern that all the sacrificial offerings had but prefigured the death of the Son of God, in which type met antitype, and after which the *rites and ceremonies* of the Mosaic dispensation were no longer binding. (*Ibid.*)

The language here is unmistakable. These Jews were slow to see how God was leading, where he was going, and they were unwilling to follow. They well-comprehend where matters were going, but they weren't sure that they necessarily wanted to go there. They were slow to discern that all the sacrifices had but prefigured the death of the Son of God, in which type met antitype, after which the rites and ceremonies of the Mosaic dispensation were no longer binding.

Even though there were strong opinions and views on both sides, they discussed it in Christian love. The spirit of God was present and leading in this.

The various points involved in the settlement of the main question at issue seemed to present before the council insurmountable difficulties. But the Holy Spirit had, in reality, already settled this question, upon the decision of which seemed to depend the prosperity, if not the very existence, of the Christian church. (*Ibid.*, p.192)

At first, even though they peaceably discussed the matter, with both sides presenting the issue, they were unable to settle their differences. It seemed they faced an insurmountable difficulty, but inspiration clearly tells us that the Holy Spirit had already settled the issue.<sup>1</sup>

At this crucial moment, when they could go no further, the apostle Peter stands and gives his testimony:

And when there had been much disputing, Peter rose up, and said unto them, Men and brethren, ye know how that a good while ago God made choice among us, that the Gentiles by my mouth should hear the word of the gospel, and believe. And God, which knoweth the hearts, bare them witness, giving them the Holy Ghost, even as he did unto us; And put no difference between us and them, purifying their hearts by faith. Now therefore why tempt ye God, to put a yoke upon the neck of the disciples, which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear? But we believe that through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ we shall be saved, even as they. Then all the multitude kept silence, and gave audience to Barnabas and Paul, declaring what miracles and wonders God had wrought among the Gentiles by them. (Acts 15:7-12)

This evidence of the working of the Spirit of God settled the matter for all there. They saw clearly that God himself had answered the question, and so they were quiet, and they gave opportunity for the Spirit of God to move. The apostles Barnabas and Paul stood up and began to share the great news of how the gospel had been received by these Gentile believers, but I want us to take note of what Sister White says concerning the testimony of the apostle Peter. Here he speaks of a yoke which was upon the neck of the disciples and the neck of their fathers. *The Acts of the Apostles* clarifies this matter:

This yoke was not the law of Ten Commandments [not the moral law], as some who oppose the binding claims of the law assert; Peter here referred to *the law of ceremonies*, which was made null and void by the crucifixion of Christ. (p. 193)

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1. Very similarly, there is a correlation to this in the history of Seventh-day Adventists. The pillars of faith were founded in the very same manner. Our pioneers would come together and prayerfully discuss their ideas. They would go back and forth, and sometimes there were heated discussions, in which unkind words were spoken, but there was always repentance, confession, and forgiveness, and they would come together, even though they could not agree. At the point when they could go no further and when they could see no union of ideas, then God would move upon Sister White with a clear understanding and interpretation of the passages under question given to her, and it was settled, not by men, but by the moving of the Spirit of Prophecy.



The Spirit of Prophecy has given us clear understanding upon this point of issue. The unbearable yoke was not the Ten Commandments, but the ceremonial law, the Law of Moses, with all its ceremonies, its rites, and its customs and traditions. All this was null and void, not because of what men had done, but because of what the Lord Jesus Christ has done, for all these things were but typical of his work. We are to look to Jesus! He is the center and heart of the gospel and until we can get our eyes fixed on him, we, too, are going to be lost and deceived or blinded as were those Jews of old. We, too, will be bearing about that yoke. At this time the apostle James led by the Spirit of God, stood up and delivered his sentence.

And after they had held their peace, James answered, saying, Men and brethren, hearken unto me: Simeon hath declared how God at the first did visit the Gentiles, to take out of them a people for his name. And to this agree the words of the prophets; as it is written, After this I will return, and will build again the tabernacle of David, which is fallen down; and I will build again the ruins thereof, and I will set it up: That the residue of men might seek after the Lord, and all the Gentiles, upon whom my name is called, saith the Lord, who doeth all these things. Known unto God are all his works from the beginning of the world. Wherefore my sentence is, that we trouble not them, which from among the Gentiles are turned to God: But that we write unto them, that they abstain from pollutions of idols, and from fornication, and from things strangled, and from blood. For Moses of old time hath in every city them that preach him, being read in the synagogues every sabbath day. (Acts 15:13–21)

