



The Book of Job Lesson 7 4Q 2016

Retributive Punishment

Normally I don't do a preamble before the lesson, however this lesson will be very difficult for some to hear, so I felt it necessary to give this preamble.

If you had a child who was suffering with a severe illness, feverish, festering lesions, in real misery—you would not hate your child, you would have great compassion for your child, yet you will also feel sadness. And you would want to accurately identify the source of the illness so that a remedy could be applied.

This is how I felt this week as I read lesson 7. This lesson, is filled with evidence, symptoms, of a deep infection within the church that causes the church to be sick, to suffer, that keeps many Christians trapped in fear and a false system of beliefs that obstructs their access to God and His true remedy to heal and restore them to His original ideal. Further, it is this very infection of thought that has obstructed the church from doing its last day mission to lighten the world for Christ's return.

By identifying the infection that is ravaging your child you are seeking to heal not attacking your child, so too by exposing this infection of thought in the church, I am not attacking the church but seeking to bring healing.

What do you think of the title, "Retributive Punishment?"

What does **retributive** mean?

1. Characterized or involving retribution.

What does **retribution** mean?

1. requital (return or reward) according to merits or deserts, especially for evil.
2. something given or inflicted in such requital.
3. *Theology.* the distribution of rewards and punishments in a future life.

When you think of retribution what comes to mind? How do you understand this, through which law lens—imposed or design law?

How would retribution work through imposed human-type law lens?

Human laws work by the infliction of externally imposed penalties, which would not otherwise occur, unless they were inflicted to cause pain, suffering, death.

This is also known as coercion, or compelling power.

Is this how God's government works?



What is the difference between God's laws and the laws sinful humans make?

God creates space, time, matter, energy, life—His laws are the protocols upon which reality works. Humans cannot create, so we make up rules that require coercive enforcement.

Satan attacks God and His law by proclaiming that God functions no different than created beings, making up rules and coercing with inflicted punishment, ultimately taking retribution upon sinners. This is a lie—an infection of thought—that has infected all of Christianity, including the SDA church, and actually incites fear and rebellion and prevents reconciliation with God.

We see evidence of this infection in lesson 7 for this week. To be truthful about this is not an attack against any denomination or church group, but to recognize that while God has His institutions, His church, Satan works to corrupt God's institutions by getting those institutions to accept and practice Satan's ideas and methods. Satan succeeded 2000 years ago in getting God's institution on earth to accept such a distorted view of His law that they accused Jesus of law-breaking and crucified Him. The primary lie of Satan is the lie regarding God's law, that it functions like human law.

God's law of love—the principle of giving, upon which life is constructed, if you break this law what happens?

The law of liberty, that love only exists in an atmosphere of freedom, what happens if you violate liberty?

So, with this in mind, here are some historic quotes from one of the founders of the SDA church, what the SDA church was supposed to teach on this subject:

Rebellion was **not** to be overcome by force. **Compelling power is found only under Satan's government. The Lord's principles are not of this order.** [notice this doesn't say "compelling power is usually found under Satan's government." or that "God's principles are not often of this order." These are absolute statements with no exceptions.] His authority rests upon goodness, mercy, and love; and the presentation of **these principles is the means to be used.** God's government is moral, and **truth and love are to be the prevailing power.** E.G. White Desire of Ages 759 [what is the prevailing power? Truth and Love—remember that because it is vital to understanding how sinners die in the end, by what power? Truth and Love!]

God could have destroyed Satan and all his sympathizers as easily as one can pick up a pebble and cast it to the earth. **But by so doing he would have given a precedent for the exercise of force. All the compelling power is found only under Satan's government.** [Does it say "most" compelling power, or the majority of compelling power? No! All compelling power is found ONLY, not usually, under Satan's government. What would it



mean then if we present God as using these methods? That we are presenting God with the character of Satan! Notice the next words in the quote:] **The Lord's principles are not of this order. He would not work on this line... This principle is wholly of Satan's creation.** [The lesson for today argues the same argument that Satan does, that God's principles are the principles of force, coercion, compelling power, the infliction of pain, suffering and death] E.G. White Review & Herald, September 7, 1897

"Whereunto," asked Christ, "shall we liken the kingdom of God? or with what comparison shall we compare it?" Mark 4:30. **He could not** employ the kingdoms of the world as a similitude. In society He found nothing with which to compare it. **Earthly kingdoms rule by the ascendancy of physical power; but from Christ's kingdom every carnal weapon, every instrument of coercion, is banished.** E.G. White Acts of the Apostles 12 [Again, is there room for exceptions, "every carnal weapon of coercion is banished, except for the final end, when God in justice uses carnal weapons to punish and kill?" NO! God is not the source of inflicted death!]

