



## Stewardship Motives of the Heart Lesson 3 1Q 2018 God or Mammon?

Presented by Dr. Tim Jennings

### ANNOUNCEMENTS:

**New Blogs**—If you don't follow us on Facebook, then be sure to visit our website we are posting new blogs again, the go up every Tuesday, recently we posted:

**January 10,11, 2018:** Dr. Jennings will be conducting a two day seminar at Fort Leonard Wood, MO for military mental health professionals and law enforcement.

**January 19,20, 2018:** Dr. Jennings will be speaking at the Tacoma Central SDA Church, Tacoma, Washington.

**March 24, 2018:** Dr. Jennings will be doing two presentations at the California Baptist University in San Bernadino CA, in conjunction with the AACC

**May 4-5, 2018:** Dr. Jennings will be doing two presentations at Grace Fellowship, York PA, in conjunction with the AACC

**July 27-28, 2018:** Dr. Jennings will be doing two presentationat New Life Church, Colorado Springs CO, in conjunction with the AACC

**September 27-29, 2018:** Dr. Jennings will be speaking at the Mega National Conference of the American Association of Christian Counselors in Dallas, TX

*In partnership with Come and Reason Ministries and Hixson United Methodist Church*

### **Mental Health Matters**

*Community Gatherings for Help, Hope and Healing*

- **The Developing Brain Thursday, February 8, 2018**  
Environment, experience, and choice alter human DNA and impact brain structure and function. Learn how traumatic experience, diet, addictive substances, television, healthy nurturing and even belief in God alter our, genes, brain structure and brain function. Presenter: Dr. Tim Jennings
- **Neurobiology of Depression and Drug Free Treatments Thursday, March 8, 2018**  
Depression is a complex disorder with alterations in both brain and body, loss of brain volume with altered brain circuits and even change in genetic expression? Discover how you can minimize your risk of depression and make changes in your daily routines that can protect your brain. Presenter: Dr. Tim Jennings
- **Addictions and the Adolescent Brain Thursday, April 12, 2018**  
Adolescence is a time of marked vulnerability to addictions. Explore the brain's reward pathway, healthy activities which activate this pathway and how addictions hijack normal reward circuitry and damage the brain. Presenter: Dr. Tim Jennings
- **The Mind- God's Design & What Went Wrong Thursday, May 10, 2018**  
The human mind was designed with separate and distinct faculties to operate in a beautiful harmony. Something has damaged that balance and caused pain, suffering and illness. Discover God's design for the mind, what went wrong and how to restore balance to your mind. Presenter: Dr. Tim Jennings
- **The Aging Brain Thursday, August 13, 2018**  
What happens to the brain as we age? This presentation will examine the evidence-based lifestyle and non-pharmacological interventions which will protect your brain and diminish your risk of dementia.



Presenter: Dr. Tim Jennings. Copies of Dr. Jennings brand new book, *The Aging Brain*, will be available.

- **Fix for Failing Families Thursday, September 13, 2018**  
Families are under attack, more than 50% of marriages end in divorce, in the U.S. almost 900,000 children are victims of abuse each year, and 77% of childhood deaths are caused by one or both parents. Discover principles and practice to bring healing to your family. Presenter: Dr. Tim Jennings
- **The Science of Belief Thursday, October 12, 2018**  
In this seminar we will examine the science of belief and demonstrate how modern quantum understanding provides a scientific basis for the impact belief, including prayer, has on our physical health and can even impact the physical world around us. Presenter: Dr. Tim Jennings
- **Guilt Resolution Thursday, November 8, 2018**  
Do you struggle with guilt? Discover the difference between legitimate and illegitimate guilt and how to resolve each and how to prevent people from manipulating you with guilt. Presenter: Dr. Tim Jennings
- **The God-Shaped Brain Thursday, December 13, 2018**  
Our brains are in a constant state of flux. Moment by moment new connections are forming, idle tracks are being pruned back and brain circuits are changing. Discover how our beliefs change our brain wiring, our physical health, and even which genes are turned on or turned off. Do your beliefs matter – more than you ever knew! Presenter: Dr. Tim Jennings

## SABBATH

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Read first paragraph, “God does not waste words...” Is this description how you understand God, He doesn’t waste words with explaining things—just do what God says?

