

and earth pass away than one letter of the law would fail to be fulfilled. Listen to Luke—“It is easier for heaven and earth to pass, than one tittle of the law to fail” (16:17). No question about it now! What does Jesus mean? He’s not speaking about the **length of time** the law is to last—(that’s just **SDA** talk)—but the **certainty** that it **will not fail** to be **fulfilled!** Fulfill means “to make full, to complete, to accomplish.” The Greek word is “**pleeroósai**” which means, “to fulfill, to bring to a close, to end, to finish, to complete.” So Jesus did not come to destroy that law, but to **finish** it, and bring it to an **end**.

At the beginning of his ministry, Jesus said he came to **fulfill** the law. After his resurrection, he said, “These are the words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, that **all things must** be **fulfilled**, which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the psalms, concerning me” (Luke 24:44). Then Paul says, “When they had **fulfilled all** that was written of him, they took him down from the tree” (Acts 13:29). So it was **all** fulfilled at the cross. Hence Paul says it was nailed to the cross (Col 2:14-16). “Christ is the **end** of the law...” (Rom 10:4). “The law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith. But after that faith is come, we are **no longer under** a schoolmaster” (Gal 3:24,25). What could be plainer than that the law ended at the cross?

**(3)** The law here spoken of is not simply the **TEN COM**, but **the whole law of Moses**. No honest person will deny this. All commentators and scholars admit it. The proof is abundant. On this text: *Dr. Albert Barnes* says, “*The law*—the five books of Moses called the law. *The prophets*—the books which the prophets wrote. These two divisions comprehend *the Old Testament*.” And the *Bible Knowledge Commentary* says, “*The Law and the Prophets* refer to *the entire Old Testament* (see Matt 7:12; 11:13; 22:40; Luke 16:16; Acts 13:15; etc.).” So all commentators.

The Jewish Scriptures were divided into the “**book of the law**,” which included the five books of Moses, and the “**book of the prophets**,” which included the books written by the prophets, as the historical books, etc. Sometimes a third division was recognized: the Psalms, or poetical books. The Jews’ Bible is divided that way. Portions from “the book of the law” and also from “the prophets” were read in the synagogues every Sabbath. This division of the **OT** is often referred to in the **NT**. “All things that are written in the book of the law” (Gal 3:10). “It is written in the book of the prophets” (Acts 7:42). “After the reading of the law and the prophets” (Acts 13:15). So we see, “the law and the prophets” became *a common term for the whole OT*. “The law” was **the five books of Moses**. Listen to a few texts: “This is the law and the prophets” (Matt 7:12). “All the law and the prophets prophesied until John” (Matt 11:13). Here the law *cannot* mean just the **TEN COM**, for the law **prophesied**. “On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets” (Matt 22:40). “The law and the prophets were until John...If they hear not Moses and the prophets” (Luke 16:16,29,31). Here the law and the prophets is the same as **Moses** and the prophets. “Him of whom Moses in the law and the

prophets did write” (John 1:45). “Beginning at Moses and all the prophets,” “which was written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the Psalms, concerning me” (Luke 24:27,44). “All things written in the law and in the prophets” (Acts 24:14). “Which the prophets and Moses did say” (Acts 26:22). Paul preached “out of the law of Moses and out of the prophets” (Acts 28:23). “Witnessed by the law and the prophets” (Rom 3:21).

See how common this phrase was then for **the whole OT**! Remember what I said earlier: “No honest person will deny this.” Well, I’m gonna go further now, and without hesitation say, No honest **church** will deny this! If your church leaders can look at all these passages and see how clearly the Word of God uses this phrase, “the law and the prophets,” signifying **the whole of the OT**, and then go over to our text, and say, “Look! Jesus said he didn’t come to destroy the law or the prophets! He’s talking about the **TEN COM!—THE LAW!**” Look out! Somethin’s up! Either these teachers are reading the Bible with their eyes closed, or their own **SDA** agenda means more to them than honest exposition of the Scriptures. When Jesus said, “I did not come to destroy the law or the prophets,” he clearly meant **the whole of the OT Scriptures**, the same as in all those passages I’ve listed above.