In the opening of the great controversy, **Satan had declared that the law of God could not be obeyed**, that justice was inconsistent with mercy, and that, should the law be broken, it would be impossible for the sinner to be pardoned. **Every sin must meet its punishment, urged Satan;** and if God should remit the punishment of sin, He would not be a God of truth and justice. {DA 761.4} [What do you think when you hear preachers preaching that God, in order to be just, must punish sin? This is Satan's argument; this is the voice of God's adversary! This is what Satan said in heaven that seemed so reasonable to 1/3 of the angels! It is a lie! It is based on believing a lie about God's law that God's law functions like human law and therefore requires inflicted punishment. But God's law is the basis of life and breaking it destroys the sinner, unless God intervenes to heal and restore!]

We are not to regard God as waiting to punish the sinner for his sin. The sinner brings the punishment upon himself. His own actions start a train of circumstances that bring the sure result. Every act of transgression reacts upon the sinner, works in him a change of character, and makes it more easy for him to transgress again. By choosing to sin, **men separate themselves from God, cut themselves off from the channel of blessing, and the sure result is ruin and death.** -- 1Selected Messages 235

Does this mean there is no punishment for sin? Does this mean there is no retribution for sin?

Of course not, the retribution however, comes out from sin itself notice what the Bible says:

- For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord. Rom 6:23
- sin, when it is full-grown, gives birth to death. James 1:15



- The one who sows to please his sinful nature, from that nature will reap destruction; Gal 6:8

EGW never uses the term “Retributive Punishment” She does use the term retributive judgment, is there a difference?

How does love work?

- Does love seek to harm or save, to punish or deliver?
- So how does God work?
- What does love do when the one who is loved uses their freedom to insist on rebellion and rejection of all endeavors to save?
- Does love make a judgment that there is nothing more that can be done?
- Does love, at some point, let go its interventions to protect?
- And what happens when love stops interceding with sickness, with deviations from violations from the protocols life is built upon?
- Is there a terrible suffering and death that occurs? Why?

Notice this description from EGW:

We are near the close of time. **I have been shown that the retributive judgments of God are already in the land.** The Lord has given us warning of the events about to take place. Light is shining from His word; yet darkness covers the earth, and gross darkness the people. "When they shall say, Peace and safety; then sudden destruction cometh upon them; . . . and they shall not escape." 599 {Councils for the Church 336.3} [What does the Lord actually do? What action does God take that is the action of retributive judgment? Notice the very next words:]

The Lord is removing His restrictions from the earth, and soon there will be death and destruction, increasing crime, and cruel, evil working against the rich who have exalted themselves against the poor. Those who are without God's protection will find no safety in any place or position. Human agents are being trained and are using their inventive power to put in operation the most powerful machinery to wound and to kill. 600 {CCh 336.4} [What is God's action, what is He doing? Letting go, removing restrictions, setting free those in rebellion. Who is training the human agents? From where is the destruction and death originating?]

The judgments of God are in the land. The wars and rumors of wars, the destruction by fire and flood, say clearly that the time of trouble, which is to increase until the end, is very near at hand. {CCh 336.5} [What are God's judgments that are in the land? They are His accurate diagnosis of the hearts of people and His judgment that there is nothing more that love and mercy can do so He sets them free and who is causing all the trouble—God's angels? God's righteous saints? Are God's people the one's who do all the violence? No! It is from Satan and his followers!]