What about the purpose of the entire Bible?

What about:

- God talking with Moses
- God talking with Abraham
- Jesus and His disciples – John 15:15

Is this really the idea we should draw from the parable, that God doesn’t take time to explain things?

Have you ever struggled with why the Bible seems difficult to understand? Some people, because of certain stories in Scripture think that God doesn’t explain, He just commands. I have had people ask me, “Why does the Bible read like it does?”

What is God’s method for our understanding? Is it:

- No explanation “just do what I say?”
- Detailed explanation that give all the answers, “Here is why I did this?”
- Primarily principles followed by evidence leaving people free to think, with some explanation, enough that there is no excuse for not comprehending?

What can you achieve with the last method you cannot achieve with the first two?



Individual growth, maturity, love and trust, i.e. understanding friendship!

The reason the Bible reads like it does is because it is designed for the healing and restoration of Godliness in people—when correctly used. And how does one use the Bible correctly?

As a source of information, evidence, revelation for which we must think, reason, and compare not only Scripture with Scripture, but with a heart submitted to God, inviting in the Holy Spirit and harmonizing Scripture with science and experience. In this way we mature, grow, develop as we voluntarily participate and freely assimilate its truths.

What do you think the lesson means by “Should put the fear of God in us all.”

Are they saying that we should be frightened and full of fear and terror of God?

Are they suggesting the problem with disobeying God is what God will do to us and that should really terrify us into doing what is right? What level of moral development is this? Level 1—is this what God wants? NO!

What results when people obey out of fear of punishment? Destruction of love, rebellion and destruction of individuality. This idea that we should live in fear of God and see Him as the source of punishment is central to Satan’s lies.

The Bible teaches that perfect love casts out ALL fear—when we draw close to God, have His law written on our hearts, know Him as He wants to be known, we will love Him and have no fear of Him!

In the parable is God inflicting something on this person, or is it being revealed where a person’s hardness of heart leads? Can accumulating material possessions result in healing hearts and minds?

I read this in the book *The Desire of Ages* this morning:

**Riches, worldly honor, and human greatness can never save a soul from death; Jesus purposed that no attraction of an earthly nature should call men to His side. Only the beauty of heavenly truth must draw those who would follow Him.** The character of the Messiah had long been foretold in prophecy, and He desired men to accept Him upon the testimony of the word of God. {DA 43.1}

Isn’t this the point of the parable?

**SUNDAY**

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Read first paragraph, “It was Christ...” Wasn’t this beautifully stated? What did Christ write into nature? The message of the *Father’s* love, which is the principle of giving that life is built upon. However, today there is an antagonistic principle in nature that undermines and perverts God’s design. Romans 8 “all nature groans under the weigh of sin.”

In Eden, before sin, do you think there were:

- Raptors (Eagles, Falcons, Hawks) that had beaks and claws for tearing flesh?
- Predators like wolves, lions and bears with claws and fangs designed for tearing flesh?
- Poisonous biting insects and arachnids?
- Poisonous plants?
- Thorns?
- Viruses and harmful microorganisms?

If God didn’t create them, then where did these organisms originate? Jesus said an enemy has sewn weeds into the field of God. Satan, after Adam’s sin, began messing with the God’s design perverting it, and also sinful humans, and natural decay and random mutation.

So, in nature we see two antagonistic principles at war, love and survival of the fittest.

The lesson goes on to differentiate Christianity with its solid belief in a real God who creates a real physical universe with the belief that physical matter is not evil, from philosophies that suggest physical matter is evil and spirituality is found only in the non-physical.

Question: Do we value material things differently than God? If so, why?

Is it not because of fear and selfishness—fear of what will happen without the physical things, whether water, food, clothes, shelter, money, land, cars...we derive security from the physical things. And we value the physical thing and often derive more security from the physical thing than from God—the source of all physical things.