For further proof of this, notice that Jesus immediately begins teaching on various parts of **the law**—murder, altar, gift, adultery, swearing, eye for an eye, divorce, love to enemies, etc. (vv21-43). Is all this in the **TEN COM**? No. *It is* in the “book of the law,” though. So you see how absurd it is to say that Jesus meant only the **TEN COM** and the prophets. This would leave out the books of Moses entirely. So then, **the law here is the whole law of Moses**. Now if every jot and tittle of that law is binding till the end of the world, then we have the whole Jewish law to keep as well as the Sabbath. This shows the fallacy of the **SDA** position. The simple truth is that Christ fulfilled the law and it passed away after serving its purpose. Now, let me share with you these translations of our text, for they say so clearly what we’ve been stating above:

*The Living Bible*

Don't misunderstand why I have come—it isn't to cancel the laws of Moses and the warnings of the prophets. No, I came to fulfill them and to make them all come true. With all the earnestness I have I say: every law in the book will continue until its purpose is achieved.

*God's Word Translation*

Don't ever think that I came to set aside Moses' Teachings or the Prophets. I didn't come to set them aside but to make them come true. I can guarantee this truth: Until the earth and the heavens disappear, neither a period nor a comma will disappear from Moses' teachings before everything has come true.

*Complete Jewish Bible*

Don't think that I have come to abolish the Torah or the Prophets. I have come not to abolish but to complete. Yes indeed! I tell you that until heaven and earth pass away, not so much as a yud or a stroke will pass from the Torah —not until everything that must happen has happened.

**The law of Moses!** Jesus completed it! and made it all come true! And not one speck or iota of it ever passed away before everything had come true, and its purpose was achieved!—**“not until everything that must happen had happened!”**

**SDA STATEMENTS OF FAITH & MATT 5:17,18**

We want to focus our attention now on the two most important doctrinal books of the **SDA**. The first of these is a massive volume from their own “Adventist Classic Library”—*Questions on Doctrine* (1957). The second is “an exposition of their fundamental beliefs”—*Seventh-day Adventists Believe* (2006). *Questions* uses the KJV, while their *Believe* book uses the NKJV. Seeing how **SDA** are so fond of our text in Matthew, to where we hear them constantly referring to it, it’s remarkable that in *both* of these comprehensive works, they not only do not give us a clear exposition of this *all-important* passage, but it’s strangely mentioned **only one time!** It’s nowhere in *Questions*—and conspicuously missing from their extensive “Scripture Index.” I searched for it carefully in their chapters on *The Law* and *The Sabbath*, all to no avail. It’s just not there. And the **one time** it does surface in their *Believe* book, only a portion of verse 18 is quoted. But the verse that carries that dreadful word “destroy,” that they like to focus upon, is *not* verse 18, but 17! I found that interesting! If **Matthew 5:17,18** carries such a momentous message, that they so persistently hurl at us, as though it were ironclad proof of something, then we are forced to ask: **WHY IS IT NOT MORE PROMINENT IN THEIR STATEMENTS OF FAITH?** The answer is all too obvious. Allowing too much of this text to be seen would cause their own **SDA** interpretation of it to fall flat!

Let’s make some observations about their use of this text in their *SDA Believe* book. It’s found in the chapter on “The Law of God” which opens with a bolded statement in one brief paragraph that sets the stage for the entire chapter (p 263). They say, “The great principles of *God’s law* are embodied in *the Ten Commandments*...They...*are binding upon all people in every age*...Salvation is all of grace and not of works, but its *fruitage is obedience to the commandments*...”(emphasis mine). Under this paragraph there are various Scripture references listed (just the reference, no text), among which is Matthew 5:17-20. By this, they are *implying* that Jesus in this text *in Matthew* has the **TEN COM** in view when he says “the law” in verses 17 & 18.

Then where they do **quote** this text, and only *once* in the *entire volume*, without any doubt and in the clearest manner possible they’re teaching that Jesus is talking about the **TEN COM!** They place it right in the midst of the following phrases in order to lead you right where they want you to go. Where is that? to believe that Jesus is referring to the **TEN COM!** Under “Christ and the Law” (p 276), it is surrounded on all sides by these phrases—“the Ten Commandment law” (para 1), “the Decalogue” (para 2), “commandment keepers,” “the law of God,” “God’s law” (para 3), and then “the law,” “God’s law,” and “the Decalogue” in paragraph 4 where Matthew 5:18 is quoted. They could not state their case any stronger!

**SDA** leaders know that for them to put Matthew 5:17,18 into print (and I said **into print**), it’s a delicate matter. This is not something to just throw out there. It must be handled very carefully, or it might backfire. This is why in *both* of these doctrinal expositions, you get it but *once*. But they did give it to us once. But even then, they still had to be extremely cautious as to **HOW they let you see it**. In other words, they had their work cut out for them! Their objective is to use this text in such a way so as to *persuade you* that Jesus is talking about the **TEN COM**. How are they going to do that? I want to show you *three* revealing things that they knew they had to do in order to use this text on you convincingly.