What was God's retributive judgment in that passage? That people were beyond healing and He accurately judges or diagnosis it to be so and rightly determines or judges that there is nothing more He can do for them, thus in harmony with His methods and character of love, He sets them free and all hell breaks loose—from the wicked—not as infliction from God!

God has given to men a declaration of His character and of His method of dealing with sin. "The Lord God, merciful and gracious, long-suffering and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, and that will by no means clear the guilty." Exodus 34:6, 7. "All the wicked will He destroy." "The transgressors shall be destroyed together: the end of the wicked shall be cut off." Psalm 145:20; 37:38. **The power and authority of the divine government will be employed to put down rebellion;** [what does this mean? Those who think through imposed human-law immediately hear passages like this and think God would act the way we sinful humans would act. They think He would use power to inflict punishment—but this passage must be harmonized with the authors previous statements about God's kingdom and methods and that it is only under Satan's government that compelling power and coercion are used. So note the continuation of the sentence:] **yet all the manifestations of retributive justice will be perfectly consistent with the character of God as a merciful, long-suffering, benevolent being.** {GC 541.2} [what does this mean? That we must understand terms like retributive justice through design-law lenses and STOP thinking through imposed law, stop making God out to look and act like sinful human beings. Notice the very next words in this quote:]

God does not force the will or judgment of any. He takes no pleasure in a slavish obedience. He desires that the creatures of His hands shall love Him because He is worthy of love. [Does threats to kill those who don't love generate love? No! It is a violation of the law of liberty and God NEVER does this.] He would have them obey Him because they have an intelligent appreciation of His wisdom, justice, and benevolence. And all who have a just conception of these qualities will love Him because they are drawn toward Him in admiration of His attributes. {GC 541.3} [Can this happen if God is the source of inflicted pain, suffering and death for those who disobey? NO! Those who teach God must use His power to inflict punishment are demonstrating they are duped into believing Satan's view of God and God's government and they are obstructing God's end time message and plan.]

The principles of kindness, mercy, and love, taught and exemplified by our Saviour, are a transcript of the will and character of God. Christ declared that He taught nothing except that which He had received from His Father. **The principles of the divine government are in perfect harmony with the Saviour's precept, "Love your enemies."** God executes justice upon the wicked, for the good of the universe, and even for the good of those upon whom His judgments are visited. [What does this mean? Do we immediately forget all that we just read, or do we understand this language in harmony with all the other



descriptions we read previously describing how God's government actually functions? How then does God execute justice? What is justice, doing what is right, and what is the right thing to do to those who insist on separating themselves from God? **He would make them happy if He could do so in accordance with the laws of His government and the justice of His character. He surrounds them with the tokens of His love, He grants them a knowledge of His law, and follows them with the offers of His mercy; but they despise His love, make void His law, and reject His mercy.** While constantly receiving His gifts, they dishonor the Giver; they hate God because they know that He abhors their sins. The Lord bears long with their perversity; **but the decisive hour will come at last, when their destiny is to be decided.** [By whom? Who decides their destiny? Is the destiny of the wicked decided by God in a judicial proceeding, or by the wicked in rejecting all the truth and love provided by God and thus permanently hardening themselves against God?] Will He then chain these rebels to His side? Will He force them to do His will? {GC 541.4}

Those who have chosen Satan as their leader and have been controlled by his power are not prepared to enter the presence of God. [why not? What has prevented them from being prepared? Note the next words:] **Pride, deception, licentiousness, cruelty, have become fixed in their characters.** [How did it become fixed in their characters? Did God fix it there? Did God determine this for them? Did God decide they would be this way?] Can they enter heaven to dwell forever with those whom they despised and hated on earth? Truth will never be agreeable to a liar; meekness will not satisfy self-esteem and pride; purity is not acceptable to the corrupt; disinterested love does not appear attractive to the selfish. What source of enjoyment could heaven offer to those who are wholly absorbed in earthly and selfish interests? {GC 542.1}