Examples of people trusting in God instead of the physical things and then allowing God providing for their good?

- David and Goliath
- Elisha and the armies
- Elijah and the widow and the flour and oil
- Gideon and the Amalekites
- Jehoshaphat
- Daniel and the three worthies
- Jesus feeding the masses
- The Apostles—imprisoned when delivered and when martyred

Do we see in every physical blessing a direct link to God?



Is this what Jesus was trying to get people to consider when He said, “And he took bread, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to them, saying, “This is my body given for you; do this in remembrance of me.” (Lk 22:19)?

Was Jesus merely setting up a ritual, or was He trying to get people to remember all our physical blessings are directly from Him? And every time we break bread, with every meal, we are to remember from where the bread really comes and the ultimate bread of heaven—Jesus?

## MONDAY

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Read third paragraph, “One reason...” This is well said in several respects:

- Jesus did come into the world to reveal the truth about God and His character of love to us and the onlooking universe
- But this aspect of His mission, the revelation of truth about God, is only ONE reason amongst several that He came—in other words, Jesus had a mission that included more than revelation—it included achievement
- What other things did Christ come to achieve in addition to revealing the truth about God?
  - By revealing the truth about God it would simultaneously prove Satan lied, thus exposing Satan as a liar and thereby disarm Satan Heb 2:14
  - Destroy death (2Tim 1:9,10)
  - Destroy the devil’s work (1John 3:8) which is to efface the image of God in man and put Satan’s image in humanity and Christ destroyed the devil’s work by...
    - Developing a perfect, sinless human character, Heb 5:9,10, and thus became the Remedy, the source of salvation for all who trust Him
  - All of this not only validates God, exposes Satan, fixes the human species by restoring God’s design protocols within the species, but also demonstrates there was no manufacturer’s defect in the creation of humankind as Jesus, in a weaker humanity than Adam, was able to live in perfect harmony with God’s law/design.

Read last paragraph, “Imagine Jesus...” Was it merely his great wealth, or was it a deeply imbedded belief system he had been taught since childhood about what that wealth represented in regard to salvation and how someone is saved?

The rich man had the uneasiness which occurs when a person is not reconciled to God, the emptiness of soul, which drove him to search for peace, for internal healing. He searched throughout his life and was raised from childhood to believe that ritual observance, attendance at feast, washing appropriately, etc. would mean one was right with God and he would know that he was right with God because the Bible says,

“The Lord commanded us to obey all these decrees and to fear the Lord our God, **so that we**



**might always prosper** and be kept alive, as is the case today.” Dt 6:24

If you pay attention to these laws and are careful to follow them, then the Lord your God will keep his covenant of love with you, as he swore to your forefathers. <sup>13</sup> He will love you and bless you and increase your numbers. He will bless the fruit of your womb, **the crops of your land—your grain, new wine and oil—the calves of your herds and the lambs of your flocks in the land that he swore to your forefathers to give you.** <sup>14</sup> **You will be blessed more than any other people;** none of your men or women will be childless, nor any of your livestock without young. Dt 7:12-14

So, was it merely that he loved material possessions, or had he been taught a theology that caused him to believe his wealth was proof that he was right with God?

## TUESDAY

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Read first paragraph, “Debt is not a principle...” If debt is not a principle of heaven, then why create a system that leads to debt?

Are we debtors to divine justice? What does this mean?

Read second paragraph, “God’s love...” According to this, God set up a transaction between whom? To whom is the payment of a human sacrifice being made?

In this setting, if the payment isn’t made what is the result or what would happen?

What is the payment achieving in this viewpoint?

Where, then, in this theology, is the problem that the payment is fixing?

This is all a lie based on the false law construct.

The truth is seen when we come back to design law.

What was the problem that sin caused that the plan of salvation was designed to fix?

When Adam sinned did:

- God get changed?
- God’s law get changed?
- Humankind change?