This was James, the brother of Jesus, known as James the elder, and it seems very likely that he delivered the sentence because he was the elder of those present, as it was customary among the Jews that the elder should give the decision, should be the spokesman for the family. In *The Acts of the Apostles*, we read this concerning this sentence:

It was his [James's] sentence that the ceremonial law, and especially the ordinance of circumcision, should not be urged upon the Gentiles, or even recommended to them. James sought to impress the minds of his brethren with the fact that, in turning to God, the Gentiles had made a great change in their lives and that much caution should be used not to trouble them with perplexing and doubtful questions of minor importance, lest they be discouraged in following Christ.

The Gentile converts, however, were to give up the customs that were inconsistent with the principles of Christianity. The apostles and elders therefore agreed to instruct the Gentiles by letter to abstain from meats offered to idols, from fornication, from things strangled, and from blood. They were to be urged to keep the commandments and to lead holy lives. They were also to be assured that the

men who had declared circumcision to be binding were not authorized to do so by the apostles. . . .

The council which decided this case was composed of apostles and teachers who had been prominent in raising up the Jewish and Gentile Christian churches, with chosen delegates from various places. Elders from Jerusalem and deputies from Antioch were present, and the most influential churches were represented. The council moved in accordance with the dictates of enlightened judgment, and with the dignity of a church established by the divine will. As a result of their deliberations they all saw that God Himself had answered the question at issue by bestowing upon the Gentiles the Holy Ghost; and they realized that it was their part to follow the guidance of the Spirit.

The entire body of Christians was not called to vote upon the question. The “apostles and elders,” men of influence and judgment, framed and issued the decree, which was thereupon generally accepted by the Christian churches. (*The Acts of the Apostles*, pp. 195, 196)

Then follows this sad commentary:

Not all, however, were pleased with the decision; there was a faction of ambitious and self-confident brethren who disagreed with it. These men assumed to engage in the work on their own responsibility. They indulged in much murmuring and faultfinding, proposing new plans and seeking to pull down the work of the men whom God had ordained to teach the gospel message. From the first the church has had such obstacles to meet and ever will have till the close of time. (*Ibid.*, p. 196)

The problem was not fully solved, nor all hearts fully won.

Jerusalem was the metropolis of the Jews, and it was there that the greatest exclusiveness and bigotry were found. The Jewish Christians living within sight of the temple naturally allowed their minds to revert to the peculiar privileges of the Jews as a nation. When they saw the Christian church departing from the ceremonies and traditions of Judaism, and perceived that the peculiar sacredness with which the Jewish customs had been invested would soon be lost sight of in the light of the new faith, many grew indignant with Paul as the one who had, in a large measure, caused this change. Even the disciples were not all prepared to accept willingly the decision of the council. Some were zealous for the ceremonial law, and they regarded Paul with disfavor because they thought that his principles in regard to the obligations of the Jewish law were lax. (*Ibid.*, p.197)

### **Lessons for Today**

Beloved, we see clearly that even though all present saw God's will in the matter, not all were pleased. Some, though they were convinced, it was against their will, and we know it is as the saying goes—a man convinced against his will is of the same opinion still. There were many, even among the disciples, who were not content to accept the decision of the

council. These men thought that it was their obligation, their duty, to go and to undermine the work which the apostles, especially Paul, had begun. At that time Paul was maligned, and he has been misrepresented by Christians down through the ages. Even today there is a movement abroad that seeks to promote that the apostle Paul was the great advocate of the Jewish system of rites and ceremonies, desiring to uphold it and maintain it, but this view is clearly not in harmony with that of the word of God and with the Spirit of Prophecy. We see clearly that Paul was the champion of that liberty which is in Christ Jesus. He was the one primarily responsible for breaking down those walls and for seeking to unite Jew and Gentile together in one common faith. Satan is the one who is come in, seeking to bring division and strife and difference of opinion on this matter. It is not God who has done this. God has made his will plain and clear through the working of his Spirit in giving to both Jew and Gentile his Spirit. God has shown no difference between them.

Paul is contrasted very clearly with these leading Jews who sought to bring in this division. They may have been sincere but if they were, they were deceived. They were misled and blinded by their prejudices, by their old ways of thinking, and this led them to fight against God. If these men, as well as men today, were willing to listen to the dictates of God and to the dictates of those who had led out in the decision of the council of Jerusalem, all of this consternation that has come to us down through the ages would never have been, nor be here today. Paul stands as the great champion of our liberty today.

