

Lion and Lamb Apologetics'

Michael Is Not Jesus, And The Resurrection Is Not a Re-Creation

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1



This week as I wrote our commentary on next week's Sabbath School lesson, I realized that it addresses two of the Adventist organization's persistent but less-well-known teachings. I decided that these two insights from the Quarterly were important enough that I needed to include them in an article for our online magazine besides addressing them in our Sabbath School commentary. Consequently, I have excerpted part of what I wrote in this week's commentary on the Sabbath School lesson and am sharing it here as well.

The two Adventist beliefs that we are addressing here are the persistent but often-hidden doctrine of Michael the Archangel and the idea that the future resurrection is a re-creation.

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Adventists, like the Jehovah's Witnesses, believe that Michael the Archangel is Jesus. This belief is included this week in a lesson on "The Old Testament Hope", the fourth lesson in a quarter focusing "On Death, Dying, and the Future Hope". There is no biblical

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support for this idea, but it is important for the Ellen White-portrayed understanding of Jesus in her pre-history story about Jesus and Lucifer.

The second belief we address is the fact that, under the hood, the Adventist resurrection is not really a resurrection but a re-creation. This detail may seem trivial on the surface, but it implies a vast difference from the biblical teaching. The lesson actually uses the term “re-create” to describe what God will do at the end of time, and we address the meanings of the terms and show that Adventists actually are revealing their true belief about the nature of man by using the term “re-create”.

2

Michael the Archangel

The lesson says this:

Daniel 12:1 refers to Michael, “ ‘the great prince,’ ” whose identification has been much disputed. Because each of the great visions in the book of Daniel culminates with the manifestation of Christ and His kingdom, the same should be the case in regard to this specific passage. In the book of Daniel we find allusions to the same Divine Being as “the Prince of the host” (Dan. 8:11, NKJV), “ ‘the Prince of princes’ ” (Dan. 8:25, NKJV), “ ‘Messiah the Prince’ ” (Dan. 9:25, NKJV), and finally as “ ‘Michael, the great prince’ ” (Dan. 12:1, NASB). **So, we should identify Michael also as Christ.**

This paragraph uses illogical reasoning to arrive at its conclusion that “we should identify Michael also as Christ”. All the texts listed in the paragraph above identify Michael as one of the princes, as the prince of Daniel’s people, and so forth. Significantly, the paragraph omits the Michael references from Daniel 10 where it becomes even more obvious that Michael is one of several others categorized as “princes”.

Jesus is not one of several. He is completely unique, and He Is God.

Furthermore, the argument that the visions in Daniel end with manifestations of Christ and His kingdom, so Daniel 12:1 needs to refer to Christ, is utterly unsupported contextually. It is an illogical argument that has no support from the context. Even more, Jude 9 identifies Michael the archangel as one who would not rebuke Satan but said, “The Lord rebuke you.” Yet Adventism, by EGW’s authority, says Jude 9 refers to Jesus.

This identification is unsupported by Scripture. Jesus very plainly directly rebuked Satan while He was on earth. He commanded the “Legion” of demons to leave the demoniac

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in Mark 5 and Luke 8. He directly rebuked Satan in the wilderness when He was tempted by the devil after his baptism (Mt. 4).

Yet Adventism is “married” to identifying Michael the Archangel as another name for Jesus in spite of the biblical context which clearly denies this designation.

What the Adventist identification does do, however, is to cement the internal view that Jesus is not almighty God, that He is somehow less than the Father, and that He was once exalted to the position of Son thus making Lucifer jealous. If Jesus is identified as an archangel, a created being, then Lucifer could claim God was unfair to exalt Jesus instead of him. Such an identity would put Jesus and Lucifer on nearly equal ground in the distant past.

Even though Adventists attempt to deny equating Jesus with a created being by saying, “Michael is just another name for Jesus,” their denial is empty. Jesus is never identified as an archangel. Scripture provides no support for this Adventist claim.

Resurrection, Not Re-creation

The lesson equates resurrection with the re-creation of the person who has died. For example, Friday’s lesson says this:

Modern science teaches that all matter is composed of atoms, themselves made up of two smaller particles, quarks and leptons, which are believed to be the building blocks of all physical reality. If, then, at the core the physical world is quarks and leptons, couldn’t the God who not only created and sustains that world also just reconfigure the quarks and leptons when the time comes to resurrect us? Mocking the resurrection, atheist Bertrand Russell asked what happens to those whom cannibals ate, because their bodies are now part of the cannibals’, and so who gets what in the resurrection? But suppose the Lord simply grabs quarks and leptons, the ultimate building blocks of existence, from wherever, and, based on the information that He possesses about each one of us, reconstructs us from those quarks and leptons on up? He doesn’t need our original ones; any will do. Or, in fact, He could just speak new quarks and leptons into existence and go from there. **However He does it, the God who created the universe can re-create us, which He promises to do at the resurrection of the dead.**

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Resurrection, however, is not “re-creation”. Resurrection is defined as “the act of restoring a dead person, for example, to life,” or “the condition of having been restored to life” (*The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language*, 5th Edition).

Re-creation, on the other hand, is defined as “the state or instance of creating again or anew: *the re-creation of the Russian Empire*” (<https://www.thefreedictionary.com/re-creation>).



Resurrection is a word that describes restoring a life. To restore means to bring back into existence or use or to return something to a normal condition. It does not imply creating a replacement.

Resurrection is the restoration of a person to a living condition; it is not a new creation or a replica of the original.