Then does something need to be done to God or God’s law? If something is done to God or God’s law,



i.e. pay some legal debt, does that actually change the condition of humankind? No! **And this is Satan's grand plan, to get people to accept a solution for their problem that doesn't actually fix the problem.**

That is what penal legal theologies do—they have a form of godliness but no power.

Read fourth paragraph, “The Greek word...” Does the statement “it is finished” mean “our debt is paid?”

Is this what Jesus' words meant? Or, is it not only a misrepresentation of what Jesus' words meant, but an obstruction to the truth, an obstacle to the gospel, a barrier to accessing what Christ did for us?

First, what is the penalty for sin? Death—sleep death or eternal death; death from which we are resurrected or death from which there is no resurrection?

If the penalty is death without resurrection—an eternal death—then did Christ pay that penalty?

So, the penal view is fraudulent on its face—and believing such things teaches people to accept falsehoods as truths and this corrupts the mind and character and prevents the Spirit of Truth from doing His work of healing us.

In the book, *The Desire of Ages*, which Billy Graham is reported to have said is the best book on the life of Christ he has ever read, there is a chapter entitled It Is Finished. I want to read some sections from this chapter, let's consider what this author thought was finished by Christ's death and see if we agree:

To the angels and the unfallen worlds the cry, "It is finished," had a deep significance. **It was for them as well as for us that the great work of redemption** had been accomplished. They with us share the fruits of Christ's victory. [Did angels in heaven have a debt that Christ had to pay for them? Do we agree the cross was also for sinless angels? “all things in heaven...” Col 1:20 “angels long to look into...” 1Pet 1:12] {DA 758.2}

**Not until the death of Christ was the character of Satan clearly revealed to the angels or to the unfallen worlds.** The archapostate had so clothed himself with deception that even holy beings had not understood his principles. They had not clearly seen the nature of his rebellion... [What was the nature of his rebellion? What didn't they understand? The nature of love, truth, liberty; how life functions, and that disobedience cannot be cured by infliction of punishment. They didn't realize such actions are not just, but manifestations of Satan's methods and would only perpetuate evil and sin] {DA 758.3}

God could have destroyed Satan and his sympathizers as easily as one can cast a pebble to the earth; but He did not do this. **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. **His**



**authority rests upon goodness, mercy, and love; and the presentation of these principles is the means to be used.** [used for what? For the winning of the war? What kind of war? How do these principles win the war? If we teach God is the source of inflicted pain and suffering and requires a legal payment in the form of His Son's life, does that promote the principles of goodness, mercy and love, or teach compelling power?] God's government is moral, and **truth and love are to be the prevailing power.** [How do truth and love prevail? 2Cor 10:3-5]{DA 759.1}

**It was God's purpose to place things on an eternal basis of security,** and in the councils of heaven it was decided that time must be given for Satan to develop the principles which were the foundation of his system of government. He had claimed that these were superior to God's principles. Time was given for the working of Satan's principles, that they might be seen by the heavenly universe... {DA 759.2} [How would this place things on eternal security? What would cause security to be eternal? Would it answer all questions, would God's methods be proven to be the only method of life? Would people remember what happens when beings deviate from God's design? So can we have eternal security if memory of sin and salvation are erased?]

All heaven and the unfallen worlds had been witnesses to the controversy. With what intense interest did they follow the closing scenes of the conflict. They beheld the Saviour enter the garden of Gethsemane, His soul bowed down with the horror of a great darkness. They heard His bitter cry, "Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from Me." Matthew 26:39. **As the Father's presence was withdrawn, they saw Him sorrowful with a bitterness of sorrow exceeding that of the last great struggle with death.** [Was the Father inflicting punishment? Was the Father using power to kill, to torment, to torture? Was the Father withdrawing? Why? Was The Father withdrawing because the Father was angry at Jesus? Was the Father withdrawing because some horrible substance called sin was being placed on Jesus and the Father just couldn't stand it any more? What was Jesus' mission? Was Jesus going to need to die to complete His mission? Could He die if the source of life didn't let go? Why did Jesus stay away from Lazarus when Lazarus was sick? The Father's withdrawal was not punishment, but the purposeful cooperation of the Godhead in Their plan to complete the mission to fix what sin had done to this creation!] The bloody sweat was forced from His pores, and fell in drops upon the ground. Thrice the prayer for deliverance was wrung from His lips. Heaven could no longer endure the sight, and a messenger of comfort was sent to the Son of God... {DA 759.5}