Could those whose lives have been spent in rebellion against God be suddenly transported to heaven and witness the high, the holy state of perfection that ever exists there,-- every soul filled with love, every countenance beaming with joy, enrapturing music in melodious strains rising in honor of God and the Lamb, and ceaseless streams of light flowing upon the redeemed from the face of Him who sitteth upon the throne,--could those whose hearts are filled with hatred of God, of truth and holiness, mingle with the heavenly throng and join their songs of praise? **Could they endure the glory of God and the Lamb? No, no; [why not? Because God is unwilling? Because God is using His power to cause some type of unpleasantness for them? Because God is taking some type of retribution against them? Listen why not:]** years of probation were granted them, that they might form characters for heaven; **but they** have never trained the mind to love purity; **they** have never learned the language of heaven, and now it is too late. **A life of rebellion against God has unfitted them for heaven.** [What has happened to them? Why has it happened to them? Who did it to them?] Its purity, holiness, and peace would be torture to them; [what is the cause of their torture? Are the righteous tortured there? Why not, what is the difference?] the glory of God would be a consuming fire. [What kind of fire? Are the righteous in this fire? Why is it not harmful to them? Is this the fire of combustion? Does all matter, trees, plants etc, burn up in



this fire?] They would long to flee from that holy place. **They would welcome destruction, that they might be hidden from the face of Him who died to redeem them. The destiny of the wicked is fixed by their own choice. [Who fixed the destiny of the wicked? Who decided it? So what is God's judgment then? The accurate diagnosis of their condition, which they have chosen.] Their exclusion from heaven is voluntary with themselves, and just and merciful on the part of God. [If their exclusion from heaven is voluntary, then is it an infliction upon them by God? If it is voluntary then is it compelled upon them? Is coercion used?]** {GC 542.2}

Like the waters of the Flood the fires of the great day declare God's verdict that the wicked are incurable. [What is God's judgment? That they are incurable, it is design law, the actual condition of each sinner who rejects the remedy Jesus procured] They have no disposition to submit to divine authority. Their will has been exercised in revolt; and when life is ended, it is too late to turn the current of their thoughts in the opposite direction, too late to turn from transgression to obedience, from hatred to love. {GC 543.1}

Remember this entire quote started with EGW talking about God's retributive justice—do we now have an understanding of what that is? It is always manifested through His design laws, which themselves are manifestations of His character of love.

This quote is another that demonstrates the same regarding the judgments of God.

"I was shown that the judgments of God would not come directly out from the Lord upon them, but in this way;

"They place themselves beyond His protection. [Whose choice determines this?] He warns, corrects, reproveth, and points out the only path of safety; then if those who have been the objects of His special care will follow their own course, independent of the Spirit of God, after repeated warnings, if they choose their own way, then **He does not commission His angels to prevent Satan's decided attacks upon them. [Whose agents are the source of attacks?]**

"It is Satan's power that is at work at sea and on land, bringing calamity and distress, and sweeping off multitudes to make sure of his prey, and storm and tempest both by sea and land will be, for Satan has come down in great wrath. He is at work. He knows his time is short and, he is not restrained; we shall see more terrible manifestations of his great power than we have ever dreamed of."

Manuscript Release vol. 14, p. 3

Any view which has God as the source of artificially inflicted punishment for sin is not consistent with God and, in fact, is evidence of the infection of Satan's lies about God corrupting Christianity.



Those who like to quote EGW to support the idea that God is the source of inflicted pain and suffering distort her writings because they fail to harmonize her more declarative statements with where she has described what she means by such language.

Now, let's look at the lesson for this week—we will note that the infection of lies has deeply infected this week's lesson.

SABBATH

The memory text asks, “Can you search the deep things of God?” Job 11:7

Then the first paragraph states, “The problem of human suffering continues to daunt humanity. We see ‘good’ people suffer immense tragedy, while evil ones go unpunished in this life.”

First, does your mind become suspicious when the lesson quotes Zophar, one of Job's friends, who God later says was wrong as a source of wisdom?

Can we search the deep things of God? The suggestion of Zophar and the lesson is that we cannot. But what does the Bible say?

But if from there you seek the Lord your God, you will find him if you look for him with all your heart and with all your soul. DT 4:29

What did Jesus say?

“Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. ⁸ For everyone who asks receives; he who seeks finds; and to him who knocks, the door will be opened. Mt 7:7,8

Can we find God by searching for Him? In fact, it is a requirement that we must have a desire for God, an interest, make a choice to want to know God, to seek Him.

Who would have us think that it is pointless to try and search to understand and know God?

Zophar's statement, cited by the lesson, is a subtle lie of Satan to discourage people and get them to give up and not seek to find God and the deep truths of God's character which He has revealed to us through Christ—including, not only the life history of Jesus, but also in what He has made so that men are without excuse! (Rom 1:20)

What about the idea that evil people go unpunished in this life?



This is evidence that those who wrote this lesson are operating under the lie that God's law functions like sinful human beings—imposed rules. The reason they say they go unpunished is because they don't see some authority arresting them and inflicting punishment upon them. This is how human law works.

It would be like the child who says, "All those other kids who are smoking and shooting up IV drugs haven't been arrested therefore they are going unpunished." Are people who smoke cigarettes, which are legal, going unpunished? When marijuana becomes legal and people smoke it legally will they go unpunished? Or will they still experience the punishment that deviations from the laws of health bring?

Mature people, those who understand God and His law, realize that people who abuse their bodies are being punished, with poor health, damaged brains, seared consciences and warped characters.

This is how it is with sin as well. A person can NEVER commit sin without damaging themselves! This is what the imposed law adherents don't understand, they think the problem with sin is a legal problem, rather than realizing it is an actual problem with our state of being.

SUNDAY

Read the first two paragraphs, "As if getting..." Is it true that God casts away sinners if they sin? No, this is a lie. The Bible is clear, "**But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.**" Rom 5:8

The lesson then suggests this is ironic because Job offered animal sacrifices for the sins of his children.

What were animal sacrifices supposed to do had his children sinned?

Think about it? Okay your children are out sinning, say doing drugs, viewing porn, and you run out buy a goat and slaughter it and offer the dead animal to God—what is that supposed to do for your children? Will the slaughtered animal cause their health to improve, prevent their brains from being damage, avoid the searing of their consciences or warping of their characters? No! The animal sacrifice in that situation is based on a false understanding of reality that God is the problem your children need to be protected from, or the one who doesn't care enough to help without an animal being slaughtered to buy His help.

This is evidence that Job himself didn't have great understanding about God, His law, the nature of sin and God's plan of salvation.

Remember Hebrews makes it clear that the animal sacrifices were never able to cleanse the consciences of the worshippers. (Heb 9:14, 10:22)



And what does it suggest if one person could offer a sacrifice to God on behalf of another person who isn't even interested in turning away from their sin? Wouldn't such a God be arbitrary and untrustworthy—open to bribes if paid the right price?

How much of Christianity has Jesus in the role of Job offering His blood to the Father to persuade the Father to relent from anger, wrath and vengeance?

Further this description suggests that God actually needed sacrifices offered to Him. But what message did God send through His prophets?

Hosea 6:6

I want your constant love, not your animal sacrifices. I would rather have my people know me than burn offerings to me.

Third paragraph quotes Job 8:9, which says, “For we were born yesterday, and know nothing, because our days on earth are a shadow.”

How many times have you simply believed because someone quoted a Bible text, well it's the Bible it must be true?

Is it true that because we live a short time that we know nothing? Who wants us to believe that it is pointless for us to think we can know anything? Satan wants us to believe such lies, again this quote is Bildad, a person who God says is wrong!

What did Jesus say?

Now this is eternal life: that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent. Jn 17:3

The Bible teaches that we can know the truth about God and His methods, which results in eternal life. But the lesson authors are quoting Bildad to teach the idea that we live too short a life to know anything, so why bother.

TUESDAY

Read first two paragraphs, “Job’s three friends...”

Wow, the three fellows that God said were wrong about Him, the lesson is citing as sources of truth about God—there is something terribly wrong here. And what is it? The lesson authors have the



same distorted view of God and His law that the friends of Job had and for which God had to chastise those friends.

Notice, they put God in the role of being the source of inflicted pain, suffering and death. This is a lie. God is the source of life, and sin breaks God's parameters for life and results in pain, suffering and death.