I want to share with you this quote in closing:

Throughout his ministry, Paul had looked to God for direct guidance. At the same time, he had been very careful to labor in harmony with the decisions of the general council at Jerusalem . . . (*Ibid.*)

So while Paul looked to God, he did not work as an independent atom, floating here and there, not connected to the church. He believed that God also spoke through his people.

What is the result of laboring in harmony with the dictates of God's Spirit?

. . . and as a result the churches were "established in the faith, and increased in number daily." (*Ibid.*)

God blessed and added abundantly to the church. Paul, though he looked to Jesus directly for his guidance, worked and labored in harmony with the decision of the council. Paul labored in perfect harmony. Are you laboring as Jesus and Paul, in harmony with the revealed will of God? Are you building partition walls, or are you teaching the liberty and living the liberty that is in Christ Jesus? There are only two sides—slavery and liberty. Jesus and the apostle Paul taught liberty, not liberty to do as we please, not liberty to follow the dictates of our own lusts and desires or our wants in any matter. No, Paul taught freedom to do as God has indicated in his word. We are free from the bondage which Satan and men would impose upon us. We are free from that disunity, free

from the strife and contention, if only we will accept that freedom that is in the law of liberty which sets us free from the customs and traditions, the ideas and thoughts and opinions of men. Will we be free? Will you be free today? ✍

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"Youth's Corner," continued from page 24

What a glorious and happy day was that when I finished my fight with the army! How glad I was that I had remained true to God! He had been with me from the day that I entered the ranks; He had helped me and had given me the victory. When the trials were the hardest and most painful, I felt His power and was strengthened to endure, to fight, and to conquer. I had learned to confide in Him, and with Paul I had learned, "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me." I was convinced that there is a God in heaven who can help us in every time of need, and under His wings we may trust. ✍



"Ordination Report . . ." continued from page 19

ordination of women pastors. Such a move has been resisted especially by the church members from Africa. However, the North American Division (NAD), which has historically carried the political clout of the church, favors the ordination of women. The Biblical Research Committee of the North American Division voted overwhelmingly in favor of women's ordination with 182 in favor, 31 opposed and 3 abstentions (<http://nadordination.com>).

What way forward will the Seventh-day Adventist Church take at the 2015 General Conference session? Will it try to hold fragmenting groups together by allowing each division or union to adopt its own standards? For such a tightly-run church, that would be precedent-setting and would open the door for future battles on controversial subjects. If, on the other hand, the church denies ordination, then they will have to figure out what to do with the unions that have already begun the process without General Conference approval. It is doubtful that the church, on a world level, would have enough support to rein the unions in, even if the General Conference tried.

The future of organized Adventism does not look rosy through the glasses of women's ordination, but with "God being removed from His position of sovereignty" (Ellen White, *Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 8, p. 292; emphasis supplied), what can one expect? ✍



# Ordination Report Finally Ready

At the 2010 General Conference Session in Atlanta, Georgia, a request was made for an official church study of ordination. In response to this request, on September 18, 2012, General Conference leaders voted to establish the Theology of Ordination Study Committee (TOSC). TOSC is composed of 106 Adventist men and women of diverse ages, ethnicities, and professions, tasked with answering two primary questions which it will report on at the 2014 Annual Council.

1. What is the theology of ordination from a Biblical perspective?

2. What should the implications of this theology be for Seventh-day Adventist practices, including the question of women's ordination? (<http://www.adventistarchives.org/ordination#.U5hjo16nSbU>; accessed 6–11–14)

As noted above, the TOSC was composed of one hundred six members, with at least two representatives from each division. A list of the members may be found at <http://www.adventistarchives.org/about-tosc#.U5hkEV6nSbU>. Some well-known names on the list include Doug Batchelor, Gerard Damsteegt, Jo Ann Davidson, Richard Davidson, William A. Fagal, Denis Fortin, Darius Jankiewicz, Robert E. Lemon, Jerry Moon, Dwight K. Nelson, Gerhard Pfandl, Timothy L. Poirier, George Reid, Angel M. Rodriguez, Ted N. C. Wilson, and Carol Zarska. The steering committee was composed of Artur A. Stele, *Chair*; Geoffrey G. Mbwana, *Vice-chair*; Karen J. Porter, *Secretary*; Gerard Damsteegt; Richard Davidson; William A. Fagal; and Angel M. Rodriguez.

