OPPOSING SLAVERY

Like many believers before who obeyed their governments so long as they did not conflict with God’s precepts, early Adventists heartily supported the U.S. government and its laws in most areas except slavery. Adventists were staunch defenders of abolitionism even when more than ninety percent of the U.S. population viewed it as extreme. Adventist publications consistently opposed slavery causing our publications to be forbidden in the slave-owning South.

It’s clear from church leaders’ letters that they wanted to present a united front on this important issue. As such, Adventists who supported slavery were disfellowshipped. Ellen White warned in a letter that unless the recipient changed his position, “it will be the duty of God’s people to publicly withdraw their sympathy and fellowship from you, in order to save the impression which must go out in regard to us as a people. We must let it be known that we have no such ones in our fellowship, that we will not walk with them in church capacity” (Testimonies for the Church, vol. 1 [1855], 359). Adventists felt so strongly that the Advent Review and Sabbath Herald released an article on June 13, 1854 that challenged the nation to either abolish slavery or amend the Declaration of Independence: “If this nation would not be the most hypocritical nation on the face of the earth, it should amend this declaration thus: All white men are created free and equal etc.” (ARSH, vol. 5). This week, we’ll unpack the biblical prophecies that made it impossible for Adventists to be apathetic toward slavery.
Write out Revelation 14 from the translation of your choice. If you’re pressed for time, write out verses 6–8. You may also rewrite the passage in your own words, or outline or mind-map the passage.
Go back to your scribed text and study the passage.

Circle repeated words/ phrases/ideas

Underline words/phrases that are important and have meaning to you

Draw Arrows to connect words/ phrases to other associated or related words/phrases

What special insights do your marks seem overall to point to?

Memorize your favorite verse. Write it out multiple times to help with memorization.

What does it mean to fear God?

What are some people groups in today’s world that need help gaining autonomy? How can we help them?

Read more at www.inversebible.org/RL10-3
After looking at your scribed and annotated text, what special insights do your marks seem to point to overall?

What questions emerge after studying this passage? What parts are difficult?

What other principles and conclusions do you find?

How do the Old Testament laws about slavery further demonstrate God’s incredible love?

Read more at www.inversebible.org/RL10-4
What relationship do the following verses have with Revelation 14?

Revelation 18:13
Daniel 4:27
Matthew 25:41–47
Matthew 28:19
Luke 12:7
Acts 17:26

What other verses come to mind in connection with the primary passage?

Review your memorized verse from Revelation 14.
Meditate on the primary passage again and look for where Jesus is.

Why did Jesus send the second angel to warn about the sins of Babylon before His return? (Rev. 14:8, 14.)

How do you see Jesus differently or see Him again?

What is He saying to you personally through the text of the week?

Prayer Response:

Read more at www.inversebible.org/RL10-6
Review the memory verse. How does it apply to your life this week?

After this week’s study of the passage, what are some personal applications you are convicted of in your life?

What are some practical applications you must make in your school, family, workplace, and church life?

Read more inSight from the Spirit of Prophecy at www.inversebible.org/RL10-7
Share insights from this week’s memory verse and Bible study as well as any discoveries, observations, and questions with your Sabbath School class (or Bible study group). Consider these discussion questions with the rest of the group.

Why is first the angel’s message incompatible with modern slavery?

What are some biblical examples of how to fear God?

How does the fear of God change the way a person relates to others?

What was the purpose of slavery in the Old Testament?

How does the slavery of recent history violate God’s commandments?

What did Christianity’s general support of slavery in America say about the quality of spirituality in the churches?

What people in our local community need help restoring human dignity and liberty?

What groups of people lack equal access to the gospel? How can we help them?