The lesson goes on to say in paragraph three, "Clearly the story of the Flood is an example of divine retribution for sin. In it, God brings punishment directly upon those who specifically deserved it."

This is so sad, people who are supposed to be leaders and teachers in the church, people who are supposed to be on meat, are still on milk and as such are not acquainted with the teaching about righteousness (Heb 5:13).

They take the story of the Flood and they view it through imposed law lenses and think God is punishing sin. Rather than realizing that the human race was infected with a terminal condition and would be eternally lost unless Jesus becomes incarnate to fix what Adam did to this creation. At that time in human history there was only one righteous man left on the earth through whom God could work and bring our Savior. The avenue for the Messiah was almost closed. God's actions were acts of mercy, not punishment, to keep open the avenue for the Messiah.

The lesson tries hard to make God out to be the kind of person the enemy suggests, in the last paragraph it states, "God wasn't simply abandoning sinners to their sin and letting that sin itself destroy them. As with the Flood, God was the direct agent of their punishment. He functioned here as the judge and destroyer of wickedness and evil."

What is wrong with this statement? Where are the lesson authors in error?

- They don't understand how God's law actually functions
- They put God in the role of using coercive power, which is found only under Satan's government
- They put God in the role of violating His own law, the law of love and liberty, which actually destroys love and incites rebellion
- They do not harmonize the Flood with historical facts of the Great Controversy and God working to keep open the avenue for the Messiah
- Within their own false legal view they now have God punishing sin before the judgment, which would be unjust to do
- They fail to recognize that first death is not the Biblical punishment for sin and therefore they draw a false conclusion that God is punishing sin
- They fail to understand how God actually does destroy wickedness and evil, which itself is a revelation that they don't truly understand what wickedness and evil are. Their suggested method would actually perpetuate wickedness and evil.



- The only way to eradicate lies is with truth; and the only way to eradicate selfishness is with love, thus the prevailing power in God's government is truth and love, but they have God using methods of force, which can never work.

WEDNESDAY

Read first paragraph, "Many instances of..."

This is an interpretation of events, based on viewing through imposed law, another understanding is that God is always acting therapeutically to keep open the avenue for the Messiah and that no punishment for sin has been inflicted by God.

That does not mean God has not acted to put some people to sleep in the first death—He did do that. But first death is not punishment for sin and those who make that argument create a lie, one they themselves acknowledge when they instantly admit that Daniel and other righteous people who have fallen asleep in the first death did not receive the punishment of sin. So on the one hand they state Daniel did not die as a punishment for sin, and his death is the same death as the wicked, the death of sleep, but then they claim the sleep death is the punishment for sin.

The lesson states, "The Old Testament is filled with promise after promise of the blessings and prosperity that God would directly bring to His people were they to obey Him."

What do you think of this? How does it make God's blessings sound? How does it make God's law and character sound? This is the other side of the arbitrary coin that God functions like a mafia boss, rewarding those who do what he says but punishing those who don't. They present God as the God-Father rather than Father-God.

It is all distorted from accepted Satan's lies about God's law.

Remember what Jesus said:

"You have heard that it was said, 'Love your neighbor and hate your enemy.' ⁴⁴ But I tell you: Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, ⁴⁵ that you may be sons of your Father in heaven. He causes his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous. ⁴⁶ If you love those who love you, what reward will you get? Are not even the tax collectors doing that? ⁴⁷ And if you greet only your brothers, what are you doing more than others? Do not even pagans do that? ⁴⁸ Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect. Mt 5:43-48

The lesson authors are doing exactly what the religious leaders in Christ's day did, they make God out to be functioning on the same level as sinful human beings, rewarding those who do what He says and punishing those who do not. Jesus refuted this, and they crucified Him for it. So too today,



religious leaders who hold to this distorted view end up attacking those who present the God that Jesus revealed.

The third paragraph states, “Of course, the Old Testament also is filled with warning after warning about direct divine punishment that would come for disobedience.”

This is true, there are such warnings, the question is why? And how do we understand such warnings?

Sadly, many people have never learned how to examine evidence and instead base their beliefs on declarative statements, rather than evidence of what actually happened.