The long-awaited results of the Theology of Ordination Study Committee were posted on June 5 on *Adventist Review's* website (<http://www.adventistreview.org/church-news/ordination-study-concludes-with-suggestions-for-“the-way-forward”>; accessed 6–10–14).

The committee has long been struggling with the issue of women's ordination into the gospel ministry. The article headline is: *Ordination Study Concludes with Suggestions for “The Way Forward”: TOSC group considered hermeneutical, historical questions and prepared study materials*. In this news report, we read:

... when TOSC chairman Artur Stele announced the results of an informal survey of the group of scholars, church administrators, pastors and laypersons, three positions emerged from the data, with no position claiming a majority of the 95 votes received.

Forty TOSC members identified as their first choice a position that “*Each entity responsible for calling pastors be authorized to choose either to have only men as ordained pastors; or to have both men and women as ordained pastors.*”

Thirty-two members favored a proposal that affirms the “*practice of ordaining/commissioning only qualified men to the office of pastor/minister throughout the world church . . .*”

A third option was the first choice of 22 participants. It stated, “*Christ is the only head of the church,*” noting that there is a “*biblical pattern of male leadership, under the headship of Christ, in the office of the ordained minister.*” But this option also added that “*We recommend that denominational leadership at a proper level be authorized to decide, based on biblical principles, whether such an adaptation [permission to ordain both men and women] may be appropriate for their area or region.*” (Emphases in original)

While there may not have been a majority for one view over the other two, as retired pastor and former editor of *Ministry* magazine and now editor of *Adventist Today*, J. David Newman, wrote in the comments section of the report:

The report here is incorrect when it stated “three positions emerged from the data, with no position claiming a majority of the 95 votes received” Sixty-two persons were willing to see women ordained as pastors. Thirty two were opposed. That seems to be a majority to me in favor of allowing women to be ordained when you combine options 1 and 3.

Newman also noted:

All this discussion is rather moot. Ordination of women is already a fact whether we like it or not. Ordination of women elders is a fact whether we like it or not. Women have officially been authorized to serve as pastors. No limit was placed on where they could serve whether as associates or senior pastors. There are really only two options: 1. Reverse course. Vote that women cannot serve as pastors. Revoke the authorization of women elders. or 2. Give to women the full recognition as pastors that have been given to women elders. Now of course option 1 is not impossible but I see no ground swell for adopting that option. That leaves us with option 2 which is where I believe we are headed. One thing is certain, the status quo will not continue.

The TOSC has no authority to decide the issue, but it will make its findings “available in advance to the 300+ member Executive Committee, which decides what to recommend to the church's quinquennial General Conference session planned for San Antonio, Texas, 13 months from now” (*Ibid.*).

As Newman states, there is virtually no chance to reverse the decision to allow women pastors and with the ordination of women for elders, the church has set itself up for the

*continued on page 18, column 2*

## Youth's Corner – Experience in Argentina

Our story this month continues Chapter 18 of *Youthful Witness* by W. A. Spicer, entitled “Under the Iron Regulations of Militarism.”

### EXPERIENCE IN ARGENTINA

This story tells how God helped young Pedro Kalbermatten to pioneer a pathway for other youth through the trials of service in the military camps of the Argentine Republic, South America. The young man had grown up in our Argentine school and was in the nurses' class at the River Plate Sanitarium. He tells the story of his experience as follows:

For many years here in Argentina our young Adventist brethren who were obliged to serve in the army did not refuse to work or do service on the Sabbath when they entered the ranks, for fear of the severe punishments threatened by the military authorities. Two of my brothers, when called to enter the service, asked their superior officers to grant them the freedom of the Sabbath, but were threatened with the most severe punishments if they did not conform to the rules of the army. So they served and worked on the Sabbath as did the rest.

Many times before I entered the ranks, while talking with my parents and my brothers, I insisted that our young Adventist brethren ought not to do service on the Sabbath, for it is contrary to the commandments of God; but they declared that it was impossible to keep the Sabbath, for the military laws would not permit it. However, I always said that when the day came that I should enter the service, I would not work on the Sabbath, but would remain true to God.

On the first of July, 1907, I was notified by the minister of war that on the fifteenth day of August that same year I must present myself at a designated place to be enrolled, and to complete the required service of one year. In my heart I felt that God demanded of me an example of fidelity before my brethren, but I also felt very weak and incapable of carrying to a finish the work that God had given me. Many times I had a great struggle in my heart; often I was sad and everything was very dark. I did not know what would be the result; life and death were before me, and my only comfort and hope were that God would help me to carry to a finish the struggle that I was about to enter.