**Satanic agencies confederated with evil men in leading the people to believe Christ the chief of sinners,** and to make Him the object of detestation. Those who mocked Christ as He hung upon the cross were imbued with the spirit of the first great rebel. He filled them with vile and loathsome speeches. He inspired their taunts. But by all this he gained nothing. {DA 760.4}

**Could one sin have been found in Christ, had He in one particular yielded to Satan to escape the terrible torture, the enemy of God and man would have triumphed.** [Why?



What was Christ fighting to achieve? What was the root to Christ's struggle? Did Christ experience human emotions that tempted Him? To do what? To save self—and selfishness is the infection driven by fear caused by distrust, which occurs because of believing lies. Christ overcame by first knowing the truth about God, His character, methods, principles, and trusting the Father fully and loving the Father and us more than Himself and thus when the temptation to act to save self came, Christ instead loved and love casts out all fear. **In Christ the perfection of God was restored into the species human!**] Christ bowed His head and died, but He held fast His faith and His submission to God. "And I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, Now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of His Christ: for the accuser of our brethren is cast down, which accused them before our God day and night." Revelation 12:10. {DA 761.1}

**Satan saw that his disguise was torn away. His administration was laid open before the unfallen angels and before the heavenly universe. He had revealed himself as a murderer. By shedding the blood of the Son of God, he had uprooted himself from the sympathies of the heavenly beings.** [Who killed Jesus on the Cross? Was it, as those in the penal substitutionary camp teach, God killing Jesus for justice sake? No! It was Satan and evil men. But the Penal theologies teach it was God who killed Jesus at the cross.] **Henceforth his work was restricted.** Whatever attitude he might assume, he could no longer await the angels as they came from the heavenly courts, and before them accuse Christ's brethren of being clothed with the garments of blackness and the defilement of sin. The last link of sympathy between Satan and the heavenly world was broken. {DA 761.2} [What broke that link of sympathy? What restricted Satan's movements? Was it the use of might and power by God? No! It was the truth revealed which settled the intelligences in heaven into the truth about God's goodness and therefore Satan's lies had no more power. None in heaven would listen to Satan any more. Only here on earth do intelligent beings still listen to, accept and promote Satan's lies about God.]

**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. [Who originated the idea that sin must be punished by God? This is Satan's view of God and God's law and government. The penal substitution group teach the same lie and we as Christians cannot complete the work of leading people back to God as long as we teach that **God is like Satan in character and method.**] When men broke the law of God, and defied His will, Satan exulted. It was proved, he declared, that the law could not be obeyed; man could not be forgiven. Because he, after his rebellion, had been banished from heaven, Satan claimed that the human race must be forever shut out from God's favor. God could not be just, he urged, and yet show mercy to the sinner. {DA 761.4}

But even as a sinner, man was in a different position from that of Satan. Lucifer in heaven had sinned in the light of God's glory. To him as to no other created being was given a revelation of God's love.



Understanding the character of God, knowing His goodness, Satan chose to follow his own selfish, independent will. This choice was final. There was no more that God could do to save him. **But man was deceived; his mind was darkened by Satan's sophistry. The height and depth of the love of God he did not know. For him there was hope in a knowledge of God's love. By beholding His character he might be drawn back to God.** {DA 761.5} [What could impact humanity and result in drawing us back to God for salvation? The truth of God's character of love! Does it give insight into why Christ didn't die for Satan and the fallen angels? Not because Jesus and the Father didn't love them enough to die for them, but because it would have had no impact. They were not deceived as man was in regard to the nature of God's character of love. Thus revealing that love to beings who already knew it, considered it and rejected it would have been of no value.]