When we hear a husband say, as his is violently beating his wife, “I only do this because I love you.” Should we believe his words that he loves his wife because he said so? Or, do we recognize what is happening and realize we cannot go by what is said?

To believe the husband who beats his wife loves her because he uses the words “I love you” would be an example of believing a declarative statement while ignoring the evidence.

Likewise, if we hear a parent screaming threats to a child who is riding their tricycle toward oncoming traffic, should we conclude that the parent *will* inflict retribution if the child rides into the oncoming cars?

So how do we understand God speaking so threateningly in the Old Testament? First, look at what the people were doing, then look at what God actually did.

The last paragraph references Korah, Dathan and Abiram those following them, and then states:

“Given the nature of how the rebels were destroyed, this incident cannot be chalked up to the idea of ‘sin bringing its own punishment.’”

Do you see what the authors are trying to do? They are trying to make the case that God is the source of inflicted punishment for sin. This is their argument, if you think through what they are actually describing they are saying:

There is nothing wrong with sin itself, there is only something wrong with God who will punish you for sin. If God would only get some anger control and not use His power to inflict punishment, we could live eternally in sin because sin doesn’t actually harm and there isn’t anything wrong with sin, other than God will punish you for it.

This is Satan’s view of God and God’s government. It is false.



Further, they create a lie to make their argument. They are saying that the punishment for sin is the first sleep death, which we all know is false, but they use it to try and make their case. If they would acknowledge the truth that the first death is NOT the punishment for sin, then they would have to step back and say, wait, then what God did here was not punish sin. Then what was God doing? God was working to keep open the avenue for the Messiah!

God was teaching those still capable of learning, while simultaneously suspending in time those who were beyond healing.

THURSDAY

Read first paragraph, “Certainly the greatest...”

From what we have read so far in this lesson can you assess and diagnose accurately the problems in this paragraph?

What type of law is this paragraph based upon? Imposed law—why? Because they teach that punishment must be inflicted, in other words that if God doesn’t inflict it then it doesn’t happen, which means they are teaching God’s law functions no different than the laws sinners make.

This is a lie. The message of the 3 angels is to worship Him who made the heavens... to worship the Creator whose laws are those upon which reality is actually constructed.

Sadly, we find that the authors are teaching that God is the source of death, not sin.

This idea, that God is the source of death, means that the authors are teaching Eastern Mysticism, dualism, that we live in a universe with eternal good and evil, eternal life and death, all found in the character of God. It is a lie.

Read the second paragraph of the lesson, from the book *The Great Controversy*: “Fire comes down from God...”

This is an interesting quote as they cut this from a chapter which describes something quite different than this passage in isolation suggests. Here are some further quotations from the same chapter, I suggest reading it in its entirety:

At last the order to advance is given, and the countless host moves on--an army such as was never summoned by earthly conquerors, such as the combined forces of all ages since war began on earth could never equal. Satan, the mightiest of warriors, leads the van, and his angels unite their forces for this final struggle. Kings and warriors are in his train, and the multitudes follow in vast companies, each under its appointed leader. With military precision the serried ranks advance over the earth's broken and uneven surface to the City of God. **By**



command of Jesus, the gates of the New Jerusalem are closed, and the armies of Satan surround the city and make ready for the onset. {GC 664.3}

Now Christ again appears to the view of His enemies. Far above the city, upon a foundation of burnished gold, is a throne, high and lifted up. Upon this throne sits the Son of God, and around Him are the subjects of His kingdom. The power and majesty of Christ no language can describe, no pen portray. **The glory of the Eternal Father is enshrouding His Son. The brightness of His presence fills the City of God, and flows out beyond the gates, flooding the whole earth with its radiance.** {GC 665.1}

As soon as the books of record are opened, and the eye of Jesus looks upon the wicked, they are conscious of every sin which they have ever committed. They see just where their feet diverged from the path of purity and holiness, just how far pride and rebellion have carried them in the violation of the law of God. The seductive temptations which they encouraged by indulgence in sin, the blessings perverted, the messengers of God despised, the warnings rejected, the waves of mercy beaten back by the stubborn, unrepentant heart--**all appear as if written in letters of fire.** {GC 666.2}