As never before I felt the need of seeking the Lord in prayer, and night after night I sought a solitary place and presented my needs and the afflictions of my soul before God. No more could I love the things of this world; to me they were all vanity, and the only comfort and satisfaction that I had was to do the will of God. Notwithstanding, it was very sad and painful for me when came the day and the hour that I must separate from my loved ones, perhaps

never to see them more in this world. But I felt in my heart a profound comfort and peace, for I knew the prayers of the brethren went with me, and I had the full assurance that if I remained faithful, I should see them in the earth made new.

The fifteenth day of August, 1907, I was enrolled in the third artillery, Diamante, Entre Rios, R. de Argentina. The same day I presented myself before the *comandante* of my regiment, and stated that I wished to be a faithful and obedient soldier in all my duties to my superiors, but that I had a burden upon my heart that I wished to make known to my commander. I told him that I was a Christian, and as such professed to keep the commandments of God, and then begged him to give me the Sabbath free from work or military duties, that I might keep it according to the commandments of God. He asked me who had put those ideas into my head. I answered, that from youth I had read the Bible, and that it taught us to keep holy the Sabbath day according to the fourth commandment, “Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy.”

The *comandante* said that the Bible is a very good book and teaches many good things, but that in the army it was impossible to follow its teachings; that now I was serving my country, under the law of compulsory service, and during this time I must forget my religion and do whatever my superiors commanded.

I answered that I was very sorry, but it was impossible for me to forget my religion, for that was contrary to my conscience and to the law of God.

The *comandante* then ordered me to retire, and gave orders to the captain of my company that I should be taught the military and penal codes, also the obligations and duties of a soldier that is serving his country.

So the first week, from morning until night, they were teaching me the codes and instructing me in my duties; in fact, doing all they could to make me a valiant soldier. Not only did they seek to develop in me a military spirit, but they did all they could to destroy my religious convictions and to convince me that I must work on the Sabbath. But all was in vain; I remained the same, always manifesting and affirming the same opinions.

When the Sabbath came, I did not wish to work, and soon found myself surrounded by all my superiors, counseling and warning me of the great danger that I should incur if I persisted in such ideas. At last, when weary with me and convinced that they could get nothing from me, I was taken to the guardhouse. Here I passed the day standing with my face to the wall, and a sentinel at my side to see that I did not move. At night when I was put at liberty I



could scarcely move my hands or feet because of numbness.

The second week passed with the same program, only worse. It was a constant fight from morning until night against the whole regiment, for without exception they all persecuted me and fought against me and the Sabbath. I did not have a quiet moment; all despised and hated me. When I opened my Bible to read, they surrounded me to mock; and when I did not expect it, they would snatch the book from my hands and toss it from one to the other until tired, and then finish by throwing it at my head, shouting, "The saint has finished the mass." At night when I retired, they would throw rubbish, biscuits, bones, shoes, and anything else that they could find, at my bed. When tired of this, they would tip the bed over, saying, "The poor saint, why doesn't the Lord help him?"

In all this I could see that the devil was trying to discourage me and gain the victory; but I had the assurance that God was on my side, and would give me the victory.

Again the Sabbath came, and again I refused to work. The officers were infuriated, and rudely hustled me off to the guardhouse, where I was placed upon a low bench with my feet securely fastened in irons, and stretched out so I could not bend my knees. I was compelled to remain in this position all day. At times it seemed that I could endure it no longer, and would drop from exhaustion, but the guard compelled me to resume my former position. So passed the second Sabbath, very painful and fatiguing. At night I was released, but the struggle only became more intense. The *comandante* gave orders that everything possible should be done to convince me that I must work on the Sabbath.

The next Friday I asked again to speak with the *comandante*, but he refused to listen to me, and warned me that by that time I ought to be convinced that my obstinacy was useless; that in the army I must work on the Sabbath, and I could not follow my strange ideas without meriting the severest punishment, and in the end be compelled to yield. With this encouragement I was ordered to retire, and I knew what to expect on the morrow.

At six o'clock all the troops were ordered to go to the river to wash their clothes. I refused to violate my conscience, choosing to suffer punishment rather than to disobey God. I was immediately hustled to the guardhouse. When the *comandante* arrived and the captain told him how in the presence of the whole regiment I had refused to go with the rest to the river, he was furious with anger. Before them all he said that to that time the "*Sabatista*" had had his way, but the time had come when he had to learn that in the army there is no other religion than obedience to superiors. He ordered a tub to be brought, and that before the regiment I should wash my clothes.