**(1)** First, they have to try and find a translation that’s worded in such a way that they can use it. And that’s not easy. They couldn’t find it in the NKJV, KJV, NIV, NASB, NEB, ASV, ESV, RSV, WEB, or the Amplified, etc., but they finally found it in the *Good News Bible (TEV)*. This was a version they could use and be comfortable with **on this text**. But they had to go out and do their shopping to find a version that was suitable!

**(2)** Secondly, they leave off **verse 17!** Why? Because they don’t want to arouse suspicion in your mind with Jesus’ words “the law or the prophets.” They could get into trouble with that. You might start thinking. As we saw earlier, that phrase is too popular in the **NT**, and it clearly refers to **the whole** of the **OT**, not just the **TEN COM**. There’s another reason, though, why verse 17 is completely missing. *They couldn’t use it!* That’s a verse in the TEV you’ll never get to see! It lets the cat right out of the bag! The law is plainly identified as “**the Law of Moses!**”—“Do not think that I have come to do away with the Law of Moses and *the teachings of the prophets*. I have not come to do away with them, but to make their teachings come true” (TEV). That’s an **SDA** no-no! You’ll *never* see *that* quoted in their literature! So, in spite of their searching efforts to find a translation they could use, they still ended up disappointed and only *half-happy!* Verse 18 is all that would work! They only want you to hear “the law” of verse 18; because to you “the law” is nothing more than the **TEN COM**. They’ve trained you to think that way. That’s right! They know that when you hear the words “the law,” your mind immediately goes “ding!” the **TEN COM!** And that’s their springboard for this phrase “the law” in verse 18. But they can’t do it with “the law of Moses.” They know that includes **all the books of Moses**.

**(3)** Finally, they cut the last phrase of Jesus’ words right off! That could really get you to thinking!—***till all is fulfilled***. Words like that have to be omitted! They don’t want you to think about the word till. Till what? If they want their precious **Sabbath** to bind us throughout all eternity, the thought of “**until**” just doesn’t fit in anywhere! So only a portion of Jesus’ statement is quoted. Here is all they’ll give you of this vital text in *both* of these **SDA** volumes! We’ll take it exactly as they have it from the beginning of the paragraph. And remember, they have the whole page saturated with all manner of **TEN COM** phrases, “the Decalogue,” “God’s law,” “the

Ten Commandment law,” etc. They’ve got your brainwaves already bent in that direction when this appears: (p 276)

Christ himself fulfilled the law, not by destroying it, but through a life of obedience. “Remember,” he said, “that as long as heaven and earth last, not the least point nor the smallest detail of the Law will be done away with” (Matt 5:18).

What is **THE** message here that they’re thrusting upon you? **As long as heaven and earth last, no part of the TEN COM will be done away with!** And of course, that includes their seventh-day Sabbath! But you see how they had to do it! Just **CUT OFF** the words of the Lord himself! It’s Okay! He’s not through saying what he had to say, but “**till all is fulfilled**” will *spoil* our whole *seventh-day program!* And did you notice that they *refused* to put an ellipsis (...) at the end of their quote to notify you that they *cut* right into Jesus’ words? That’s right. They left it out on purpose! They want his sentence to end right there!—so no ellipsis. Anyone should be able to see right through this. It’s all too obvious. They put an ellipsis in **eight** other quotes in this chapter alone! They know what they’re doing. This subtle device we’ll see again. But this is their clever way of getting you to hear a text without really hearing the text. You’re hearing it “**the S-D-A way.**” While their tactics are clearly misleading, are they dishonest? Whatever you say to that, they certainly qualify as being a bit “tricky.”

**ELLEN G. WHITE & MATT 5:17,18**

Now we come to the praised and revered “prophetess” of all **SDA**, Ellen G. White, and her classic and even “inspired” volume, **The Great Controversy**. We want to focus our atten-

tion where she mentions our text in two places in this book. **(1)** The first is in the chapter, *America in Prophecy* (p242,col2, 2002 ed.). She quotes verse 18, and in typical **SDA** style, she cuts off the last phrase: “till all be fulfilled.” That has no place in her way of thinking and in that which she wants to convey. Nor does she end the quote with an ellipsis (...) to notify her readers that she stopped short right in the middle of what Jesus was saying. **(2)** This next reference, we’ll spend a little more time with. It’s from the chapter, *Modern Revivals* (p 261, col 1). She quotes both verses 17 & 18, and again cuts into Jesus’ words, this time **twice**. Let’s take it from the beginning of the paragraph:

The claim that Christ by his death abolished **his Father’s law** is without foundation. Had it been possible for **the law** to be **changed** or **set aside**, then Christ need not have died to save man from the penalty of sin. The death of Christ, so far from

abolishing **the law**, proves that it is immutable. The Son of God came to “magnify the law, and make it honorable.” Isaiah 42:21. **He said:** “**Think not that I am come to destroy the law;**” “**till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law.**” Matthew 5:17,18. (*emphasis mine*)

If anyone has “**changed**” or “**set aside**” anything, it’s **Ellen G. White!** for clearly she has *set aside* key phrases of this crucial passage, and successfully *changed* Jesus’ meaning completely! Notice she says, “**He said:**” But he didn’t say that. Here’s what **He said:** with *the italics* showing what she omitted—*set aside!*

Think not that I am come to destroy the law, *or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil.* For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, *till all be fulfilled.*

Now you see where the **SDA** get their pet phrase to throw at us—“*Jesus said he didn’t come to destroy the law!*” This is how they constantly *hear* it in their assemblies! and *read* it in their literature!—“**Think not that I am come to destroy the law.**” And again, *what law* is Jesus talking about? Ellen directs our minds right to the **TEN COM!**—“*his Father’s law*” in line one, and two sentences earlier—“**the Decalogue!**” The **TEN COM!** Notice also how she *again* refuses to put an ellipsis (...) after “the law”—*in both verses!* She just cuts Jesus’ words right off! And don’t think she doesn’t know how to use an ellipsis. She used one in **eight** other quotes in this chapter alone! When quoting someone, it’s one thing to leave out words that may not be relevant, but it’s quite another thing to leave out words that *totally change the meaning* of what was said.

Suppose the Governor says, “**I’m not going to run for President, till I have the financial backing.**” Then a reporter comes along and quotes him in the newspaper like this, “**The Governor said, ‘I’m not going to run for President.’**” We all know that’s *not* what he said. The reporter cut his words short, and thus, lost the Governor’s real meaning; because you can hear in the Governor’s words that he *does indeed* intend to run. But it will be at the appropriate time, and not before!—“**till I have the financial backing.**” That’s shoddy reporting! It’s not good, nor fair, nor honest. He should be fired! What about our **SDA** empress? Is she one whit above this reporter?

**(1)** How has Mrs. White *changed the meaning* of the text by leaving out the phrase, “**or the prophets**” (v17)? By doing this, she leaves “the law” out there all by itself for the **SDA** to come along and use this crucial text to suit their own agenda, by saying, “**Look! The law! The TEN COM! Jesus didn’t come to destroy the law!**” If that’s *what Jesus said*, no one can argue with it. But that’s **NOT what Jesus said!** Jesus coupled the law **with the prophets** which thereby shows that “the law” in this passage could never carry a meaning so restricted as to signify the **TEN COM only**, as we’ve already seen.

**(2)** How has Mrs. White *changed the meaning* of the text by leaving out the phrase, “**till all be fulfilled**” (v18)? By doing this, she has successfully hidden the fact that Jesus is saying that there is a time coming when that which *must pass away* “under the law” *would pass away* in order for the bringing in

of a **New Covenant**—but not “*till all be fulfilled.*” She wants “the law,” which she interprets as the **TEN COM**, to be binding upon Christians in this New Covenant age! So, with her **SDA** interpretation of “the law,” it isn’t difficult to see why she **DELETES** these words of Jesus, “*till all be fulfilled,*” because she knows that Jesus “*fulfilled*” the Scriptures completely! She’s already said so herself! Listen to her earlier on, in the chapter, *Light Through Darkness* (p191), “Christ had come in the exact time and in the manner foretold by prophecy. *The testimony of Scripture had been fulfilled in every detail of his ministry.*” **THANK YOU!** When **Ellen G.** wants to say the word *fulfilled*, she just comes right out and says it! But when it doesn’t suit her purpose, or further her cause, *she won’t even let Jesus say it!* Anyway, I must give her a hearty **AMEN!** on this last quote. I couldn’t have said it better myself!