To use an inanimate example, to restore an antique chair which has gone through centuries of disuse and decay, a person would not simply make a replica of that chair but would work with the original piece and would remove the dirt and grime and repair broken parts and refinish it so it would reflect its original beauty and the purpose the original maker had in mind. A replica of the chair, on the other hands, would be ontologically different. It would imitate but would not BE the original chair.

A restored chair would still have existed for hundreds of years and would still bear its own value. A replica, or a re-creation, might appear identical to an onlooker, but it would intrinsically be different. It would not bear the legacy of the years of the original's existence or of the original maker's personal design and care.

The Adventist explanations of “resurrection” inevitably go to the idea of God's making a completely new person—a completely new body into which He places His memory of the person who ceased to exist at death. This understanding of “resurrection” is necessary for Adventists because they do not believe the person has an immaterial identity.

If we think about the implications of the Adventist view of God re-creating the dead, we have to acknowledge that the re-created person is not ontologically the SAME person. It is a replica, a clone, a “trick” to make everyone, including the re-created person, think it's the same—but it cannot be the same. The “downloaded” memory of God into the re-created body is not the actual person who has been created, known, and loved by God. It is not a restoration of life to a real person; it is, rather, a clever imitation designed to pick up wherever the dead stopped existing, not functioning as itself but as a programmed replica.

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In the Adventist view, the person himself—his personality and memories—are all contained in the brain. If the brain has decayed or been digested by sharks, it cannot continue the life of the person. Thus a “re-created” person is not the same person but a replica programmed with the same neural responses that the first person had.

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Intuitively [Adventists] know that they will cease to exist when they die, and when they are re-created, they do not know what they will discover: will they be saved or lost? Will they even be the same person?

This reality of the Adventist view of death and resurrection is part of the reason Adventists fear death so strongly. Intuitively they know that they will cease to exist when they die, and when they are re-created, they do not know what they will discover: will they be saved or lost? Will they even be the same person?

The answer is they will NOT be the same person—if their view is correct.

The Bible, however, describes something very different. Because Jesus took our imputed sin into Himself and took the wrath of God against our sin, when we trust Him, we pass from death to life at that moment (Jn. 5:24). Eternal life isn't just a metaphor; when we receive eternal life upon trusting the Lord Jesus, we will never die, as Jesus told Martha in John 11:16. Those words are not metaphors; they are literal and real.

Oh, yes—our bodies may die, but WE, the essential US that knows and worships God, will NEVER DIE but will eventually be absent from the body and present with the Lord (2 Cor. 5:1–9), a condition that is “very much better” than remaining here in our bodies (Phil 1:22, 23).

When Jesus said, “Into Thy hand I commit my spirit”, He was not referring to His breath. He was referring to His personal essence, His immaterial identity which was housed in His human body but which returns to the God who gave it upon the death of the body.

The part of a believer that actually IS a completely new creation is our new birth, our naturally dead-in-sin spirits being brought to life through belief and trust in Jesus' shed blood and resurrection. Paul explains it this way:

For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them (Ephesians 2:10).

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That word “created” is the word used in Genesis 1:1: “In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth”. Created is a word that describes bringing a brand-new “thing” into existence.

When we are born again and given new life—eternal life—we literally become brand-new creatures. We will never die; our lives are hidden with Christ in God (Col 3:3), and we are different from those who are still dead in sin.

Believers are literally brand-new creations. We are not re-creations, nor are we resurrected creatures. Rather, our spirits, the core identity of US, is literally new with eternal life, the resurrection life of Jesus making us completely new. These NEW creations—our living spirits—are still housed in mortal flesh which will die. Our living spirits, however, will NOT die but will be present with the Lord while our bodies go into the grave.

We will not cease to exist; rather, we will wait in Christ for our resurrections when He brings us our glorified bodies and reunites the immaterial part of US with our bodies.

We will not cease to exist; rather, we will wait in Christ for our resurrections when He brings us our glorified bodies and reunites the immaterial part of US with our bodies. This two-part definition of humanity is the nature of man, and the resurrection is necessary in order for us to retain our humanity eternally. It is this identity that the Son of Man also has since His incarnation. Besides being God, He is also fully man, with a body and a human spirit.

The wicked also have this two-part identity, but they are not new creations. They remain spiritually dead in sin—separated from the resurrection life of Jesus—until (or unless) they trust Him and are born again (John 3:18, 36; Ephesians 2:1–3). When they die, however, they also die as humans, not as animals. Their spirits—even though they are dead in sin—go back to God who “knows how to rescue the godly from trials, and to keep the unrighteous under punishment until the day of judgment” (2 Peter 2:9).

This lesson, thankfully, reveals the reality that Adventism teaches a false view of death and resurrection. Seldom do we find written material that so clearly reveals the Adventist heresy of mere physicality.

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We are body plus spirit, and when we know the Lord, we worship Him in spirit and in truth (Jn. 4:24). †

Colleen Tinker



Colleen Tinker, the editor of *Proclamation!* magazine, and her husband Richard left Adventism in 1998 with their two sons, Roy and Nathanael, who were in grades six and ten. They have co-led the Former Adventist Fellowship since 1999. Colleen, a graduate of Walla Walla University, is a former high school English teacher and also the former managing editor of *Adventist Today* magazine. Colleen became the stepmother of Roy and Nathanael in 1989, and in 2008 she adopted them. Romans 8:15-17 has assumed new depth and significance for her and Richard since she and her sons chose to claim each other legally and permanently. She and Richard share an office

and a commitment to sharing the gospel of the true Jesus with all of those seeking a way out of the bondage of the false gospel of Adventism.

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