Through Jesus, God's mercy was manifested to men; **but mercy does not set aside justice.** [Ah, the penal group will say, despite all that has been read thus far, they will jump on this sentence and insert their coercive, imposed, punishing god and claim it is justice. But, how do you understand justice? Through what law lens? What did this author describe as justice?] The law reveals the **attributes of God's character**, and not a jot or tittle of it could be changed to meet man in his fallen condition. [What does this mean? What is God's character? Love! And how does love work? By giving, love cannot be coerced. No change could be made in the law why? Because it is the parameters upon which life is built. It would be like saying, "no change in the law of respiration could be made to meet a drowning man who refuses to get his head above water."] **God did not change His law, but He sacrificed Himself, in Christ, for man's redemption.** "God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself." 2 Corinthians 5:19. {DA 762.1} [Which means what? What was the purpose? If the law could not be changed and God does not change, what needed to be changed? the condition of humankind. Would this require a human to make that change? What change? Would it mean changing humans to live in perfect harmony with God's law/design?]

**The law requires righteousness,--a righteous life, a perfect character; and this man has not to give.** He cannot meet the claims of God's holy law. But Christ, coming to the earth as man, lived a holy life, **and developed a perfect character.** [Why was this necessary? For the same reason the law of respiration requires we breathe] **These He offers as a free gift to all who will receive them.** His life stands for the life of men. **Thus they have remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God.** [Notice, not through a legal payment. The issue was not legal, but design law] **More than this, Christ imbues men with the attributes of God. He builds up the human character after the similitude of the divine character,** a goodly fabric of spiritual strength and beauty. Thus the very righteousness of the law is fulfilled in the believer in Christ. God can "**be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus.**" Romans 3:26. {DA 762.2} [Notice justice is fixing what is broken, setting human beings right with God, making them righteous through the achievement of Jesus!]



**Another deception was now to be brought forward. Satan declared that mercy destroyed justice, that the death of Christ abrogated the Father's law.** Had it been possible for the law to be changed or abrogated, then Christ need not have died. But to abrogate the law would be to immortalize transgression, and place the world under Satan's control. It was because the law was changeless, because man could be saved only through obedience to its precepts, that Jesus was lifted up on the cross. **Yet the very means by which Christ established the law Satan represented as destroying it. Here will come the last conflict of the great controversy between Christ and Satan.** {DA 762.5} [How is Christ's death, which is the means of establishing the law, used by Satan to teach the destruction of God's law? By teaching that the law is imposed and God is the one who killed Jesus at the Cross. Thus the Cross, instead of demonstrating the fulfillment of perfect love and the restoration of God's design into the species human while eradicating the infection of selfishness, instead is now used to teach the very lie about God's law that the Cross refutes. Notice the next words of this author, who understood it perfectly.]

**By substituting human law for God's law, Satan will seek to control the world.** This work is foretold in prophecy. Of the great apostate power which is the representative of Satan, it is declared, "He shall speak great words against the Most High, and shall wear out the saints of the Most High, and think to change times and laws: and they shall be given into his hand." Daniel 7:25. {DA 763.1}

Men will surely set up their laws to counterwork the laws of God. **They will seek to compel the consciences of others, and in their zeal to enforce these laws they will oppress their fellow men.** {DA 763.2} [Use of coercive power—just what God would not use. But the penal view teaches this very thing God eventually uses. And we become like the God we admire and worship. Thus throughout history Christians, when accepting the imposed law view, repeatedly coerce in the name of God—crusades, inquisition, Protestant/Catholic wars.]

**The warfare against God's law, which was begun in heaven, will be continued until the end of time.** Every man will be tested. Obedience or disobedience is the question to be decided by the whole world. **All will be called to choose between the law of God and the laws of men.** Here the dividing line will be drawn. There will be but two classes. **Every character will be fully developed; and all will show whether they have chosen the side of loyalty or that of rebellion.** {DA 763.3} [What is the dividing line? Character—do we have a character like Christ, which is love, truth, freedom, built on a trust relationship with God and living in harmony with design law. Or do we have a character like Satan, based in fear, and imposed punishments for disobedience.]