One of the officers and a soldier escorted me to my bed, and the officer ordered me to gather up my clothes. I told him that I was very sorry, but could not do so, for it was contrary to the law of my God and to my conscience. The officer then ordered the soldier to put the blankets upon my shoulders, and so I was led out to the tub. The clothing was thrown on the ground; one soldier brought soap, another a whip. The rest were lined up to see the result, while around me stood the officers, ordering me to wash.

I knelt beside the tub and began to pray that God would give me strength to bear the trial. When the prayer was finished, the strokes of the whip began to descend, and the officer ordered me: "Wash, wash." I was upon my knees beside the tub, and the officer lashed me with all his strength. The pain was fearful, but the power of God sustained me. The chastisement continued until the whip was worn out, and then a heavier one was brought and plied with the same force across my back. A sergeant put the soap in one of my hands and the clothes in the other, then taking them in his he went through the operation, saying, "Wash, wash;" but when he let go of my hands, the soap and the clothes fell into the water. I had no fear of my superiors nor of the punishment, but I did fear to disobey God.

The punishment continued for two hours, until they were convinced that they could do nothing with me. The *comandante* was furious. He said to the other officers that it seemed impossible that in the twentieth century there should be found a man who was willing to be maimed and mutilated for his religion; that I must be a Jew to the last extremity, for he had heard that they would rather die than work on the Sabbath, and that I seemed capable of doing the same thing. Two soldiers took me by the arms and raised me from the ground and escorted me to the *calabozo*, where I was enclosed with the tub and the clothes, and told that if I did not wash them, I should die there.

The Sabbath passed, but the clothes were unwashed. In my heart I felt a profound peace and joy because I could see that God had helped me and had given me the victory. I had more courage, more faith, and more confidence than ever before, for I had experienced the power of God in my behalf, and I was convinced that He would carry me through.

At eight o'clock I was taken out. The officer of the guard said that if I still refused the next Sabbath, I should never again leave the *calabozo*.

During the week I was at liberty in the barracks, but the struggle continued; officers and men, night and day, persecuted and criticized me. At night, after I had gone to bed, they drugged me and crammed tobacco into my mouth. They also stole nearly everything I had. This was done because the *comandante* had offered a medal of honor to the officer who could persuade me to work on the Sabbath. I

had to exercise much patience, humility, and meekness, for I was as a sheep among wolves. All were against me; none were in my favor. Often at night I escaped from the barracks to a solitary place to seek the Lord and pour out my soul to Him.

At the beginning of the next Sabbath, officers and men came to me and asked if I would work this Sabbath. When I told them no, they said one to another, "The poor saint! He doesn't know what awaits him tomorrow."

All that night I lay awake, my heart palpitating with anguish and crying out to God. At six o'clock the men lined up to go to the river; I only remained, reading my Bible. The officers came and asked why I had not formed ranks with the rest. I told them that my clothes were clean and did not need washing. They said that made no difference; that I should go with the rest to the river, but if I wished I could take my Bible and spend the day quietly there. Not suspecting any evil, I accepted their counsel.

No sooner had we arrived than I was told that I had not come there to read the Bible, but to wash clothes, and putting a huge pile before me they ordered me to wash them; failing to do so would result ill for me, as this was the last Sabbath that any consideration would be shown, and failure to obey orders would be followed by life imprisonment.

With tears in my eyes I confessed my regret at not being able to comply with the order, for it was violating my conscience and the command of God.

After maltreating me until they were tired, one of the officers mounted a horse, took a whip, put me on a run, lashing me as he would an animal, for a mile and a quarter back to the barracks. I was again delivered to the officer of the guard, and was made to sit on the stool with my feet extended and fastened in irons, with a guard at my side to prevent a change of position. There I remained from a little after seven in the morning until eight o'clock at night, when I was once more put into the *calabozo*.

The following day I was taken to the hospital to be examined as to my sanity. The doctor took me into a room, closed the door, with a guard outside, and then ordered me to strip. He examined me from head to foot, but found no defect. In his report to the *comandante*, he said I was the *healthiest and sanest man in the regiment*.

The same week the judge, or inspector, of military instruction came from Buenos Aires, and before him I was accused of disobedience and insubordination, which constituted a terrible indictment. The judge sent me into close confinement for seven months.