It is now evident to all that the wages of sin is not noble independence and eternal life, but slavery, ruin, and death. The wicked see what they have forfeited by their life of rebellion... All see that their exclusion from heaven is just. *By their lives they have declared:* "We will not have this Man [Jesus] to reign over us." {GC 668.3}

The aim of the great rebel has ever been to justify himself and to prove the divine government responsible for the rebellion. To this end he has bent all the power of his giant intellect. **He has worked deliberately and systematically, and with marvelous success, leading vast multitudes to accept his version of the great controversy** which has been so long in progress. For thousands of years this chief of conspiracy has palmed off falsehood for truth. **But the time has now come when the rebellion is to be finally defeated and the history and character of Satan disclosed.** [How? In the minds of all loyal by persuading them of truth] In his last great effort to dethrone Christ, destroy His people, and take possession of the City of God, the archdeceiver has been fully unmasked. Those who have united with him see the total failure of his cause. Christ's followers and the loyal angels behold the full extent of his machinations against the government of God. **He is the object of universal abhorrence.** {GC 670.1}

Satan sees that his voluntary rebellion has unfitted him for heaven. He has trained his powers to war against God; the purity, peace, and harmony of heaven would be to him supreme torture... {GC 670.2}

Fire comes down from God out of heaven. The earth is broken up. The weapons concealed in its depths are drawn forth. Devouring flames burst from every yawning chasm. The very



rocks are on fire. The day has come that shall burn as an oven. The elements melt with fervent heat, the earth also, and the works that are therein are burned up. Malachi 4:1; 2 Peter 3:10. The earth's surface seems one molten mass--a vast, seething lake of fire. It is the time of the judgment and perdition of ungodly men--"the day of the Lord's vengeance, and the year of recompenses for the controversy of Zion." Isaiah 34:8. {GC 672.2}

While the earth was wrapped in the fire of destruction, the righteous abode safely in the Holy City. Upon those that had part in the first resurrection, the second death has no power. **While God is to the wicked a consuming fire, He is to His people both a sun and a shield.** Revelation 20:6; Psalm 84:11. {GC 673.3}

"I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away." Revelation 21:1. **The fire that consumes the wicked purifies the earth. Every trace of the curse is swept away.** No eternally burning hell will keep before the ransomed the fearful consequences of sin. {GC 674.1}

What do you hear? Do you remember how the law of love and liberty work? Do you harmonize the earlier quotes where no coercion will be used by God, that no compelling power employed?

So, we have two fires, one that destroys sin, which is the fire of God's presence, and from which the wicked cannot hide and in which some suffer longer as truth burns through the lies they have used to avoid the reality of their own wicked condition. Satan with the most lies suffers the longest, but in the end, the death of all are voluntary with themselves. Then AFTER they are all dead, another fire, the fire of combustion, which melts matter, but can never remove or cleanse from sin, burns away the physical defects sinners perpetrated upon God's creation and God recreates the earth anew.

FRIDAY

Read and discuss the questions.



ANNOUNCEMENTS:

Calendar: Come and Reason now has a Calendar of Events on our Website. If you would like to know what is coming up or where Dr. J is speaking or who is teaching a particular week, check out the calendar.

January 20, 21, 2017: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at The Haven in St. Helena, California

May 6, 2017: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at Summit Northwest Ministries, Post Falls, Idaho.

September 15,16 2017: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at the Church in the Valley, Aldergrove, British Columbia, Canada.

October 12-16, 2017: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at Garden Grove SDA church in Garden Grove, CA. This will be a multi-speaker event focusing on the atonement. For more information contact:

Garden Grove Seventh-day Adventist Church

12702 9th Street

Garden Grove, CA 92840

Church office hours: Monday - Thursday 9:00 am - 4:00 pm

Phone: (714) 534-1987

Fax: (714) 534-3877

Email: office@gardengrovesda.com

October 27, 28, 2017: Dr. Jennings will speaking at the Arlington SDA church in Arlington, TX. For more information contact: <http://www.arlingtonadventist.com/>