**Then the end will come. God will vindicate His law and deliver His people. Satan and all who have joined him in rebellion will be cut off. Sin and sinners will perish, root and branch...** {DA 763.4} [How do they perish? Is it by infliction of death on those who would otherwise live eternally in sin, or is it be "cutting them off" i.e. setting them free, leaving them



separate from God, who is the source of life, and what happens? They die, why? Because they refused to be reconciled to the only source of life.]

**This is not an act of arbitrary power on the part of God. The rejecters of His mercy reap that which they have sown. God is the fountain of life; and when one chooses the service of sin, he separates from God, and thus cuts himself off from life.** He is "alienated from the life of God." Christ says, "All they that hate Me love death." Ephesians 4:18; Proverbs 8:36. God gives them existence for a time that they may develop their character and reveal their principles. This accomplished, they receive the results of their own choice. **By a life of rebellion, Satan and all who unite with him place themselves so out of harmony with God that His very presence is to them a consuming fire. The glory of Him who is love will destroy them.** {DA 764.1} [Is there a punishment for sin? Yes, from where does the punishment come? From unremedied sin, not an infliction from God!]

**At the beginning of the great controversy, the angels did not understand this. Had Satan and his host then been left to reap the full result of their sin, they would have perished; but it would not have been apparent to heavenly beings that this was the inevitable result of sin. A doubt of God's goodness would have remained in their minds as evil seed, to produce its deadly fruit of sin and woe.** {DA 764.2} [And what would have been the result? Could the universe be placed on an eternal basis of security if this had happened?]

**But not so when the great controversy shall be ended.** Then, the plan of redemption having been completed, **the character of God is revealed to all created intelligences. The precepts of His law are seen to be perfect and immutable.** Then sin has made manifest its nature, Satan his character. Then the extermination of sin will vindicate God's love and establish His honor before a universe of beings who delight to do His will, and in whose heart is His law. {DA 764.3}

**Well, then, might the angels rejoice as they looked upon the Saviour's cross;** for though they did not then understand all, they knew that the destruction of sin and Satan was forever made certain, that the redemption of man was assured, and that the universe was made eternally secure. **Christ Himself fully comprehended the results of the sacrifice made upon Calvary. To all these He looked forward when upon the cross He cried out, "It is finished."** {DA 764.4}

Do we find something much more significant and profound in Christ's words It is finished, than "he paid my debt?" In fact, do we misrepresent what Christ accomplished and promote the lie that Christ came to refute when we present the Cross as paying a legal debt?

Then, how do we deal with quotations like this one from the same author who wrote the passage above:

This record teaches an important lesson. "The love of money is the root of all evil" (1 Timothy 6:10). In this generation the desire for gain is the absorbing passion. . . . **We were all debtors to**



**divine justice, but we had nothing with which to pay the debt. Then the Son of God, who pitied us, paid the price of our redemption.** He became poor that through His poverty we might be rich. By deeds of liberality toward His poor we may prove the sincerity of our gratitude for the mercy extended to us. {CC 267.5}

What was the price? The cost of exposing Satan as liar, revealing truth to win us to trust, destroying the infection of fear and selfishness and developing a perfect character to be given to those who trust in Jesus. Thus, a price was paid, but not a legal price, it was the price our condition required in order to fix what sin did to us!

From another article:

...The value of the **law of Jehovah is to be estimated by the immense price that was paid in the death of the Son of God to maintain its sacredness.** {ST, December 30, 1889 par. 1}

**The law of God is a transcript of his character; it portrays the nature of God.** As in Christ we behold the brightness of his glory, the express image of his person, so also in the **law the attributes of the Father are unfolded...** {ST, December 30, 1889 par. 2}

