



# JOURNAL OF THE ADVENTIST THEOLOGICAL SOCIETY

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ADVENTIST THEOLOGICAL SOCIETY

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## THE PRESIDENT'S PAGE

### A Message from the ATS President

Gerhard F. Hasel

Dr. Jack Blanco's term as president of the Adventist Theological Society ended in July 1990 at the close of the two-year presidential term prescribed by the Society's Bylaws. As one of the founding fathers of the Society, Jack has given outstanding leadership, going far beyond the call of duty. The Lord of heaven and earth has blessed him mightily in his endeavors. We want to express our deepest appreciation for his leadership. He will now serve a two-year term as Past President, and we shall continue to value his wise counsel.

We want to thank Dr. Ron Springett also for his services in helping the Society get started. In July he was asked to serve as an Honorary Trustee.

The first crucial stages of organization are now in the past. The Society's Constitution and Bylaws are in place. Our mission statement provides direction. Our membership has grown to 500, comprising persons from many countries around the world—university and college professors, seminary teachers, pastors and administrators (including some Division presidents), physicians and dentists, scientists and researchers, lawyers and business persons, and others.

The first issue of the JOURNAL OF THE ADVENTIST THEOLOGICAL SOCIETY (JATS) has appeared and been mailed worldwide, and now you have the second issue in your hands. We trust that the third issue will be off the press by next February. Plans have been laid in faith to print 25,000 copies of the third issue. It will contain the presentations made at the General Meeting of the Society held in Indianapolis immediately

prior to the General Conference session and attended, on the Sabbath, by as many as a thousand people.

"By their fruits you shall know them," Jesus said. Through the meetings, which are open to everyone, through the first two issues of the JOURNAL, which contain the presentations made at the first two meetings, and through the videotapes which were made at the second meeting, the "fruits" of the Adventist Theological Society can now be tested by all. We trust we shall be found faithful.

I believe that the work of ATS is a sacred work. I have accepted the presidency only after serious reflection and prayer. Our mission statement describes the Society as "centrist," and we are determined to continue on this path. We are living in the end time, when by God's grace Seventh-day Adventists are described in prophecy as the final remnant.

To serve the remnant as it should, the Society must engage in "theological evangelism," informing the church about where theology is today, how it is moving, and what foundations Seventh-day Adventism should build on if it is to move in the right direction. This is no time for panic—or for timidity; it is no time to be alarmist—or to be silent. It is time to speak clearly in a decisive and penetrating voice, a time to speak wisely and affirmingly. It is also a time to pull together, to *pull together*, on the platform of Scripture in its entirety supported by the writings of the Spirit of Prophecy, the "lesser light" that illuminates the greater one.

The work of the Adventist Theological Society is sacred—to help build the body of Christ, to foster its mission to proclaim the truth of the third angel's message in all the world and thereby to hasten the day when the church militant will become the church triumphant. To this task I solemnly pledge myself as the new President.

Sincerely,

Gerhard F. Hasel

## THE PAST PRESIDENT'S PAGE

A Message from the ATS Past President

Jack J. Blanco

Without the blessing of the Lord, His providential leadings, and the exercise of the gifts of the Holy Spirit by our members the rapid growth we have seen in our Society would not have been possible. May all praise and thanksgiving be given to the Lord Jesus Christ!

This issue of the JOURNAL contains for the most part the presentations and sermons given at the *Professional Meeting* of the Society held in San Diego, California, near the end of 1989. We met there in connection with the professional meeting of the Evangelical Theological Society, for whose hospitality and fellowship we are grateful. I wish to thank the participants at San Diego for their contributions of papers and sermons which made our West Coast meeting so beneficial.

However, the experience at our *General Meeting* held this past summer in Indianapolis, Indiana, previous to the 55th session of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, was beyond expectation. The fellowship and spiritual uplift at this first international gathering of the Society as we worshiped with committed believers from around the world will be forever etched in our memories.

Without diminishing the value of anything else that was heard or seen at the Indianapolis meeting, I wish to mention two items that elicited outstanding response. One was the keynote address by Enoch Oliveira, Vice President of the General Conference, who spoke plainly on the present dangers which threaten our faith. The other was the recommitment of over one thousand in attendance, including nearly three hundred ordained ministers and professors, who stood and

pledged themselves to continue to acknowledge and to uphold the importance of the prophetic gift as defined in the Scriptures. This recommitment followed the presentation given by Kenneth H. Wood, Chairman of the Board of Trustees of the Ellen G. White Estate.

The text of the papers and sermons given at the Indianapolis meeting will appear in the spring 1991 issue of the JOURNAL.

Our prayer is that God's richest blessings may rest upon the new President of the Society, Dr. Gerhard Hasel, Professor of Old Testament and Biblical Theology at the Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary, Andrews University, and on the Vice President, Dr. C. Raymond Holmes, Professor of Preaching and Worship at the same institution, as they guide the Society into expanded paths of scholarship, fellowship, and witness.

Sincerely yours,

Jack J. Blanco

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## THE STATUS OF THE FETUS IN MOSAIC LAW

By Ron du Preez  
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Only one law in the Bible deals with the human fetus. This legislation, located in Exodus 21:22-25, can be considered the most crucial passage in the Old Testament in regard to the life of the unborn. Naturally, it has received close scrutiny for the light it might shed on the critical question of the nature of the fetus and its value and status in relation to its mother.

Undeniably, this passage contains several exegetical problems.<sup>1</sup> Nevertheless, because of the fact that many people on both sides of the abortion issue have appealed to it, and because it is the only Biblical passage used in support of the official Seventh-day Adventist position regarding abortion in the denomination's medical institutions, it deserves to become the focus of this paper.

### Conflicting Translations of Exodus 21:22-25

During the preparation of this paper, 40 available English versions of the Scriptures were examined in order to see how Exodus 21:22-25 has been translated. Essentially, the translators have interpreted our passage in one of two ways.<sup>2</sup> Twenty translations, from the *Douay Version* of 1609 to the *New Jerusalem Bible* of 1985, render the text in such a way that the fetus can be viewed as of less value than a human being. For instance, the *Jerusalem Bible*, published in 1966, puts the passage this way:

If, when men come to blows, they hurt a woman who is pregnant and she suffers a miscarriage, though she does not die of it, the man