I had never been thus confined, so suffered a great deal the first month. I have experienced how sad is the lot of the prisoner, and know how precious is the enjoyment of liberty.

One day when I least expected it, my father was brought to the door of the *calabozo*. His face was very sad, and he burst into tears as he embraced me. He said that he had passed two weeks of sleepless nights, and that my mother and brothers were in sorrow and anguish because of my present state. He also said that the *comandante* had promised him that if he could convince me that it was my duty to work on the Sabbath, I should be put at liberty and he would pardon all my past offenses. On the other hand, if I persisted in my course, I should be imprisoned for life; in fact, I should soon be taken to the penitentiary, where it would be work on the Sabbath or death.

In anguish of soul my father promised to do what he could to convince me that I was mistaken in my convictions, that it was my duty to obey my superiors, and that God would not hold me accountable for what I could not help. And yet from my youth my father had always taught me that we ought to obey the commandments of God. He sincerely sought to help me, but I could not accept his counsel. In reality my own father was working against me, and I was called upon to defend the fundamental principles of the word of God by citing such experiences as Daniel's refusing to obey the decree of Darius; the three Hebrews who preferred to suffer the fiery furnace rather than to worship the golden image; and how Peter and John, because they refused to obey the command of the Sanhedrin to cease their preaching, were cast into the common prison, and then Peter said that we ought to obey God rather than men. The Lord tells us to be subject to all authority and to render it obedience and respect, but that we are not obliged to disobey God in so doing.

My father labored with me for two hours, until he was well assured that I had determined to remain true to the teachings and promises of the word of God to the end of the fight. With tears and great grief he bade me farewell, and returned to inform the *comandante* that I was unmovable, and was disposed to die rather than to yield. After that the officers despised and oppressed me the more because I had refused to accept the counsels of my own father.

Everyone was against me; no one defended me. But God did not leave me alone. I had a friend that comforted and encouraged me; and that friend was my Bible. But one day while I was asleep someone crept into the *calabozo* and stole it. With sadness of heart and tears in my eyes I searched and searched for it, but was unable to find it. I was told by one of the officers that he had torn it up and thrown it away. Two weeks later a good brother came to visit me, and secretly brought me another Bible. How great was my joy and how happy I was to have the Bible with me once more! After that I always carried it concealed in my clothing. During my imprisonment I read the Bible through twice, and found it to be indeed my spiritual food. At the end of seven months there came an order from



the council of war that I should be taken to Buenos Aires to be sentenced. While making the journey on the boat, with an armed guard at my side, I thought of faithful Paul when he was taken prisoner to Rome.

Arriving at Buenos Aires, I was placed in a cell, with the usual armed guard at the door. There I remained for a month, when I was brought before the council to receive my sentence. After the indictment was read, the prosecutor asked for a sentence of five years. The president of the council rose and said that this was the first time in the history of the country that a man was being sentenced because of his religion, and that he was very sorry to do so, but it was impossible to avoid it, as my crime was very grave. He asked why I had disobeyed so many times. I told him that it was because I had a profound respect for my conscience and for the law of God, citing at the same time the fourth commandment.

I was sentenced to one year of imprisonment, and earnestly warned that I should regain my liberty only upon condition that I comply with the rules of the prison. In a few days I was taken to Martin Garcia, an island prison in the river, where I found a great many other prisoners. Immediately I began to teach them the gospel. Some listened attentively, others mocked. During the day the prisoners worked in the quarries, making bricks and excavating. At night they were inclosed in large cells like a drove of steers. Many times there were fights among them, caused by their robbing one another of their food.

The second day after my arrival I asked to speak with the *comandante*. My request was granted, and in the presence of several others, including the priest, I stated the cause of my imprisonment and asked to be relieved of work on the Sabbath. They discussed the matter with me for an hour, trying to show me the futility of my request. The priest, however, had to admit that the Catholic Church had changed the law of God, and that the Sabbath—the seventh day—is the day of the Lord. The *comandante* at last dismissed me with the warning to drop such ideas and to think well what I was about to do, for if I refused to work, he had full right to have me hanged, for I was then a felon and had lost all my rights. So closed the first encounter.

