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# JOURNAL OF THE ADVENTIST THEOLOGICAL SOCIETY

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Volume 1, Number 1 . . . . . Spring 1990

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ADVENTIST THEOLOGICAL SOCIETY

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The JOURNAL OF THE ADVENTIST THEOLOGICAL SOCIETY is published twice yearly by the Adventist Theological Society, P. O. Box 551, Collegedale, Tennessee 37315.

The JOURNAL is sent free to members of the Society whose dues are not in arrears.

The regular annual subscription price for non-members is US\$9.50 to addresses in the USA and US\$11.50 to addresses elsewhere.

The student and retiree subscription price for non-members is US\$7.50 in the USA and US\$9.50 elsewhere.

As a promotional offer, subscriptions may be purchased for US\$2.00 less prior to April 15, 1990.

The single copy price is US\$4.95.

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## Greetings!

### A Message from the ATS President

Jack J. Blanco

Dear Reader:

I sincerely hope you will enjoy this first issue of the JOURNAL OF THE ADVENTIST THEOLOGICAL SOCIETY. It is a privilege to introduce it to you.

In it we share with you the actual presentations, or summaries of some of them, that were given at the first General Meeting of the Adventist Theological Society held in Lincoln, Nebraska, September 7-10, 1989.

The Adventist Theological Society (ATS) is a vehicle whereby men and women who hold to the divine inspiration of Scripture and who have accepted Christ as their Lord and Saviour and committed their lives to upholding the Seventh-day Adventist church can associate together for focused fellowship, prayer, and Bible study.

At present the Society holds two meetings a year, the General Meeting in the summer and, in the fall, the Research Session, conducted in connection with the meetings of other biblical and religious societies. Except for business sessions, which are open only to Society members, ATS meetings are open to everyone. And the plan is that the papers and sermons given at the meetings will be published in our JOURNAL—which we expect to distribute at least twice yearly, or more often, as the number of presentations and the need for their distribution may suggest.

Membership in the Society is by invitation or application, followed by endorsement and committee action—a procedure customary in many societies. In addition to membership, we provide for "patronage," which carries with it all the privileges of membership, excepting only the right to vote at business meetings. Almost daily men and women are joining us, either as members or as patrons. We are immensely grateful to the Lord for the strength they provide—and for the warm response we have received from fellow believers in many countries who are concerned about the current

erosion of scriptural authority even in churches long known as bastions of biblical truth.

The literalness of the creation and flood narratives, the divine establishment of the seventh-day Sabbath, the need for a substitutionary atonement, the intercession of Christ as portrayed through the symbols of the sanctuary, and the concept of an end-time remnant church have all come under question, even among some Seventh-day Adventists.

It is the purpose of the Society to provide papers that speak specifically to basic Seventh-day Adventist beliefs. The Society hopes to set forth in clear lines the issues confronting Bible-believing Christians and the choices we must make.

The leaders of the Society are convinced that a biblical understanding of the issues involved in earth's final days will nourish faith—and that faith thus nourished will bring forth more honest lives, lives filled with reverence for what is sacred, committed deeply to the Lord Jesus, and devoted to His loving service in preparing others for His soon return.

May this JOURNAL be the help it is intended to be. May it beget a new beginning to your life by helping you put first things first as never before. Surely He who died for us and whom we love is coming soon. Even so come, Lord Jesus.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

JACK

## New, Yet Historic

By Gordon Hyde, Editor

*Adventist Perspectives*

The first General Meeting of the Adventist Theological Society (ATS) convened September 7-10, 1989, in Lincoln, Nebraska. By invitation of President Joel O. Tompkins, the Society met in the well-appointed headquarters building of the Mid-America Union Conference. Gracious accommodations, food service, and transportation were provided on the campus of nearby Union College.

These open sessions drew an international gathering of more than a hundred seminary and college theologians, college administrators, division and union presidents, active and retired General Conference officers, editors, and departmental directors, lawyers, physicians and dentists, doctoral candidates from the Seminary, active and retired pastors, Bible instructors, and business people.

On Thursday evening Elder Francis W. Wernick, former General Conference vice president, gave the keynote address. He reaffirmed the supreme authority of the Bible in the faith of the Seventh-day Adventist church—a faith that is not subordinated to human reason, science, history, philosophy, or any other source of human knowledge and wisdom.

Friday's program included presentations by four of the theologians present. Panel discussions followed each presentation. The morning was devoted to the biblical basis of our faith. Dr. Gerhard Hasel, of the Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary of Andrews University, traced the vicissitudes of the historical-critical method (higher criticism) in Seventh-day Adventist history, and Dr. Richard Davidson, also of the Seminary faculty, outlined his personal pilgrimage of faith into and out of the same critical approach to the Bible.

The Friday afternoon program dealt with another major topic of ATS emphasis, the atonement. Dr. Norman R. Gulley of Southern College of Seventh-day Adventists compared the many theories of atonement with