**God grants men a probation in this world, that their principles may become firmly established in the right, thus precluding the possibility of sin in the future life,** and so assuring the happiness and security of all. **Through the atonement of the Son of God alone could power be given to man to establish him in righteousness, and make him a fit subject for heaven. The blood of Christ is the eternal antidote for sin.** The offensive character of sin is seen in what it cost the Son of God in humiliation, in suffering and death. All the worlds behold in him a living testimony to the malignity of sin, for in his divine form he bears the marks of the curse. He is in the midst of the throne as a Lamb that hath been slain. The redeemed will ever be vividly impressed with the hateful character of sin, as they behold Him who died for their transgressions. The preciousness of the Offering will be more fully realized as **the blood-washed through more fully comprehend how God has made a new and living way for the salvation of men,** through the union of the human and the divine in Christ. {ST, December 30, 1889 par. 3}

... **the atonement will never need to be repeated; and there will be no danger of another rebellion in the universe of God. That which alone can effectually restrain from sin in this world of darkness, will prevent sin in heaven. The significance of the death of Christ will be seen by saints and angels. Fallen men could not have a home in the paradise of God without the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world. Shall we not then exalt the cross of Christ? The angels ascribe honor and glory to Christ, for even they are not secure except by looking to the sufferings of the Son of God. It is through the efficacy of the cross that the angels of heaven are guarded from apostasy. Without the cross they would be no more secure against evil than were the angels before the fall of Satan. Angelic perfection failed in heaven. Human perfection failed in Eden, the paradise of bliss. All who wish for**



**security in earth or heaven must look to the Lamb of God.** The plan of salvation, making manifest the justice and love of God, **provides an eternal safeguard against defection in unfallen worlds**, as well as among those who shall be redeemed by the blood of the Lamb. Our only hope is perfect trust in the blood of Him who can save to the uttermost all that come unto God by Him. The death of Christ on the cross of Calvary is our only hope in this world, and it will be our theme in the world to come. Oh, we do not comprehend the value of the atonement! If we did, we would talk more about it. The gift of God in his beloved Son was the expression of an incomprehensible love. It was the utmost that God could do to preserve the honor of his law, and still save the transgressor. Why should man not study the theme of redemption? It is the greatest subject that can engage the human mind. If men would contemplate the love of Christ, displayed in the cross, their faith would be strengthened to appropriate the merits of his shed blood, and they would be cleansed and saved from sin. *There are many who will be lost, because they depend on legal religion, or mere repentance for sin. But repentance for sin alone cannot work the salvation of any soul...* {ST, December 30, 1889 par. 4}

**God saves man through the blood of Christ alone, and man's belief in, and allegiance to, Christ is salvation...** If the unspeakable gift of God does not lead man to repentance, there is nothing that ever will move his heart. There is no power held in reserve to act upon his mind, and arouse his sensibilities. The whole character of God was revealed in his Son, the whole range of the possibilities of heaven is displayed for the acceptance of man in the Son of the Infinite One. The way for man's return to God and heaven has no barriers. The matchless depths of the Saviour's love have been demonstrated; and if this manifestation of God's love for the children of men does not prevail to draw men to himself, there is nothing that ever will. {ST, December 30, 1889 par. 6}

## WEDNESDAY

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Read second paragraph, "It is impossible for the finite minds to fully comprehend..." What does this mean? Does this mean we cannot comprehend God, or that we cannot FULLY comprehend God?

Is there a difference?

Does God want us to comprehend Him? John 15:15...

Can we comprehend God's character and methods of love? How love works, that God is trustworthy?

The next paragraph states, "God has no equal. He thinks, remembers, and acts in ways we do not comprehend."

If we cannot comprehend God, then how can we tell the difference between God and Satan?



## **THURSDAY**

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Read first paragraph, “We belong to God, both by creation and by redemption.”

What does this mean? Belong, like we are property and owned by God? Like slaves? Then why did Jesus say in John 15:15 He would not call us slaves, but friends?

Could it mean, rather than belongs to as in property, we belong to God in the same way:

- The meow belongs to the cat
- The branch belongs to the vine

We belong to God because only in union with God do we exist, as it says in Acts: ‘For in him we live and move and have our being.’ 17:28

Would all things belong to God because all things have their origin, substance, existence and life only as they are connected to Him?

## **FRIDAY**

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read and discuss questions