**A QUIET TIME TO REFLECT & RESOLVE**

Could it be that you’ve always looked at these words of Jesus through a set of spectacles not your own, following for years the “**cherished opinions**” of the **SDA**? And could it be that at present you find yourself a bit uneasy about this text and the beliefs you’ve always held, even to the point of conviction? Has the truth of Scripture laid hold upon you to such a degree that compromise is out of the question, and that which has always been has been overthrown by that which is before you now? Light has a sobering impact upon those who truly love “the Light of this world.” It brings us to a crossroads where we see him on one side and all else on the other, and nothing is of any value except the honor and glory he receives from our allegiance. Has what you’ve always held on to with such a tenacious grip and stood for so valiantly been nothing more than the “**cherished opinions**” of others that you’ve so devotedly made your very own? If so, your duty is to follow the conviction you feel even now and resolve once and for all to be free from the shackles of church doctrine and stand upon the Scriptures alone. Such a resolution will elevate you to a higher plane than you’ve ever known before to where the faith and opinions of your church will by no means ever sway your conscience again or dictate your journey in search of the truth. Perhaps you’re hesitant, though, to make such a bold move as to shift from what you’ve always been taught to the light you now see shining so brightly upon **Jesus’ words** in **Matthew 5:17,18**. At this juncture, then, Ellen G. White has some good counsel for you. It concerns truth, cherished opinions, and accepting the light that is given:

If you search the Scriptures to vindicate your own opinions, you will never reach the truth. Search in order to learn what the Lord says. If conviction comes as you search, if you see that your **cherished opinions** are not in harmony with the truth, do not misinterpret the truth in order to suit your own belief, **but accept the light given.**

*Christ’s Object Lessons* (Pacific Press, 1900) p112

—Dan Shanks  
767/285-0175

*I am grateful to D.M. Canright for the opening arguments of this tract.*

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**“Jesus said He Didn’t Come to Destroy The Law!”**

**H**ow many times have we heard that!—“*Jesus said he didn’t come to destroy the law!*” If there was ever a *broken record* amongst religious people, this is it! What a statement! It just never stops. It plays over and over and over again! They’ll hit you with it coming and going. Well, what of it? Are we supposed to listen to that? Sure, if it’s true. But if it’s *not* true, and if it’s *not* in the Bible, let it “*go in one ear and out the other.*” Treat it just like you would any other **fairy tale**. If Jesus said it, hear it. But if he didn’t, don’t worry about it. So the question is, Did he say it? **No**. But isn’t it found in Matthew 5:17? **No**. And anyone who makes this statement—“*Jesus said he didn’t come to destroy the law!*”—is speaking in ignorance and merely repeating an unbiblical religious cliché. This will become evident as we go along. Here’s the text:

**“Do not think that I came to destroy the law or the Prophets. I did not come to destroy but to fulfil. For assuredly I say to you, till heaven and earth pass away, one jot or one tittle will by no means pass from the law till all is fulfilled.” —Matthew 5:17,18 NKJV**

**The Seventh-day Adventists (SDA) position—“The law”** Jesus speaks of here is the **Ten Commandments (TEN COM)**. He did not come to destroy the law, but to fulfill it; every jot and tittle of it will stand till heaven and earth pass away. Thus, this law is unchangeable and still binding. The Sabbath is a part of this law, therefore, the seventh day must still be kept.

**Answer**—It teaches no such thing. **SDA** consider this the strongest text in the New Testament (**NT**) for “the law.” They constantly refer to it. If it fails, they have no stronger fort. But consider the following: **(1)** **SDA** themselves admit that Jesus fulfilled and ended what they call “**the ceremonial law.**” They say he “abolished” it at the cross. The question we ask them is: Did he come to “**DESTROY**” *that* law? Certainly not, and yet, **he did away with it**. So then, it’s one thing to **DESTROY** a law, and quite another to **bring it to a close** by **fulfilling** it. Think about that. **SDA** say that because we’re teaching that the Sabbath is no longer binding, we’re teaching that Jesus “destroyed the law.” But that’s not true. We’re saying the same thing Jesus is saying in this text—he didn’t come to destroy, but to fulfill. And that which he came to fulfill is then *set aside*; the purpose for it has been achieved, it’s no longer necessary.

**(2)** It does not say that every jot and tittle of the law will stand till heaven and earth pass away. **SDA** try to get us to hear it that way. But that’s not at all what Jesus is saying. He’s saying that the law will **not** pass away **until it is all fulfilled**, or “**until everything is accomplished**” (*NIV*). Now think about that. Jesus is teaching that it *would* all be fulfilled *sometime*, that it *would* all be accomplished *sometime*, and that it *would* all pass away *sometime*. The idea is that sooner would heaven