The next day the priest had me brought to the church, or chapel, and talked with me for a long time, but was convinced that I could not be moved. He promised to present my case to the *comandante* and to do all that he could to give me the Sabbath free from work. On Friday I again asked to see the *comandante*. The officer of the guard asked me what I wanted. I told him that I wished to ask again that I should not be compelled to work on the Sabbath. “It is not necessary,” he said, “I have been given orders not to ask you to work.” It seemed too good to be true. All the week I had been trembling, sad and downcast, for I knew not what was before me, or what the end of the

week would bring. Day and night I had been praying that I might find grace before my superiors and not suffer further punishment. The moment that I learned that my prayers had been answered, a great burden rolled away, and I was filled with inexpressible joy. I could see that God was with me and had touched the hearts of the officers to grant my request.

At the usual hour Sabbath morning the rest of the prisoners were called out; I only remained, reading my Bible. In my great joy I burst forth in song and praise to God. When least expecting it, I discovered that the officers were standing near, listening. They asked me what I was doing. I told them that I was praising and worshiping the Lord, and reading His word. They asked if I always expected to do that. I said, “Yes, I mean to be true to my God as long as I live.” Then I explained to them the fundamental principles of the truth. They listened attentively, and then went away. Soon after this the priest came and greeted me most cordially. He asked if I had not been called out to work. When I told him that I had not, he said, “I presented your case to the *comandante* and asked him to grant your request.” I thanked him for his kindness, conversed with him for a time, and then he went away. So passed the first Sabbath.

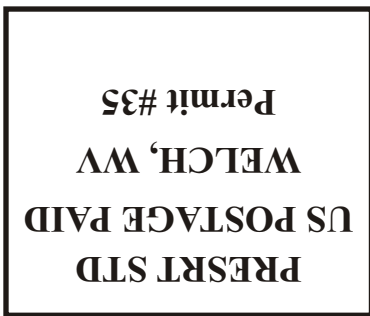
A month later I had the joy of seeing one of the prisoners accept the truth. Baldonero Sereal was a faithful companion. Many times when I was speaking the word to the prisoners he stood at my side and helped me. He would tell them: “*We* were brought here for crimes that we committed, but this man the Lord has sent here to teach us the way of life.” What great joy was this to me! During our imprisonment we helped and encouraged each other, and so the time passed more quickly.

I had been at Martin Garcia four months when there came an order for the minister of war to transfer all the prisoners to C ampo de Mayo. My superior advised me of that beforehand, and predicted that I would have difficulty in keeping the Sabbath there, and that it would be better for me to yield for the rest of my term than to risk life imprisonment. The priest also visited me and expressed regret that I should be taken away to encounter new difficulties. I told him that God had helped me so many times in the past that He would still be with me to the end of the fight.

Two days later the boat arrived at the island, and the prisoners embarked for Buenos Aires. At that port we were met by an armed guard and herded like a troop of wild steers to the Retiro station, where we boarded a train. At eleven o’clock at night we arrived at our destination and were put into the guardhouse. At twelve o’clock the *comandante* of the Compa nia de Disciplina arrived. He ordered us to form in two lines, then beginning with the first, he passed down the line to the last, asking each one the cause of his imprisonment. Many hung their heads in shame. When he asked me, I felt no fear nor shame, but

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freely confessed. The *comandante* was astonished, and said that my imprisonment was unjust, for this country guaranteed religious liberty, and no one had a right to prohibit its free exercise. This was a great surprise to the rest of the prisoners, and they said to one another, “God is helping the saint.”

All that week I prayed that I might find grace before my new chief. On Friday I asked to speak with him; and he not only granted me freedom from work on the Sabbath, but said that I should be taken out of the prison. He called the guard and gave him an order to that effect. What great joy and happiness was mine! All my troubles of the past seemed as nothing, and I could see the hand of God in all my experience.

The next week I was given charge of the *comandante’s* garden. I gave it the best of my efforts and attention, and in two months he was so pleased with what I had done that he made me his orderly. Here my work was different. I had to clean his boots, polish his sword, serve his tea and coffee, etc. I lived the life of a prince, eating the same food as he had on his table, and in a short time I was robust and strong again. He treated me very kindly, giving me full liberty on the Sabbath. Often he had me recount the experiences through which I had passed. Then he would congratulate me on my firmness, and say, “That is right. A man who

professes a religion ought to live it. It is better to break than to double.” This last experience reminded me of Joseph, who left his prison cell to become Pharaoh’s trusted servant.

At last my term expired, and once more I was at liberty. I was warmly congratulated by the *comandante* for my constancy and fidelity, and given an honorable military discharge of blameless conduct and service well rendered. Shortly after, the minister of war issued a decree exempting Seventh-day Adventist young men from service on the Sabbath. So all my suffering had not been in vain.

*continued on page 18, column 2*

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